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33

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**Cognitive and Pragmatic
Aspects of Speech Actions**



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Cognitive and Pragmatic Aspects of Speech Actions

- Editorial

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The inspiration for the present volume came from the papers and discussions presented during the international conference *Meaning, Context and Cognition*, annually held in University of Lodz and organised by the Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics.

Following the profile of the conference, whose initiation in March 2011 markedly coincided with the 100th anniversary of John L. Austin's birthday, the contributions reflect the authors' interest in cognitive aspects of processing natural language data in the interface of semantics and pragmatics. This functional perspective leads to the main theme which can be identified as "speech actions", i.e. influencing and changing the world by means of words. The choice of the expression "speech actions" which appears in the title of the volume was deliberate to emphasise that the research programmes represented in the book are not necessarily related to individual speech acts. The speech action perspective, being a linking thread across the many topics and problems that the papers bring to the fore, is much broader both with regard to the data subjected to analysis and in its methodological commitments. Thus, although the selection of issues under discussion is much varied and results in an overall interdisciplinary research report, the contributions are integrated by their focus on the nature and role of context and cognition in speech action processing and construal.

The papers collected in this volume have been grouped into four parts. Part I contains papers of theoretical orientation. The first article, "**On times and contents**" by **Kepa Korta** and **Maria Ponte**, presents a novel approach to the analysis of temporally unspecific sentences. Having reviewed current literature on the topic, the authors suggest a novel model which combines selected elements of the eternalist and the temporalist account with Korta and Perry's (2011) critical pragmatics theory. The resulting new theory of utterance content is shown to be neutral with respect to the extreme theoretical positions in the debate and, at the same time, able to offer a natural account of the facts brought to the fore by both parties. The authors claim that utterances of temporally unspecific sentences have a systematic variety of contents from reflexive, or utterance-bound contents to incremental or referential contents. Korta and Ponte's analysis of temporally neutral propositions is followed by "**Reasoning without explicit quantifiers**", authored by **Hiroyuki Uchida** and **Nicholas L. Cassimatis**. The paper explores the problems of reasoning and perception and suggests a theoretical reasoning system that is able to maintain the isomorphism between the ingredients of reasoning and the perceptual representations and simultaneously accommodate abstract non-perceptual notions involved

in human cognition. The authors claim that their simulation-based reasoning system can deal with not only the data chosen for the analysis, but also with all the other propositional operators and connectives in a traditional first-order logic. In addition, it is suggested that the model is able to offer a uniform semantic analysis of both quantificational and referential NPs. In “**Violable constraints and scalar implicature strength**”, *Chris Cummins*, in a Gricean approach, explores some of the details of the enrichments available to the hearer and discusses the ways in which hearers have been demonstrated to modulate their pragmatic inferencing based upon contextual considerations. Finally, drawing on his previous research (Cummins 2011) focused on speakers’ constraints, he presents evidence to support the claim that in numerous contexts hearers are adjusting their inferences in a way similar to that exercised by speakers. In a less theory-critical light, it is claimed that the experimental findings obtained in testing the constraint-based model can shed further light upon the question of what implicatures are available to hearers, and how the set of alternative utterances available to a speaker is restricted. The last paper in the section, “**Context, topic and the resolution of polysemy**” by *Tahir Wood* suggests a novel means to theoretically distinguish between semantics and pragmatics. It presents semantics and pragmatics as parts of a continuum from explicitness to inexplicitness, related to the need for contextual information in interpretation. Resolution of polysemy is presented as a semantic process and the paper in overall places more emphasis on semantics as it is more thoroughly demonstrated how semantic processes make up three distinct levels of meaning: lexical, propositional and discursive with transitions between the level being explained with reference to Visetti and Cadiot’s (2002) theory of semantic forms. It is at the discursive level that semantics is shown to become content, relating to theme and to topic. At this point it is distinguished from pragmatics, which is characterised as function or use.

Part II of the book considers the questions pertaining to lexical pragmatics. It includes three papers focused on the meaning of particles. *Joana Garmendia* offers “**A pragmatic analysis of the Basque particle ‘ote’**”. The Basque data finds is further explored in *Larraitz Zubeldia*’s text entitled “**Basque reportative particle ‘omen’ contributing to the propositional content: how it differs from the reportative verb ‘esan’**”. The nature of the Polish interrogative particle ‘czy’ is in the centre of interest in *Matylda Weidner*’s article, “**Towards an interactional grammar of Polish: yes/no questions and their design**”. The section closes with a relevance-theoretic approach (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995) to “**The pragmatics of reduced forms in an Internet community of practice**”, authored by *Jonathan R. White*.

Part III contains papers explicitly addressing issues in speech act theory in the tradition of John L. Austin (1962/1975), John R. Searle (1969), and Bach and Harnish (1979). *Jesús Navarro-Reyes* explores the problems of “**Intention and responsibility in speech acts**” against Alston’s (2000) normative account of speech acts, while *Nicolas Ruytenbeek* addresses the question “**Are indirect speech**

acts always conventional?” challenging Searle’s (e.g. 1969, 1975) early claims with regard to the allegedly dual interpretation of indirect acts and their conventionality.

Part IV presents a number of studies which concentrate on various cognitive processes involved in language development and processing. **Katarzyna Jaworska-Biskup** offers a discussion of **“Conceptual development and the emergence of meaning in a congenitally blind child’s lexicon”**. **Kamila Dębowska-Kozłowska** analyses **“Intuitive and reflective inferencing in counter-argument processing”**. Finally, **Ewa Wałaszewska** gives a relevance-theoretic account of **“The butcher-surgeon metaphor revisited: Ad hoc concepts and blends”**.

In this introductory note I wish to thank all the authors for their contributions. I am also deeply grateful to the reviewers of the volume, Jacob Mey and Hanna Pulaczewska.

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Pragmatic and Cognitive Presuppositions Across Discourse Spheres. Maria Tarantino Dipartimento Interateneo di Fisica, Università e Politecnico di Bari, Italy. An hour sitting with a pretty girl on a park bench passes in a minute, but a minute sitting on a hot stove seems like an hour. The often-quoted ethno-linguist argues for the inclusion of agents, activities, actions, contexts of situation and culture in describing speech events. He suggests that without the. 77. His model of analysis includes consideration of the grammatico-semantic content of sentences, of the participants' role and intentions, and of truth-conditional aspects of statements. Austin suggests that the unit of speech feature three-layers of information which he terms: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. The necessarily heterogeneous field of research into speech actions is approached by the contributors from various perspectives and with focus on different types of data. The papers have been grouped into four sections which subsequently emphasise theoretical linguistics issues, lexical pragmatics, speech act-theoretic problems, and cognitive processes. Buy the eBook. List Price. Books related to Cognitive and Pragmatic Aspects of Speech Actions. Skip this list.