

Introduction. Inquiries in Philosophical Pragmatics: Linguistic and Theoretical Issues



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Together with the volume “Inquiries in philosophical pragmatics: Theoretical developments,” this book collects selected contributions to the conference Pragmasophia II held in Lisbon in 2018.

In the first volume, twelve chapters outlined a path that characterizes pragmatic research, starting from the philosophical grounds and leading to new explorations and new interconnections with other disciplines, in particular argumentation theory and discourse analysis. From a thematic perspective, the first volume moved from the classical topics of quantifiers, intentions, and common knowledge to the theoretical challenges related to the phenomena of pure indexicals, deferred reference, explicatures and indirect reports, and finally to the inquiry into classical topics using mixed theoretical approaches. Thus, metaphors are considered from the perspective of their explanatory or argumentative effects, relevance is analyzed taking into account its measurability, and stereotypes are studied as vehicles and content of implicit strategies. The path from theory to practice runs through the twelve chapters from the strictly philosophical discussions of the first papers to the applications of the pragmatic insights to specific fields of practice, such as medical discourse, artificial intelligence, and political discourse and advertising.

The eleven essays that this second volume collects follow a similar thread. The analytical emphasis is now placed on how a linguistic structure or expression manifests a pragmatic phenomenon, and not the foundational and essential question of

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what a specific pragmatic phenomenon is. This different approach runs through all the chapters, which are ordered considering their relationship with the specificity of the context. The first three papers, devoted to the topics of prototype-based generalizations, scalar implicatures, and temporal ordering, propose new insights into pragmatic phenomena considering linguistic behavior independent of the social activity in which it is placed. In the last papers, the analytical and empirical goals become predominant. Here, the theoretical advances are considered as instruments for analyzing specific texts, such as marketplace interactions, courtroom speech, schizophrenic discourse, narratives of literary texts for children or deception in movies. In between these two groups of contributions, three papers devoted to emotive or loaded words bridge the passage from more theoretical to more empirical and context-oriented works. These three chapters address the theoretical topic of derogative force of slurs or ethical terms (Stevenson, 1937) considering specific social contexts (political discourse, national surveys, and artificial languages) and investigating the strategies of manipulation and quasi-definition of the “emotive meaning” of specific terms in political discourse, ageing stereotypes manifested in the use of specific terminology, and impoliteness expressed in Esperanto.

In the first chapter, Horn analyzes through linguistic lenses a problem that is essential to pragmatics, argumentation, and logic, namely the so-called “plausible” or prototype-based generalizations. In logic and argumentation, this topic is at the basis of the structure of the so-called natural inferences, describing our everyday reasoning (Walton, 1995, 2001). By describing the behavior of personal pronouns having sex-neutral references, the prototype gender of some words (such as the doctor or the informant), and bare plurals, Horn brings to light the cancellability conditions of such generalizations, contributing to the debate on their presuppositional or inferential nature. In particular, he builds on the principles of salience and relevance, which rule out some default inferences when they are made incoherent with the context to propose a new perspective on the phenomenon. Framed in the words of the popular *dictum* that “it is easier to ask forgiveness than to ask permission,” Horn formulates the principle that governs prototype-based generalization: the discourse sequencing and processing of generalization and exception follows a left-to-right asymmetry. A *ceteris paribus* generalization can be drawn even if later on a subsequently acknowledged exception narrows the domain of that generalization retroactively, but if the salient exception comes first, the default generalization it apparently contradicts cannot be asserted.

The principles governing scalar implicatures are the subject matter of Huang’s chapter, dedicated to a very little investigated issue, marked scalar implicatures. Huang describes this type of implicature as dependent on the non-use of the semantically or informationally stronger alternatives that could have been used in the context (“some students got an A” instead of “all the students got an A”), which results in the negation of the (semantically, informationally) stronger option (“not all the students got an A”). However, this type of implicature fails to account for some inferences, called “non-canonical scalar implicatures” that the author exemplifies through excerpts from different languages. He observes that in some contexts “I like you” implies the stronger “I love you” in Chinese, a general noun (“person”) is used

in Malagasy to refer to the more specific (informational) speaker's husband, while in face-threatening contexts weaker expressions are used to imply stronger ones in Chinese, Japanese, and English. Huang explains such non-canonical scalar implicatures by introducing an epistemic dimension not only in the nature of the implicature, but also in the reasons governing its triggering. Thus, the choice of an alternative can be determined by either epistemic reasons, or non-epistemic ones (it would be impolite, indiscrete, unethical, immoral, and/or politically/ideologically incorrect to use a semantically stronger alternative), which leads to an implicature "from weak to stronger."

The third chapter addresses the disputed source of the default temporal interpretation of sentential *and* coordination ("Mary broke her leg and went to hospital"). The temporal meaning of conjunction is associated by various theories with different factors, including aspectual class of the connected eventualities, grammatical tenses, or Gricean implicatures. Jaszczolt and Sileo describe and compare critically the dominant views considering the factors leading to a temporal interpretation in a non-biased context, and the role that assumed scenarios and biasing contexts play in such a reading. By combining theoretical analyses with the results of five case studies, the authors propose an integrated perspective centered on the notion of eventhood and the degrees thereof.

The theoretical linguistic analyses proposed in the first three papers are followed by three contributions that investigate different aspects of emotive meaning, each taking into account a specific communicative context. Macagno and Rossi introduce this thematic section by addressing the notion of emotive meaning from an argumentation theory perspective. They propose an inferential approach to this phenomenon, where the "expressive force" of "loaded" or "emotive" words such as slurs, pejorative words, or ethical terms is conceived as a defeasible and automatic or automatized evaluative and intended inference commonly associated with their use. Such inferences are described and distinguished through argumentation schemes (Walton, Reed, & Macagno, 2008), representations of the common forms of natural inference. The automatic evaluative inferences are shown to be aspects of the connotation of such loaded terms, which can be modified and manipulated by recontextualization strategies. Through the analysis of the past US presidential campaign, the authors bring to light the relationship between emotive meaning, inferences, and contexts of use.

In the following chapter, Allan, Benczes, and Burrige map the evaluative inferences and the stereotypes associated with the nominal phrases that describe ageing in Australia. By running an online survey, the authors analyze the common associations triggered by the use of the NP "seniors," "older people," "old people," "oldies," and "the elderly." They highlight how, while the first two expressions lead to positive inferences, related to positive personal characteristics of health, experience, and wisdom, the referents of "old people" and "oldies" are not described in an evaluative way. Finally, "the elderly" is found to carry negative stereotypes connected to frail health or incompetence.

The last contribution in this thematic section concerns the existence and the development of slurs and pejoratives in artificial auxiliary languages. Libert

observes that slurs can be hardly expected to exist in such languages, which were artificially created to facilitate international communication. The author argues that auxiliary languages were not designed to insult (on the contrary, they were thought to prevent impoliteness); moreover, the expressive force of a pejorative would be a coded component thereof (bad-x), which would defuse its derogatory effect. However, this chapter provides some clear examples of slurs and pejoratives drawn from Esperanto corpora, which suggests that the use of a language for human communication naturally results in the expression of human behavior, which includes verbal aggression and attacks.

The relationship between pragmatics and human behavior (and conversational settings) becomes predominant in the last section of the volume, which collects papers in which pragmatics is regarded as an instrument for analyzing a specific context and human activity. The seventh chapter, “Pragmemes at the marketplace,” develops this transition from theoretical advances to empirical analyses. Capone builds on the theory of pragmemes, or “culturally situated speech acts” (Mey, 2001, 2016), to capture not only the illocutionary force of utterances expressed in a specific context, but higher order communicative intentions that presuppose communicative competence, and cultural and textual habits and rules. Capone observes that at the marketplace different types of pragmemes can be found, each characterized by a mix of poetic, conative, argumentative, and phatic functions. The author points out how the understanding of the communicative intention expressed by a pragme requires pragmatic competence that involves an accurate knowledge of the context, background assumptions, and ethical norms. By describing the specific pragme “selling fish at the marketplace,” he illustrates these complex interrelations in its different manifestations.

The use of pragmatic instruments for accounting for linguistic strategies in specific conversational settings is the purpose of Chaemsaitong’s chapter, in which he provides a corpus-based study on the use of self-reference pronouns in the penalty phase of capital trials. The author regards self-reference as a persuasive instrument through which the speaker can manipulate the conversational situation, involving other actors (primarily the jurors) in his or her viewpoint or dissociating themselves from a certain group. For example, in closing statements, defense attorneys tend to use more the personal pronoun “we” than “I,” both considering their absolute frequencies and the relative ones (compared to the prosecution). On this view, pronouns become instruments for framing jurors’ perceptions, creating solidarity with or distance from the defendant and signal or foreground differences.

Pragmatics, and in particular the relationship between deixis and perception in schizophrenic discourse, is the focus of van Schuppen, Sanders and van Krieken’s paper. The basic assumption is that language provides an instrument for understanding how the self, the other, and the world are experienced by the people diagnosed with this disorder. By analyzing the markers of perspective-taking in schizophrenic patients’ narratives, the authors investigate the nature and complexity of their perspectivization issues. Through a model for the analysis of perspective in conversational discourse called “Deictic Navigation Network,” the authors capture how the use of tense shifts, spatial deixis, and speech and thought reports constructs the

speakers' projections of themselves and the others in the narrative domain. The study of a corpus based on this methodology shows how people affected by schizophrenia tend to fail to signal through their language that they acknowledge the hearer's separate and different perspective (implying a difficulty to recognize the others as bearers of independent viewpoints), and to maintain viewpoint stability, separating between viewpoints anchored in different domains.

The linguistic strategies for creating perlocutionary effects in literary texts for children are the focus of Tsapiv's contribution. Her starting point is the assumption that a specific perlocutionary effect can be produced through a definite narrative strategy, developed at the lexical, grammatical, semiotic, and narrative level. In this chapter, the author shows how different effects are pursued through different types of narratives and metaphors.

The last chapter in this twofold collection of essays is devoted to one of the frontiers of pragmatics, multimodal film analysis, situating the discussion and analysis of classical philosophical issues within the study of a very specific communicative activity. In "When both utterances and appearances are deceptive: Deception in multimodal film narrative," Dynel takes into account a classical philosophical topic frequently discussed in pragmatics and linguistics, lying and deception (Meibauer, 2014). However, deception becomes an artistic phenomenon in movies, which needs to be analyzing considering not only the verbal and pragmatic dimension, but also non-verbal communication, multimodal analysis, and studies of fictional narrative. The author proposes an eclectic approach to this multidisciplinary and multifaceted phenomenon, showing how deception is the result not only of the characters' messages (verbal and not verbal), but also of the production crew (constricting a fictional world that invites false make beliefs in viewers), the intradiegetic narrator that reports on the characters' interactions, and the interaction between the extradiegetic and the intradiegetic narrator. Through the analysis of multimodal deceptions in some episodes of Dr. House and Hitchcock's *Stage Fright*, the author discusses the philosophical distinction between covert ambiguity and deceptively withholding information, and the relationship between objective facts and individual mental experiences.

This journey in two volumes from philosophical approaches to pragmatics to its new frontiers illustrate the many directions and methods that characterize this field of study, each characterized by a different role of and focus on the context, and a different conception of the context itself. Thus, the conditions, the constraints, and the regularities of the language in use become methods for studying how language is used and what its use in specific circumstances can tell us.

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