Strands in Pragmatics

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CHAPTER ONE
THE ROOTS OF PRAGMATICS: WITTGENSTEIN

1. Introduction

Pragmatics is the third component-level of linguistics, the other two being syntactics and semantics. It is perceived as a newly founded, but fast expanding, field with little history in its past. However, this is quite wrong, as roots of presumably new disciplines have to be most often than not sought in past history. In a textbook of pragmatics, therefore, it is not totally unwise to begin with a survey of the recent history of language study. But dispelling a rather general misconception regarding the origin of pragmatics, it must be stressed, without ignoring its non-philosophical roots also in linguistic theory and psychology, that **pragmatics is philosophical**, in that it evolved from an interest in language in philosophical quarters; moreover, it remained distinctly philosophical in the one strand of pragmatics we will be reviewing, as its orientation was primarily towards explaining linguistic phenomena and facts that did not 'fit' within the semantics inherited to us from philosophy of language. It is, therefore, interesting, instructive, but also imperative, to identify the major landmarks that initiated distinct lines of research in philosophy of language and which eventually gave rise to the development of the discipline of pragmatics. But such a task is ambitious, and as our

focus will be on just two major strands in pragmatics, we will limit our attention, within the earlier philosophy of language, to Wittgenstein only. The two distinct types of philosophy of language he developed can be claimed to have inaugurated the two rather distinct strands within pragmatics, which we wish to explore: The representational theory of meaning propounded by the earlier Wittgenstein gave rise to a branch of pragmatics which focuses on preserving semantic theories of meaning enriched by a pragmatic component taking care of all overflowing phenomena that seek an explanation within its scope. The later Wittgenstein advanced a functional outlook in language that, although it lacked a coherent proposal towards systematisation, nevertheless motivated a line of research whose focus has been on the functional role of language.

The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, who lived in the first part of 20th century, inaugurated, as we have already said, two distinct trends in the philosophy of language. The earlier Wittgenstein, as we conventionally refer to his earlier work, epitomised in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (TLP)*, his dissertation of roughly eighty pages under Russell's supervision in Cambridge, broke new ground in philosophy; his *Tractatus* proved a seminal piece of work for the philosophy of language. Later and present day developments in philosophical semantics have very much followed in the spirit of the *Tractatus*.

However, it is his later work, culminating in the publication of his *Philosophical Investigations (PI),* that is of special interest to pragmatics. While the *Tractatus* reflects a detached conception of language, later Wittgenstein put forth a very different view of language: language as meaningful human behaviour, as a tool for human communication, as a form of life. Indeed, in pragmatics language is examined as an integral part of human behaviour. In the next section, therefore, we will briefly review these two phases of Wittgenstein's philosophy.

To the well-placed or justifiable question about the relevance of the earlier Wittgenstein's philosophy to pragmatics, we can counter that a distinct line of thought in pragmatics, Gricean pragmatics or the logic of conversation, emerged as the saviour of an earlier Wittgensteinean truth-conditional representational theory of language or semantics, whose task was to soak up the truth-conditionally unexplainable linguistic phenomena. We will return to this issue in later chapters.

2. Earlier Wittgenstein

2.1. Reconstruction of Philosophical Background

As we can already anticipate on the basis of our knowledge of semantics, the philosophical background in which Ludwig Wittgenstein operated has absolutely nothing in common with what one ordinarily understands by the term 'philosophy'. To try to

understand Wittgenstein it is best to forget all one's knowledge about the subject-matter of philosophy. The philosophical context established by Frege, Russell and later, the logical positivists, did not posit 'spectacular' questions or 'metaphysical muddles' as to the genesis of the world or the nature of God or the power of reason, or the atom, etc. As Russell put it, analytical empiricism, as we could call this type of philosophy, has "the quality of science rather than of philosophy" (Russell, 1946: 788). And, to say that this view is owing to scientific envy, that is, that when science became much too mathematical and complicated for the uninitiated to understand, philosophers aspired that their field, too, should acquire a similar 'lofty' status, as the physicist Stephen Hawking put it, shows poor understanding of the *raison d'être* of logical analysis. Quite on the contrary, although Russell was profoundly influenced by the relativity theory and quantum mechanics and, indeed, drew for his theory of logical atomism on their findings, he nevertheless believed that the logical analysis as the main object of philosophy would clear the way to true and unbiased, as he put it, knowledge. This turn in philosophy, which dominated in England and the states, is called the linguistic turn and can be placed at the turn of the 20th century and thereafter. It is, in effect, a linguistic philosophy or a philosophy of language. It arose from a distinct dissatisfaction with philosophical excesses, especially those emanating from Germany. It was believed that close attention to language would eradicate excess and bias from philosophical statements. Within 20th century Anglo-Saxon philosophy, attention is given, not to ethics, but to the language of ethics, not to science, but to

the language of science, not to aesthetics, but to the language used to deal with the subject. So, linguistic analysis as a philosophical method would guarantee scientific truthfulness, by which one is to understand "the habit of basing our beliefs upon observations and inferences as impersonal, and as much divested of local and temperamental bias, as is possible for human beings" (Russell, 1946: 789). However, it remains true to say that this type of philosophy was very much methodological in its orientation rather than speculative on a comprehensive sphere of human activity and inquiry. As it is so aptly put in Devitt and Sterelny (1999), when we point our finger at reality the linguistic philosopher discusses the finger.

The philosophical climate within which Wittgenstein wrote was delimited mainly by Frege and Russell. Indeed, it is said that Wittgenstein had little knowledge of what was considered ‘the canon’ in philosophy, but had profound knowledge and understanding of his surrounding philosophy at the time established in Cambridge, as well as of some other texts, such as Augustine’s *Confessions* and James’ *Principles of Psychology* (Baker 1998). Wittgenstein studied philosophy with Russell in Cambridge and Russell, who discovered Frege's writings, introduced him to analytic philosophy and Frege's work. As Russell writes in the introduction to *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus,* "Wittgenstein is concerned with the conditions for a logically perfect language" (x), that is, with the construction of a symbolism that would generate 'accurate' meaning, eradicate

vagueness and non-sense and secure uniqueness of meaning or reference.

Russell was aware that natural language is both vague and imprecise and did not believe that the construction of an accurate symbolic language, an ideal language, was an overnight achievement. But he did believe that Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus* was a significant step towards this direction of explicating the logic of our language. For Russell the various problems concerning language include:

1. The psychological or psychologistic problem of what really happens when we use language with the intention to mean something.
2. The problem of the relation between thought or words and sentences and the objects or entities to which they refer; or, in other words, the problem between the word and the world
3. The problem of the use of sentences to convey truth rather than falsehood. Lastly, he writes, there is
4. the problem of the conditions enabling one fact (a sentence) to stand for another (a fact). This is a logical problem that demands a logical analysis and this is the problem Wittgenstein is concerned with in *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus.*

In the preface, Wittgenstein writes that the book will be understood only by those who already have thought about the same issues.

Indeed, its comprehension presupposes familiarity with Frege's works and Russell's philosophy. Wittgenstein mentions his indebtedness to them both.

Wittgenstein produced his *Tractatus* in a revolutionised climate: It is worth recalling that Frege revolutionised logic by introducing a mathematical notation in order to formalise inferences. He had noticed that 'Alexander invaded Asia' and 'Asia was invaded by Alexander' express the same proposition, despite their dissimilar grammatical subjects and predicates. As a result, one can draw the same inferences from them both were they to be included in a syllogism. So Frege replaced this traditional distinction between grammatical subject and predicate by a distinction between argument and function, as we saw in Semantics. A predicate is compared to a mathematical function, such as $(\ )^2$. In this mathematical formula we can place an x that is a variable: $(x)^2$. Frege maintained that a predicate, such as 'x is wise', can be accounted for in terms of this mathematical function which in philosophy he named a 'propositional function'; propositional functions signify properties and relations. 'x's' stand for variable individuals which are called by Frege 'objects'. If we replace x by a proper name we get a proposition, just as in mathematics we can get the exact value of this function if we replace x by a definite number. The result is called an 'atomic proposition'. Wittgenstein accepted this view (T, 3.333). Frege also introduced the concept of 'quantification', which had dire consequences in logic and philosophy. That the concept of quantification is not just a technical device was made clear

in the course in Semantics. From atomic propositions and the employment of propositional connectives or quantifiers we can derive new complex propositions. Frege also introduced the notion of the 'truth-value' as it is currently used.

2.2. Tractatus Logico-philosophicus (TLP)

TLP is not an ordinary book even in terms of its lay-out. It is presented in the form of numbered remarks. The decimally numbered remarks belong in substance, too, to the thematic remarks marked by the integers. These are:

1. The world is everything that is the case.
2. What is the case - the fact - is the existence of atomic facts.
3. The logical picture of the facts is the thought.
4. The thought is the significant proposition.
5. The proposition is a truth-function of elementary propositions.
6. The general form of truth-function is $[p, \xi, N(\xi)]$. This is the general form of proposition.
7. What we cannot speak of, we must be silent about.

Wittgenstein's major philosophical concern throughout his life was the nature of language and its connection with reality. He believed that a linguistic concern ought to be philosophy's main, or rather only, preoccupation. 'All Philosophy is a 'critique of language' (T, 4.0031). The central doctrine propounded in the *Tractatus* is the famous **picture theory of meaning** to which we will now turn.

2.2.1. Wittgenstein's Picture Theory

Put in a nutshell, Wittgenstein's picture theory of meaning consists in his doctrine that the world consists of the totality of facts which are pictured in the propositions of language:

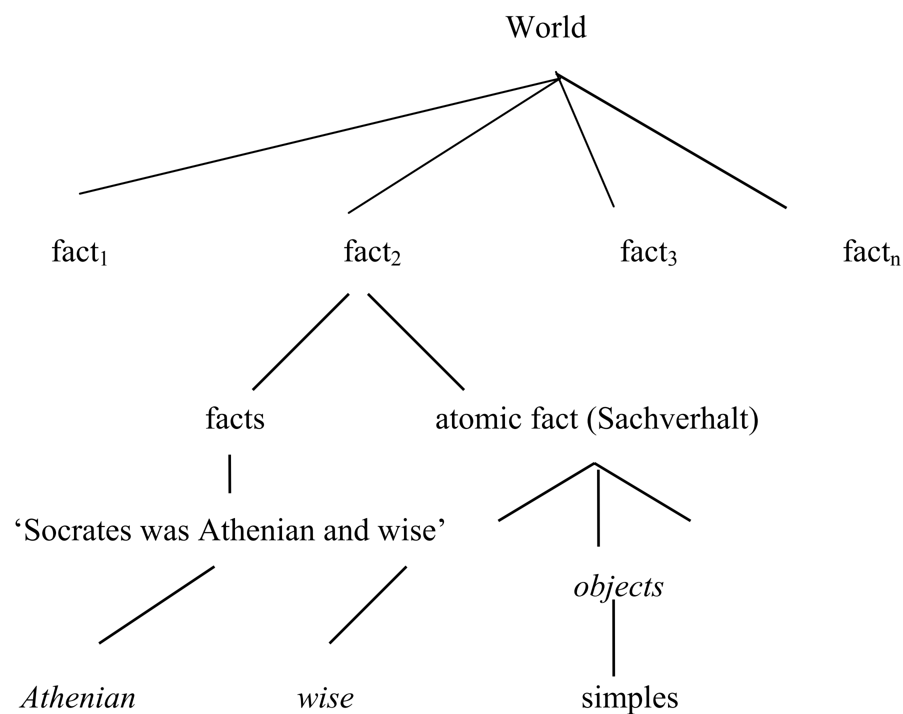

figure 1: A 'naïve' representation of Wittgenstein's Picture Theory

As the diagram shows the world consists of facts, which can be either complex or simple. The latter consist of objects (entities, things), which are simples and their configuration forms an atomic fact.

When they are atomic, these facts are expressed in **elementary propositions** (see below); when they are complex, they are expressed in the conjunction (product) of these elementary propositions:

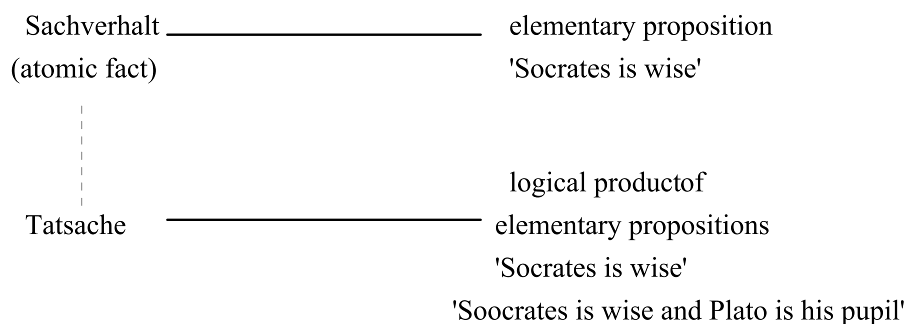

figure 2: Elementary propositions of atomic facts

But we must note that the 'sentential sign' is also a fact as it consists of the combination of elements, i.e., words. And it is these latter facts that actually pictures the non-verbal ones.

In 2.1 Wittgenstein states 'We picture facts to ourselves' and, as Russell writes, this is where he introduces his theory of symbolism. Propositions, according to Wittgenstein, are pictures and that is why his theory can be regarded as a theory of representation. The *meaning* of a proposition can be likened to what it is a picture or representation of, while its *truth* or *falsehood* is likened to whether it represents what it does accurately and correctly. Schematically this correspondence would be represented as follows:

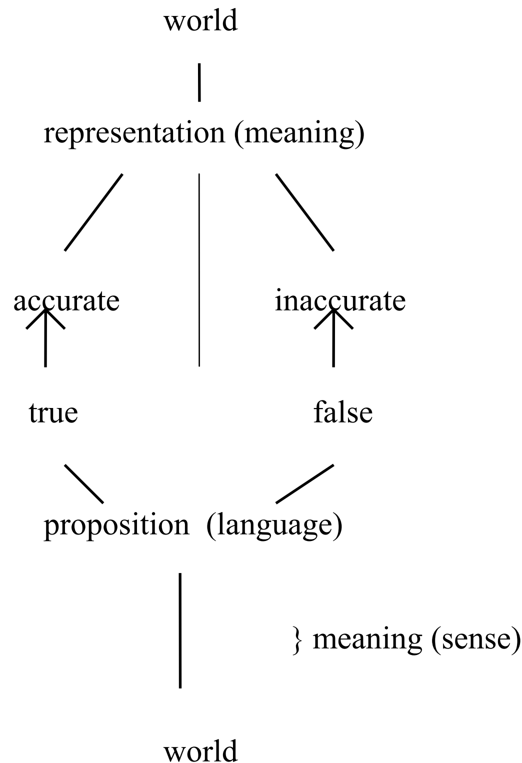

figure 3: The world as represented in language

As the diagram portrays, language consists of propositions, ('The totality of propositions is language' 4.001), which depict the world. However, these propositions are human mediators and as such they are our thoughts' cloak. In other words, propositions are the 'tangible' expressed thoughts or the perceptible expressions of thoughts (Gedanke); these thoughts in their turn are the logical pictures of facts (TLP 3.5, 4, 4.001). Let us try to schematise this view, too:

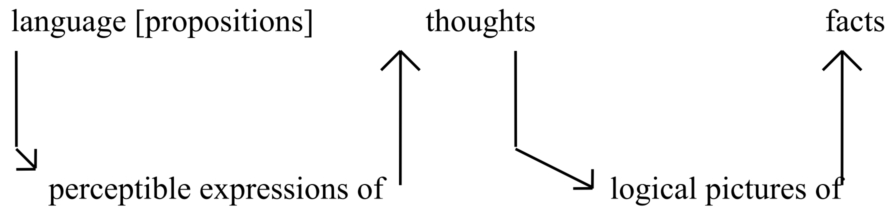

figure 4: Propositions, thought and facts

Thought, as shown clearly in the diagram, appears to mediate between language and facts. It connects propositions with states of affairs. The correlation between language and the world through thought is left unclear and poorly specified by Wittgenstein, but can be depicted in the following diagram:

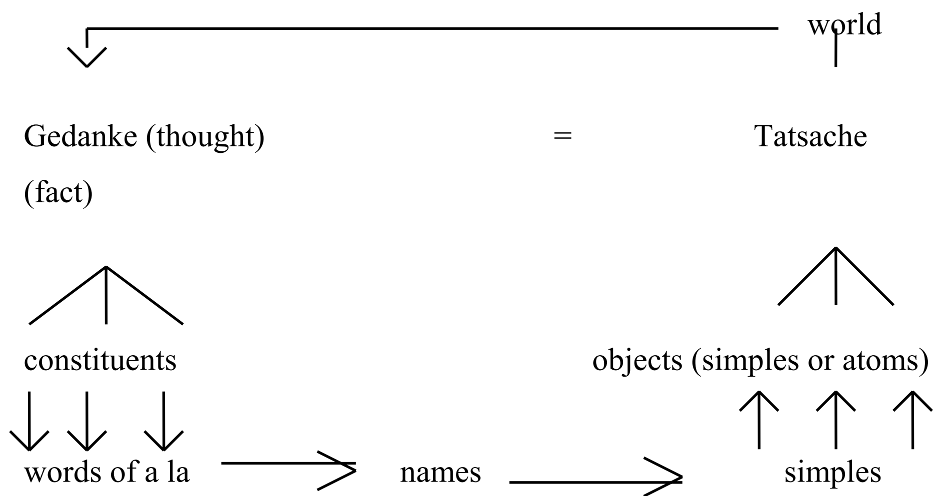

figure 5: Correlation between language and the world via thought

As can be seen, the ultimate constituents or elements of thought (Gedanke) are correlated through the words of a language (propositions) to the world constituents, which can be called atoms or simples. ‘In a proposition a thought can be expressed in such a way that elements of the propositional sign correspond to the objects of the thought.’ (T, 3.2):

simples → names → propositions [t/f] → complex [name]

These objects (Gegenstände = αντι-κείμενα) or simples are the basic ingredients of the world and the main constituents of facts. However, they do not exist outside their combination in a logical structure either in the world or as names in the language:

TLP 3.262 ‘What signs fail to express, their application shows. What signs slur over, their application says clearly.’

It follows that names have no sense but only reference (Bedeutung); and in their application, that is, when they are deployed in propositions, we say that propositions have no reference but only sense, and they have no sense if they cannot be true or false:

TLP 3.3 ‘Only propositions have sense; only in the nexus of a proposition does a name have meaning.’

This remark originates from Frege.

But what is the ontological status of Wittgenstein’s notion of a name? He writes:

TLP 3.203 ‘A name means an object. The object is its meaning.’

So we will assume that 'names' stands for objects, (Russell's particulars), or that it corresponds to 'singular terms'; it follows that 'predicate terms' are thus excluded from the set of signification of 'names'. Wittgenstein did not give in the *Tractatus* unequivocal examples of what he means by 'Gegenstand=object'.

2.2.2. Elementary propositions

Wittgenstein's conception of an elementary proposition is very similar to Frege's idea of an atomic proposition. The differences are rather terminological. He writes:

TLP 4.22 'An elementary proposition consists of names. It is a nexus, a concatenation, of names.'

TLP 4.221 'It is obvious that the analysis of propositions must bring us to elementary propositions which consist of names in immediate combination.'

An elementary proposition corresponds to and reflects an atomic fact (Sachverhalt). The original German term literally (or etymologically) means 'hold of things'; in other words, it signifies the way things (objects) stand in relation to one another, the arrangement of objects which are simples. An elementary proposition is the picture of this Sachverhalt.

TLP 2.16 'If a fact is to be a picture, it must have something in common with what it depicts' (abbilden).

TLP 2.18 ‘What any picture, of whatever form, must have in common with reality, in order to be able to depict it - correctly or incorrectly - in any way at all, is logical form, i.e. the form of reality.’

By ‘logical form’ one is to understand its ordering, which can be spatial, as shown below in the diagram.

TLP 4,012 ‘It is obvious that a proposition of the form ‘*aRb*’ strikes us as a picture. In this case the sign is obviously a likeness of what is signified:

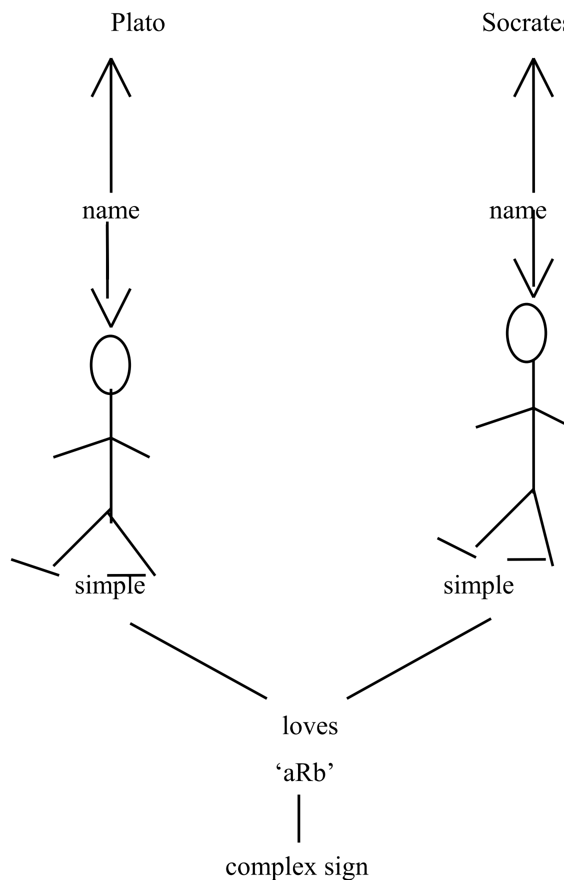

figure 6: (3.1432)

Elementary propositions are only positive. Negated propositions are not atomic. He writes:

TLP 3.24 'A complex can be given only by its description, which will be right or wrong. A proposition that mentions a complex will not be nonsensical, if the complex does not exist, but simply false. When a propositional element signifies a complex, this can be seen from an indeterminateness in the propositions in which it occurs.'

It is not clear whether Wittgenstein considered only elementary propositions to be pictures of facts. Some think that his picture theory applies only to elementary propositions (e.g. Black, 1964). But others take it to apply generally as he introduces his picture theory in general terms without specific reference to elementary propositions (Hintikka and Hintikka, 1986).

It is interesting to note that German, just like Greek, has a voluminous part of compound lexemes, which Wittgenstein uses as terms for his notions in the *Tractatus*. These terms, compound as they are, have a rather transparent representational signification.

Questions:

1. Which of the two is true?
    a. Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* supplies a prescription for an ideal language.

   b. Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* attempts to show how language as it is actually works.
   (Support your answer with arguments from the work quoting relevant paragraphs).
2. Is Wittgenstein's picture theory of meaning to be understood in a literal or metaphorical sense?
3. 'There must be something identical in a picture and what it depicts, to enable the one to be a picture of the other at all' (TLP, 2.161). Illustrate and explain.
4. Is the picture on the cover of the *Journal of Pragmatics* a picture of an impossible state of affairs?
5. In what way could one claim that there is a relation between Wittgenstein's view that objects only exist in logical structures and the structuralist principle of identity defined only in terms of relations?

3. Later Wittgenstein

3.1. Transition from earlier to later Wittgenstein

In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein wants to capture in his presentation of the calculus the ineffability of meaning and his view that language is rather reduced to syntax, the syntax of the signs of the calculus. '[L]ogic', he writes, 'is not a field in which *we* express what we wish with the help of signs, but rather one in which the nature of the absolutely necessary signs speaks for itself. If we know the logical syntax of any sign-language, then we have already been given all the

propositions of logic.' (6.124). And further down, he writes: 'For, without bothering about sense or meaning, we construct the logical proposition out of others using only *rules that deal with signs.'* (6.126).

It is interesting to note in the above quotation how the human agent (*we*) is swept away as a mediator between signs and the world; together with the *we* is swept away intentional states and will. These notions will come on stage in *Philosophical Investigations.*

However, his notion of 'calculus' is gradually modified and in *Philosophical Grammar* (X: 140) he writes:

Language is for us a calculus; it is characterised by *language acts* [*Sprachhandlungen*] (lit. *speech-handling*)

This transition, from his favourite notion of 'calculus' to the coinage of the new term of language-game in *Philosophical Investigations*, is shown quite aptly in a passage from *Philosophische Grammatik* quoted in Kenny (1973: 162):

I said that the meaning of a word is the role which it plays in the calculus of language. (I compared it to a piece in chess.) Let us think now of the way in which calculation takes place with a word, the word 'red' for example. The locality of the colour is given, the form and size are specified of the spot or body which has the colour, we are told

whether it is pure or mixed with others, whether it is lighter or darker, whether it is constant or changing, and so on. Conclusions are drawn from the propositions, they are translated into illustrations and behaviour; there is drawing, measurement and computation. But let us think also of the meaning of the word 'oh!' If we were asked about it, we would probably say 'oh!' is sigh; we say, for instance, 'Oh. It is raining again already' and similar things. In that way we would have described the use of the word. But now what corresponds to the calculus, to the complicated game which we play with other words? In the use of the words 'oh' or 'hurrah' or 'hm' there is nothing comparable. (PG 67)

3.2. Language-games (Spiele)

In *Philosophical Investigations (PI)* (1945-49), Wittgenstein's notion of 'calculus' seems to have been completely replaced by his notion of 'language-game'. The term appears throughout *PI* and, indeed, it makes its appearance right at the beginning of the book. In (2) he provisionally presents an Augustinian[1] view of language consisting of orders serving merely for communication purposes and urges the reader to conceive it as a complete primitive language. And in *PI* (7) he writes:

We can also think of the whole process of using words in (2) as one of those games by means of which children learn their native language. I will call these games "language-games" and will sometimes speak of a primitive language as a language-game. And the processes of naming

the stones and of repeating words after someone might also be called language-games. Think of much of the use of words in games like ring-a-ring-a-roses. I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, the “language-game”.

(7) introduces the notion of ‘language-game’ which is used to encompass both non linguistic and linguistic activity or language-use, as well as any antecedent training activity.

A language-game can be analysed into:

a. Words used to name objects within an activity, but also used as sentences to carry out an activity or within an activity.
b. The context of the activity: this includes the participants (builders, assistants), the objects handled within the context of the activity (slabs).
c. Goal: Although Wittgenstein does not mention the goal of the mentioned activity or language-game, the latter is described as ‘self-contained’, that is, the goal of the activity is not something external to it, but is included within its confines. So a language-game is complete and self-contained.
d. Rules. However, these rules do not rule supreme and it is only in the context of the language-game that they come into operation.

What is the use of a piece of language? It can be given only within a language-game, by describing its role in it. Most of his examples are drawn from the area of non-descriptive sentences of language, but this

need not lead us to the conclusion that Wittgenstein rejects in *PI* the notion of truth-conditions. He only thinks that the truth-conditions are determined within the language-game within which sentences of the language are placed. But he does want to emphasise that language is not just used descriptively:

PI 23. But how many kinds of sentence are there? Say assertion, question, and command? - There are *countless* kinds: countless different kinds of use of what we call “symbols”, “words”, “sentences”. And this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once for all; but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten.

This remark is followed by an enumeration of language-games which are very similar to what one later might have called speech acts. Language-games are shared by the members of a community and in this sense can be on occasion thought of as social constructs.

Instead of taking Wittgenstein’s interest in non-descriptive sentences as a rejection of the primacy of descriptive language - which may be true - it is best to view it as an extension of his theory which needs now to encompass non-descriptive sentences, too. With this broadening of his scope goes his picture theory of meaning - which understandably involves descriptive language - but also his target of constructing the logic of language in terms of a notational calculus. In

PI Wittgenstein is interested in the function of everyday language and questions the feasibility or plausibility of constructing another language as a philosophical tool, as he did in *TLP*:

PI 120. ‘When I talk about language (words, sentences, etc.) I must speak the language of every day. Is this language somehow too coarse and material for what we want to say? *Then how is another one to be constructed?* - And how strange that we should be able to do anything at all with the one we have!’

Language-games are not set up for regulating language but rather for being used as objects of comparison:

PI 130. ‘Our clear and simple language-games are not preparatory studies (Vorstudien) for a future regularization of language - as it were first approximations, ignoring friction and air-resistance. The language-games are rather set up as *objects of comparison* which are meant to throw light on the facts of our language by way not only of similarities, but of dissimilarities.’

In this paragraph, Wittgenstein has in mind either an ideal language, when he talks of language-games, or something else that serves as the imprint of language function and can be treated as an object of comparison.

Questions:

1. That language is compared to a game by Wittgenstein is meant to suggest:

   a. language is thought to be a pastime or trivial thing or activity.
   b. the similarities between linguistic and non-linguistic activities.
2. According to Wittgenstein “naming and describing do not stand on the same level: naming is a preparation for description.” (PI 49). Explain and illustrate.
3. Are language-games individuated? (*Brown Book*).

4. Wittgenstein: Appraisal of the earlier and the later:

Below are two tables showing both similarities and differences between the two major works of Wittgenstein. (TLP = *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,* PI = *Philosophical Investigations,* parts I, II pp.):

Similarities	*TLP*	*PI*
The sentences of ordinary language are in perfect logical order just as they stand.	5.5563	I 98
Language as part of human natural history.	4.002	I 25
Ordinary language is a deceptive clothing concealing differences between expressions that look similar.	4.002	II 224
Above point illustrated by same examples: ‘is’	3.323	I558
Concealed differences are revealed in their use or application	3.143 3.262	I, II
Philosophy does not consist in advancing theses	4.1122	I 126,

	4.113	I 127

Differences	
Tractatus	***Philosophical Investigations***
Sentences have a definite sense.	Definiteness of sense is not required for logical order (PI I 99-100)
Complication of language	Commonplaceness of language
Language disguises differences between names, descriptions and propositions (3.143; 3.261)	Differences between types of names (I 383), types of descriptions (I 290), types of verb and propositions (339, 693)
Picture-theory of meaning. Relation of words to primitive signs, and to denoted simples (2.0271).	Use-theory of meaning. Focus on **use** of words. Use as part in a language-game, in a form of life.
Technical style of text.	Non-technical style of text.
What cannot be said won't be said.	Struggle to say what in TLP is left unsaid.
Language in the form of a calculus. Explicit rules (6.126)	Language in the form of language-games. No sharp rules.

General questions:

1. Explain the significance of T 4.41: 'Truth-possibilities of elementary propositions are the conditions of the truth and falsity of propositions'.
2. In what sense is *Tractatus* considered to be a thesis on metaphysical atomism?
3. Are there any connections between Wittgenstein's views of language and contemporary views on frame semantics? And if there are, are these connections more transparent in his picture theory of meaning or in his view of language as language-games?

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[1] Augustine was a philosopher who lived in 4th c AD.

CHAPTER TWO
WHAT IS PRAGMATICS

1. From later Wittgenstein to Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a rather new discipline or sub-discipline, if one wants to claim that linguistic pragmatics is a component or level of linguistics rather than another discipline within the broader scope of linguistics. We would not go far astray if we claimed that pragmatics derives from Wittgenstein's later philosophy primarily and secondarily from the work of other philosophers such as Austin's and Grice's (see below).

As Wittgenstein's earlier account of language was given in terms of a picture of the facts constituting the world, it is reasonable to claim that such a picture theory of meaning can reflect what is called 'cognitive' meaning of sentences. What is significant in portraying facts in propositions is their sharing of the same logical structure. Both propositions and facts must have a logical form.

This cognitive meaning of sentences has traditionally been regarded as the only meaning of sentences worth talking about. This bias is well understood and appreciated since language was described and refined so that it would make a proper tool for use in philosophy and science. The sub-discipline or discipline developed as an offshoot of analytic

philosophy, which examines this type of descriptive meaning, is called semantics.

However, the field of semantics was expanded by the realisation that other types of non-descriptive meaning were consequential for the assignment of truth-conditions to propositions. As the bulk of these phenomena was gradually expanding and more and more issues that could not be narrowly termed semantic were added to the field of semantics, philosophers of language and linguists realised that all these pragmatic phenomena could be rightfully included and examined within the framework of a new field called pragmatics (Kempson, 1977); this new field came to be recognised as a new discipline in its own right. It must be noted, though, that at the time this option was not a conscious one, neither did linguists, philosophers and practitioners in semantics and related fields realise at the time that they were thus creating the field of pragmatics (for example, Grice in his programme of Logic and Conversation). All this is easy to be said with the acquired wisdom of hindsight.

It is wrong, however, to assume that at present there is hardly any interest in what has traditionally been called semantics. Indeed, following on earlier Wittgenstein, there has been a distinct line of development in the philosophy of language concentrating on language and its relationship with the object world, abstracting from users of language that were put into the picture by the later Wittgenstein. This line of development, inaugurated by Russell, Frege and earlier

Wittgenstein, includes figures such as Carnap, Quine and Davidson. The main issue in this tradition is the relation of language to reality, and the question that looms large is: ‘What are the truth conditions of sentences?’ Quine and Davidson propagated this type of philosophical semantics in America. One must also include within this tradition Montague’s work, or Montagovian semantics, as it is often called. The main claims in this tradition are that a natural language is, or can be, represented as a formal language and logical form can be viewed as the deep structure for the syntax of a natural language.

Pragmatics, however, sprang from the other line of development, the one that viewed language, not as related to the world, but as related to the human user. It seems quite reasonable to claim that the view of language use taken within the field of pragmatics derives directly from the view of language propagated in the later Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations,* even though Austin’s work has been more seminal for the development of pragmatics than Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations.* On the basis of *Philosophical Investigations,* it is probably correct to assume that Wittgenstein would not countenance any certain theory, such as speech act theory, evolving from philosophical theorising about language, because he believed that such theories would result in distortions and false statements.

Pragmatics is the ‘scientific’ - as some scholars would say - examination of language as it is used by its speakers. The factor

‘human use’ enters the scene together with the notion of the ‘use’ of language, since humans alone use language. The human factor as use was intentionally swept aside in the *Tractatus*, as we have already seen. The only allusion to the human user there is in terms of the apparatus of picturing facts.

On the other hand, the term ‘use’ makes its appearance in a meaningful way right in the first section of *Philosophical Investigations:*

PI 1. ‘But what is the meaning of the word “five”? - No such thing was in question here, only how the word “five” is used.’

The whole of *Philosophical Investigations* is interspersed with the idea of meaning as use. Not only that, but also the view taken there is that the use of things and, hence of linguistic items, is prior to our naming them:

PI 31: ‘We may say: only someone who already knows how to do something with it can significantly ask a name.’

Broadly speaking, the subject matter of pragmatics is language in use. A simple declarative sentence, such as ‘It’s cold in here’ can have a multiplicity of functions depending on what we may call pragmatic factors, such as who is speaking to whom, what roles the speech participants are enacting, what the situation is, if there are any power relations, what is expected of the participants and the situation, etc. For example, it is considered at its face value, that is, as a commentary or descriptive statement if it is uttered by one of the prisoners in the

environment of their cold cell where there is no possibility for closing windows (they are already closed) or for putting up the heaters (there are none). However, the same sentence uttered by my guest in the comfort of my home may be, not only interpreted, but also meant (intended) to be interpreted differently, for example as a request for putting up the heater or for closing the window or even for bringing a rug. In short, it is most probably interpreted as a request for alleviating my guest's discomfort. On the other hand, if it is uttered by the queen in her butler's presence it is both meant and interpreted as an order that has to be acted upon instantly.

While in the case of a declarative request interpretation is heavily dependent on pragmatic or situational factors, issues are not so unpredictable or difficult in more conventionalised requests, as we will see later. Pragmatics is called upon to give systematicity to such issues. This type of pragmatics has evolved from philosophy and can be called mainstream pragmatics.

2. Pragmatics evolving from linguistic quarters

However, there is a line of research in pragmatics that emerged, not from philosophy, but rather from linguistics as such. This school of thought developed as a reaction to, originally, a syntactic and then a semantic treatment of language that would be oblivious to matters of use. It gradually became apparent that language interpretation (semantic interpretation) was susceptible to contextual factors which

were excluded from the context-free treatment of language competence by Chomsky and his followers, whose theory brought about a revolution in linguistics and constituted the main paradigm in the fifties and sixties.

Rejection of this paradigm, as so often happens in politics and academia alike, sprang from the in-circles of Chomsky's disciples. The so-called "younger Turks" rebelled against the straight-jacketing effects of the Choskyan (or Chomskyite!) paradigm. Their position and, generally, the problems caused by Chomsky's theory of language are summed nicely in Levinson (1983: 36):

…as knowledge of the syntax, phonology and semantics of various languages has increased, it has become clear that there are specific phenomena that can only naturally be described by recourse to contextual concepts. On the one hand, various syntactic rules seem to be properly constrained only if one refers to pragmatic conditions; and similarly for matters of stress and intonation. It is possible, in response to these apparent counter-examples to a context-independent notion of linguistic competence, simply to retreat: the rules can be left unconstrained and allowed to generate unacceptable sentences, and a performance theory of pragmatics assigned the job of filtering out the acceptable sentences. Such a move is less than entirely satisfactory because the relationship between the theory of competence and the data on which it is based (ultimately intuitions about acceptability) becomes abstract to a point where counter-examples to the theory may

be explained away on an *ad hoc* basis, *unless* a systematic pragmatics has already been developed.

In fairness to Chomsky, it must be noted that this great linguist was fully aware of the options available to him in the field of linguistics and as early as 1969 he could anticipate the burgeoning field of pragmatics:

On the other hand, we can bring to the study of formal structures and their relations a wealth of experience and understanding. It may be that at this point we are facing a problem of conflict between significance and feasibility … I feel fairly confident that the abstraction to the study of formal mechanisms of language is appropriate; my confidence arises from the fact that many quite elegant results have been achieved on the basis of this abstraction. Still, caution is in order. It may be that the next great advance in the study of language will require the forging of new intellectual tools that permit us to bring into consideration a variety of questions that have been cast into the waste-bin of "pragmatics," so that we could proceed to study questions that we know how to formulate in an intelligible fashion.

(Chomsky, 1968[1972]: 112)

The 'younger Turks', mainly George Lakoff, Ross, McCawley, Postal, Langacker, Edward Keenan and Perlmutter (also called **generative semanticists**, as against generative interpretivists, Chomsky and his

associates, all in USA), set on a quest for a solution to the problems emerging from a syntactic account, squinted remarkably across disciplines and continents, and their eyes were caught by the practitioners in the field of philosophy of language, and mostly in England, where this philosophy flourished.

Again, it was no other than Chomsky admonishing this turn to analytic philosophy in 1968:[2]

…the linguist would do well to turn to work in analytic philosophy, particularly to the many studies of referential opacity.

(Chomsky, 1968[1972]:164)

The main outcome of this exploration came in the form of the postulation of the underlying logical structures, which were to jettison Chomsky's syntactic structures as the deep structures in linguistic theory. The flood gates were opened for the flood to set in and this did not take long. The postulation of semantic logical structures opened the door to pragmatic factors and all the tornado effects in its wake. All other previous 'voices' yelling about the importance of viewing language as communication or as behaviour (Watzlawick et al, 1968) were φωνή βοϖντος εν τη ερήμω ('voice[s] crying in the wilderness') (Matthew 3:3) (Mey 1998). As Mey (1998: 723) so aptly puts it,

Not until the linguists themselves had turned to pragmatics (forced by the paradoxes of their own science) could they begin to understand the

double binds that they had been caught in by positing, as the touchstone of their research, a model of a nonexistent, ‘ideal speaker / hearer’ (Chomsky 1965).

At present, the type of linguistics advocated by George Lakoff, for example, can be called bio-linguistics (Lakoff 1993,1997), rather than cognitive (as, indeed, it is called), since, rejecting the autonomy thesis, it views language as an integral part of our biological and conceptual system. A divide between levels of analysis is rather a joke according to this all-encompassing view.

Returning to a conventional view, however, let us give a concrete example of the different treatments of language imposed by a semantic and a pragmatic perspective. In the following, we will focus on just one sentence and its examination in the two distinct frameworks. Consider the following sentences:

1. The girl is reading the book.
2. The one who is reading the book is the girl.
3. What the girl is reading is the book.

These three distinct sentences have identical logical forms:

(∃ girl) and (∃ book) and the relation between them is that the girl is reading the book.
(*Gloss:* ∃ = there is at least one)

The derivation of this logical form and hence the reflection in it of the state of affairs described in each sentence is the work of semantics. Within the field of semantics, the standard model followed is to compute the literal meaning encapsulated in the sentence's proposition. Further non-literal or extra-logical meanings are not of interest to the semanticist.

However, despite their identical logical form, (1), (2) and (3) have distinct uses in everyday language. To identify these uses and their distinct functions is the job of pragmatics. For example, (1) is rather neutral as to the interests of the hearer or the speaker and answers questions such as:

4. What is the girl doing?
5. What's going on?
6. What is the girl reading?
7. Who is reading the book?, etc.

On the other hand, both (2) and (3) answer specific questions and that means that they are designed specifically to suit the hearer's interests or the on-going topic of the conversation:

8. Who is reading the book?
9. What is the girl reading?

In other words, they both take into account the participants' needs at the moment of the speech event. The differences between sentences (1) to (3) lie in their different pragmatic structures which carry the information reflecting an identical state of affairs or fact in distinct perspectives.

3. Pragmatics as correlated with other functional theories

The only notable exception to a consistent syntactic orientation in linguistics that was mostly consolidated by Chomskyan linguistics (Transformational Grammar (TG), *Syntactic Structures* [1957]) has been Halliday's functional approach to language. Drawing on Firth's inspiring work carried out just before the middle of 20th century and on functional theories of Prague linguistics, Halliday's functional approach has consistently forsaken a divide between syntax and semantics and challenged formal and cognitive aspects of language, positing a distinctly alternative paradigm to TG in its heyday, which, however, did not cross Atlantic boundaries.

Within functional theories of meaning such as Halliday's, then, the delimitation of the areas of semantics and pragmatics can be roughly corresponded to components of meaning such as the ideational or experiential and the interpersonal and textual respectively (see Õim, 1977). Below are Halliday's various levels of language analysis:

1. ideational (language as reflection), comprising

(a) experiential

(b) logical

2. interpersonal (language as action)
3. textual (language as texture, in relation to the environment)

(Halliday, 1978: 187)

The ideational or experiential can be likened to representational meaning, as it refers to the information encoded in language; it is the level of language as expressing both the speaker's experience of the external world as well as his/her own internal world. It, therefore, resembles meaning as pictured in language (picture theory of meaning). Interpersonal meaning takes into account the users of language including factors such as interaction, intention, action taken by interactants and assignment of speech roles, while textual meaning will include cohesion, thematisation and information structure; that is, the structure of the clause as a message relating it to the whole process of communication. The latter functions of language (interpersonal, textual) can be likened to pragmatic structures as they all derive from specific uses of language; they can be considered, as they all draw on language use, to be in the later Wittgenstein's spirit of viewing linguistic meaning.

However, it is only fair to note that Halliday does not identify a pragmatic level of analysis of language, but rather in his systemic theory the overall framework identified is a semantic system; this semantic system is organised, as he claims, into a number of

components that are more or less independent of one another. He writes:

When we say that these components are relatively independent of one another, we mean that the choices that are made within any one component, while strongly affected by other choices within the same component, have no effect, or only a very weak effect, on choices made within the others. For example, given the meaning potential of the interpersonal component, out of the innumerable choices that are available to me I might choose (i) to offer a proposition, (ii) pitched in a particular key (e.g. contradictory-defensive), (iii) with a particular intent towards you (e.g. of convincing you), (iv) with a particular assessment of its probability (e.g. certain), and (v) with indication of a particular attitude (e.g. regretful). Now, all these choices are strongly interdetermining; …But they have almost no effect on the ideational meanings, on the *content* of what you are to be convinced of, which may be that the earth is flat, that Mozart was a great musician, or that I am hungry. Similarly, the ideational meanings do not determine the interpersonal ones; but there is a high degree of interdetermination *within* the ideational component: the kind of process I choose to refer to, the circumstances of time and space, and the natural logic that links all these together.

(1978: 187-188)

The choices (i) to (v) identified above at the Hallidayan interpersonal level of meaning are all choices made by a speaker as enacting a

particular act in speech, as is defending, for example. Indeed, speech acts, as language acts came to be called, have traditionally occupied a major part of what is now called the field of pragmatics, though initially speech acts were supposed to be part of semantics or philosophy of language, as they originate from the very field of philosophy.

As was mentioned above, it can be claimed that there is a distinct line of research in pragmatics that can be called **functionalist** pragmatics as compared to mainstream pragmatics that can be called **conversational pragmatics** (Horn 1988), as inaugurated by the later Wittgenstein and the philosophers Austin, Ryle, Grice, Searle and Strawson. Functional pragmatics was inaugurated by the Prague linguistics and, in particular, linguists such as Danes, Firbas and imported to England by M.A.K. Halliday. Firth, who was granted the first chair in linguistics in England, contributed significantly to this holistic approach to language. Current research on thematisation and similar topics by linguists such as Gundel, Kuno, Prince and Reinhart are very much in a functional pragmatics spirit.

4. Pragmatics as a subdiscipline

While the first (and to date the only) journal bearing exclusively the title Pragmatics (*Journal of Pragmatics*) was launched by Jacob Mey and Hartmut Haberland in 1977, the first textbook of Pragmatics did

not appear until 1983; Levinson's *Pragmatics*, a rather comprehensive and well documented compendium of the state of the art in Pragmatics (with significant original insights), came out in 1983 as did Leech's *Principles of Pragmatics*, a rather idiosyncratic textbook of Pragmatics. The first conference of the newly founded International Pragmatics Association (IPrA) (established in 1986) took place in 1985 giving shape to a new discipline. Nowadays, pragmatics is a standard course of the core syllabus in linguistics, but also in other main disciplines, in universities all over the world.

4.1. Definitions of pragmatics

The term *pragmatics* can be said to derive from Peirce's **pragmatism**, a philosophical movement of late 19th century that spread also at the turn and the beginning of the 20th century, whose main proponents were Charles Saunders **Peirce**, William **James**, Clarence Irving **Lewis**, John **Dewey** and George Herbert **Mead**. Pragmatism is primarily a new definition of 'truth' (James) and as such it is a method of determining the meanings of intellectual concepts on which reasoning is based. The philosophy of pragmatism can be summed up in the following maxim:

In order to ascertain the meaning of an intellectual conception one should consider what practical consequences might conceivably result by necessity from the truth of that conception; and the sum of these consequences will constitute the entire meaning of the conception.

(Thayer, 1970: 53)

In other words, the meaning of a word is the totality of ways in which an utterance of it can guide our actions.

As pragmatism is anti-Cartesian and empiricist, but also primarily a methodology putting the weight on the scientific method, it can be said to be akin to 20th century Anglo-Saxon linguistic philosophy, from which present day pragmatics eventually evolved. However, it is 'pragmatic' to the extent that 'truth' in the framework of pragmatism is defined in a rather 'utilitarian' way. For Peirce truth is given 'piecemeal', so to speak, for he believes that 'the absolute truth' will be arrived at and confirmed by scientific investigation. But until that time comes, we make do with 'interim' truths. In other words, truth has a developing character as it evolves into different advanced (or modified) stages. Truth happens to an idea or it is *made* true by events. Ideas can be true in respect of how they help us to relate to our experiences. While a true idea can agree with reality, it in no way 'copies' reality but rather fits our endeavour to do what is expedient. So the type of truth assumed in pragmatism is an instrumental truth since it is a truth that helps us in our social and communicative endeavour. This type of truth is sharply distinguished from the most prevalent type of truth (correspondence truth) within Anglo-Saxon 20th century linguistic philosophy.

Peirce as a pragmatist, adhering to James's view that 'meaning' is expressed either in the favoured behaviour or in the expected

experience, stresses the importance of what he calls an 'interpretant', a mediating sign between an object and a set of ideas, the 'ground'. But Peirce is best known for his tripartite division of signs into **icons**, **indices** and **symbols**. Icons are based on similarity, such that a map is an icon of the territory it represents. Indices are based on contiguity, such that smoke is an index for fire, and symbols are pure conventional signs, such as the three rings of the bell on a bus meaning 'stop'. Quite understandably, it is the third type of signs that are more significant for the human species comprising human conventional code systems.

Peirce is best known for his contribution to what is now called the field of semiotics, but pragmatism is related to pragmatics and in particular to speech act theory in that it promotes a theory of action just as in more recent linguistic philosophy we are concerned, not only with meaning, but also with what we as users of the language mean and primarily do with words. Indeed, Austin can be seen as the inaugurator of a British version of pragmatism, what we now call 'ordinary language philosophy' (Buekens, 1995).

The term *pragmatics* is owed to Morris (1938) who distinguished the three levels of linguistic theory: syntactics, semantics and pragmatics. Morris, a psychologically oriented philosopher, was well versed in many types of philosophy, including Logical Positivism and Pragmatism. Amongst his works are *Pragmatism, and scientific empiricism* (1973), and *The pragmatic movement in American*

philosophy (1970). Just like Peirce, Morris uses the term 'interpretant', which is the set of conditions enabling an organism to be an interpreter.

Definitions of pragmatics are of two kinds: [3]

a. they either define the field by identifying its main characteristics, or
b. they define pragmatics by singling out its sub-components, thus excluding some other areas that may indeed qualify to be included within the purview of pragmatics:

The following definitions would be included in (a):

Pragmatics is

"the study of the relations of signs to interpreters" (Morris, 1938: 84)

"the study of indexical rules for relating linguistic form to a given context" (Bates, 1976: 3)

"a theory that has as its subject matter the relationship between a language, its subject matter, and the users of the language" (Martin, 1971: 138)

"the theory of the relation between the language users and the language structure" (Apostel, 1971: 33)

"the science of language use" (Haberland and Mey, 1977: 1)

"the theoretical discipline which describes and explains the systematic connections between sentences, their meaning, and the appropriate circumstances of their utterance" (Kasher and Lappin, 1977: 34)

"the study of the general conditions of the communicative use of language" (Leech, 1983:10)

"the science of language seen in relation to its users" (Mey, 1993: 5)

"the science of linguistics inasmuch as that science focuses on the language-using human" (Mey, 1998: 722)

The following definitions would be included in (b):

Pragmatics

"is the study of deixis, implicature, presupposition, speech acts, and aspects of discourse structure" (Levinson, 1983: 27)

"concerns 'illocutionary force', 'implicature', 'presupposition', and 'context-dependent acceptability'" (Gazdar, 1979: 2)

For others, however, pragmatics is not an additional component of a theory of language, but rather it offers a different pragmatic *perspective* (Verschueren, 1999: 2).

5. Meaning in context: Types of interpretation

Both using and interpreting language involves a number of both conscious and subconscious choices. Meaning is variable, adaptable and negotiable (Verschueren, 1999). Interpretation and comprehension of sentences and utterances does not depend solely on semantic factors, that is, on lexical meaning and grammatical structures alone, but on a number of contextual factors. It is generally

accepted nowadays that utterance-meaning or speaker-meaning is richer than sentence-meaning; or, to put it differently, sentence-meaning or linguistic meaning is underspecified, or underdetermined. When we talk of sentence-meaning, word or lexical meaning or, in general, linguistic meaning, we talk of meaning that is **linguistically encoded** in the lexes, grammar or the structures of the language. This type of meaning can be **decoded**, just as it is encoded. And this decoding is predictable and standardised, just as the encoded meanings can be said to be standardised, predictable or determinate. What is encoded - decoded in linguistic matter can be said, even if very crudely, to correspond to our thoughts. This encoding - decoding business of meaning is reminiscent of buying a crystal bowl (a thought) putting it in a box, wrapped up and everything (linguistic matter), and sending it to the recipient. What s/he finds in that box when s/he unwraps the packet will most definitely be exactly the same crystal bowl I put in when I bought it. Encoded meaning is very much like our case of the crystal bowl. However, communicating, or rather interacting, in linguistic matter is not like that at all. Meaning is constantly negotiated between the interactants or conversationalists and this is a most significant characteristic of human communication and interaction.

a. **Disambiguation** (or sense selection): As we know from semantics, lexemes of a language can be homonymous or polysemous. They can have the same form but signify different lexical meanings, as in the case of *bank*, or they can have one lexical entry but signify a diversity

of related meanings, as in the case of *see*. What is needed for comprehension in context, that is, in use, is this very context. For example, sentences such as the following will be disambiguated in context:

1. I've just been to the bank.
2. Have you seen the latest *Economist*?

The hearer will select the most suitable interpretation (*bank*$_1$ = 'river bank', *bank*$_2$ = 'financial institution'; *see* = 'use your eyes to recognise', 'read') basing his/her selection of sense on the supporting context, both linguistic and situative at the moment of the utterance.

b. **sense construction**: This is the process by which a certain aspect of meaning is constructed, which is not necessarily within the lexeme's broader meaning-specification set.

c. **specification**: This is the process by which a more specific meaning is given to a lexeme which is, however, included within its meaning-specification.

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[2] Also Benveniste in 1954 (1971) was writing:
A more fruitful task would be to consider the means of applying in linguistics certain of the operations of symbolic logic. (1971: 12).
[3]Some definitions taken from Biletzki (1996).

CHAPTER THREE
SPEECH ACTS

1. The emergence of speech act theory

While pragmatics or a genuinely pragmatic analysis of language is foreshadowed in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, this work consists of pragmatic reasonings in viewing language whose outcome is rarely stated or conclusive. Witness to this is the voluminous and speculative literature generated by attempts at interpreting his writings. However, Wittgenstein put his hallmark on two distinct traditions in philosophy that dominated 20th century:

a. **linguistic philosophy** (1900 to present), culminating in **logical positivism** (1930-1945) (earlier Wittgenstein)
b. **philosophy of language** (later Wittgenstein).

In both these trends in philosophy, Wittgenstein broke new ground.

Despite Wittgenstein's pioneering work in philosophy of language breaking new ground in realms that were later to be called pragmatics, it was primarily Austin who opened new vistas in the analysis of language as action when he introduced his theory of speech acts. This is probably due to Wittgenstein's reluctance to arrive at definite conclusions and advance a well-delimited theory as Austin did later.

PI 126. 'Philosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything. - Since everything lies open to view there is nothing to explain. For what is hidden, for example, is of no interest to us.'

(Wittgenstein, 1953)

Anthony Quinton puts this difference between Wittgenstein's and Austin's approaches to philosophy rather aptly when he writes that

There is a significant difference between Wittgenstein's attitude to philosophical puzzlement and that of the Oxford philosophers of ordinary language [Austin, Gilbert Ryle, Grice]. For him its relief was something he could compare with psychotherapy; for them, more breezily, it was a kind of brisk mental hygiene. However, he and they agreed, on the whole, that philosophy should not be systematic, but, rather, piecemeal; it is not a body of theoretical principles, but, rather, a method of treatment to be applied as and where the need for it is felt.

(*The Listener*, 22 April 1976, pp. 495-6)

It appears that Austin drew on later Wittgenstein's work[4] when he expounded his theory of speech acts emphasising the role of language as an exponent of human action. However, he tried to delineate a rather full-fledged theory of "How to do things with words", which was the title of a book published posthumously in 1962, based on his William James lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955. It is rather sad that linguists of various denominations do not usually place

due significance to Austin's work, but tend to refer primarily to Searle, his student, who further advanced the theory of speech acts and propagated it outside the frontiers of UK, in America and all over the world. We now turn to Austin's theory of speech acts.

2. How to do things with words

Austin's *How to do things with words* comprises twelve chapters corresponding to the twelve lectures he delivered; it is interesting and rather imperative to read them in this order as he advances his views which change in the course of the lectures. The series of lectures comprising the book was given in the context of the prevalent theme of the time in philosophy of language, Logical Positivism. Austin's first lecture acquires meaning as a reaction to the main doctrine of Logical Positivism, according to which the meaning of a sentence is its method of verification. If a sentence cannot be verified, then it is close to being meaningless. In any case, the sentences of a language, according to logical positivists, were distinguished into two classes: those that could be judged as descriptive, which were first rate sentences, and those that were not descriptive, such as exclamatory or imperative or questions; the latter were judged to be second rate sentences, as they could not be verified. But even in the class of first rate sentences, that is descriptive sentences, logical positivists would identify those ones which could not be verified successfully, i.e. sentences that came to be called 'value-judgements', such as "God is benevolent", or "Tom is a good fellow" or "The book is very good"

and, generally, ethical statements that were assumed to be used to evince emotion. These statements were called pseudo-statements or emotive statements by logical positivists. Incidentally, the identification of the two functions of language in linguistics, the representative or descriptive, on the one hand, and the emotive, on the other, is owed to this distinction between descriptive and pseudo-descriptive statements in philosophy.

It was in this climate that Austin noticed that some sentences, despite their seemingly descriptive form, do not even set out to describe anything. Instead, they just do something: When I say 'I apologise', I do not actually describe anything at all; I am just doing something at the moment of uttering the sentence, that is, I am performing the act of apologising effectively thereby. The trend to presume that all sentences are to be looked upon as descriptive Austin called the **descriptive fallacy**. Moreover, he coined the term **constative** to label descriptive statements for, as he put it, "not all true or false statements are descriptions" (3).

Questions

1. Can we identify the perlocutionary effects with the consequences of the speech act?
2. Why is the conventionality of a speech act connected with the feature of determinateness?
3. How can we tell illocutionary acts from perlocutionary ones?

4. Find at least one place in Austin's exposition of the speech act that is very reminiscent of Wittgenstein's notion of language-game. (Clue: lecture IV).
5. Is there a distinction to be made between direct and indirect speech acts? Or, can the distinction be maintained on justifiable grounds?

Searle's elaboration of speech act theory

Searle, one of Austin's students, set out to systematise Austin's speech acts. As has been said, illocutionary speech acts are, more or less, systematic and conventional. If this is so, then they are determinate, too, and therefore, predictable in some form (This is a feature of finiteness). So Searle set out to define the conditions for the systematicity of illocutionary forces of speech acts. In other words, he tried to identify those conditions that characterise certain types of speech acts.

By 'speech act' Searle wishes to refer to the product of the act of speaking as the basic unit of linguistic communication rather than to the action itself. He writes:

…the production of the sentence token under certain conditions is the illocutionary act, and the illocutionary act is the minimal unit of linguistic communication.

(Searle, 1971: 39)

Searle emphasises that to perform a speech act or an illocutionary act, as language or linguistic acts have come to be most commonly called, is “to engage in a rule-governed form of behaviour” (Searle, 1971:40). Borrowing a distinction made by Rawls between regulative and constitutive rules, Searle distinguishes between two types of activity: Those that exist quite independently of the rules that may apply to them in order to systematise them, on one hand, and those that owe their very existence to the rules that constitute them, on the other.

Examples of the former activities would be driving a car or serving dinner as a waiter. The activities exist irrespective of whether the rules that systematise them exist or not or whether, if they exist, are followed or not. A car can be driven without heeding any road and traffic signs, or without the necessity of any signs or instructions. Think of how you would drive a car in the wilderness, or in a chaotic situation where there would be no pre-existing regulating instructions. Likewise, dinner can be served on the left side of the dineé or without making the right movements in this elaborate procedure. Compare how dinner is served at a Hilton restaurant by trained waiters (it is almost a ritual) and how casually it is served at home by your mother, for example.

Examples of the latter activities would be a game of chess or football. These games depend on, or are constituted by, the very existence of the rules that nourish them. There would be no game if there were no rules, while driving would still be possible even if all traffic signs were removed. Indeed, Wittgenstein touched on this issue, too:

PI. 205. …But isn't chess defined by its rules? And how are these rules present in the mind of the person who is intending to play chess?

206. Following a rule is analogous to obeying an order. We are trained to do so; we react to an order in a particular way.

Rules regulating pre-existing activities are called **regulative rules** whereas rules constituting activities are called **constitutive rules**. Speech acts, Searle writes, are performed according to constitutive rules and saying X counts as doing Y. He places a great significance on constitutive rules in speech-acting when he claims that "the semantics of a language can be regarded as a series of systems of constitutive rules and …illocutionary acts are acts performed in accordance with these sets of constitutive rules" (Searle, 1971: 42). And in his later work[5] this is what he tried to do: to formulate a set of constitutive rules for types of speech act. These rules are obeyed almost subconsciously as we speak or act in speech. As Wittgenstein put it:

PI. 219. …When I obey a rule, I do not choose.
I obey the rule *blindly*.

It is interesting to note, by the way, that according to Searle, speech act theory is not part of pragmatics - indeed at the time he was writing (late 60s) there was not significant awareness of the field of pragmatics - but rather it constitutes the semantics of language.

Searle thinks that intention is most crucial in meaning. He borrows Grice's (1957) theory of meaning, which is the first account of meaning in terms of speaker's intentions, and reformulates it into a theory of speech acts. However, he emphasises the importance of the conventional meaning of words and seeks in his reformulation to combine both intention and convention as well as the relation between the two. He writes:

In the performance of an illocutionary act the speaker intends to produce a certain effect by means of getting the hearer to recognize his intention to produce that effect, and furthermore, if he is using words literally, he intends this recognition to be achieved in virtue of the fact that the rules for using the expressions he utters associate the expressions with the production of that effect.

(Searle, 1971:46).

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[4] But see Levinson (1983).
[5] The original publication of Searle (1971) was in 1965.

CHAPTER FOUR
LOGIC AND CONVERSATION

1. Grice: Meant but not said

The general observation and feeling in philosophy of language and linguistics that more is meant than said was rather embarrassing for theorists of semantics. There was an urgent call for an account or theory of what is meant without being said. Such an account would either be integrated within a semantic theory augmenting it with unpredictable consequences (for truth-conditionality, for example) as in the case of speech act theory (felicity conditions replacing truth-conditionality), or it would supplement in an ancillary fashion a truth-conditional semantics (cf. Kempson, 1977). Grice opted for the latter solution. Although he may even be considered the father of pragmatics since his work on Logic and Conversation is the most-oft-cited reference in the literature in pragmatics, his theory was advanced with a view to saving truth-conditional semantics rather than to developing a systematic theory of pragmatics. To state, then that Grice's "major interests were discourse[6] and its pragmatic conditions (e.g., cooperation and conversational maxims), as well as certain purely philosophical issues, such as the theory of happiness" (Koktová, 1998) without stressing his concentration on the view that truth-conditional semantics is thus salvaged (cf. McCawley's 1981

section title “Grice saves”) is rather a misrepresentation of the situation. In fact, Grice was interested in the philosophy of perception (rather than happiness) and the origins of his theory of logic and conversation are to be found in his account of a theory of perception (1961).

The traditional view of the semantics of language represented in a rather logical form held by Grice (semantic parsimony) is the point of convergence between his approach to language and earlier Wittgenstein’s view of language as being notationally formalisable.[7] Thus, it can be claimed that whereas Austin’s philosophy seems to continue in later Wittgenstein’s tradition, Grice’s departing point is the adoption of the earlier Wittgenstein’s general conception of language.

Indeed, Grice’s theory of conversation can be seen as a reaction or reply to later Wittgenstein’s account of meaning as use and his reluctance to differentiate between a meaning component and a use range of extra-logical meanings. While for later Wittgenstein any difference in use would concurrently entail a difference in meaning, too, for Grice, as we will see below, meaning is constant and conventional whereas his theory of the logic of conversation will be called upon to account for distinct uses. For example, both sentences below will have the same meaning compositionally derivable from their truth-tables (*p* & *q*), while the difference in anteriority is captured by the enforcement of the maxims of conversation:

She got pregnant and married John.
She married John and got pregnant.

While for Wittgenstein *and* would have distinct meanings following its distinct uses, Grice assigns one conjunctive logical meaning to the natural conjunction and accounts for all other variable meaning aspects in terms of implicatures generated by the speaker or derivable from specific utterances.

In the next section we will cast a more detailed look into Grice's theory of logic and conversation and will trace the development of the notion of implicature.

2. The emergence of implicature

The notion of 'implication', the forerunner of 'implicature', derives, as almost all important notions in pragmatics, from philosophy. In not too distant years some philosophers called attention to the concept of contextual implication in their attempt to solve philosophical problems by analysing the meanings of words and by analysing the relations between linguistic forms and the world. In particular, the notion of contextual implication figures prominently in Nowell-Smith (1957), who was the first to flesh it out. He defines contextual implication as follows:

I shall say that a statement *p* contextually implies a statement *q* if anyone who knew the normal conventions of the language would be entitled to infer *q* from *p in the context in which they occur.*

(72)

A detailed exposition of contextual implication is offered by Hungerland (1960), who rejects the inductive interpretation of the paradigm of contextual implication (to say *p* is to imply that one believes that *p*), and, instead, proposes an explicatory model according to which "a speaker in making a statement contextually implies whatever one is entitled to infer on the basis of the presumption that his act of stating is normal" (224-5).

However, Grice was the first, and, to date, the only philosopher to develop a fully-fledged theory of contextual implication considered from the point of view of the philosopher of language, although in his earlier writings his immediate concern lay with the problem of formulating a theory of perception, rather than with advancing a theory of implication *per se*. Later on, however, in a series of lectures, Grice developed a very influential theory of conversation, in which the notion of implication has a prominent role. In the following sections, we will give a brief, but critical, sketch of this theory.

3. Grice's account of 'what is said'

Grice distinguishes between two identifications of 'what is said'. A full identification, for which one would need to know "(a) the identity of *x*, (b) the time of utterance, (c) the meaning on the particular occasion of utterance" (Grice, 1975: 44) the words, or sentence uttered; and a partial one, for which none of the above factors are needed.

Although Grice's definition of a partial identification of 'what is said' is closely related to the conventional meaning of words (or sentences), yet it is not identified with it. He writes:

In the sense in which I am using the word 'say', I intend what someone has said to be closely related to the conventional meaning of the words (the sentence) which he has uttered.

(1975: 44)

However, the partial identification of what is said seems to be indistinguishable from the conventional meaning of words or sentences. The reason for his distinction, apparently, lies in the fact that he wants to leave room within the bounds of conventional meanings for his concept of conventional implicatures. Conventional implicatures have to be part of the conventional meaning of words. Therefore, a partial identification of what is said is identifiable with only a part of the conventional meaning and bears a part - whole relationship to it.

The question that arises is what is the utility of a distinction between two identifications of what is said. Wouldn't the definition of a full identification of what is said still leave room within the bounds of the conventional meaning for accommodating conventional implicatures deriving from it? Grice does not seem to give any justification for this distinction. A graphic representation of his concept of 'what is said' would be as in figure 1:

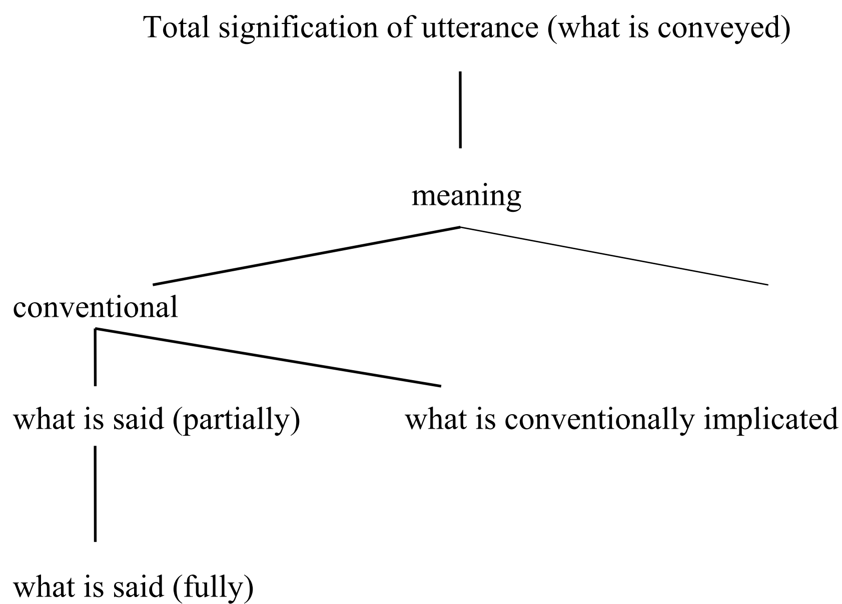

figure1

The only grounds for singling out a partial identification of what is said seems to be the fact that we have a rough understanding of what

is said, as well as of what is conventionally implicated, without having any knowledge of the factors determining the full identification of what is said. For if I overhear someone saying (1),

1. Robin is very fond of seals, therefore he ordered one,

I have a rough understanding of what is said and what is implicated (conventionally), though I do not know who is the referent of 'Robin', nor whether what is meant by the word 'seal' is the sea mammal, or the engraved stamps, or the sealing wax. I still understand, though, that the person referred to as Robin ordered either a sea mammal, or an engraved stamp, or a sealing wax, as a result of his (or even, her) being fond of it. This relation of consequentiality is what Grice calls the conventional implicature attaching to the word 'therefore'.

Another hitch in his account seems to be the following: In order to determine factor (c), the meaning, on the particular occasion of utterance, of the phrase used, you need to know more than what is specified in factors (a) and (b), i.e., the identity of references in the sentence uttered, and the time of utterance. For imagine a situation in which I say to my friend (2) at a specific time *t*,

2. Queen Elizabeth II is very fond of seals;

given that the identity of the reference is quite clear and the time is also specified, my friend couldn't, on the grounds of the identification

of these two parameters alone, decide between the two interpretations (2a) and (2b) of (2):

2a. Queen Elizabeth II is very fond of sea mammals
2b. Queen Elizabeth II is very fond of engraved stamps.

More circumstances of the utterance need to be known for identifying precisely the conventional meaning of the words used, i.e., for a full identification of 'what is said', as Grice conceptualises it.

However, enough has been said about Grice's account of 'what is said'. His main contribution to pragmatics has been his proposal that talking be seen as a co-operative enterprise, with an accepted purpose and direction, a case of "purposive, indeed rational, behaviour" (Grice, 1975: 47), governed by the Cooperative Principle and its maxims, which is sketched in the next section.

4. The Cooperative Principle and its maxims

The Cooperative Principle (henceforth CP) specifies that our conversational contributions are governed by a rationale that would run as follows:

Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk-exchange in which you are engaged.

(Grice, 1975: 45)

Four categories are distinguished within the CP, which he calls **Quantity, Quality, Relation** and **Manner**. Further subsidiary maxims fall under these categories:

Quantity ('M.Quant'):
1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange).
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Quality ('M.Qual'): *Supermaxim:* Try to make your contribution one that is true.
1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

Relation ('MR'): Be relevant.

Manner ('MM'): *Supermaxim:* Be perspicuous.
1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
4. Be orderly.

5. Conversational implications

Grice's (1975) notion of conversational implicature is intimately connected with the CP. He characterises it as follows:

> A man who, by (in, when) saying (or making as if to say) that *p* has implicated that *q*, may be said to have conversationally implicated that *q*, *provided that:* (1) he is to be presumed to be observing the conversational maxims, or at least the cooperative principle, (2) the supposition that he is aware that, or thinks that, *q*, is required in order to make his saying or making as if to say *p* (or doing so in *those* terms) consistent with this presumption; and (3) the speaker thinks (and would expect the hearer to think that the speaker thinks) that it is within the competence of the hearer to work out, or grasp intuitively, that the supposition mentioned in (2) *is* required.
>
> (Grice, 1975: 49-50)

A conversational implicature, therefore, is worked out on the assumption that the CP is observed. However, it is mostly generated via an apparent violation of it. A participant in a talk-exchange may fail to fulfil a maxim in a variety of ways. He may "quietly and unostentatiously *violate* a maxim", or he may "*opt out* from the operation both of the maxim and of the CP" (Grice, 1975: 49). He may be faced with a *clash* of two maxims, when, for instance, he cannot give the requisite information on a matter ('M. Quant.') or if he lacks adequate evidential grounds for it ('M.Qual.'). Furthermore,

he may "*flout* a maxim; that is, he may *blatantly* fail to fulfil it". In this latter case, when it is clear that the speaker is neither trying to mislead, nor is he faced with a clash of maxims, and, on the assumption that he is in a position to fulfil the maxim, then the hearer is faced with a problem: he wants to reconcile the speaker's saying what he did with the supposition that the CP is observed. It is this situation, Grice says, that characteristically gives rise to the generation of a conversational implicature; "and when a conversational implicature is generated in this way", Grice writes, "I shall say that a maxim is exploited" (Grice, 1975: 49).

Grice distinguishes between two classes of non-conventional, conversational implicatures: generalised conversational implicatures and particularised conversational implicatures. In cases of particularised conversational implicature, "an implicature", Grice says, "is carried by saying that *p* on a particular occasion, in virtue of special features of the context". In these cases, he adds, "there is no room for the idea that an implicature of this sort is *normally* carried by saying that *p*" (Grice, 1975: 56).

On the other hand, the absence of these characteristics seems to define the class of general conversational implicatures. For example, the generalised conversational implicature attaching to conditional and disjunctive statements is that there are non-truth-functional grounds for making them. So in the case of *p or q* expressions, there is an implicature that the speaker is not in a position to make a stronger

statement, if the assumption is that he is observing the CP. For if he were in a position to say that *p*, then, according to the maxim of Quantity, he would say so. But to choose this form of expression, he conversationally implicates that he lacks sufficient evidential grounds for saying *p*, or for saying *q*, and he, thus, avoids a clash with the maxim of Quality. Likewise, in cases of use of *if p then q* forms, the generalised conversational implicature thereby generated is that there are non-truth-functional grounds, i.e., that *q* is inferable from *p*, or that *p* is a good reason for *q*. Grice, therefore, is in a position to maintain that, accepting this explanation for the non-truth-functional aspects of meaning of such locutions, enables us to handle disjunctive, conditional and conjunctive statements in terms of their logical counterparts, $p V q$, $p \rightarrow q$, $p \& q$.

However, Grice admits that non-controversial examples of generalised conversational implicatures are hard to find, "since it is all too easy to treat a generalised, conversational implicature as if it were a conventional implicature" (Grice, 1975: 56). Moreover, although a conversational implicature is a condition that is not specified within the boundaries of the conventional force of an utterance, Grice admits that "it may not be impossible for what starts life…as a conversational implicature to become conventionalised" (Grice, 1975: 58). It is quite obvious that Grice here refers to generalised, conversational implicature, since in most cases of particularised conversational implicature, the implicature is carried through in virtue of contextual features which are not germane to the utterance, *per se*, of the

sentence. Whereas in cases of generalised implicature, the implicature is carried in virtue of the use of a certain form of words in an utterance. It is immediately evident that there is tension in the distinction between, and specification of, these two types of implicature, the conventional and the non-conventional conversational generalised implicature (see Kitis 1982).

In the next section, we give an account of two types of test that Grice has proposed for the identification of implicatures and for determining its type. These are detachability and cancellability.

6. Detachability and cancellability tests

Two features that could characterise conversational implicatures are detachability and cancellability. Grice is not very explicit as to what the doctrine should be, neither does he claim that any of these two tests is decisive for determining the presence of implicata. He writes that all conversational implicatures are cancellable, and, apparently, he is inclined to claim that they should be non-detachable, too. It looks as though, ideally, the doctrine should prescribe that:

a. all conversational implicatures must be cancellable, and
b. all conversational implicatures must be non-detachable.

An implicature is not detachable is so far as one cannot find another form of words to make exactly the same assertion that would not carry the same implicature. An implicature is detachable when it can be removed (detached) from what is said without altering the assertion or proposition or without affecting the truth-conditions of what is said.

An implicature is cancellable inasmuch as one can withhold commitment from the implicature carried by what one has said, without thereby annulling what was said. It can be cancelled, either **explicitly**, by the addition of a clause of the form 'but not *p*' or 'I do not mean to imply that *p*', or **contextually**, when the context is such that no implicature is carried by the same locution.

Unfortunately, however, neither of the two tests is considered to be a necessary, or a sufficient condition for the presence of an implicature. For example, non-detachability cannot be a necessary condition because an implicature may be carried in virtue of the manner of expression, and, in that case, it is detachable. Taking into consideration that entailments are also non-detachable, it is clear that detachability cannot be a sufficient condition for conversational implicature, either. The cancellability test can fail, too, because of our loose use of language. For example, we may use locutions, such as 'It is green now', when all we actually mean is that it looks green.

Grice argues, however, that the implicature is not detachable in so far as it is not possible to say the same thing in another way which would

not carry the implicature. He cites the verb ‘try’ as an example of this instance. He writes:

One would normally implicate that there was a failure, or some chance of failure, or that someone thinks/thought there to be some chance of failure, if one said ‘A tried to do x’; this implicature would also be carried if one said ‘A attempted to do x’, ‘A endeavoured to do x’, ‘A set himself to do x’.

(Grice, 1978: 115)

However, the question that is raised in this connection is why meaning aspects should be treated as conversational implicatures rather than be regarded as part of the meaning proper of the word, or at most as conventional implicatures (cf. Karttunen and Peters, 1975, 1977) if the existence of such a class of implicatures is to be conceded. In the same vein then, one could say that the verb ‘chase’ implicates that the entity identified as its direct object is moving fast, or when we say ‘She bought a cardigan’, we thereby imply that there was somebody to sell the cardigan, or, further, when we say ‘She sold five beakers today’, the implicature attaching to the word ‘sold’ is that there was at least one person to whom she sold the beakers, and so on (cf. Fillmore 1971). One, then, wonders what the conventional meaning of these words is. Besides, such a proliferation of implicata would be intolerable on the assumption that implicatures are to be treated as

informal inferences, as indeed they are by Grice, and, hence, not to be handled within a formal framework.

7. Conventional implicature

Another class of implicatures are what Grice calls conventional implicatures. Conventional implicatures derive from the conventional meaning of the words, and, yet, they are not part of what is said. Therefore, they are not truth-functional aspects of meaning, neither will an account of them be included in a semantics proper in Grice's view.

While the notion of conventional implicature has posed a rather embarrassing problem for scholars who wanted to maintain the divide between a truth-conditional semantics and a class of non-logical aspects of meaning accountable within the life-belt notion of conversational implicature, unfortunately this small category of recalcitrant phenomena termed conventional implicatures proved a fast developing one. Linguistic phenomena that have been placed within the ever expanding class of conventional implicature include the following:

a. connectives such as *but, therefore*
b. adverbials such as *already, still, yet, even*
c. verbs such as *manage to*
d. cleft constructions such as *It is John who battered Mary*

e. tense such as *Mary will go to the party*
f. suprasegmental phenomena such as intonation contour
g. lexical choice such as between *tu/vous, εσύ/εσείς*

To give one example, the semantic truth-conditional, formalisable meaning of (1a) below is just (2), its entailment. (1c) is not included within its semantic meaning; rather the latter is an appropriateness condition on asserting either (1a) or (1b). Again, what is negated by (1b) is (2) rather than (1c).

(1)a. Mary managed to pass Pragmatics.
b. Mary didn't manage to pass Pragmatics.
c. It was difficult for Mary to pass Pragmatics.
(2) Mary passed Pragmatics.

Thus, by claiming that (2) is just conventionally implicated, (conventional implicatum) in (1a,b) (Karttunen and Peters, 1979), we manage to salvage our two-valued truth-functional account of (1a, b).

It is worth noting that the notion of conventional implicature was employed in order to account for certain presuppositions. However, while presuppositional phenomenta usually span over the whole sentence, the locus classicus of conventional implicature alà Grice is a certain range of specific lexical items, such as conjunction (*but, therefore*), adverbs and certain verbs. All such items are claimed to

play no role in the determination of the truth-conditional meaning of the sentence or utterance containing them.

Holes, plugs and filters

Holes are called those lexical items or structures that let conventional implicatures or presuppositions go through to, or be inherited by, the next higher expression. Negation, for example, is considered to be a hole, since it allows the implicature of (i) to go through to (ii):

i. Mary managed to pass Pragmatics
ii. Mary did not manage to pass Pragmatics

Contradiction negation, however, is not a hole but a plug, since it does not allow either presuppositions or conventional implicata to go through.; that is, they, too, are negated as they fall within the scope of the negation operator:

iii. Mary did not manage to pass Pragmatics, it was not difficult anyway.

Whereas ii will be represented with internal negation, that is as the conjunction of the conventional implicatum and the negation of 'Mary passed Pragmatics' (iv), iii will be represented as in (v):

iv. ORDINARY NEGATION: $\sim F^E, F^I$
v. CONTRADICTION NEGATION: $\sim(F^e \& F^I), F^I \vee \sim F^I$

(where F^e stands for the truth-conditional meaning of F (its entailment) and F^i its conventional implicatum).

Factive predicates, such as *regret,* have been called holes, too:

i. Mary regrets that she failed Pragmatics.
ii. Mary regrets that she failed her husband.

On the other hand, verbs of saying are considered plugs because they plug (block) the passage of the implicature from the source-expression generating it to the next one higher up:

i. John said that Mary is meeting the prince.

Logical connectives are neither plugs nor holes; they are filters, that is, depending on the propositions they conjoin, they either let the presupposition or implicatum go through or block it.

8. Generalised conversational implicature

This type of implicature belongs together with particularised implicature in the category of conversational implicature. In other words, both particularised and generalised implicatures are subspecies of conversational implicature. The common characteristic these two subtypes share is that they both invoke the co-operative principle, that

is, the implicature has to be calculated. The hearer has to reason (even if not consciously) to the implicature generated by the utterance at issue or the lexical item used. It is quite noteworthy that generalised implicatures mostly concern lexical items, just like conventional implicature, and this is probably the reason for confusing these two types (Koktova, 1998).

The difference between generalised and conventional implicatures is that in the latter type there is no active, or even latent invocation of the CP. As a consequence, conventional implicatures of specific linguistic items or constructions are invariant and determinate. That means that they are predictable and constant with each occurrence of the construction that gives rise to them on account of its meaning and irrespective of their context, to which they are immune. All these characteristics contribute to its conventional standing. Prime examples of this type of conventional implicature are *but* and *therefore.*

On the other hand, generalised conversational implicatures, also attaching mostly to lexical items and constructions, are derived on the basis of calculability. While in both cases the hearer will not resort to context (both types of implicature are immune to context), she will, nevertheless, derive the implicature of the construction used on grounds of the speaker's specific choice dictated by his adherence to the maxims of CP, as described by Grice.

9. Neo-Griceans

Neo-Griceans are called a number of linguists such as Levinson, Horn and Atlas, who further developed Grice's theory and, in particular, his maxims, in an effort to tighten up and systematise the theory's capability towards an explanation of linguistic phenomena; they concentrated mostly on generalised conversational implicature, which admittedly was left rather poorly specified by Grice.

Their primary concern, however, was some recalcitrant linguistic phenomena, such as semantic presupposition, that posed a great problem to truth conditional semantics. Although they include the solutions proposed within the field of radical pragmatics (cf. Atlas and Levinson,1981), it would have probably been more understandable, if their proposals had been included within a field of radical semantics. And this for the following reason: their focus, just like Grice's, is to maintain truth-functionality in an acceptable way and systematise non-logical pragmatic meaning. Ambiguities, thus, will be pragmatic and not semantic. It is worth recalling that the latter type of ambiguity is embarrassing for semantic theories. In effect, Atlas and Levinson (1981), Horn (1984, 1989) and Levinson (1983) are amongst the most influential reformulations of Grice's theory trying to capture non-propositional aspects of meaning, as well.

On this view, broadly speaking, conversational implicatures are defined on the level of semantic representations. Semantic

representations are the logical forms of sentences and are distinct from their truth conditions. As we have seen, the most embarrassing linguistic phenomenon for truth conditionality is presupposition: that is, the undoubtedly distinct feeling we get as interpreters that more is conveyed by some sentences than is linguistically encoded in them (cf. ‘I stopped beating my husband’ conveys the presupposition that I used to beat him). These aspects of meaning pose a serious problem for truth conditional semantics as they are constant under negation. In the wake of Grice’s theory of logic and conversation, many scholars, as we have seen, tried to explain away presupposition in terms of implicatures, either conventional or generalised. Moreover, Neo-Griceans, offering rather formal formulations of Gricean implicatures, fall in this category, and can, therefore, be seen as continuing the earlier Wittgensteinean tradition.

In particular, Atlas and Levinson (1981) propose to account for the presuppositional behaviour of sentences like the following,

It wasn’t John that Mary kissed,

by distinguishing between two types of negation: internal and external. The external negation will be represented as follows:

It is not the case that (John kissed Mary). $\sim K(j, m)$

While the internal will roughly correspond to:

There was somebody who kissed Mary and this somebody was not John.

$\exists(x)\ (x=j)\ {\sim}K(j, m)$

If this is so, then we can claim that the presupposition of the declarative sentence is an entailment which is negated together with the negated proposition (external negation), while the interpretation which favours the preservation of the presupposition can be said to be a generalised conversational implicature derived on the basis of the **Principle of Informativeness**.

As Atlas and Levinson (1981: 12-13) write,

The relevant level of analysis for explaining implicature is the level of semantic representation. If two English sentences have logically equivalent semantic representations, they do NOT necessarily have the SAME semantic representations…they may be said to have the same semantic interpretation, but what is relevant to the calculation of implicature is the semantic representation. Although it may be acceptable to call the proposition associated with a sentence its INTENSION (Carnap), it is just a mistake to treat the proposition as its SENSE (Frege)…Logically equivalent sentences have the same intension; they do not necessarily have the same sense. The nondetachability of implicature is a matter of sense, not a matter of intension.

Scalar implicature

Scalar implicatures are a type of generalised implicatures which are attached mainly to lexical items

Zipf's Principle of Least Effort

Zipf (1949) introduced a principle that was claimed to be operative in human activity and mostly in language use. It consists of the postulation of two antinomic forces, that of economy of both physical and mental energy, and that of the need for easy and effective communication. The interaction between these two antithetical forces has been called the *Principle of Least Effort*.

This principle has been used in linguistic explanations (Kitis, 1982, amongst others) and has also been used in structuring Grice's maxims more efficiently. Horn (1984) reduces Grice's maxims to two basic principles that correspond to Zipf's principle of least effort:

The Q principle (hearer-based):
Make your contribution sufficient.
Say as much as you can. (given both QUALITY and R)

The R principle (speaker-based):
Make your contribution necessary.
Say no more than you must. (given Q).

These two principles will adequately explain the extra non-logical meaning of the following sentences. Reformulating Grice's account, we can account for the meaning in the third column as the generalised conversational implicatures of the sentences in the first column. The second column includes the truth-functional meaning.

Sentence	*One-sided reading* *Lower-bounded by* *Truth-conditional mg*	*Two-sided reading* *Upper- bounded by* *Gener. Convers. Impl*
a. He has three children	*...at least three*	*...exactly three...*
b. Some of my students are intelligent	…some if not all…	…some but not all…
c. It's possible he'll pass	…at least possible…	possible but not necessary
d. He's poor or weird	…and perhaps both…	…but not both…
e. .It's good	…if not excellent…	…but not excellent…
f. It's warm	…at least warm…	…but not hot…

Thus, the ambiguity of the sentences of the table are pragmatically, but not semantically, ambiguous. Generalised conversational implicature is called to explain pragmatic ambiguity without thus affecting truth-functional meaning.

As Horn claims

> if the Q-Principle corresponds to $Quantity_{1}$, the countervailing R-Principle collects not only Relation, but $Quantity_{2}$ and possibly all the manner maxims… The R-Principle, mirroring the effect of the Q-Principle…, is an upper-bounding principle which may be (and standardly is) exploited to generate lower-bounding implicata. A speaker who says '…p…' may license the Q-inference that he meant '…at most p…'; a speaker who says '…p…' may license the R-inference that he meant '…more than p…'.
>
> (Horn, 1984: 14)

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[6] Indeed, Grice has been criticised for providing an asocial theory of conversation (Gumperz, 1990; Harris, 1995 amongst others) and the term 'discourse' by definition refers to a social construct. See EK's Notes on Discourse Analysis.

[7] This view is at first glance objectionable (Dascal, personal communication) on the grounds that Grice's theory of meaning (1957) is significantly opposed to an earlier Wittgensteinian view of language. However, the points of convergence are to be sought in the shared broader view of a theory of language that needs to preserve a two-valued logic constituting the truth-conditional, formal semantics. The preservation of this perspective was the instigating or motivating force for the development of the logic of conversation for Grice, a perspective not espoused by Austin, for example.

CHAPTER FIVE
RELEVANCE THEORY

1. Introduction

Fodor (1983) in his book *The modularity of mind discusses* the well-known problem concerning inferential processes. While, he says, we are at home with decoding processes in language, that is, we understand how decoding takes place, we still have not effectively answered the question of how we infer meaning that is not linguistically encoded. Sperber and Wilson (1986) (henceforth S&W) set out to do exactly this: They set out to answer the question of how we infer meaning that is not encoded in linguistic form. Their answer came in the form of a principle they posited, the principle of Relevance. In what follows we will examine the main characteristics of Relevance theory.

2. Sperber and Wilson's Relevance theory

It has been the tradition in linguistics to identify within the range of **linguistically encoded** information two types of meaning: These two types have been identified in the following distinctions:

describing   indicating

stating	showing
saying	conventionally
implicating	
truth-conditional	non-truth-
conditional	
conceptual	procedural
representational	computational

However, S&W stress that it is not true that there is a one-to-one correspondence between representational or conceptual and truth-conditional meaning, on the one hand, and computational or procedural and non-truth-conditional meaning, on the other. So the arrangement of these distinctions in two columns above is rather deceptive and should not lead the reader into assuming exact correspondences. As S&W say these distinctions (truth-conditional—non-truth-conditional; conceptual—procedural [or representational—computational]) cross-cut each other. Having said that, in Pragmatics we are more interested in the twilight zone between decoding and inferencing. It is quite clear that inferences are not based solely on linguistic decoding. Inferencing is based both on linguistic decoding but also on information whose source is to be sought outside linguistic encoding, that is, outside the constructions of the language. The principle of Relevance was set up with a view to accounting for what type of non-encoded information needs to be accessed along with the encoded linguistic information in the interpretation of utterances. In other words, how do we decide which information is decoded and

which is just inferred? The following figure is from Sperber and Wilson (1993: 3) and summarizes the various types of information, both decoded and inferred, going into the interpretation of utterances:

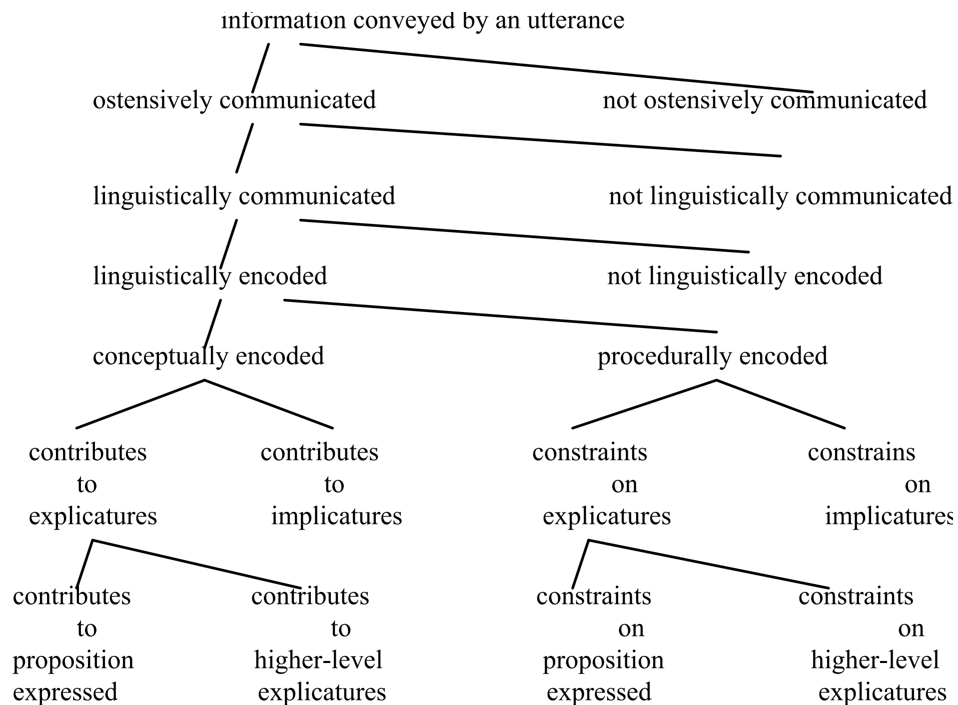

fig. 1. Types of communicated information

2.1. Types of information

A basic type of conveyed information is linguistically encoded. But not all information needs to be conveyed in a linguistic form. For example, I know that my son is hungry when he makes a break and comes downstairs to the kitchen. This information may be uncertain but it is reinforced if I see him going towards the fridge. It is further reinforced if I see him rummaging through the items stored therein.

However, the information that he is hungry is accidental because he neither meant to communicate it to me nor to even inform me of it. Even if he meant to let me know that he was hungry, my inference to this effect is based on his behaviour and not on the recognition of his intention to communicate anything to me. This type of information that often accompanies our utterances is called **informative intention** and is defined as follows:

Informative intention: to make manifest or more manifest to the audience a set of assumptions $\{I\}$.

There is another type of information, however, that is of immediate relevance to linguistic communication, and this type can be called **communicative intention** and can be defined as follows:

Communicative intention: to make it mutually manifest to audience and communicator that the communicator has this informative intention.

To carry the same example further, although my son can (un)intentionally communicate to me that he is hungry by his behaviour, he can also communicate his state of hunger to me by letting me recognise his intention to inform me it. This can be done verbally while he is seated at his desk upstairs. Moreover, the only way to communicate to me that he was hungry two days ago, when I went visiting his aunt, is the linguistic way, i.e., to employ a

communicative intention to this effect. Both informative and communicative intentions constitute part of what can be called **ostensive-inferential communication**.

This is how Blakemore and Carston (1999) give a brief picture of Relevance theory:

To say that a proposition carries the presumption of relevance is to say that it yields the contextual effects which are necessary for the utterance which expresses it to achieve the level of *optimal relevance.* Contextual effects are simply the various ways in which a new item of information can interact with the addressee's assumptions about the world to yield an improved representation of the world. Relevance is defined in terms of contextual effects and the processing effort required for their recovery, so it is a matter of degree, increasing with the number of contextual effects and decreasing with the amount of processing effort. According to the Communicative Principle of Relevance, a presumption of optimal relevance is conveyed by every act of ostensive (overt) communication. Optimal relevance, on Sperber & Wilson's 1995 definition, is the level of relevance achieved when the utterance is (i) relevant enough to be worth processing, and (ii) the most relevant one compatible with the speaker's abilities and preference. It is this single communicative principle (rather than a collection of maxims), grounded in more fundamental assumptions about cognitive processing generally, that regulates the production and interpretation of utterances. Following a least effort processing path, hearers look for an interpretation which satisfies their expectation of relevance and when they find one they stop processing; speakers are assumed (with certain caveats) to be observing the presumption.

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