

Pragmatics and Philosophy: In Search of a Paradigm¹

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1. Introduction: Questions, Paradigms and Methods

1.1. Philosophy and Pragmatics: Explanans and Explanandum

‘Why pragmatics matters for philosophy’ is not a difficult question to answer: just as *philosophical logic* applies methods of formal logic to the analysis of philosophical problems such as reference, existence, truth, modality, quantification, and so forth, the label *philosophical pragmatics*, by analogy, is often used for those approaches that use the findings about how natural language is used in conversation to address such philosophical questions. The pertinent labels are, however, not used consistently, so in an exposition of the mutual relevance of pragmatics and philosophy, where the question ‘Why philosophy matters to pragmatics’ also has to be answered, they require some attention.

We can also try this: Since formal languages have their syntax and semantics, there is *philosophical semantics* subsumed under *philosophical logic*. But next, arguably, allowing for indexical language systems that work just like formal languages of logic do, we can extend *philosophical logic* to encompass *philosophical pragmatics*.² On the other hand, reverting to our initial definition, philosophical pragmatics can encompass those approaches to the philosophical questions listed above (and many others) that investigate the use of

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² Cf. ‘...the investigation of indexical languages and the erection of indexical language-systems are urgent tasks for contemporary logicians. May I add, for the sake of classificatory clarity, that the former task belongs to *descriptive pragmatics* and the latter to *pure pragmatics* (in one of the many senses of the expression)?’ Bar-Hillel 1954, quoted in Korta and Perry (2015: 26).

natural language. The choices we make here affect philosophical semantics too: remembering that natural languages also have their syntax and semantics, we face the question as to whether *natural language semantics* ought to be analysed on a par with the semantics of formal systems. If the answer is ‘no’, then *philosophical semantics* can mean something different altogether: addressing philosophical questions by solving the questions pertaining to the meaning of natural language sentences in a way that is specific to the task at hand. In short, the label *philosophical pragmatics*, just like *philosophical semantics*, is up for grabs, its use depending on the foundational theoretical assumptions one adopts concerning the utility of the analysis of formal systems for the analysis of natural language systems.

The next terminological complication comes from the label *linguistic philosophy*. According to the advocates of linguistic philosophy, philosophical problems were deemed to be solvable through a better understanding of how language works. So, here the labelling convention breaks down: we could in principle have ‘syntactic’ or ‘semantic’ philosophy by analogy, although perhaps not ‘pragmatic’ philosophy due to the specific understanding of the relation between semantics and pragmatics at the time when linguistic philosophy flourished, and, on the other hand, due to the fact that ‘pragmatic’ philosophy would confuse linguistic pragmatics with the philosophical movement of pragmatism.

Next, if we were to continue with the label of *linguistic philosophy* beyond its days of glory, we would have to include pragmatics too; how language works is revealed to us as much by using formal methods as by understanding language use. But then, the latter has become – historically, and from the current vantage point – an antidote to the first in the form of *ordinary language philosophy*. In this context, *philosophical pragmatics* would on this reasoning be a label for a study of philosophical problems by means of studying how language is used where ‘language’ means unreservedly only natural language as used in human communication. These seem to be the main theoretical possibilities of employing the term *philosophical pragmatics* in conjunction with either formal or ordinary-language paradigms in linguistic research.

A terminological disclaimer is in order here. In what follows, I employ the term ‘paradigm’ more in a sense of a general ‘orientation’ or ‘adopted tendency’ than in the strong sense promoted by Kuhn’s (1962) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. This loosening is, in my view, necessitated by the focusing on language sciences. I mean by a paradigm a set of theories that share main philosophical assumptions and methodological tools, such as for example (i) cognitivism with its assumed (i.a) subjectivism about human concepts and its method of constructing (i.b) mental models – where both the assumption and the method

subsume a range of specific different theories and constructs such as for example *cognitive semantics* with its *idealized cognitive models*, or (ii) formal semantics, with its assumed (ii.a) objectivism and the method employing (ii.b) truth conditions, possible worlds and models understood as formal equivalents of these worlds. Just as Kuhnian paradigms correspond to periods of normal science separated by scientific revolutions, my language-science-driven paradigms correspond to periods of normal science (normal development of an orientation) followed by a scientific revolution. Cognitivists' reaction to truth-conditional semantics on the dimensions of (i.a-i.b) and (ii.a-ii.b) above is an example, and so is Chomskyan revolution in the understanding of grammar. But while Kuhn emphasises the incommensurability of paradigms on the dimensions of methods, observation (world view), and theoretical terms, in what follows I stress the importance of the possibility of, so to speak, 'positively eclectic' paradigms. For such a construal it will be essential that a paradigm can draw on aspects of extant rival paradigms. Put simply, on this construal, for example, the next generation of cognitive semantics can make use of truth conditions as its tool, as long as some relevant assumptions are adjusted.³

Returning to the topic of pragmatics and philosophy, *philosophical pragmatics*, defined as above, where the objectives are provided by philosophy and methods by language analysis, does not yet exhaust our field of enquiry which is the mutual relevance of pragmatics and philosophy. We have to address the outstanding question of the relevance of philosophy for pragmatic theory. To do so, we have to move one level up, to defining and delimiting *pragmatic theory* itself. *Pragmatic theory* concerns itself with theories and generalizations about language use, aiming at a satisfactory level of explanatory adequacy and predictive power. It also has to address the question of universalism and cross-cultural variation and either limit its explanations to particular natural languages in their particular sociocultural context, or embrace universalism about discourse meaning. Theories of linguistic politeness or irony are good examples of the necessity of such choices. Next, philosophy comes in the form of metaphysical, epistemological, or ethical considerations, or in the form of *philosophy of language* – or a combination of thereof, like, for example, in the case of metaethics where philosophy of language and ethics meet. An example of such an enquiry would be defining and delimiting lying, asking such questions as its differentiation

³ This weakening of the concept of a paradigm may appear contentious but ample research on the essence of, for example, Chomskyan revolution, demonstrates its utility. Thank you to an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out.

from misleading and the significance of the intention to deceive as pursued in Saul (2012). In what follows, I shall not venture into the associations with metaphysics, epistemology and ethics as these are tangential to pragmatic theory itself. Next, *philosophy of language*, in spite of being a core player here, is not a useful category in our pursuit of the ‘pragmatics vis-a-vis philosophy’ question in that the way in which it is defined testifies to the fragmentation, eclecticism and also a degree of arbitrariness with which the term is applied. In the most general terms, it concerns itself with problems and puzzles about meaning, such as how reference in language works, whether natural languages have compositional semantics, how truth and meaning are related as their mutual explanantia, what uses acts of communication can be put to and how, or whether the literal/nonliteral distinction is sufficiently well theoretically and empirically motivated. All these are questions about the devices of the language system that can be put to use in discourse. However, here the chase takes us back to the beginning. As such, *philosophy of language* naturally evolves into *philosophical semantics* on the one hand, where these questions guide, say, formal semantic theories, and *philosophical pragmatics* on the other, where such questions guide theories of language use. (To repeat, philosophical logic remains in the picture as long as, and to the extent that, philosophical natural language semantics remains parallel to philosophical semantics of formal languages of logic.)

On the other hand, arguably, understanding how natural language is used *leads* not only to better understanding of philosophical concepts such as reference, existence, quantification, or modality, but it also *makes use* of the understanding of these. In a nutshell, to use a simpler analogy, just as philosophers use meaning to understand truth, linguists use truth to understand meaning. It follows that when discussing prospects and problems for ‘pragmatics and philosophy’, one has to take each of them as an explanans as well as an explanandum for the other. The interrelation between pragmatics and philosophy understood in this way, as symmetrical and bi-directional, is the topic of what follows. At the same time, bearing these relations in mind, I shall approach the interrelation from the perspective of the interests of a *philosopher of language* rather than, say, a linguistic philosopher. That is to say, I shall focus on the nature of meaning in language use for the sake of understanding language use itself, as opposed to using it as a tool for achieving some other aims. As such, now making full use of the liberal label ‘philosophy of language’, I define *theoretical pragmatics* as a branch of (broadly understood, as above) philosophy of language: an enquiry into the nature of meaning in natural language discourse, its dependence on context, and its relation to the mind on the one hand, and the world on the other. It subsumes philosophical pragmatics,

in principle on both of its senses identified here, but it also allows for the opposite direction in defining the objects and the methods. To recap, since *philosophical pragmatics* is an already reserved term (and so is, as goes without saying, *pragmatic philosophy*), and *philosophy of pragmatics* means an enterprise of a higher level, as part of *metapragmatics*, none of these extant labels can be adopted to pursue my title question. Instead, what we need is *theoretical pragmatics* seen from the perspective of the goals of *philosophy of language* at large.⁴ Such a construct will then allow us to capture the bi-directional relation between pragmatics and philosophy.

In what follows I shall use the label *pragmatics_{PPL}* as an abbreviation for theoretical pragmatics (P) as a branch of philosophy of language (PL) that concerns itself with meaning in natural language discourse and its relation to the mind and the world. I am aware that labels such as ‘post-Gricean pragmatics’ or ‘Anglo-American pragmatics’, or even ‘classical pragmatics’ (Korta and Perry 2015) have been applied to cover a similar range of questions, as distinguished from, say, ‘continental (European) pragmatics’, ‘empirical pragmatics’, or ‘sociopragmatics’, but none of these applies to the entirety of the domain I want to cover. I discuss some current seminal problems addressed within *pragmatics_{PPL}* and assess emerging future prospects.

1.2. Problems and Questions

Towards the approaching end of the second decade of the 21st century it is time to attempt to address future prospects of the trends in the philosophy of language that about seventy years ago gave foundations to what we can now call theoretical pragmatics – or, as above, *pragmatics_{PPL}*. On the one hand, ordinary language philosophy pushed the boundaries of the understanding of meaning and language beyond those set out by adopting, and adapting, the analyses of formal languages of logic, and on the other, modern formal, truth-conditional analyses pushed the boundaries towards (and beyond) recognising (i) the dynamic nature of natural language meaning and (ii) the essential and ineliminable role of context. As a result, we have been privy to the progressing contextualism that was fuelled, in its early phase, on

⁴*Philosophy of pragmatics* can be defined by analogy to *philosophy of linguistics*: ‘Philosophy of linguistics is the philosophy of science as applied to linguistics. This differentiates it sharply from the philosophy of language, traditionally concerned with matters of meaning and reference.’ Scholz (2011: 1). On *philosophy of language vs. linguistic philosophy vs. philosophy of linguistics* see also Jaszczolt 2015.

the one hand by late Wittgenstein's, Austin's and Searle's preoccupation with language use, and on the other by the various attempts to save truth-conditional semantics by Grice, the post-Griceans (Atlas, Kempson, Horn, Levinson, Recanati, Sperber, Wilson, Carston, Jaszczolt, among others), and representatives of dynamic approaches to meaning (Kamp, Groenendijk and Stokhof, and more recently Asher, Zeevat, Dekker, Aloni, among others). In the remainder of the paper I address three main questions that I consider to be of particular interest for the state of the art of pragmatics_{PPL}:

- [1] How is pragmatics_{PPL} to be delimited?
 - [2] How do pragmatic solutions to questions about meaning fare vis-à-vis syntactic solutions? Is there a pattern emerging?
- and, relatedly,
- [3] What are the future prospects for pragmatics_{PPL} in theories of natural language meaning?

Only having addressed these, and some other, questions, can we ask questions about comparisons with other paradigms and methods such as why the study of meaning in language use has not gone the whole hog to constitute part of empirical science and employ experimental, big-data-driven, neuroimaging-driven or other strictly scientific methods. The answers to [1]-[3] that we give in Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 3 secure an important place both for (a) philosophical argumentation as a method and for (b) philosophy of language use as a subject matter: the first in pragmatics proper and the latter in metapragmatics.

2. The Provenance of Meaning: Putting Language in Its Place

2.1. The Semantics of Acts of Communication?

'Meaning is what essence becomes when it is divorced from the object of reference and wedded to the word', as Quine (1951: 40) famously said in his 'Two dogmas of empiricism', invoking Aristotle's idea of essences of things. Essences belong with things, while meanings belong with linguistic expressions. By the end of this section I will have argued that not only does meaning have to be divorced from the word and wedded back to the world, but it also has to be bigamously wedded to the mind. Neither marriage will, however, be based on trust and faithfulness. In other words, if we are to harness meaning, the meaning we want to

pursue is not only *not* the meaning of words or sentences as formal semanticists have it, but it is not the meaning of speech acts either. It is a kind of meaning sought on the level of mental states and, derivatively, acts of communication. On this level, the direct/indirect distinction plays absolutely no role, and neither does the distinction between what is conveyed by linguistic and what by non-linguistic means. More directly, I will end up advocating yet another unorthodox wedding: that of the formal methods of truth-conditional semantics with the object of study of cognitive linguistics. The role of context in such a merger goes far beyond that assumed, for example, in post-Gricean contextualism or in dynamic semantics: pragmatics does not *intrude* in truth conditions but *dictates* truth conditions. The main reason (and the main premise of the argument at the same time) is that the composition of meaning takes place on the level of mental acts as constituent parts of, or at least inseparable aspects of, acts of communication and only derivatively applies to natural-language sentences. What follows is that the logical form of sentences ought not to be regarded as the starting point of the enquiry about meaning, to which we then add enrichments, modulations, and implicatures, but rather as one of its end-points: natural language constructions inherit some remnants of compositionality but, as intensional contexts best demonstrate, they do not exhibit it properly and *en masse* – unless we force them to do so by theoretical tricks, adding to natural language semantics some constituents or postulates that have no good independent justification.⁵

First, one of the fundamental questions for any theory of meaning is the selection and delimitation of its object of study. There has been a lot of confusion in the history of the philosophy of language, probably best exemplified in endless discussions on the meaning of intensional constructions such as propositional attitude reports, over the selection of the correct object of analysis: a (Russellian) sentence, a (Strawsonian) statement, a (Gricean, among others) utterance, a (post-Gricean, among others) mental state, or even, more recently, an aspect of the sentence that constitutes the *question under discussion* (QUD, e.g. Roberts 2004, and independently for propositional attitudes, and founded on Goodman's aboutness, Atlas 2016).⁶ As Atlas (2016: 14) aptly points out, '[i]t will help little to formalize our

⁵ See, for example, various versions of unarticulated constituents, hidden indexicals, modes of presentation, variadic function, functional categories for contextual restriction, and other theoretical constructs. Details of the corresponding theories are not relevant for my current purpose.

⁶ The relation between the phenomenological concept of intentionality (aboutness) and discursive aboutness captured by QUD is reminiscent of Searle's double level of intentionality. According to Searle (1983: 27-28; 165-166), the mind imposes on linguistic expressions the property of being *about* something. So, speech acts

ordinary psychological language, if one is formalizing a misunderstanding of the relationship between THE LANGUAGE of the psychological attributions and THE MENTAL CONTENTS of the psychological states as conceived in our ordinary conceptual scheme'. Formalizing the understanding of intensional contexts achieves neither the aim of giving the formal semantics of sentences nor the aim of formalizing the meaning of intended messages.

Now, if the truth-conditional theory of meaning we are interested in is a theory of *discourse meaning*, then, arguably, what we model is the mental state that is expressed through a language but also through a context, in a given situation of discourse, with its common ground for conveying the message in precisely the form in which it was conveyed. Arguably, the theory of discourse meaning we need here is to be dynamic in the sense called by Rothschild and Yalcin (2016) 'compositional dynamicness': semantic values of sentences are context-change potentials. The composition of meaning is dynamic: a state in a conversation is mapped onto a new state when context changes – the fact that has its parallel in the incremental nature of discourse interpretation and that gave foundation to pragmatics-rich approaches to discourse meaning in which semantic values of sentences are such context-change potentials. Here we have (i) Discourse Representation Theory (DRT, Kamp and Reyle 1993) and its derivatives such as Asher and Lascarides' (2003) Segmented Discourse Representation Theory (SDRT), or, with non-sentential compositionality, Jaszczolt's (2005) Default Semantics (DS); (ii) File-Change Semantics (Heim 1988); and (iii) Dynamic Predicate Logic (DPL, Groenendijk and Stokhof 1991).

Rothschild and Yalcin stress that formalizing pragmatics can also be achieved through different understanding of dynamicness where the mapping from sentences to context-change potentials requires two-dimensional but static semantics: semantics provides a propositional concept that is then 'made into' a proposition with the help of a context. This is captured in Stalnaker's (1978) idea of assertion or Kaplan's (1989) character/content distinction. We will not go into detail of what dynamicness can mean in various attempts to formalize pragmatics. Suffice it to say that since the late 1970s there have been many different theories proposed whose aim was to arrive at a formal theory of meaning of discourse that would account for such thorny phenomena as indexical resolution, cross-sentential anaphora, cross-sentential

have intentionality that is *derived* from their mental correlates which have it *intrinsically*. Alternatively, Jaszczolt (1999: 104-111) argues that the traditional Husserlian (Husserl 1900-01) view of intentionality is to be preferred, according to which there is only one level of intentionality; linguistic expressions are vehicles through which mental acts can be externalised and as such they share their intentionality. The information structure on which QUD-based semantics is founded takes aboutness one step further.

bridging, or presupposition and presupposition projection. There have also been different views since then on the need for representationalism.⁷ When we add to this various kinds of modification of sentence meaning that have to be accounted for before we reach the intended speaker meaning, the scope of formalization of pragmatics becomes complete: we move from sentences (and in reality, often sentential fragments that cannot be handled as syntactic ellipsis⁸) to primary intended speech acts with their all-important illocutionary forces. In short, not much hinges on the preference for a particular style of dynamicness: what matters is the fact that pragmatics is crucial to formal representations of meaning and as such ought to advocate mental states as the proper object of analysis and lead to semantic representations that have the status of mental representations.

In order to model mental states, however, one has to *start* with mental states and look for various ways in which they are externalised in discourse. To repeat, starting with a sentence and enhancing its logical form with contextually derived adornments, known in the literature as enrichment, fleshing out, development of the logical form, modulation, and so forth, will not produce the required results because not all information contributed by such sources pertains to such adornments of the logical form. In fact, bearing in mind the cross-culturally attested human propensity to speak indirectly, traced to a variety of reasons discussed at length in sociopragmatics, such adornments rarely suffice.

Default Semantics (Jaszczolt 2005, 2010), which has been developed by a group of researchers in Cambridge since the 1990s, is a dynamic semantic theory that models such *primary intended meaning*. Primary meaning is understood there as the main message intended by a model speaker and recovered by a model addressee, and as such it can correspond to the meaning of the sentence, the meaning of the sentence enhanced with information from context, or, very often, some other intended proposition conveyed indirectly. In search for primary meaning, discourse interactants employ various sources of information and various corresponding processes of interpretation that are available to them. So, Default Semantics does not model the meaning of sentences, neither does it model the

⁷ Cf. 'If any two syntactically distinct expressions are associated with the same (independently specified) meaning, and, yet, play a different role in the explanation of certain semantic facts, then the explanation of these facts is (strongly) representational.' Dekker (2000: 295).

⁸ For pragmatic accounts of sentence fragments see e.g. Stainton 2006; Savva 2017.

meaning of sentences in context. It models the main meaning that is conveyed jointly by the available linguistic and non-linguistic devices.⁹ It is a semantics of acts of communication.

Functionalism of this kind seems to be currently ‘in the air’. For example, the move away from sentences also affects semantics in generative grammar. Schiffer (2015) asks a highly theory-driven question that is pertinent for us for reasons that are not theory-driven. He asks what semantic theory would have to be like to constitute the semantic component of a generative grammar – all on the assumption that generative grammar is required to understand a sentence of a natural language in that it generates syntactic structures for that sentence, together with a phonological and semantic interpretation. Different versions of Chomsky’s program put it somewhat differently, but the gist is this: semantics, if at all discernible, must be internal to grammar.

First, Montague model-theoretic, truth-conditional, possible-worlds semantics is rejected as a candidate because ‘[t]rying to theorize about sentence meaning without considering the very intimate connection between sentence-meaning and speaker-meaning is like trying to understand the properties of a hammer without knowing what hammers are for’ (Schiffer 2015: 75). This analogy, reminiscent of Chomsky (2013), is well justified even in the context of the new developments in the Montagovian program. Although problems with first-person reference or with speaker’s lack of knowledge for property-assignment mentioned by Schiffer can in fact both be solved in, so to speak, ‘pragmatics within semantics’ that more recent Montagovian semantic theories allow, theories such as DRT or SDRT do not move far beyond what we called above sentence enhancement in that sentence meaning ‘constrains’ speaker meaning and as such constitutes the matrix on which semantic representations are founded, allowing for the addition of reference resolution or presuppositions to this matrix.

But what this shows is that one has to go even further. Semantics cannot be understood as syntax-internal, as on Schiffer’s Chomskyan assumption, neither can it mirror

⁹Ariel (e.g. 2002, 2016; Sternau et al. 2015) adopts a similar unit of enquiry, likens it to the DS-theoretic *primary meaning*, but calls it a *privileged interactional interpretation*. Differences, such as her claim that explicit meanings enjoy greater prominence (Ariel 2016: 1, 4), not supported by the DS-theoretic enquiries (see e.g. Jaszczolt 2005, 2010, 2016 on the importance and associated frequency of communicating indirectly) are tangential to our current concern. Suffice it to say that the difference may be associated with the fact that a *privileged interactional interpretation* is not a normative construct (see Ariel 2016, fn 20). On the other hand, intuitively, the lack of its normative status ought to strengthen, not weaken, the flexibility of admitting indirect meanings as primary. But, as I said, this is a topic for another occasion.

syntax, as in the Montagovian program. It needs to be not only dynamic à la DRT but also take a further big step in the direction of speech acts by modelling the primary meaning of such speech acts, independently of its relation to the logical form of the sentence and the degree of influence that indexical resolution, proposition completion, unconstrained contextual modification (a.k.a. expansion, development of the logical form, enrichment, modulation, and so forth – what we earlier called ‘enhancement’), and other context-driven processes may exert. It can still make use of model theory, possible worlds and truth conditions in that, arguably, these are the most effective tools to date to represent meaning, but it has to do so on the level of the mental representations associated with the speech act, at the same time founded on the effect this speech act is intended to have on reality (or, what Searle and Vanderveken (1985) popularised as a ‘direction of fit’). Default Semantics briefly introduced above is one such theory. So, when Schiffer tentatively proposes that the ‘best bet’ for generative grammar is a semantics of the speech-act-based content, this semantics is in fact already there. In addition, it is in fact founded on the dynamic approaches that have been advanced since the 1990s that avail themselves of the Montagovian tools of possible worlds, truth conditions and models.

All that is needed to take this final necessary step towards speech acts is overruling the syntactic constraint so that primary, but at the same time indirectly communicated, meaning could be represented on a par with directly communicated primary meaning. As various analyses in Default Semantics testify, the step is not as awesome as it may seem. And it is even simpler to implement as we strip the argument of the theoretical burden of immersing semantics in generative grammar and ask instead a (largely) theoretically unconstrained question: What would semantics have to be like to fit the requirement of being a theory that explains the meaning of natural language sentences? Or, even better: What would semantics have to be like to fit the requirement of being a theory that explains meaning in natural language? Here we free the theory of meaning from the concomitant of the syntactic constraint, namely adopting the sentence as the unit of analysis of meaning. More importantly still, we don’t even have to move from types to tokens to do that: utterances themselves become types when associated with situation types. We analyse them in conjunction with other sources of information in discourse and afford such a merger with a compositional semantics. Or, even better still: we opt for strings of utterances that constitute discourses. This is an achievable goal when we introduce instead a different restriction, namely that a theory of meaning ought to concern itself only with rational, generalizable conversational behaviour, where background assumptions are sufficiently well calibrated to

allow for the correct recovery of the intended meaning –within the bounds of what matters for communication to continue. This Gricean assumption is necessary for the theory to be compositional and normative; to have predictive power.

Needless to say, the radical contextualist program so understood, where by ‘radical’ we mean, somewhat non-standardsly, a radical, function-driven departure from the syntax-driven theory of meaning, by definition denies the need for generalizations founded on units of the language system.¹⁰ To illustrate, let us consider Schiffer (2015: 78) again:

‘...to know the meaning of a sentence σ is for there to be a type of speech-act A and a form of content Ψ such that one knows that in a literal and unembedded utterance of σ the speaker is performing an act of kind A whose content is of form Ψ .’

To repeat, this proposal takes us some way towards a speech-act based compositional theory of meaning but it does not take us sufficiently far. It smacks of a resurrection of the performative hypothesis where a lot of faith was placed in generalizing over expression types in the hope of finding an adequate typology of speech acts on the one hand, and a reliable form-illocutionary force correlation on the other, extending even to the rather ill-conceived project of the search for a force-based classification of the English verbs.¹¹ Sentences are not mapped onto such speech-act types; it is an illusion and wishful thinking based on made-up and largely context-free examples that inadvertently make one purport that they do exhibit such a mapping. Instead of the search for this will-o'-the-wisp, it is more empirically justified, and theoretically powerful, to embrace compositionality on the level of the merger of information coming from all available linguistic and non-linguistic sources and model speech acts as they function in such mergers – with due prominence given to the universal human propensity to communicate indirectly. It is an all too well entrenched and all too long endured myth that semantic representation has to be controlled by the syntactic representation of the sentence: the meaning of the speech act relies on the syntactic form of its sentence but it need not be hampered by it. It relies on it just like climbing may rely on a ladder – a tool that we can discard when we get to the top (unless one is a grammarian who wants to get down again).

¹⁰ ‘Radical’ is a gradable qualifier. The label ‘radical contextualism’ as used in Default Semantics and as adopted here refers to a version of contextualism that is more ‘radical’ in its departure from grammar-driven meaning than Recanati’s radical contextualism.

¹¹ The details of the particular views do not contribute to my current argument.

In other words, in the radically contextualist approach to meaning advocated here, compositionality is predicated of the level of conceptual structures (called in Default Semantics (Jaszczolt, e.g. 2005, 2010, 2016) merger representations. The approach has its roots in Recanati's (e.g. 2004) pragmatic, interactive compositionality but goes a little further beyond top-down modulation of the logical form of the sentence to primary intended meaning proper, irrespective of its relation to sentence structure. At present compositionality so conceived has the status of (i) a methodological assumption, arguably necessary for any theory of meaning (Groenendijk and Stokhof (1991) and, at best, (ii) an empirical assumption about human languages (Szabó 2000). It is still a task for future research to provide algorithms for meaning in discourse interaction – and it is not an easy task, considering the diversity of sources of information about meaning, the diversity of processes through which it is recovered (or even co-constructed in discourse), as well as the diversity of types of interaction of these processes. But the foundations are already there, and the core advantage speaks strongly in its favour: we no longer seek compositionality on the level of meaning which clearly does not exhibit it on its own, namely natural language structures, but assume it where it truly resides.¹²

2.2. Syntax, Pragmatics, or 'Hardly the Stuff of Theories'?

Arguably, most of the 'big questions' for pragmatics_{PPL} arise on the syntax-pragmatics boundary in that a phenomenon or construction whose meaning is in need of an explanation, such as quantifier domain restriction, scalar implicatures, propositional radicals (complete sentences that do not correspond to complete propositions, see Bach 1994), sentence fragments, adjective-noun combinations, predicate adicity, semantic effect of information structure, and many others, give rise to a search for solutions either in sentence structure or in language use. For example, quantifier domain restriction famously led to a proposal that a node in the sentence structure is 'co-habited' by a noun and some information from context (Stanley and Szabó 2000), but also to solutions from free (syntactically unconstrained)

¹² Compositionality 'kicked up', so to speak, to the level of such a merger is still conceived of as a recursive function of the meaning of its parts. The route to a formal account of such composition is through computational corpus linguistics or neuroimaging. What we have so far is the theoretical semantic foundation, proposing, to repeat, the types of sources, processes, and some insight into the composition process through a variable unit of analysis called 'fluid character' whose length is established in the dynamic process of meaning construction. See Jaszczolt 2005, 2010, or 2016 for details.

pragmatic enrichment (Recanati 1993). Subsentential speech triggered explanations in terms of syntactic ellipsis (Merchant 2004) but also pragmatic resolution (Stainton 2006), including a radical contextualist proposal within Default Semantics (Savva 2017).

The general picture that emerges seems to be that if one opts for a syntactic solution, one has to make two sacrifices. First, one has to complicate syntax by adding assumptions that often lack independent motivation. For example, the co-habitation of a nominal node by contextual information is stipulated via, so to speak, reasoning by elimination: we assume that this information has to be added somewhere in the structure, so let us add it where it raises the fewest objections and produces the least unwelcome effects. This is the argumentation advanced in Stanley and Szabó 2000. Next, in the case of sentence fragments, one can complicate the syntax by adding the missing and allegedly recoverable strings that are general and exactly the same for a given type of missing structure, as Merchant proposes. Next, and *a fortiori*, one has to restrict the universe to which these solutions apply. As Savva (2017) convincingly shows, the syntactic ellipsis approach leaves out a wide range of intuitively pertinent examples. Moreover, it does not attend to the fact that speakers often do not have any specific completion in mind.

This indeterminacy constitutes a powerful argument against formal syntactic explanations. Analogously, as Pupa (2015: 285) argues, formalizing quantifier domain restriction does not acknowledge the fact that ‘restrictions tend to be indeterminate to both speakers and hearers’. It is a matter for empirical testing as to whether this lack of precision is a common tendency or merely a fairly well attested occurrence, and whether it differs among such phenomena as quantifier domain, scalars, or sentence fragments (the obvious hypothesis would be that it does) but what matters here is that if indeterminacy is indeed the case, then perhaps *neither syntactic nor pragmatic generalizations* can yield appropriate solutions. As Pupa continues regarding quantifier domain restriction,

‘In the typical case, then, there seems to be no sense in positing principles that serve to deliver such restrictions. Indeed, the specification of the content of a restriction seems to be nothing more than *post hoc* reconstruction, which will vary across those doing the reconstructing. In this way, the phenomenon of quantifier domain restriction is not a matter of some entity – a null restrictor, a gap – and the value it receives in a particular context. **This is hardly the stuff of theories.**¹³ Pupa (2015: 285)

¹³My emphasis.

As he points out, negative facts are at least as important as positive facts. If we cannot account for the restrictions, we cannot posit a successful generalization. He concludes with a philosophical observation of a broader import:

‘Most theorists spend little time fretting over negative facts. In addition to this oversight, most theorists fail to notice a more basic explanatory obstacle, namely the indeterminacy of the positive facts. In the normal course of events, actual speakers don’t *intend* a particular restriction. When pressed, actual speakers are *unwilling or unable* to specify a particular restriction. When asked, actual speakers are *unlikely to assent* to the completions that theorists select on their behalf.’ Pupa (2015: 285)

Equally, we can add that the totality of the positive facts is at least as important as the selection of positive facts. If we have to carve an otherwise natural phenomenon to posit a generalization, then the generalization is not a theoretically interesting one. The latter claim applies not only to sentence fragments; it has a much wider import. For example, the solutions to the behaviour of the alleged scalar implicature range from syntactic, whereby it is the grammar that produces the desired enriched interpretation of the quantifier, say, (1b) of (1a), as long as the monotonicity of the construction is correct (Chierchia 2004), to pragmatic, whereby the enriched meaning is the result of a generalized conversational implicature and its derivative: a pragmatic scale (Grice 1975; Horn 1984; Levinson 2000).

- (1a) I have answered some of the questions about meaning.
- (1b) I have answered some but not all of the questions about meaning.

The unwelcome carving of the field is visible here from four different angles. First, not all contexts come with the preference for the scalar reading, in which case we would have to adopt a rather cumbersome explanation based on a costly cancellation of a reading that is produced but rejected (Levinson 2000; see Jaszczolt 2016 for criticism). Second, these readings arise locally and as such not really on the basis of the determiner or the quantifier noun phrase but often a unit of a different length (Geurts 2009, 2010; see Jaszczolt 2012a for flexible inferential bases). Third, speakers sometimes do not mean either the enriched (‘some but not all’) or the basic, logical (‘some and possibly all’) reading: they leave this aspect of

the content unspecified when precisification would be immaterial to the conversation at hand. Finally, the scales themselves can be viewed as constructed in the context— viz. Hirschberg’s (1985) acclaimed scales that are formed *ad hoc* for the context at hand, such as, say, the speaker’s subjective ranking of the value of films, prominence of movie stars, and so forth. This shows that the concept of a scale does not have to be carved off and delimited: what we refer to as a scalar implicature may in fact be better construed as part of an altogether different phenomenon.

All in all, it appears justified to entertain the possibility that scalar implicatures, just like quantifier domain restriction and completion of sentence fragments, are ‘hardly the stuff of theories’, to repeat Pupa’s apt phrase. Speech behaviour appears not to yield to theories, be it syntactic or pragmatic.

Or does it? If pragmatics_{PPL} is true to the definition of studying discourse meaning by studying the use of language in context, then two options are open: either (i) to say that linguistic generalizations cannot be made and nihilist conclusions à la Pupa are correct, or (ii) to admit that one ought to go beyond linguistic theories to theories of communication and be able to *predict* from the structure of the discourse whether pragmatic enhancement was intended. But this requires some reconceptualization – ‘wedding meaning to the world and the mind’, to misuse Quine’s metaphor discussed in Section 2.1. The traditional objects of study of philosophical semantics or pragmatics such as reference, quantification, modality, and so forth would have to be understood as phenomena pertaining *not* to natural language meaning but rather to human reasoning – human cognition and communication in which natural language (and its syntax) play a much smaller part than traditional truth-conditional semantics or pragmatics allow. Reference, counting, distancing ourselves from certain judgements through epistemic attitudes are what humans do and it is precisely on this level of *thinking* in such concepts that the theory of meaning should operate. So, we have to part company with Quine’s definition (with which, *nota bene*, he found profound albeit very different problems), whereby the Aristotelian ‘essence’ has to be divorced from the object and wedded to the word. Meaning is not wedded to the word, but neither is it wedded to the *use of the word* as ordinary language philosophers had it. It is properly placed in the act of cognition and as such also in the act of communication of thoughts, where cognition is achieved through a medley of inputs and communication with the help of a medley of resources. Reaching to this medley and finding compositionality there is an awe-inspiring but exciting task which we are only beginning to comprehend and appreciate.

3. Pragmatics_{SPP}L and Functionalism

An important corollary of ‘wedding meaning to the mind and to the world’ and as such of the adoption of the level on which information is collated (and, *ipso facto*, of the departure from the grammar-centred vision of meaning) is the flexibility with which one can approach categories. Relevant categories that emerge from such a picture of meaning will have little to do with the syntactically defined categories of quantifiers, indexicals, tense, aspect, modal verbs, and so forth. Instead, since on this radical contextualist picture expressions mean what the speaker, the context, and the very interaction of the sources on which the message relies will force them to mean, there is little point beginning with grammar-driven or even grammar-inspired classifications. To repeat the proposal from Section 2.1, the logical form, the output (or mirror image, depending on whom you follow) of the syntactic representation is one of the end-points of the composition of meaning rather than the start. In what follows I briefly present three examples of the consequences this view of meaning has on the delimitation of categories, in the domains of indexicality, modality, and temporality. I shall only flag these issues briefly, pointing to the sources in which they have been given a more extensive treatment.

3.1. Functional Indexicals

An indexical is ‘a linguistic expression whose reference can shift from context to context’ (Braun 2015: 1). Put in this way, it is not immediately obvious that this definition ought to result in a clear demarcation between what we have been given to understand as indexicals on the one hand, say, personal pronouns, adverbials such as ‘here’, ‘there’, ‘today’ or ‘tomorrow’, and non-indexicals, such as common nouns, on the other. This distinction is adopted in seminal semantic approaches that deal with context-sensitivity such as Kaplan’s (1989) and Stalnaker’s (1978) versions of two-dimensional semantics. Kaplan differentiates indexicals from non-indexicals by manipulating the categories of character (linguistic meaning, such as speaker or writer for ‘I’) and content (contextually fixed reference). Stalnaker proposes here to treat both contexts and contents as possible worlds that provide

input to a propositional concept.¹⁴ But the idea is analogous: the meaning results from the combination of who is referred to and whether the sentence is true of that referent. For theorists of this persuasion, there is a set of natural-language expressions, including most notably personal pronouns and demonstrative noun phrases, as well as several other categories more, or less, generously added depending on the stance, that behave in this manner (see e.g. Cappelen and Lepore’s (2005) ‘basic set’). However, several decades on, richer by a bulk of cross-linguistic empirical research, one grows more and more sceptical of the grammatical means of delimiting indexicality.

First, pronouns are not a clearly-cut class. Generic pronouns such as ‘one’ are often used for first-person reference, combining some other pragmatic functions such as politeness-triggered generalization (e.g. Moltmann 2010; Jaszczolt 2016, ch. 5). Languages with honorifics combine first-person reference with expressive content conveying deference, face anointment, situational propriety, and so forth. What using functional criteria we would call ‘pronouns’ constitute an open-ended class in these languages and, according to syntactic criteria, are categorised as referential nouns. Next, Kaplan’s criterion that indexicals fix their reference in the context of the current speech act (the so-called fixity thesis) does not work for some languages: there is growing evidence that in many languages the referent of ‘I’ can shift to reported contexts and even change reference within one single sentence, as in the Amharic example (2).

- (2) wändəmme käne gar albälamm alä
 my-brother “with-me I-will-not-eat”, he said
 My brother refused to eat with me.

(from Leslau 1995: 778; discussed in Jaszczolt 2016). The case of Amharic was brought to the fore of semantic theory by Schlenker 2003. Since then, a growing list of languages allowing such a shift of reference has been identified, including Navajo, Speas, Zazaki, Slave, Catalan Sign Language, Nez Perce, Matses, Turkish, and Uyghur (Shklovsky and Sudo 2014; Roberts 2014). Researchers keep finding new evidence of this shift, at least in a specified syntactic position, so continuing with the quest may prove a futile exercise; it may be best to

¹⁴A propositional concept is a matrix in which the horizontal axis represents arguments of the propositions expressed (functions from possible worlds to truth values) and the vertical axis represents context determining what is said – both understood as possible worlds. See Stalnaker (1978: 80-81 for an example).

bite the bullet and admit that Kaplan's fixity is an ethnocentric proposal, based solely on English, and does not universally hold. In fact, the label 'shift' is in itself inappropriate as it presupposes the default, fixed context type.

The future of pragmatics looks rather dim for such grammar-based categories and much brighter for functional ones. After all, I can refer to myself as 'mummy' when speaking to my daughter, 'your wife' when speaking to my husband, and 'the head of department' as in (3) when speaking to an employee, as well as 'yours truly, or 'muggins here', somewhat analogously to honorification.

- (3) There will be funding for this workshop, you have a promise from the head of department.¹⁵

In a similar vein, indexicals are increasingly analysed as anaphoric or presuppositional expressions instead (van der Sandt 1992, 2012; Zeevat 1999) and there is a growing emphasis on the similarities between definite descriptions, proper names and grammatical 'indexicals' in their reliance on context (Hunter 2013; Heller and Wolter 2014; Jaszczolt 2013, 2016). Heller and Wolter convincingly demonstrate that direct reference is not lexically determined but is instead a pragmatic phenomenon, sensitive to the source of information. Hunter rejects a qualitative semantic distinction between alleged 'indexicals' and proper names or definite descriptions. They do not belong to different categories as far as their employment of context is concerned but rather they all avail themselves of pragmatic binding (the term popularized by the view of presupposition as anaphora, or, more interestingly, anaphora as presupposition, by van der Sandt, Zeevat, Asher, Lascarides, and Hunter, among others) in their search for the referent. All in all, it appears yet again that in the contest between grammar and pragmatics for explanatorily adequate solutions, pragmatics comes up trumps.

3.2. Epistemic Modality and Speaker's Degrees of Commitment

Epistemic modals are expressions such as 'may', 'might', 'can', 'could', or epistemic 'should'. But, once again, delimiting the semantic category by means of specifying the list of items or constructions suffers from similar conceptual and methodological errors as other

¹⁵ For more examples and a discussion in terms of categories of speech acts see Jaszczolt and Witek, in press.

grammar-driven examples of reasoning about semantic phenomena. Epistemic modality means an expression of knowledge or belief and as such stands for a degree of certainty, or, alternatively, detachment, with which a proposition or statement is accepted by the speaker or some other agent. The gradability of the concept is itself the best indicator that strict lexical or grammatical categories will not be sufficiently finely grained for the purpose, and neither will they constitute an adequate point of departure. In addition to modal verbs, speakers use epistemic predicates such as ‘believe’, ‘doubt’, ‘know’, qualified predicates such as ‘strongly believe’ or ‘sincerely doubt’ (qualified for propositional content or for illocutionary force), constructions such as ‘it seems that’, ‘it appears that’, adjectives such as ‘alleged’ or ‘apparent’, or some more elaborate periphrastic ways of expressing commitment. Degrees of commitment start with strong (albeit lexically differentiated) assertoric force associated with unqualified declaratives¹⁶ and diminish with the use of hedges, subjunctive, conditional, and devices such as those mentioned above. Next, rhetorical questions also convey a form of commitment. Finally, the use of tenses can be manipulated for this purpose, for example choosing between simple present, present progressive and simple future for marking future-time reference – the first two called in this context ‘tenseless future’ and ‘futate progressive’.

Most importantly for the point we are making, epistemic modality, as a semantic concept, testifies to the necessity of adopting a discourse-based perspective to conveying commitment where lexical and syntactic means work on a par with context and co-text, intonation, and as such with pragmatic devices such as reliance on meanings derived through inference or as salient or default interpretations. Only in this way can we capture the gradability of commitment inherent in that concept. Cross-cultural studies further testify to the importance of the discourse-based perspective in that grammaticalization and lexicalization of epistemic modality, and even more so, the associated category of evidentiality, can differ significantly from culture to culture. It appears to be much more true to the facts of conversation to admit that there are possibly endless ways of conveying the

¹⁶I am trying to avoid the term ‘mood’ as is a notoriously ambiguous category: it can mean both a grammatical category that is realised as an inflectional variant of the verb (whereby ‘indicative’, vs., mainly, ‘subjunctive’, ‘imperative’) but also sentence type (whereby ‘declarative’ vs. ‘interrogative’, ‘imperative’). See e.g. Matthews 2014. I am interested in speech acts of assertion realised as a declarative sentence type.

degree (and type, if you subsume evidentiality under the category) of commitment than rest the case after looking at lexical items and constructions.^{17,18}

3.3. Temporal Reference and the Concept of Time

One only has to remember the fact that there are (superficially as well as inherently) tenseless languages, languages where expressing temporal reference is optional, and languages that exhibit time-tense mismatches (viz. tenseless future and futurate progressive in Section 3.2 above) in order to realise that temporal reference in discourse and grammatical tense are not as closely-knit as a cursory glance at the use of tenses in English might suggest. Temporal reference can be conveyed by the lexicon, for example adverbs such as ‘yesterday’, by constructions such as the prepositional phrase ‘on 4 April 2017’, or by grammatical categories such as tense and aspect. But it can also be left to pragmatic inference from context or, more likely, to a default interpretation in a given context. In other words, there is a trade-off between the lexicon, grammar and pragmatics in conveying temporal reference. There is an intra-linguistic as well as cross-linguistic trade-off in a sense that such qualitatively different means of referring to time can be available within one language, and, on the other hand, what one language expresses via grammar, another can express through the lexicon or through contextual clues.

It appears that just as modal verbs are not a justified starting point for analysing modality, tense is not a justified starting point for analysing temporal reference: other means are not exceptions but legitimate alternative devices. Attempts to fit temporal reference under the syntactic representation revealed two-pronged results: while it is possible to do so in the case of some languages by proposing a phonologically empty tense morpheme (see Matthewson 2006 on St’át’imcets), others appear to be genuinely tenseless and rely on context and temporal adverbials (see Tonhauser 2011 on Paraguayan Guaraní). It then appears that, as before, in the interest of not carving off parts of the phenomenon where no such carving off is to be recommended, pragmatic explanations come up trumps: temporality

¹⁷ I will not justify here my choice to associate epistemic modality with the category of evidentiality as it is tangential to my current concern. But see e.g. van der Auwera and Plungian 1998 or Nuyts 2006.

¹⁸ I discussed the pragmatic approach to modality and temporality at length in publications dedicated to these purposes. See e.g. Jaszczolt 2009 – a monograph-length defence of temporality as supervenient on epistemic modality, where modality is itself a discursive category, and Jaszczolt 2012b on the lexicon-grammar-pragmatics trade-offs.

is to be gleaned from co-text and context, and expressed with whatever devices, including appropriate gestures, invoking the culturally accepted shape and direction of the timeline, are available and appropriate for the context at hand. Needless to say, pragmatics is then invoked again when the primary intent of such indexical, modal, or temporal constructions is to be recovered.

4. Two Crucial Steps

It appears that since the phenomenon of divorcing the primary intended message from the structure of the uttered sentence is so all-pervasive, then drawing any boundary that would emphasise the direct/indirect or explicit/implicit distinction is misguided from the start in that it reinforces a false impression of the object of study of meaning – the impression inculcated in linguists by the methods inherited from logicians and mathematicians. Interestingly, speech act theorists are victims of this inheritance as much as formal semanticists are by taking *speech act types* as their object of analysis – acts that are still far too closely tied to the uttered sentence as a unit of analysis and to its corollary: the faith in the utility of the direct/indirect distinction. But if instead we think of language as only one of many ways in which our objects of interest, namely reference, quantification, modality, and so forth, are externalized, we are forced to move one level up to human cognition and look for meaning there. Just as Evans and Levinson (2009) and Everett (2008, 2012), among a growing number of other anthropological linguists, find universals of meaning (such as recursion) on the level of human cognition and communication, so we have to seek the answers for pragmatics_{PPL} on the level of human cognition and communication. Languages display recursion in storytelling and in the structure of conversational turns even when their syntax appears to lack it. The answers to big questions of pragmatics_{PPL} lie in the organization of discourses. And, conversely, when we seek answers to how the structure and meaning of discourses are organized, we encounter generalizations that constitute the object of study of pragmatics_{PPL}. In other words, discourse meaning is here an explanans as well as an explanandum.

Furthermore, we have to take one more important step and establish the meaning of acts of communication, as distinguished from speech act types, as the object of study, and by the same token as the object of semantic analysis. To repeat, compositional semantics built on the level of merging information from various linguistic and non-linguistic sources, combined

with our radical understanding of contextualism¹⁹ allows us to do it. Such semantics retains the tools of the most successful formal approaches to meaning, namely truth conditions, possible worlds and models but ‘kicks them up’, so to speak, to the level of cognition. Default Semantics is such a cognitive, truth-conditional, dynamic, discourse-based semantics.

Cognitive linguistics embraced one aspect of the relevant paradigm shift several decades ago. But what they have not embraced is the fact that moving one level up, so to speak, to only partially language-guided reasoning, does not require a radical rejection of well-attested methods. We can still be interested in how the composition of meaning can be worked out by formal methods, and we are still interested in formally representing such meaning using an unambiguous metalanguage and transparent logical structures. The solution Default Semantics proposes – an eclectic one, but ‘eclectic’ in the most positive sense – is to retain the metalanguage based on predicate logic, retain truth conditions, retain the concept of a model in the sense of a formal representations of variations on situations that are pertinent for truth-evaluation (not so much in the sense of alternative worlds as alternative mental states that incorporate Travisian relevant circumstances under which the interlocutors would evaluate an act of communication), but employ all these superbly rich resources to represent and analyse main intended messages that, to repeat, are thought and externalised in whatever manner happens to be most adequate or readily available. If compositionality is to be found at all, it is not to be found in language, neither is it to be found in gestures or in other components of mental and communicative acts. Linguistic and gestural compositionality are merely imperfect aftermaths of the composition process in these acts– hence the endless quest for a compositional account of intensional contexts for example. What I proposed in Default Semantics (Jaszczolt 2005, 2010, 2016) is such an application of extant tools to the well-trodden area of metal and communicative acts, pointing out that, to repeat, perhaps the structure of the sentence and its logical form are not to be treated as the starting point beyond which we reach by proposing its expansions and added implicatures, but rather as one of many end points: an often imperfect derivative of compositionality of our reasoning and of sharing this reasoning with others in a conversation.

Conclusion: In Search of a Paradigm

¹⁹ See fn 10 on the strong understanding of the qualifier ‘radical’ in Default Semantics.

What we are left with is a picture of pragmatic theory that permeates the theory of meaning not merely by adding to what grammar leaves unspecified or disambiguating what grammar can handle in two or more different ways. We have a pragmatic theory that, as a theory of meaning of language as it is used in discourse, itself *builds* semantic representations. We can call this stance *pragmacentrism* about meaning. Semantic representations are not representations of meaning that interpret grammatical strings as generative grammarians have it, neither are they representations that mirror such strings, as Montagovian semanticists claimed. Neither are they restricted by such strings. They are representations of the meaning pertaining to acts of communication as intended by the speaker and, if all goes well, as recovered by the addressee – ‘if all goes well’ since theories of meaning are concerned with cases when all *does* go well in order to claim predictive power. Dynamic semantics such as DRT or SDRT created significant landmarks in freeing the theory of meaning from such syntactic constraints by incorporating information from changing context, modelling presupposed meaning, and extending the unit of analysis beyond a sentence-based proposition. Default Semantics just adds the small but all important step of freeing meaning representations from syntactic constraints altogether: after all, and for a wide variety of reasons, we so often say *p* when we mean *q* as long as *q* is easily recoverable and avoids the social consequences of saying *q* directly.

Now, in order to make informed speculations about the future of pragmatics_{SPP}, one would have to speculate about the possibility of a consensus about different aspects of it: the object, the methods, the unit, and the openness of representatives of different paradigms to constructive eclecticism. What I presented in this paper is the scenario I find plausible, where

- (i) The object of study is the act of communication *tout court*, with all the complexity of the available sources of information and the compositionality that in principle makes use of all these sources;
- (ii) The method makes use of truth-conditions, possible-worlds and models but applied on the level of mental representations;
- (iii) The unit varies from subsentential to multisentential, with the proviso that the sentence itself and its logical form do not necessarily trigger the search for a semantic representation;
- (iv) The paradigms of truth-conditional, dynamic, semantics and cognitive semantics both contribute their best ideas: the first one, the methods and the openness to the

variability of the unit, and the latter the move to the focus on mental states, where acts of communication are formed and recovered.

I conclude on the already mentioned anthropological linguistics note. In his popular book *Don't Sleep, There Are Snakes: Life and Language in the Amazonian Jungle*, Dan Everett (2008) points out that previously unstudied languages such as Pirahã suggest that culture can be instrumental in the construction of the grammar of a language, while the genetic origins of grammar propounded by Chomsky or Pinker are clouded by mounting counterevidence. Inferring from features such as the apparent lack of recursion in Pirahã grammar, and at the same time omnipresence of recursion in Pirahã discourse structure, life, and thought, he concludes that what for the past sixty years or so we have been trained to attribute to grammar may be a feature of cognition, reasoning, and also the surrounding world. He concludes:

‘We are left with a theory in which grammar – the mechanics of language – is much less important than the culture-based meanings and constraints on talking of each specific culture in the world.’
Everett (2008: 259).

The way to understand the importance of this emphasis on conceptual structure is that irrespective of the presence or absence of recursion on the level of syntactic structures, the conceptual level is the level researchers ought to focus on. In other words, irrespective of whether the Pirahã grammar exhibits recursion or not, the fact that recursion is salient in story-telling but not in syntax is all that matters because this is where true universals are to be found.

Pragmatics_{SPP} seems to be moving in that direction. There is no doubt that contextualism is the dominant orientation, and so is departing from sententialism. Frameworks not covered in this discussion, such as versions of game theory, exhibit similar preferences.²⁰ Adopting acts of communication as the object of *semantic* analysis is the next step, evident in Schiffer's tentative proposal of semantics for generative grammar discussed above and, in conjunction with a more radical rejection of sententialism, in Default Semantics. The approach to meaning advocated in this paper embraces all of these,

²⁰ See e.g. Parikh (2010) on his rejection of the Gricean ‘pipeline theory of meaning’ and on the emphasis on derivation in his Equilibrium Semantics. For a comparison with Default Semantics see Parikh 2016.

summarised in (i)-(iv) above. When composition of meaning is understood more in Dan Everett's way of combining information that language and culture throw at us, then we are free from the restrictions of stifling formal semantic theories that do not fit English, let alone Pirahã, but at the same time we begin to realise that the task of constructing theories of meaning only begins now: we have to find a normative theory of such a composition, a theory where meaning in communicative interaction can be given by a formalizable theory enjoying adequate predictive power, before we can apply truth conditions to the output of this composition. Merger representations adopted in Default Semantics are just a useful label for a unit about which we still know very little: we list the common sources of information, we stipulate the associated processes of meaning recovery, while the compositionality of such sociocultural products is something of which we have daily proof but which we still don't really know how to handle.

In short, the main message in my argument has been that pragmatics and philosophy have to occupy the centre stage in the study of meaning, in pursuit of a new (albeit possibly constructively eclectic) paradigm; any experimental or other empirical enquiry is futile unless it is firmly founded on theoretical assumptions that are revealed through sound argumentation and conceptual analysis. Otherwise one ends up chasing non-existent categories such as, say, scalar implicatures exorcised as a label in Section 2.2, asking irrelevant (*qua* theory-internal) questions about their processing, and hoping to support approaches that are themselves founded on unfalsifiable or blatantly false assumptions.

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