

Utterance Interpretation and Cognitive Models IV
Brussels, 2–3 September 2013

Book of abstracts

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Conference program

Monday, 2 September

Registration	9.00-10.00am	
Opening of the conference	10.00-10.15am	
Diana Mazzarella <i>Do we need inferences in pragmatics? Challenges from a unified associative account of pragmatic processes</i>	10.15-10.45am	
Mihaela Popa <i>Embedded irony, speech-acts, and the semantics pragmatics distinction</i>	10.45-11.15am	
Coffee break	11.15-11.30am	
Keynote lecture 1: RACHEL GIORA <i>Default sarcastic interpretations: On the priority of non-salient interpretations of negative utterances</i>	11.30-12.45am	
LUNCH	12.45am-2.00pm	
Marta Szücs <i>The role of theory of mind and reception of grammar in metaphor and irony comprehension in preschool children</i>	2.00-2.30pm	
Isabelle Needham Didsbury <i>Interpreting Metaphorical Meaning: Pragmatic Routes</i>	2.30-3.00pm	
Coffee break	3.00-3.15pm	
Keynote lecture 2: MARINA TERKOURAFI <i>The importance of being indirect</i>	3.15-4.30pm	
Conference dinner	8.00pm	

Tuesday, 3 September

<p>Keynote lecture 3: RAYMOND GIBBS</p> <p><i>Is a general theory of utterance interpretation really possible? Insights from the study of figurative language</i></p>	10.15-11.30am	
<p>Coffee</p>	11.30-11.45am	
<p>Jörg Meibauer</p> <p><i>A truth that's told with bad intent. Lying and implicit content</i></p>	11.45-12.15am	
<p>Nele Poldvere, Carita Paradis & Dylan Glynn</p> <p><i>Stance-taking and social status in an online bulletin board</i></p>	12.15-12.45am	
<p>LUNCH</p>	12.45am-2.00pm	
<p>Ana Teresa Alves</p> <p><i>Inferences in the temporal interpretation of sentences and discourse sequences with only/só</i></p>	2.00-2.30pm	
<p>Coffee break</p>	2.30-2.45pm	
<p>Keynote lecture 4: ELISABETH CAMP</p> <p><i>Implicature, indirection and insinuation</i></p>	2.45-4.00pm	
<p>Conclusion</p>	4.00-4.15pm	

Keynote lectures

Elisabeth Camp (Rutgers University, USA)

Insinuation, Indirection, and Implicature

Philosophical and linguistic theorizing about communication, as exemplified by the work of Paul Grice, Herb Clark, and their followers, has focused almost exclusively on cooperative forms of communication. There are good reasons for this: as Locke pointed out, because the association between sign and signified is voluntary and arbitrary, the only constraint to mean any particular thing from the sounds we make derives from a desire to be understood by others. Moreover, the very idea of a conversation, as opposed to a series of one-off remarks, involves coordination on and combined contributions to a common topic. However, much verbal communication involves parties whose interests are not fully aligned, and who know this. Recently, some theorists have begun to attend to antagonistic conversations, and in particular to the use of insinuation to communicate ‘off-record’ contents, or to mislead without lying (Pinker et al 2007, 2010, Terkourafi 2011, Fricker 2012, Saul 2012, Jäger 2013). In this talk I analyze what insinuation is and what it reveals about communication and meaning more generally. I argue that insinuation is a form of speaker’s meaning in which speakers communicate some content without adding it to the conversational scoreboard, and sometimes without even adding it to the common ground. I contrast insinuation with related forms of communication including assertion and ostensive showing. Finally, I contrast insinuation with some other forms of indirect and implicit speech, and sketch some theoretical implications for probing the distinction between semantics and pragmatics.

Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr. (University of California, Santa Cruz, USA)

Is a General Theory of Utterance Interpretation Really Possible? Insights from the Study of Figurative Language

The multidisciplinary study of utterance interpretation focuses on many diverse dimensions of how people understand the communicative meanings of speakers’ messages in a variety of discourse contexts. Most of this scholarship is aimed toward creating a comprehensive theory of utterance interpretation that captures what really happens when listeners and readers infer pragmatic meanings. Underlying this pursuit is the belief that there truly exists some definitive process by which utterance interpretation typically occurs, which can be uncovered through linguistic, psychological, and philosophical studies of meaning construction. My talk will suggest that there are great difficulties with adopting this normative view of utterance interpretation. Though an examination of contemporary research on figurative language understanding, I will argue that utterance interpretation ALWAYS depends on a whole host of personal, linguistic and contextual factors that make it impossible to create a single, default account of what people typically do when they encounter pragmatic meanings in context. An alternative perspective on utterance interpretation will be offered that aims to capture the complex dynamics associated with understanding what any speaker means by what he or she says.

Rachel Giora (Tel Aviv University, Israel)

***Default sarcastic interpretations:
On the priority of nonsalient interpretations of negative utterances***

In this talk, two types of default interpretations are weighed against each other: salience-based vs. nonsalient utterance-interpretations. *Utterance-interpretations* differ from coded *meanings* in that they are *constructed* rather than accessed directly from the mental lexicon. And for an utterance-interpretation to be *constructed by default*, it has to be derived automatically, regardless of contextual information.

According to the Graded Salience Hypothesis (Giora, 1997, 2003; Giora et al., 2007), salience-based utterance-interpretations are default interpretations; they are constructed on the basis of the salient, coded meanings of the utterance components, regardless of degree of (non)literalness. Accordingly, the affirmative *-That's my best attribute!* - should be interpreted initially in terms of 'something that I excel at', regardless of whether contextual information is non-biasing or biasing (e.g., toward the sarcastic or toward the salience-based interpretation). Findings in Fein et al. (2013) indeed show that salience-based interpretations of affirmative utterances enjoy priority; they are activated initially and faster than their nonsalient, (here) sarcastically biased interpretations, even when contextually incompatible (see also Giora et al., 2007).

In contrast, according to the View of Default Nonliteral Interpretation (Giora, 2010, 2013a,b), low-salience markers (Givoni et al., 2013), such as negation, highlighting features low on salience, will generate nonsalient *nonliteral* interpretations by default. Such interpretations are not salience-based; instead, they are removed from the salient meanings of the utterance components. Accordingly, nonsalient (here) sarcastic interpretations of (some) negative utterances will enjoy priority over their salience-based interpretations, regardless of contextual bias. Thus, unlike its affirmative counterpart, the negative - *That's not my best attribute!* - should be interpreted sarcastically initially in terms of 'This is something I am bad at', regardless of whether contextual information is biased toward the sarcastic or toward the salience-based, mitigated interpretation (as in 'This is something I am moderately good at but there are other things I am better at'). Findings in Giora et al. (2013a,b) indeed show that nonsalient sarcastic interpretations of negative utterances enjoy priority over their salience-based (often literal) interpretations, regardless of equal strength of contextual bias. Such findings contest the Graded Salience Hypothesis.

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Marina Terkourafi (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA)

The importance of being indirect

Typically, explanations for indirect speech have ranged from politeness (Searle 1975, Brown & Levinson 1978/1987) to deniability and relationship negotiation (Pinker et al., 2008, Lee & Pinker 2010) — either way capitalizing on its potential to imply something without saying it explicitly, which makes it possible to put forward a potentially risky message while retaining the possibility of retracting it if things go wrong. This position leaves much to be desired. Minimally, it requires that the task at hand and the interlocutors' relationship be at odds with one another, with the speaker typically wanting to get the former done without jeopardizing the latter. What this leaves out is cases where the task at hand itself *promotes* (rather than jeopardizes) the relationship—or even, discourse which may be exclusively relationship-serving. Existing schemes make few if any predictions about these cases, which can nevertheless be fairly frequent in daily life.

In this talk, I take issue with the received view that indirect speech is the more cumbersome but safer way of saying something that could have been said directly, if only people didn't care about the consequences — be those financial, legal, social, or simply emotional. This view is most immediately refuted by the preponderance of indirect speech between intimates (e.g., husband-wife interactions) and in what Hall (1977) calls high-context cultures. In such cultures, indirect speech serves to foreground interlocutors' shared belonging and cultural understanding, enabling it to play a unique relationship-building (rather than relationship-protecting) role. But while serving to establish these previously overlooked functions of indirect speech, its use in high context cultures still does not refute the claim that indirect speech is used to achieve *additional* effects—and so is, in some sense, cumbersome, or marked. In this talk, I wish to go further and claim that, sometimes, indirect speech can be the speaker's only available choice. These are cases where the speaker does not already have a fully-formed message in her head but rather only what I will call a 'proto-message'—more like the sculptor's or the painter's rough draft which only through the expert viewer's transforming gaze can be mentally envisioned into the final product. In such cases, to claim that indirect speech constitutes a calculated departure from direct speech is inaccurate, since there is nothing in the speaker's head corresponding to a fully-formed message that could have been expressed directly. Rather, indirect speech serves as an invitation to the listener to help the speaker carve out her message. The resulting interpretation does not reflect the speaker's underlying individual intention and its recognition by the listener but rather the carving out of an intention by the listener from the linguistic material provided by the speaker — the result of a genuinely inter-subjective process which may be more common around us than existing frameworks have cared to admit. To exemplify this process, I will discuss evidence from language acquisition, language learning, and metaphor, which suggests that speakers routinely rely on their addressees to help them out when their cognitive or linguistic resources fail them.

Indirect speech allows us to probe into this uncharted territory, where thoughts are first born and before they are given their full propositional form. Ongoing research in psychology (Miles et al. 2010, Stallen 2012) opens new avenues for exploring communication less as a matter of two separate intellects struggling to reconstruct each other's thoughts within the limits of their individual rationalities and more as an emergent phenomenon jointly constituted by selves who are fluid and perpetually inter-penetrable. Acknowledging and accounting for these functions of indirect speech will expand our understanding of the relationship between language and thought and how they mutually constitute each other, as well as the role of direct and indirect speech in this process. It will also challenge the primacy

of direct speech taken for granted in much of previous research, allowing us to move beyond what Lempert (2012) has suggested is an ideological construct supported by a Western-centric, logic-dominated mode of thinking.

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Contributed papers

Ana Teresa Alves (University of the Azores, Portugal)

Inferences in the temporal interpretation of sentences and discourse sequences with only/só

There is a vast literature about *only* (e.g., McCawley (1981), Rooth (1985), Rooth (1992), Atlas (1993), Horn (1996), Ippolito (2008), Roberts (2011)), which includes distinct proposals to account for the meaning of this expression. In spite of important differences, there seems to be consensus about the fact that, in sentences like (1) below, two implications (cf. a and b) are conveyed, the main point of disagreement between authors concerning the nature – a conversational or a conventional implicature, a presupposition, or an entailment – of the prejacent.

- (1) **Only Mary** interviewed John.
a. Mary interviewed John. [the prejacent implication]
b. Nobody distinct from Mary interviewed John. [the exclusive implication]

Mutatis mutandis, one can claim that examples like (2), where *only* (at least superficially) applies to temporal locating adverbials, convey similar implications – see (2’) and (2’’) below:

- (2) Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox. Tours are conducted **only between May and September**, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (...) Lambeau Field, home of the Green Bay Packers. Tours are offered **only in June, July and August**.

<http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>

- (2’) a. Tours are conducted between May and September. [the prejacent implication]
b. Tours are not conducted in any other months besides May-September. [the exclusive implication]
(2’’) a. Tours are offered in June, July and August. [the prejacent implication]
b. Tours are not conducted in any other months besides June, July and August. [the exclusive implication]

However, the examples given below – the ones I’ll mainly focus on this presentation – are, I believe, in crucial aspects and despite superficial similarities, distinct from those given in (2),

and challenge existing proposals to account for the meaning of *only* in examples like (1) and (2).

(3) Yesterday, John went to sleep **only at 3 a. m.**

(4) Iran told the IAEA **only in September** that it was building the facility, leading U.S., British and French leaders to denounce Tehran for keeping it secret.

<http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>

(5) The British had been absorbing the parasite since June, but the Franco-Americans arrived in the Tidewater **only in September**. So malaria had two extra months to work its mischief in British ranks.

<http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>

Even though in (3)-(5) *only* also applies (again, at least superficially) to a temporal locating adverbial that represents the locating interval of the eventuality described in the sentence in which it occurs – respectively, *at 3 am*, *in September*, and *in September*, the implications in these examples are not – this is my claim – exactly the same as those in (2), the main difference relating to the exclusive implication. For instance, (3) – an example of the occurrence of *only* in single sentences – has, this is my proposal, at least the two implications given below, the relevance of the question whether 3. a. m. was the only time of the day in which he went to sleep (the exclusive implication) being disputable.

- (3'') a. John went to sleep at 3 a.m.
b. John went to sleep later than expected.

In formal terms, my proposal is that, in contexts such as those above, *only* is best analysed as expressions that applies to a location time t and triggers a comparison between t and another time, t' , such that $t' < t$ (i.e. t' temporally precedes t). t' is directly represented in the linguistic context or else is implicitly given, and is the time at which the speaker (based on previous experience, based on world-knowledge, based on what he thinks are politeness rules, among many other possibilities) thinks that the eventuality taking place at time t should have happened. It also triggers the implication that, from the speaker's point of view, the eventuality taking place at t' could or should have happened earlier. For instance, in (3) *only* triggers a comparison between 3 am (t) and a triggered time t' , let's say midnight (t') (because the speaker knows that usually John goes asleep by midnight). It conveys that John should have gone to bed at around t' , that is, in this case, around midnight.

This proposal explains why, in constructions as those under study, *only* does not occur with the following kinds of temporal adverbials: (i) temporal locators conveying the temporal immediacy (cf. (6)); (ii) temporal locators conveying short temporal distances (cf. (7)); (iii) temporal locators conveying the temporal identity of two locating intervals; (iv) it cannot occur with temporal clauses with *before* (but occurs with subordinate temporal clauses with *after*).

(6) #The Mayor replied to my letter **only** immediately.

(7) John found out about Mary **only** {few years ago / many hours later / # many years ago / # few hours later}.

(8) #The Mayor replied to my letter **only** in the same week I wrote to him.

(9) John found out about Mary **only** {after / #before leaving Paris}.

Other questions to be tackled (besides the meaning of *only* in examples like (3)-(5)) are the following: is there enough evidence to suggest the existence of two distinct “only” expressions? If not, how to build an integrated account of this expression?

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Diana Mazzarella (University College London, UK)

***Do we need inferences in pragmatics?
Challenges from a unified associative account of pragmatic processes***

A debate between associative and inferential approaches to pragmatics has arisen within the recent ‘cognitive turn’ in the pragmatic field. In recent years, the nature of on-line pragmatic processes has become the focus of attention of philosophers (Recanati 2002, 2004, 2007) and linguists (Wilson & Carston 2007, Carston 2007).

The main focus of this debate has concerned the nature of *primary* processes, i.e. pragmatic processes that contribute to the determination of the explicit meaning of the utterance. On the one hand, Relevance Theory (Wilson & Sperber 2004) proposes a unified inferential account of all pragmatic processes. The pragmatic inferential module takes as input an ostensive stimulus and delivers as output an interpretative hypothesis about the communicator’s meaning (i.e. what is explicitly and implicitly communicated). This comprehension procedure is driven by occasion-specific expectations of relevance, underpinned by the general presumption of optimal relevance that is carried by all ostensive stimuli. On the other hand, Recanati’s (2002, 2004) dual system introduces a substantial distinction between primary and secondary pragmatic processes. This distinction subsumes two different on-line processing systems: an associative, low level system, which is responsible for the derivation of ‘what is said’; and a genuinely inferential system, which is responsible for recovering ‘what is implicated’.

These competing approaches, however, share a common perspective on implicature derivation (i.e. secondary processes), which they both view as the result of a global *inferential* process.

In this talk I present and evaluate a more radical proposal about the nature of secondary pragmatic processes put forth by Mazzone (2009, 2011, in press). According to Mazzone, the recovery of both ‘what is said’ and ‘what is implicated’ (i.e. ‘explicatures’ and ‘implicatures’, in relevance-theoretic terms) is the result of a *unified associative* comprehension process.

The structure of the talk is as follows. First, I introduce Recanati’s (2004) associative account of primary pragmatic processes, which constitutes the starting point of Mazzone’s own account. In particular, I discuss Recanati’s (2004) notion of ‘schemata’: schemata, or world-knowledge structures, represent an important constraint on the dynamics of activation-

and-association and they are said to promote the search for coherence in interpretation.

There are two features of Recanati's theory that seem to naturally ground Mazzone's extension of his associative approach. The first one is related to the alleged inferential nature of conversational implicatures. Carston (2007) suggests that Recanati's characterisation of implicature derivation as an inferential process is weaker than often assumed. Recanati claims that conversational implicatures merely require the occurrence of a 'tacit' but 'personal' inference, that is, an inference requiring that

[...] the cognitive agent to which it is ascribed on those grounds is *itself* capable of making the inference explicitly and of rationally justifying whatever methods it spontaneously uses in arriving at the 'conclusion'. (Recanati 2004: 50)

This passage not only suggests that secondary pragmatic processes constitutively involve the hearer's capacity to provide a rational reconstruction of the inferential link between premises and conclusions, but, more interestingly for our purposes, it also suggests that the *on-line* process of implicature derivation need not be inferential at all: it can be based on "whatever methods it uses" in deriving the intended implicated content.

A second consideration that may support the extension of Recanati's associative framework to secondary pragmatic processes concerns the notion of 'schemata'. Recanati (2007) suggests that, as well as general world-knowledge, particular world-knowledge (e.g. knowledge about a particular individual, his abilities and preferences) can affect the dynamics of accessibility via the same blind mechanism of associations. The result is that "the smartness of an inferential system can be implemented in a dumb associative system" (Recanati 2007: 52) and that an associative system can accommodate speaker's beliefs and other mental states when these affect the derivation of the propositional content of the utterance. These considerations seem to ground the generalisation of the role accorded to schemata proposed by Mazzone (2009, 2011).

I then present and critically evaluate Mazzone's proposal of an associative account of implicature derivation based on the notion of 'intentional' and 'inferential' schemata. The key assumption of his proposal is that coded regularities are not limited to word associations and world-knowledge structures. Rather, regularities concerning our intentional communicative behaviours and interpretative practices are coded within, respectively, 'intentional' and 'inferential' schemata.

Finally, I argue that "the clearest and most extensive argument against associative accounts" (Mazzone 2011: 2152) put forth by Wilson & Carston (2007) is not invalidated by Mazzone's proposal. The argument can be paraphrased as follows: (i) associations lack any systematic structure, (ii) structures constrain the interpretation process, *thus*, (iii) associative accounts vastly overgenerate.

Mazzone denies the soundness of this argument on the basis of his rejection of premise (i). I suggest that the conclusion of Wilson and Carston's argument stands even when we take into consideration an associative account implemented with an extended notion of schemata (including intentional and inferential schemata) and that Mazzone's associative account still lacks a principled method to filter out unwanted interpretations.

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Jörg Meibauer (University of Mainz, Germany)

A truth that's told with bad intent. Lying and implicit content

The study of lying is an old topic in the philosophy of language and linguistics. Since lying is a speech act that intrinsically has to do with truth and falsity, as well as with sincerity and insincerity, it is an important subject for all attempts at analysing the semantics-pragmatics interface. In recent years, a lively debate has emerged about the question of correctly defining lying. Two strands of argumentation have evolved in the philosophy of language (cf. Carson 2010, Saul 2012): First, the idea that lying is not necessarily connected to an intention of the speaker to deceive the hearer; second, the idea that there is a fundamental distinction between lying and mere misleading. In my talk, I will discuss both assumptions from the vantage point of the semantics-pragmatics interface, and relate them to the question how it is possible to lie while drawing on implicit content of an utterance.

As for the first assumption, so-called bald-faced lies have been presented as cases where an intention of the speaker to deceive is lacking. I will argue that bald-faced lies are no lies, but acts of verbal aggression. The intention to deceive need not be written directly into a proper definition of lying, since it follows from the assumption that lying is an act of insincere assertion. Since assertion is always connected with commitment to the truth of propositional content, it follows that lying is always connected with the intention to deceive. As for the second assumption, I will discuss the distinction between lying and “mere” misleading. While misleading might be a useful notion (in the sense of leading someone or being led into a false belief), it is argued that many bona fide cases of misleading, such as Clinton’s famous utterance *There is no sexual relationship* in the context of the Lewinsky trial, can be reconstructed as deliberately false implicatures. Other cases of misleading can be analysed as cases of an unlucky choice of interpretation or simple misunderstanding.

Since deliberately false implicatures, in the prototypical case, are bound to an assertion, and, as additional propositions, are intended to be derived by the hearer, I will propose a definition of lying that includes deliberately false implicatures (Meibauer, forthcoming). While it is clear that deliberately false implicatures are derived by the hearer, the burden of a correct calculation being put on her, the speaker is nevertheless committed to this implicature. Observations related to cancellability, retractability, and clarification show that there is no principal difference between the speaker’s commitment to an assertion and her commitment to an intended implicature (although the type of implicature, e.g. GCI vs PCI, could matter). Hence deliberately false conversational implicatures, as one type of implicit content, are intended to deceive the hearer just like false explicit propositional content in ordinary lying. This line of argument can be extended to other types of implicit content.

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Interpreting Metaphorical Meaning: Pragmatic Routes

For years, it has been acknowledged that different discourses give rise to varying degrees of figurative language. Poetry, psychotherapy, political speeches and the teaching of science are just a few domains in which metaphorical expressions are notably widespread; often surfacing in markedly extended or novel forms (Brown, 2008; Semino, 2008). Whether such language has been deliberately exploited for a particular purpose or occurs spontaneously with no strategy in mind, I believe that pragmatic theories of metaphor processing stand to learn a great deal from the use of figurative language in these domains.

I focus my attention primarily on the *ad hoc* concept account of metaphor comprehension formulated within the relevance-theoretic framework (Sperber & Wilson, 2008) and assess the extent to which this theory provides a satisfactory account of the process by which we interpret metaphors, of all varieties. I argue that Carston's recent proposal of an alternative processing route for understanding extended and other complex metaphors may be better suited to many of the examples witnessed in the aforementioned domains (Carston, 2010). This account suggests that initially hearers 'entertain the internally consistent literal meaning as a whole' (Carston, 2011) and metarepresent it as descriptive of an imaginary world. This representation of literal meaning is then framed or metarepresented (hence kept apart from factual belief representations) and is subjected as a whole to additional reflective inferential processing. Exploring this approach leads me to consider various theories of metaphor comprehension which focus on exploration of the literal meaning of the expressions in question and the mental construction of 'metaphoric worlds' (for example, Camp, 2008; Levin, 1988).

I shall argue that these latter theories provide a more realistic picture of how, in certain contexts, non-literal content is processed. I hope to demonstrate that pursuing the deep, reflective comprehension procedure suggested by these theorists yields an altogether different interpretation to that which results from a concept construction route. In line with Levin, I claim that it is through more literal processing that readers are best able to understand the internal world of their interlocutor. Ultimately, I shall argue that these accounts of figurative language processing explain how such language is able to promote great insight, affect us deeply and generate novel perspectives. Its power in this regard is not something which comes out of concept construction accounts to the same degree. Yet, it is a widely perceived effect of metaphor, most evident in the domains of speech mentioned earlier, where such figurative content is often used in order to achieve such a goal as insight (Roberts & Kreuz, 1994).

Of particular interest to me is the domain of psychotherapy. Interestingly, psychotherapeutic practice has witnessed a growing number of models recommending serious, immersive consideration of metaphorical language (Kopp, 1995; 2000; Stott et al., 2010; Sullivan & Rees, 2008). These frameworks are designed to facilitate clients in the construction of personal 'metaphor landscapes' and to an extent, can be seen as indirect support for the claim that metaphors may be processed in one of two ways, with the resulting insight different depending on the adopted route of processing.

Evidently, the proposal I have outlined is in need of empirical support. I shall dedicate the second half of my presentation to discussing experimental work intended to test Carston's claims. This work builds on previous cross-modal lexical priming studies by Rubio-Fernández (2007) which demonstrate that literal meaning lingers beyond the point at which it is relevant, yet is suppressed around 1,000 milliseconds. Through discussion of the proposed empirical

studies, I highlight the challenges involved in such an endeavour and the implications for the theory in question.

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Stance-taking and social status in an online bulletin board

This study examines epistemic and evidential lexical verbs, such as *I think, it seems, I find*, etc., in rhythmic gymnastics bulletin board conversations. It employs the Cognitive Linguistic analytical framework and corpus-driven dialogical discourse analysis to examine the expression of stance relative to the extra-linguistic dimension of social hierarchy (rank). The study shows that similarly to communication in face-to-face interaction, social hierarchy and its linguistic expression is transmuted to virtual communities.

Naturally occurring language is indisputably characterized by varied and complex epistemic and evidential expressions, which are constantly chosen to convince one's interlocutors of a given construal of the world. In Functional Linguistics (Biber & Finegan 1989, Scheibman 2002, Kärkkäinen 2003, Martin & White 2005), work has sought to understand the structures used in the expression of stance. Additionally, such discourse approaches to text and talk as Conversation Analysis have limited themselves to the external behavior of interaction at the expense of conceptual representations. This study advances our understanding of the phenomenon in numerous ways. Firstly, it employs a conceptual analysis, especially construal and grounding (Langacker 1990, Brisard 2002), in order to explore the construction of subjectivity between a perceiver and the object of perception. Secondly, it adopts a corpus-driven and socio-cognitive methodological framework, namely dialogical discourse analysis (Markova et al. 2007, Linell 2009), to account for the sequential and thematic organization of stance, and show that stance is a socially as well as cognitively constructed phenomenon that emerges in dialogical conversations between two or more co-participants.

The data for the study are extracted from an online rhythmic gymnastics bulletin board. The study benefits from the dialogical and conversational style of the mode, where the exchange of views and opinions is a prominent feature (Claridge 2007). The members of the

board are seen as having formed a virtual community that is characterized by linguistic and social variation. Therefore, we have divided the users into three ranks in terms of activity (number of posts) and status (e.g., moderators) in the community. The sample consists of two controversial and engaging threads of 242 messages extracted from the bulletin board. All instances of epistemic and evidential mental predicates are annotated and studied in interactional discourse units in which they are generated to see how bulletin board users across three hierarchically different ranks accentuate or reduce the strength of their propositions in accordance with their conversational co-participants.

Our initial results show that the lexical verb constructions are an important tool for accomplishing intersubjectivity between members of the bulletin board. Rsg.net users align stance constructions with their conversational partners in terms of type (epistemic vs. evidential) and strength, which shows that their construal of the world through stance is closely interdependent with that of others. Therefore, the Cognitive Linguistic framework and dialogical discourse analysis implemented in our study will help explore the dialogicality of human cognition and linguistic structuring, and consequently support our hypothesis that bulletin board users on a higher rank are more likely to use assertive and authoritative epistemic and evidential mental predicates to express speaker stance than members on a lower rank.

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Embedded irony, speech-acts, and the semantics pragmatics distinction

A common way of drawing the semantics/pragmatics distinction is through *Embedding*: said- but not implicated-content embeds. I argue that irony poses a special threat to this way of drawing the distinction since irony can embed as implicated- or non-truth-conditional content. This challenges truth-conditional compositionality (TCC)—by which only truth-conditional inputs undergo compositionality—since in the case of embedded irony non-truth-conditional content enters compositionally into the overall content of the compound utterance. There are three responses to this challenge. (1) One may preserve TCC since by virtue of embedding the ironic implicature becomes part of said-content. But this puts considerable pressure on said-content threatening to dissolve the said/implicated distinction. (2) One may avoid this by abandoning *Embedding* and showing that irony embeds qua implicature. But this puts in turn pressure on TCC since implicatures cannot enter compositionally into the overall content of compound utterances. (3) This worry is alleviated adopting a different kind of compositionality in terms of speech-act structure as proposed by Barker (2004). I develop Barker's approach to argue that irony embeds as a speech-act and composes with other speech-acts to form logical compounds.

In this talk I develop the third response by drawing on Barker’s formal pragmatic speech-act theoretic account. The problem of embedding is solved by appealing to his notion of proto-assertion (written as A(S)pro). By making a proto-assertion the speaker U acts as if she has certain speech-act intentions—of making an assertion—but signals that she lacks them. Thus, by uttering (1) U makes an ironic speech-act with the following structure:

- (1) Fred is so smart
- (i) U performs a proto-act A(Fred is so smart)_{pro}, presenting a defensive stance towards (a) Fred is so smart, and (b) approving of (a) (as defended in a literal assertion of ‘Fred is so smart’) but U lacks the advertised intentions;
- (ii) U presents an attitude contrary to the one advertised in (i)—i.e. to represent her belief (a) that Fred is so dumb; (b) and her disapproval of (a);
- (iii) U has the intention (iia-b).

(i) is a basic proto-assertion; (ii) is an *ironic-proto-act* which is doxastically grounded by virtue of (iii), as when it is used to make self-standing illocutionary acts. This structure captures the idea that irony is non-truth-conditional content in that U does not undertake a defensive commitment, as she would do had she asserted the ironic content.

I use this analysis to show that irony embeds as a speech-act. I focus on embedding in indicative conditionals by drawing on Barker’s suppositional theory of conditionals. Accordingly, conditionals are some form of *conditional assertion*—whereby U’s ground or warrant for asserting Q relies not just on U’s beliefs but crucially on U’s *supposition* of P. More precisely, conditionals express a connection between two kinds of speech-acts: a suppositional proto-assertion A(P)_{pro/S} (‘S’ for suppositional interpretation, or A(if P)), and a conditional proto-assertion A(P)_{pro/C} (‘C’ for conditional interpretation, or A(Q)).

The supposition performed by uttering ‘if P’ can be thought of as an interpretation in which the speaker stipulates the permissibility of performing a proto-assertion A(P)_{pro}. It has the following structure:

- a) A proto-assertion A(P)_{pro}
- b) The permissibility of performing A(P)_{pro} is stipulated with the aim of simulating a belief that P—i.e. U acts as if P were believed rather than actually expressing P.

A supposition is always introduced given a certain conversational setting C at a time t. We can understand this setting as a set K of speech-acts and proto-assertions that are permissible in C at t—i.e. where permissible means that they are allowed or accepted in C at t. Thus, when U stipulates the permissibility of a proto-act A(P)_{pro} in K, P is *accepted* in K. However, this act of stipulation by itself only ensures that the p-commitment that P is true is *accepted suppositionally* in K, rather than that P is true tout court. The proto-act A(if P) receives thus a suppositional interpretation in the sense that U does not intend to be taken as committed to P being true. U’s purpose is not to express a belief that P, as if she were making a self-standing assertion. Rather, she uses the suppositional proto-act A(if P) with a further purpose of determining what consequences follow from accepting the permissibility of P.

More precisely, the acceptance of A(if P) in K enables U to perform other proto-assertions based on it, such as a proto-assertion of Q which is accepted as permissible in the scope of the supposition of P. In other words, A(Q) receives a *conditional* interpretation insofar as the proto-assertion of Q is rendered permissible by (and thus conditional on) the permissibility of A(if P), and other beliefs and suppositions accepted in K at t. The conditional proto-assertion that Q has the structure below—where K + A(if P) denotes that K is updated with the acceptance of A(if P):

- a) A proto-assertion A(Q)_{pro}
- b) The permissibility of A(Q)_{pro} is signalled as grounded on A(if P) in K + A(if P).

On this analysis, it follows that conditionals indicate permissibility relations or dependency relations between proto-acts. Thus, the permissibility of a proto-act, together with the acceptance of other assertions or suppositions in K, implies that others proto-acts are permissible. Importantly, both proto-acts embedded in the antecedent and consequent lack doxastic grounding. This captures the intuition that U is asserting neither the antecedent nor the consequent. Rather, she uses them with the purpose of indicating a connection between the suppositional proto-act of the antecedent and the conditional proto-act of the consequent.

How does this analysis of conditionals apply to in embedded irony? Consider (2) with irony embedded both in antecedent and consequent:

(2) If Fred is that smart, we really ought to give him all our money to invest.

The conditional has the following structure:

<i>Suppose:</i>	(i/a) <i>Proto-act:</i> Fred is that smart.
<i>stipulate as permissible</i>	(ii/a) <i>Ironic-Mode:</i> presenting the attitude that Fred is dumb and disapproving of those who would think he is smart.
<i>follows as permissible</i>	(i/c) <i>Proto-act:</i> We really ought to give him all our money...
	(ii/c) <i>Ironic-Mode:</i> presenting the attitude that it would be idiotic to give him all our money and disapproving of those who would think this is a smart thing to do.

Irony embeds as a complex ironic proto-act with the structure above that includes both a basic proto-assertion in (i) by which U presents herself to believe <P>, and an ironic proto-act in (ii) by which she makes manifest a contrary belief <Q>, together with a displayed ironic attitude towards <P>. The operator ‘if...then’ connects with both proto-acts of the antecedent and consequent to form a more complex speech-act of the whole conditional. Thus, the antecedent stipulates the permissibility of an ironic proto-act—that Fred is so dumb, and it would be mockable to think he is smart—which together with other background accepted proto-assertions and suppositions in K, makes the ironic proto-act of the consequent permissible—that we ought not give him all our money to invest, thereby mocking those who think this is a good idea. In short, the permissibility of the ironic proto-act of the antecedent entails that the ironic proto-act of the consequent is permissible. In this way, the two ironic embedded proto-acts enter into the commitments of the whole conditional insofar as it indicates a dependency relation between the permissibility of two ironic proto-acts. More precisely, the conditional is acceptable when the ironic proto-act of the consequent is permissible in the scope of the supposition of an ironic proto-act of the antecedent.

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The role of theory of mind and reception of grammar in metaphor and irony comprehension in preschool children

Relevance theory (Sperber–Wilson 1986/1995) assumes the role of the mind-reading in human communication. The comprehension of explicatures or implicatures involves an inference process embedded within the overall process of constructing a hypothesis about the speaker’s meaning. On one hand, metaphorical utterances convey an array of weak implicatures, therefore metaphors cannot be fully understood without a first-order theory of mind (ToM). On the other hand, the verbal irony is treated as the expression of an indirectly dissociative attitude to an attributed utterance or thought, thus irony involves a higher order metarepresentational ability than explicatures or metaphor.

The predictions about the degree of theory of mind necessary for understanding metaphor and irony were confirmed in typically developing children and children with autism by Happé (1993). However, recent findings provide evidence that possession of first-order theory of Mind (ToM) skills do not ensure metaphor comprehension, instead language ability is a stronger predictor of performance on metaphor task (Norbury 2005), and Sullivan et al. (1995, 2003) show that the second-order mental state is necessary but not sufficient to distinguish lies from ironic jokes due to the second-order mental state precedes the ironic joke comprehension by approximately 2 years.

The specific aims of the present study were two-fold: 1) the prediction that comprehension of metaphor requires first-order ToM ability and irony requires second-order theory of mind ability was tested in typically developing children, using a modified version of the task designed by Happé (1993), 2) to investigate how close the connection between reception of grammar and metaphor and irony comprehension.

Seventy-one typically developing children (aged 4–7) participated in the experiment. Children were tested on two first-order and two second-order false belief tests and they were selected to form three groups on their results of these tests:

Group	noToM	1stToM	2ndToM
Number	29	22	20
Age	5;2 (4;2-6;11)	5;11 (4;0-7;2)	5;11 (4;10-6;11)

Materials consisted of five short stories illustrated with four pictures for each of them. The stories had a metaphorical (eg. *These became stone cookies.*) and an ironic ending (eg. *What soft cookies!*). After listening to a story children were asked what the story characters meant by their metaphorical and ironic utterance, then they had to choose an answer from a multiple-choice task (eg. *the cookies were made of stone (literal)/ hard (metaphorical)/ sweet (irrelevant)*). The Test for Reception of Grammar (Bishop 1983, adapted by Lukács, Győri and Rózsa 2011) was used to assess grammar comprehension of Hungarian grammatical contrasts marked by inflection, function words, word order etc.

The results have shown no significant difference either between noToM group (Mean=0.7) and 1st ToM group (Mean=0.75) for metaphor ($F(3.317)=1.734$; $p=0.184$) or between 1st ToM group (Mean=0.4) and 2nd ToM group (Mean=0.37) for irony ($F(6.888)=1.730$; $p=0.185$). These findings suggest that the relationship between theory of mind and the comprehension of the two nonliteral language forms may not be so close in typically developing children: metaphor understanding can precede first-order ToM ability and second-order ToM ability is not sufficient to ensure better irony comprehension.

The grammar comprehension is correlated significantly with metaphor understanding ($r=0.328$; $p=0.005$) but do not correlate with irony comprehension at all. These findings

suggest the comprehension of two phenomena may require different cognitive and language abilities.

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