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Pragmatics, discourse and philosophy

1. Introduction: Pragmatics, discourse, philosophy - domains and connections

Taking a philosophical approach to pragmatics and discourse analysis involves a number of precepts that look straightforward individually, but deserve a far deeper attention on a holistic view. First – and rightfully enough – in its scientific characterization, pragmatics falls within the domain of language, communication and communication studies. Second, studies in pragmatics are studies of communication phenomena in context and thus depend on data that derives directly from discourse. Third, communication, language and philosophy are intrinsically related; in the last hundred years or so concern for language has managed to infiltrate almost every area in virtually all strands of philosophy, making issues of mind and language (and thus discourse) inseparable elements of inquiry (Losonsky 2006). While we need to allow for a degree of simplification behind these individual observations, the emerging conclusion looks alluringly easy and unproblematic, and particularly so for the vast community of discourse analysts. Namely, given the many ties and evident dependencies, vistas for philosophical advances and philosophy-based accounts in pragmatics and discourse research seem nothing but great. Apparently, it ‘only’ takes elucidating the conspicuous connections to seize the opportunity.

This is, unfortunately, a stance that is as much immature as it is fallacious. First of all, the relationship between philosophy and language (and discourse) goes far beyond the conception of an analytical ‘umbrella’ or perspective that extends over a particular empirical territory. In other words, while for example ‘syntax of language’ implies a theoretical position and scope adopted to deal with certain patterns of language, ‘philosophy of language’ evades such a simple instrumental characterization. Philosophy, with all of its ontological, epistemological, axiological, etc., aspects, is not something that is brought from ‘the outside’ to deal with linguistic questions; it rather originates *inside* language, in the sense that it expresses and eventually

explains issues of interest, problem or controversy that arise naturally to become objects of analytical attention. Thus, philosophy of language (and discourse) can be described as a manifestation (and realization) of interest in foundational issues regarding the nature of language. These include general questions such as what is the difference between artificial and human languages, how to account for the relationship between meaning and use as we find it in human languages, how to account for pragmatic phenomena that seem to be most characteristic of human language, i.e. context-dependence, vagueness, and presupposition, what it is to know a language, and (crucially for discourse researchers) whether knowing and using a language commits a speaker to a specific worldview or perspective (see Stalmaszczyk 2021 for an up-to-date panorama of issues).

Following the so-called 'linguistic turn' in analytical philosophy, commonly associated with the pivotal figures of Frege, Russell and, later, Wittgenstein, research in these foundational issues had gradually subsumed more specific questions emerging in linguistics, such as meaning, intentionality, reference and truth (Nye 1998). Advances in these areas made by linguists and philosophers in the past 50-70 years (Lycan 2018) further strengthen the perception of language philosophy as an essentially bottom-up enterprise, motivated by the emergence, in language analytical practice, of new problematic issues. In these explorations, the domain of linguistics that has turned particularly fruitful in inspiring philosophical questions is, without doubt, pragmatics. At the same time, however, the contribution of pragmatics to philosophical inquiry into the nature of language makes establishing connections between philosophy, language and discourse – and pragmatics itself – only more challenging (Sbisà, *Östman* and Verschueren 2011). Remarkably enough, research in pragmatics, at both utterance level (micropragmatics) and discourse level (macropragmatics) (Cap 2011) brings to light many questions that have been central to philosophy of language for years, such as the above-mentioned issues of context-dependence, vagueness, implicature and presupposition. What is more, pragmatics is a territory where much of philosophy of linguistics (understood in general terms of the philosophy of science as applied to linguistics) is shaped, and from which it takes inspiration to deal with matters of methodology and explanation (Sbisà 2011). These include questions addressing various linguistic pragmatic phenomena and ways of investigation from perspectives such as what the subject matter is, what the theoretical goals are, what form theories and models (developed to deal with a particular phenomenon) should take, and what counts as data (informing the theories).

Finally, in mapping the domains of pragmatics, discourse and philosophy we must not overlook the fact that the contribution of pragmatics to philosophy of language and linguistics relies, like anything in pragmatics, on consideration of linguistic phenomena abstracted from discourse. In other words, it is the application of conceptual and analytical tools of pragmatics in discourse and discourse study that works in the way of raising issues and highlighting controversies of essentially philosophical nature. This again precludes the conception of philosophical practice as theoretical-

ly external to linguistics and pragmatics. Doing pragmatics does not (only) use the apparatus of philosophy; it entails philosophy and, in many cases (which this text is mainly interested in) it *is* philosophy – at least given the latter’s fundamental concerns and characteristics as outlined above. Depending on different kinds of data, and driven by different research aspirations, analytical practices in pragmatics reveal questions pertinent to both philosophy of language and philosophy of linguistics. In the next section (2) I outline these questions in general terms. Then, in section 3, we take a more detailed approach, showcasing the most intriguing issues, arising in the course of specific analyses. This account cannot possibly be exhaustive, for the simple reason that neither data in pragmatics (and beyond) nor tools designed to handle it are in any way finite and fixed – as data domains expand, theories, models and their conceptual elements get revised, redefined or changed accordingly. The goal is, rather, to endorse the claim that pragmatics and discourse analysis are indeed areas of exceptionally intense philosophical practice, which targets not only central issues of language philosophy, but in fact also ontological and epistemological matters of general philosophy.

2. Pragmatic analysis of discourse: areas, problems and implications

Establishing how and where pragmatics applies to discourse and discourse analysis is a philosophical problem in itself, prompting questions of ontological, as well as strictly logical, nature. The traditional distinction between micropragmatics and macropragmatics sees discourse, somewhat artificially, as a collection of mostly spoken stretches of language above the sentence level – in opposition to phrases not exceeding the size of a sentence or mostly written sequences referred to as texts (Halliday and Hasan 2000). However, this classical distinction fails to do justice to massive amounts of different pieces of data which are found daily and which reveal, in one way or another, essentially ‘discursive’ features. Let us briefly review what language manifestations, phenomena and forms, and on what grounds, can be called ‘discourse’. First, discourse is conventionally defined by context, which makes conversation perhaps the most typical manifestation of discourse (Fetzer and Speyer 2012). The focus on conversation as discourse entails looking at context features such as setting, time, interlocutors, and so on. But context is not a unitary concept and there are many different levels of contextual categories, including linguistic, cognitive and social, which are addressed in discourse. Moreover, context is never ‘static’ or ‘given’; conversely, interlocutors keep creating current contexts for current utterances. This means that the moment an utterance is coined, it becomes part of resources on which interpretation of the following as well as preceding utterances has to draw. Crucially, such contributions and resources come not only from utterances understood as fully-fledged, sentence-size elements of text. Context gets updated by elements of whatever size; in fact, as an individual utterance unfolds, the amount of contextual information transmitted

between interlocutors grows (Fetzer and Speyer 2012). Consequently, defining discourse by context, while not wrong, is insufficient as on such an approach potentially all units of language can count as context.

Second, discourse is often defined by mode of production, the term ‘discourse’ being typically used to denote spoken interaction rather than written text (Fetzer 2018). This designation poses just as many ontological questions as the context-based one. There are genres of public communication, such as political speeches, which involve spoken performances of pre-written texts. Such genres often exhibit a genuine mix of ‘textual’ and ‘discursive’ features. In particular, many political speeches include forms of ‘hidden’ or ‘virtual’ dialogue (Cap 2021a), whereby the speaker addresses, anticipates and reacts to another person’s discourse, even though the interlocutor is neither physically present nor is their voice directly present in the speaker’s discourse. The direct statements of the ‘interlocutor’ are omitted, but they are presupposed, implied or reported in the speaker’s responses to them, for example:

- (1) We could wait and hope that Saddam does not give weapons to terrorists or develop a nuclear program to blackmail the world.
But I am convinced that is hope against all evidence. (G.W. Bush, January 28, 2003).
- (2) Some have argued that confronting the threat from Iraq could detract from the war against terror.
To the contrary, confronting the threat posed by Iraq is crucial to winning the war on terror. (G.W. Bush, January 28, 2003).

Instead of directly voicing opinion and presenting a future course of action, the speaker in (1-2) invites an indefinite adversary to take part in a virtual dialogue on what options are available. This generates rhetorical benefits, since by openly considering alternatives the speaker makes a strategic display of rationality and responsibility. In theoretical terms, the existence of cases such as above blurs a number of traditional distinctions – not only between dialogue and monologue, but also between text and discourse, making the concept of discourse apply to technically monologic and essentially text-based data. This naturally broadens the empirical domain of pragmatics and thus invites a growing number of analytical models, mainly in cognitive pragmatics and cognitive critical discourse studies, which take the fuzziness of the classical boundaries for granted (see Cap 2021b for an overview).

The richness and heterogeneity of discourse brought to light in pragmatic and discourse analytical explorations make difficult not only defining the actual scope of particular concepts and theories, but, far more consequentially, constructing new models. The key problem is, on the one hand, the mutual positioning of pragmatics and discourse relative to the standard categories of theory and data and, on the other, the complexity of discourse processes that makes discourse more than a data supplier. The question where discourse ‘belongs’, so to say, pertains for instance to recent theoretical models in cognitive critical discourse studies, such as Critical Metaphor Analysis (Musolff 2016), Discourse Space Theory (Chilton 2014) and Proximization

Theory (Cap 2013). In each of these frameworks, discourse is both a bottom-level category, i.e. the domain from which linguistic data is abstracted for analysis, and, importantly, a top-level category, in the sense that discourse processes underlie (and endorse) all social theory that governs the model. This concerns processes such as performance of social affiliations, enactment of social and political distinctions, indexing values and ideologies, and the like, all of which are intrinsic features of discourse and discourse practice able to shape, re-shape and update respective theories. The double status of discourse and discourse scrutiny means in turn that pragmatics and its main analytical concepts and tools (such as deixis, presupposition, implicature, etc.) function typically as coordinators of empirical work that proceeds, top-down, within the model. In this work, findings and regularities of social theory are expressed in functional terms involving pragmatic concepts, and the pragmatic concepts, imbued with the acquired social meanings, are applied to identify and systematize lexical data. For instance, in Discourse Space and Proximization models different social, axiological and geopolitical representations of entities placed on symbolic axes extending between the conceptual extremes of us vs. them, good vs. bad, close vs. remote, etc., are assigned pragmatic meanings and categories (corresponding with functions of different speech acts), which the latter are used to account for lexico-grammatical choices. I describe the Proximization framework more extensively in the next section.

The theoretical connections of discourse and discourse analysis with pragmatics often cause pragmatic concepts to undergo revision and redefinition as a result of discourse practice and observation. Such redefinitions can be described as practices and advances in not only philosophy of language but also philosophy of linguistics. While they aim, in principle, to account for a particular phenomenon in the relation between mind and language, they do so by invoking global questions of theory, method and explanation. Let us take the concept of presupposition as an example. In its global characterization, presupposition constitutes a mechanism whereby the speaker addresses a body of knowledge and experience, involving both linguistic and non-linguistic contexts, which he or she assumes to be common to him-/herself and the hearer (Senft 2014). The assumption of existence of the 'shared' knowledge frees the speaker from having to assert it overtly in the utterance. On most classical views, presuppositions are linguistically encoded and expressed, usually by definite descriptions, factive verbs and many other lexical and grammatical means (Stalnaker 1973). These means are considered linguistic 'triggers' of presupposition. However, as research in discourse pragmatics has shown (Abbott 2000), such a restricted semantic-pragmatic view fails to account for a lot of interesting cases where presupposition arises and shared knowledge is built in communication that involves not only linguistic exchange, but also other transmission channels. For example, as will be documented in the next section, shared or 'common' knowledge may involve past visual experience that the speaker presumes in the hearer for the purposes of current exchange. Thus, on discourse analytical approach, presupposition should be seen as a phenomenon that extends over, or rather across, several ontological domains – the

encoded and the assumed, the formal and the functional, and crucially, the linguistic and the non-linguistic.

Further, discourse studies are making an important contribution to ongoing work on speech events, macro speech acts and global intentionality levels (see Senft 2014 for overview), though here insights from discourse can be credited mostly with refuting, rather than supporting or expanding, the central proposals or postulates. Most notably, discourse research sheds light on problems with accounting for the uppermost category of intentionality realization, which pragmaticians and text linguists such as van Dijk and Kintsch (van Dijk 1980; van Dijk and Kintsch 1983) have termed the ‘macro’ or ‘global’ speech act. On van Dijk’s (1980) original approach, a macro speech act is one that is performed by the utterance of a whole discourse, and executed by a sequence of possibly different speech acts. In text linguistics and pragmatics of the 1980s and early 90s, this characterization was used quite successfully for typological and classificatory purposes – as a conceptual handle on different-size series of individual speech act sequences. However, as has been shown in discourse research (Angermüller, Maingueneau and Wodak 2014), while the concept of macro speech act does a useful job in the way of systematizing patterns in which intentions are realized through individual acts, it still suffers from problems regarding its own status. Apparently, on Van Dijk’s (1980) approach, we never get to know how much is ‘a whole discourse’, and even though text linguists have made attempts to establish some distinctive features of macro acts with regard to setting and temporal parameters, many relativities are still there.

The interaction of discourse studies, text linguistics and macropragmatics brings us to methodological implications of discourse analysis and its influence on analytical methods and practices in pragmatics in general. Partly as a result of critical strands in discourse studies (see Hart and Cap 2014, Flowerdew and Richardson 2018, for overview), most schools in discourse analysis in the past two or three decades have shown to apply, and advocate, largely abductive methods. This is best explained in the following statement by Luke (2002):

CDS [Critical Discourse Studies] involves a principled and transparent shunting backwards and forth between the microanalysis of texts using various tools of linguistic, semiotic and literary analysis, and the macroanalysis of social formations, institutions and power relations that these texts index and construct. Today, in fact, this goes for many discourse studies that do not describe themselves as critical. (Luke 2002: 100).

The dialogue between the micro- and macro categories of description – a central characteristic of the abductive method of analysis – is these days no longer a unique feature of critical discourse studies; it has come to underlie research involving genuinely pragmatic concepts and tools. By way of illustration, consider how the abductive method is used in an actual micro- and macropragmatic analysis of political discourse. In his discourse historical study of the pragmatics of Eisenhower’s cold war speeches, Oddo (2018) identifies a large number of deictic, referential and anaphoric

markers, embedded in a number of direct speech acts. At the same time, he reports little presence of inferential phenomena, such as implicature and presupposition, which abound in many instances of political discourse but are for some reason underrepresented in Eisenhower's discourse. To account for this interesting disparity, Oddo (2018) goes on to check his observations from text analysis against considerations of extralinguistic, geopolitical context. He finds that the speaker's pragmalinguistic choices are driven by rigid contextual constraints, such as abiding rhetorically by the existing geopolitical and ideological distinctions. Thus, only the choices that follow clear and bipolar ideological distinctions are acceptable. Since performing such distinctions involves maximum care for directness, the speaker's discourse exhibits an opulent use of indexicals and anaphoric expressions and, simultaneously, a restricted use of forms of implicit communication.

Continuing with his research, Oddo (2018) returns to micro textual analysis, using observations made at the macro extralinguistic level to inform his study. In particular, he applies findings in regard to the ideological underpinnings of Eisenhower's discourse to identify further bottom-level lexical markers of ideological and political distinctions. At this point, he makes no more attempts to search for pragmatic markers of implicitness, as these have been found irrelevant to the context of the analyzed speeches. Thus, Oddo's re-informed analysis aims at forms which cohere functionally with previously identified forms of deixis, reference and anaphora. This includes, most notably, thesis-antithesis sequences and other patterns and lexical markers of the so-called alternative futures. It is argued by Oddo (2018) that the specific function of such forms is to enact a clear-cut vision of alternative, positive vs. negative developments, following from either accepting or rejecting the speaker's policy proposals. Altogether, Oddo's account of Eisenhower's speeches is a lucid example of discourse pragmatic research moving purposefully between micro and macro levels of theory and description, in order to deliver the most accurate results and conclusions. In this kind of study, the initial micropragmatic part leads, gradually, to a macropragmatic extension involving extralinguistic insight and verification. Following the latter, the most promising findings are re-examined back at the micro level and more findings are made in line with the original ones.

The last point to make in this section is that discourse practices and discourse research not only inform the way in which particular concepts in pragmatics are approached and accounted for individually (*viz.* presupposition), but often inspire ways of elucidating and systematizing the processes where several concepts are jointly 'at work' to explain a phenomenon. In such meta-accounts, the order in which the pragmatic tools do their analytical job is explained in terms of structure of a discourse event. The best example is, *viz.* Senft (2014), how apparently distinct facets of deixis, presupposition and implicature lend themselves to analysis, in discourse theoretical terms, of their joint contribution to the speech act function of an utterance. In accounts such as Senft's, the function of an utterance is shown to evolve progressively, as a result of cumulative input of meaning involving deictic markers, presupposition

and implicature. The concepts of deixis, presupposition and implicature extend, so to say, over different stages of this evolution. At the presupposition stage, presumptions of common knowledge are made and lexicalizable presumptions and respective background knowledges are encoded in specific lexical items and phrases. At the deictic stage, features of context such as *who* speaks to accomplish *what*, *when* and *where* are coded by means of, again, conventional lexico-grammatical items. Finally, at the implicature stage, the linguistically coded meanings are expressed and thus made to interact with interlocutor's presumptions and discourse expectations. As a result of this interaction, further implicit meanings may arise. The speech act of an utterance involves both formal and functional contributions made to the utterance over each of these symbolic stages. The speech act designation is thus the final point of a semantic-pragmatic sequence, which is at the same time an action and temporal sequence. This correspondence amounts to the conceptual analogy between speech act evolution and discourse event.

3. Case studies

As was explained at the beginning of this paper, the theoretical observations made in section 2 must be treated as generalizations from real-life discourse, discursive actions and discourse study. In this section I present specific analytical cases which underlie some of these points. The aim is, let us repeat, to prove that the intersection of pragmatics and discourse analysis is a domain of rich philosophical activity, which involves use of pragmatic and functional linguistic tools to tackle questions of essentially philosophical nature.

3.1. The ontology of a speech act

To begin with, we re-address, this time on an empirical plane, the issue of status, function and, notably, pragmatic composition of speech acts. We have noted that the global function of an utterance speech act is one that derives from an integrated input of meaning involving individual, micro functional contributions from deixis, presupposition and, usually, implicature. Thus, for methodological purposes, speech act can be taken as an umbrella category of description. This entails a specific research practice: in analyzing an utterance for its force and effect, we study the micro contributions, first against each other, and then incrementally with a view to defining the macro function. Let us have the following example to describe the particular steps:

- (3) You do not take your course credits for granted.

Assume that (3) is an utterance in university classroom discourse. The following specific elements of context, or premises, are available to the analyst:

- a. the speaker of (3) is a professor commonly known to have lenient attitude to students;

- b. (3) is uttered during a lecture;
- c. participation in the lecture is compulsory, however the professor checks attendance only sporadically;
- d. the lecture is normally attended by about one-third of enrolled students;
- e. the professor utters (3) immediately after three students arrive 20 minutes late for the lecture;
- f. uttering (3) involves no form of personal reference other than verbal;
- g. the situation described in e/f happens for the first time.

The aim of the analyst is to use the premises in a-g to establish the speech act performed in (3), in its full functional complexity, that is in regard to its locutionary (content-related), illocutionary (intention-related) as well as perlocutionary (effect-related) features (Austin 1962). In determining the speech act, the analyst works within an empirical domain defined, from different theoretical sides and by different exploratory questions, by what can be assumed (about the situation and the utterance), what is actually said, and what can be expected in terms of effect. Accordingly, he/she aims to find out i) how content of the utterance is conveyed at lexical and structural levels, ii) which elements of context are addressed and how they are indexed linguistically, iii) what effect is likely presumed by the speaker (relative to the data in a-g) before making the utterance, and (iv) what effect is actually produced, in the light of all the considerations (i-iii) involved. The analysis is thus essentially incremental and forms a continuum, subsuming, at different stages of the trajectory, the concepts of deixis, presupposition and implicature.

The opening stage involves, naturally, considering content of the utterance against available discursive and non-discursive presumptions regarding the speaker, i.e. the professor. If the professor is known for his lenient attitude to students (the (a) premise), then the lexical and grammatical content of (3) cannot be viewed as a typical manifestation of such approach. This means, for the analyst, that (3) is uttered in extraordinary circumstances or in response to an incident, such as – given the (e) premise – the late arrival of three students for the professor's lecture. Interestingly, the inference in question is essentially a case of implicature recovery (Grice 1975), even though the recovery is made from partly non-linguistic premises. Namely, the analyst acknowledges a relevance clash between context-based expectations and utterance (3), taking the clash – in Gricean terms – as a vehicle of extra information (explaining, in this case, the direct reason for [3]).

The next task is to establish the reference of (3). This means resolving the ambiguity triggered by the 'you' marker, which may be used for general or specific reference. Here, again, the (a) premise is used for the most plausible interpretation. Since in the context of the (a) premise uttering (3) emerges as emotionally marked, one can assume its direct, i.e. particular reference (to the three students), rather than a less directly appealing general reference (to the whole lecture group). This inference is further endorsed by a temporal coincidence. As (3) constitutes an immediate response to the late arrival situation, the analyst is prone to take such a sequence to possess causative

meaning which binds the speaker and the addressee in a common discourse event. Finally, the analyst considers the possible perlocutionary effect of the utterance, in which task he envisions and meta-applies the professor's presumptions regarding the event, as well as applies his own presumptions of effect, stemming from the collection of a-g premises. A notable consequence of the twofold nature of the presumptions is that the emerging speech act designation can never be regarded as definitive. In fact, the act is likely describable as a reprimand or a warning, or, better still, as a lacuna of largely uninterpretable meaning extending between the latter designations. Thus, as is the case with virtually all speech act analyses, the most 'accurate' description is often the least 'precise' one.

The brief case above goes to show that speech act is indeed a tricky category to define and establishing its function in an utterance is invariably a matter of approximation. This, however, does not detract in any way from its methodological status and value. Understood as a controlling concept of description, speech act plays an important role in systematizing and describing the meanings which contribute to it – at different stages of its evolution. That said, speech act is a concept that lies within the domain of language philosophy, as well as philosophy of linguistics (Tsohatzidis 1994). As a language philosophical notion, it makes utterance function the central aim of inquiry in micropragmatics. As a linguistic philosophical concept, it makes specific methods, such as cross-examination of the subordinate concepts of lexical content, presupposition, deixis and implicature, applicable in analysis. As the study of (3) shows, the two facets of speech act analysis are closely bound. The language philosophical perspective of analysis is, in logical terms, essentially inductive – the study starts with input from individual pragmatic variables and uses this micro input to determine global utterance function. The linguistic philosophical perspective is, in contrast, largely deductive, in that it involves prescribing a way of study in the light of what the analyst knows about his data, methods and available tools beforehand. This knowledge includes, for example, how deixis works, what are the limits of linguistic coding of meaning, how presuppositions affect what can be said, what implicatures can be accomplished given the existence of particular presuppositions, among many others.

3.2. Toward the macro speech act – what happens on the way?

As noted in section 2, the *macro speech act* can be defined, according to its original accounts in text linguistics and pragmatics of the 80s and early 90s, as a sequence of potentially different speech acts that realize the speaker's global intention, collectively, over the space of 'a whole discourse' (van Dijk 1980; van Dijk and Kintsch 1983). This theoretical characterization, though useful from a classificatory perspective, entails difficult issues of conceptual delimitation in actual analysis. It leads to questions – driven by different philosophical positions (Tsohatzidis 1994) – about the degree of

approximation that is to be allowed in discourse study and actual case description. We discuss these questions on the following example:

(4) Hello, are we all here?

Let us take (4) to be, again, part of university classroom discourse. The speaker is an academic running a seminar class with his students. In asking (4) he performs two direct speech acts (greeting and asking), as well as an indirect act of requesting students to reveal names of any absentees. The speech acts involve a deictic anchoring (e.g., 'here' recognized as classroom), presuppositions (e.g., of a number of students yet missing), and the indirect act involves inference from an implicature. This is, with some simplification, where a micropragmatic analysis of (4) can get us. Our focus in this section is however on what happens 'next', that is what general intention of the speaker emerges from the context and the speaker's utterance that adds to it, how the utterance partakes in realizing the speaker's intention, and whether carrying out the intention, as a whole, entails any additional acts.

In regard to the first point, the intention, one could reasonably argue – from a macropragmatic perspective – that the target function of (4) goes quite beyond making a greeting, inquiry, or request. Assuming that the situation in which (4) is uttered happens regularly, (4) should be viewed as a part of expectable routine, enacting a discourse pattern arising from a *larger intention*. Mark an analogy: if we follow the routine of buying each morning a newspaper (an action which involves micro-actions analogical to the acts in (4)), the 'larger intention' can be described as an intention to stay updated with the current news. Thus, if we accept after speech act theorists that actions and speech acts are fundamentally interrelated (Searle 1969), we should search for a larger intention that underlies (4) as well. And indeed, we could postulate – with good reason given (4)'s context – that the larger intention in (4) is *to begin the seminar*, making sure everything is in place for a productive meeting. This finding does not sound very original in itself, but we take it as a starting point to show that intention – being a core determinant of communicative function in discourse – is hardly a matter individual utterance and thus the scope of inquiry must be extended accordingly.

The fact is namely that the speaker in (4) may need to say more than just (4) to successfully begin the seminar. Moreover, he may choose from an infinite number of utterances serving the same intention, to start the seminar. Some typical gambits may include: 'It's getting late', 'Would you close the doors please?', 'Now, Jim, listen up, will you?', 'Right, shall we begin?', 'And the marker is missing as usual!', 'I can't remember when we last started on time', etc. Apparently a diverse bunch, all these utterances contribute, in one way or another, to realization of the target intention. Interestingly, they do so while containing, technically, different speech acts (assertives, directives, expressives), whose force may also be different, direct or indirect. Consequently, each of these acts may possess a different input from deixis, presupposition, and implicature.

Discourse patterns such as above, involving speaker's realization of individual speech acts (subsuming other micropragmatic concepts) in the service of a larger intention, are commonly defined as *speech events*. Speech events may contain, as has been shown, a potentially infinite number of utterances, depending on how many are actually necessary to carry out the intention. If, in the case of (4), the seminar group enters the classroom discussing a just-finished exam in which they participated, the lecturer may need a longer stretch of talk to 'set up the stage' for his own class. Otherwise, it may take him a few short remarks to cover technicalities and initiate the topic proper. Whatever happens in actuality is thus dictated, as anything in discourse and pragmatics, by context. A speech event can comprise just as many utterances (and speech acts) as needed to match the contextual preconditions. These utterances do not have to come in a monologic pattern. In (4), the speaker may keep performing the speech event by producing a few utterances in a row, then pausing, then, possibly, reacting to a question that comes in the meantime, then resuming the monologue, and so on. Thus, his performance is a genuine 'discourse' performance, which exists in and responds to a dynamic social setting.

The relativities that pertain to exploratory and descriptive practice at the level of speech event analysis appear significant enough to make a solid contribution to the existing language philosophical questions of meaning, intentionality, context-dependence and truth, as well as linguistic philosophical issues of argument and explanation. There are, however, more problematic issues that emerge as we move up the intention ladder. While the speech event in (4) subsumes a series of individual acts performing the function to begin a seminar, it may itself be subordinate to a larger discourse goal – be it, for instance, conducting a productive seminar meeting as a whole. This goal entails that a virtually infinite number of speech events are carried out 'on the way'; from, say, an event whereby problems are explained which arise during the meeting, to a later event whereby homework is assigned. Each of these speech *events* involves, itself, a number of component speech *acts*. For example, the homework event may involve: an expressive (such as reprimanding students for not completing a previous assignment), a commissive (such as threatening to fail students at the end of the course, if they keep neglecting their assignments), a directive (telling students to do a particular task for the next meeting), and an assertive (describing rationale for the task). The variety of these acts is, apparently, no smaller than of the acts making up the event of starting the seminar.

Finally, as the consecutive speech events pile up, our analysis of (4) calls for an 'uppermost' category of description, one that is able to encompass all the subordinate intentions realized within the events and through their attendant acts. As noted earlier, text linguistic approaches leave the task in question to the concept of the *macro speech act* – a global speech act performed by the utterance of a whole discourse, executed by sequences of individual acts and events. This is, however, where we experience, first-hand, limitations of Van Dijk and Kintsch's theories: we do not really know where the notion of the 'whole discourse' applies. Is it, in the case of (4), the whole

body of discourse produced during the whole seminar and serving the intention to make it a productive meeting? On such an account, the relationship between the macro speech act and the component speech events (and their individual acts) seems analytically elegant. But, does this account exhaust the potential of the macro speech act to combine with further macro speech acts, to serve a yet-more-global intention? Apparently not. Truth is, the intention to carry out an a rewarding seminar can still be considered subordinate to more complex intentions: the intention to conduct the entire course as planned, the intention to perform one's academic duties properly, and so on. At the end of the day, envisaging a highest-rank intention, pursued through a highest-rank act, appears a rather futile undertaking.

Still, despite the empirical constraints, there are methodological benefits of macro act studies which must not be disregarded. These consist, somewhat paradoxically, in the recognition of limits to which intentionality *could* be accounted for in larger stretches of discourse. Thus, proposals such as macro speech act theory should not be brushed off, as linguistic philosophical and pragmatic scrutiny of these proposals eventually motivates research in better demarcated and better empirically equipped areas. A prominent example of such an area is Conversation Analysis (CA), which has been flourishing for the past three decades (see Sidnell 2010, etc., for overview). Conversation analysts have elaborated an impressive arsenal of techniques for the description of speech act deployment, though in necessarily limited contexts, often just co-texts. As a result, the apparatus of linguistics, linguistic pragmatics and discourse studies has been enriched with a number of relevant concepts, such as 'floor', 'topic', 'turn', 'turn-taking', 'transition relevance place', and so on, each of which contributes its share of insight in how people manage their intentions and goals in conversational and discourse settings.

3.3. Semiotic-pragmatic presupposition and where data comes from

One of the strongest points made in the theoretical part of this paper was that discourse practice and discourse analysis often make pragmatic notions undergo a conceptual revision and, frequently, redefinition. Such redefinitions draw upon new portions of linguistic, discursive and, notably, semiotic but essentially non-linguistic data to inspire some novel ways of looking at the relation between mind, language and the world. The result are not only further original explorations but also new methods of explanation and description, developed to handle the heterogeneous data. A great illustration of these processes and transitions is the shift occurring, in the last two decades or so, in the perspective upon presupposition (cf. 2). Regarded originally as a semantic or, at best, semantic-pragmatic phenomenon (Stalnaker 1973), presupposition comes to be viewed as an element of communication that involves not only linguistic exchange, but also visual and auditory input (Senft 2014). Such an eclectic approach involves, just like the study of macro speech acts, taking a fuller account of

some challenging yet inspiring relativities underlying a communicative act. I address these issues in the analysis of (5), which comes from my own academic practice:

(5) Please tell Beth the Rector wanted to see me.

Here goes the context. Some time ago during my consultation hours, I received a phone call urging me to come, asap, to our Rector's office. The call came about 30 minutes before a scheduled appointment with my Ph.D. student Beth. Feeling uncomfortable about missing the appointment, I decided to ask my office-mate (A) to pass on an apology. My request is represented in (5). It involves a number of presuppositions, such as the following:

- a. A knows there is such a person as Beth;
- b. A knows the Rector exists;
- c. A knows Beth is a Ph.D. student of mine and what she looks like;
- d. A knows Beth is about to come for consultation;
- e. A is happy to pass on my apology to Beth;
- f. A will do (e) intending to communicate my apology as efficiently as possible.

Clearly enough, presuppositions (a-f) reveal different anchoring in the form of the utterance, and in its linguistic, as well as non-linguistic, context. In fact, only (a) and (b) are lexically encoded, by means of definite descriptions. The rest draw upon narrower or wider, but all of them essentially non-linguistic, contexts. Each of these contexts entails a different kind and amount of knowledge to be addressed. To presuppose (c), I can simply recall a previous occasion on which I introduced Beth, as one of my Ph.D. students, to my office-mate (A). Alternatively, however, I could flash back to a moment when my office-mate saw Beth entering my seminar room, at the time when the seminar was supposed to start. The knowledge sanctioning (c) is thus accessible through linguistic as well as non-linguistic means. Such complexities tend to grow as we move down the list, toward (f). In presupposing (f), I invoke a whole network of beliefs which not only draw upon knowledge of my interlocutor's past experience (whether linguistic or non-linguistic) and own behavior, but, in doing so, also connect that knowledge to the proposition asserted explicitly in the form of the utterance (5). (F) consists in a series of expectations: that (A) possesses all the knowledge as presupposed in (a)-(d), that he wants to and will be cooperative, that he is able to recognize (5) as a request to communicate an apology on my behalf; finally, that he is able to do it as well as I would. Interestingly, many of these expectations are only legitimate on the assumption – a presupposition in itself – that (A) relates them to his own experience triggered by the mention of specific lexical items in my utterance. For instance, hearing about 'the Rector', (A) might 'replay' his own thoughts and feelings experienced before a similar meeting he attended (for instance a belief that the meeting will last for a long time) – thus putting himself in my shoes.

As can be seen from this brief analysis, the nature of knowledge underlying speaker's beliefs in the case of (5) is such that the presuppositional load of (5) can hardly be

described as semantic alone. It is not even sufficient to describe it as semantic-pragmatic, as some of the presuppositions draw upon entirely non-linguistic premises, including visual experience and meta-representation. It is therefore more accurate and explanatory to consider the presuppositions in (5) as semiotic-pragmatic, carrying information and knowledge derived from general experience and addressing that experience in the service of utterance goals. This conclusion has specific methodological repercussions. Most notably, it corroborates the status of discourse practice and discourse study as venues where new empirical data are found and analyzed with a view to revisiting the existing analytical concepts and, eventually, entire models of analysis. The latter issue moves us to the next and final empirical section of the paper.

3.4. Data-theory relations in a discourse model: Proximization Theory

This last case study is not a specific analysis; the ‘case’ here is a specific *model* of analysis. We look at it from the perspective of data-theory relations and, generally, the role of discourse and discourse scrutiny in designing a research framework. As was mentioned in 2., recent models in cognitive critical discourse studies consider discourse to be more than a set of domains providing data for empirical study. Instead, they treat discourse as a top-level methodological construct, informing and potentially defining and redefining the controlling categories of analysis. A prominent example of such a position is Proximization Theory (Cap 2013), which derives its central conceptual and theoretical premises directly from discourse practices in the social world, such as performing social affiliations, enacting socio-political distinctions, indexing values and ideologies, etc. (Chilton 2004).

As a research model, Proximization Theory, or PT, recognizes the key fact that people possess a mental ability to structure their socio-cognitive experience (‘looking at’ the world) in terms of dichotomous representations of good and evil, right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable, and so on (Habermas 1981). This cornerstone ability is linked with a linguistic ability to evoke or reinforce these dichotomous representations in discourse in accordance with people’s social goals (Chilton 2004). The central goal involves getting others to share a common view on what is good-evil, right-wrong, etc. and consequently, on how to secure the ‘right’, ‘good’, ‘useful’, ‘just’, against a possible intrusion of the ‘wrong’, ‘bad’, or ‘harmful’. Thus, communication and discourse always presuppose distance between the Self (the home group of the speaker) and the Other (the possible ‘intruder’). The ‘good’ and ‘right’ are conceptualized and then lexicalized, through deixis and other means, as ‘close to Self’ (or ‘here’) and the ‘bad’ and ‘wrong’ as peripheral, ‘remote to Self’ (‘there’).

The specific focus of PT is on the conceptual operation of ‘proximization’ – a discursively constructed movement of the Other toward the Self – and the different forms of its realization (spatial, temporal, axiological) which serve a variety of social goals, such as coercion and legitimization (Cap 2013). In its linguistic dimension PT

accounts for the lexical and grammatical choices that speakers make to, first, index the existing socio-political and ideological differences and, second, demonstrate the capacity of the Other to erase these distinctions by encroaching on the Self's space. In that sense, PT can also be described as a theory of threat construction and fear generation (Cap 2017; Dunmire 2011). The basic conceptual architecture of PT and its theoretical take on discourse and discourse space (a symbolic space of all social relations construed in discourse) can be illustrated as follows (Figure 1):

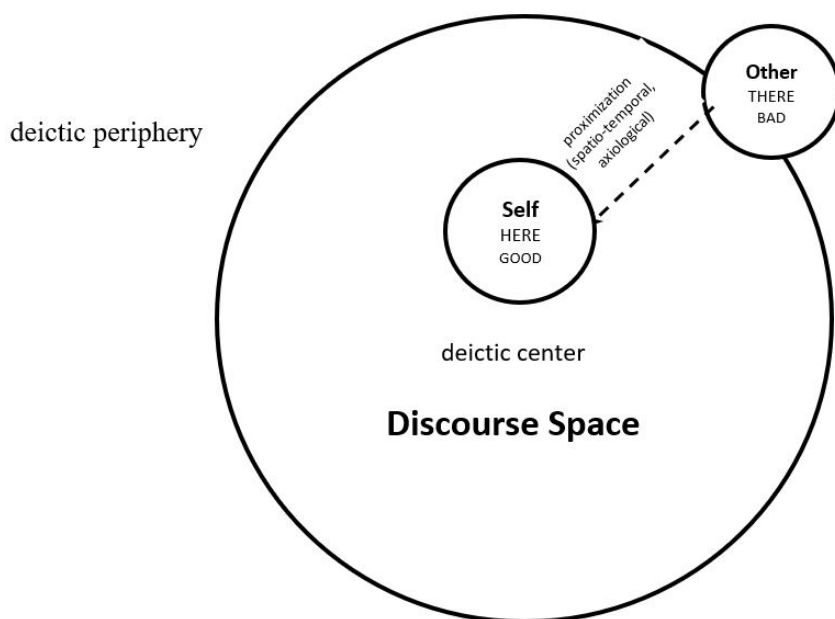


Figure 1. Proximization Theory: A conceptual representation

The conceptualization of discourse and discursive space in Figure 1 reveals the grounding of PT in a complex network of relations between social theory and discourse data. Crucially, the main theoretical tenets of the model, such as the positioning of Self and Other, are not presupposed categories; rather, they are abstractions from discourse practice and discourse observation. This pertains to both spatial and ideological dimensions in which the opposing camps are construed. The input of discourse and discourse data at the conceptual level of the model does not stop there as PT is designed to use corpus and other quantitative and qualitative tools to account for linguistic (lexical and grammatical) choices at the level of actual text analysis. Thus, in PT discourse is, from a methodological standpoint, both a controlling and a controlled (or explored, in empirical terms), bottom-level category. In between the two, at the heart of the model, is the apparatus of pragmatics, which, on the one hand, accounts for the opposing, bipolar cognitive representations ('Self' vs 'Other', 'here' vs

‘there’, ‘good’ vs ‘bad’) in terms of their social functions and effects (such as coercion and threat generation) and, on the other, engages discourse study methods to endorse these social functions through text analysis. The entire analytical chain of PT is thus, from a philosophical and logical perspective, a hierarchical structure involving different top-down, bottom-up as well as abductive relations between cognitive-evolutionary groundwork for communication, social theory, discourse, and pragmatics.

4. Concluding remarks

As evidenced in section 3, research practices in discourse analysis and pragmatics involve questions pertinent to both philosophy of language and philosophy of linguistics. These include, from a language philosophical perspective, issues of form and function in meaning formation (viz. speech act structure), levels of intentionality and its manifestation in discourse (viz. speech events and macro acts), and the heterogeneity of context underlying communicative beliefs (viz. presupposition). As far as philosophy of linguistics is concerned, the latter questions give rise to issues of methodology and explanation and eventually affect ways in which analytical models, such as the PT model above, are designed and used. Philosophical considerations are thus never external to discourse, they are an integral part of discourse practice and discourse study, playing key roles in identification and selection of pragmatic instruments to account for specific discursive phenomena. This sanctions the point we made at the outset of the paper: doing pragmatics and discourse analysis does not merely involve the apparatus of philosophy, it *is* philosophy. These days philosophical insights in discourse get only deeper with the advent of new interdisciplinary research schools, such as critical discourse studies, which face the challenge of uniting diverse methodologies to develop efficient tools of analysis. There, questions of method, description and explanation are addressed against pools of fresh discourse data from emerging research domains. At the same time, the new data make the existing methodologies adopt necessary revisions. This often leads, as in the case of PT, to a whole new way of viewing discourse – as not only the source of language data for analysis, but also a theoretical concept and a controlling construct in research design.

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Pragmatics, discourse and philosophy

Abstract: Following the linguistic turn in analytical philosophy, concern for language underlies some of the most important strands of philosophical practice, making issues of mind, language and discourse virtually inseparable elements of scientific inquiry. Just as philosophy looks to language and linguistics to endorse different ontological and epistemological postulates, linguistics looks to philosophy in addressing its key questions of meaning, function and use. In this paper I argue that pragmatics and discourse analysis are areas where the relation between language, linguistics and philosophy is particularly salient. Crucially, philosophy, its conceptions and frameworks, should never be viewed as 'external' to discourse. Rather, discourse and discourse study involving pragmatic tools are, in themselves, areas of intense philosophical practice. Results of this practice are relevant and of interest to not only language philosophers, but also to those exploring ontological and epistemological matters of general philosophy.

Keywords: philosophy of language; philosophy of linguistics; pragmatics; discourse analysis; discourse practice; discourse data; speech act; macro speech act; presupposition; Proximization Theory

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