

Department of English and General Linguistics  
University of Łódź



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# PhiLang 2021

Seventh International Conference  
on Philosophy of Language  
and Linguistics

**Łódź, 14-16 May 2021**

## **Book of Abstracts**

edited by

Martin Hinton, Wiktor Pskit,  
Aleksandra Majdzińska-Koczorowicz

Department of English and General Linguistics  
Institute of English Studies  
University of Łódź

Seventh International Conference on Philosophy of Language and Linguistics

## ***PhiLang 2021***

Łódź, 14-16 May 2021

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### **Special Session**

PhilArg: The Philosophy of Argumentation  
Convenor: Martin Hinton

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Łódź, 2021

## Contents

<b>Plenary lectures .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Brian Ball .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Thought and talk about iterated attitudes	
<b>Katarzyna Kijania-Placek .....</b>	<b>9</b>
All the faces of proper names. A polysemous account	
<b>Genoveva Martí .....</b>	<b>10</b>
X-Phi results and (armchair) philosophical theorizing	
<b>Steve Oswald .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Pragmatics and argumentation	
<b>Isidora Stojanovic.....</b>	<b>12</b>
Exploring valence in judgments of taste	
<b>Main Sessions .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Tibor Bárány &amp; Miklós Márton .....</b>	<b>14</b>
“Total signification”, utterer’s meaning, and what is said	
<b>Filippo Batisti.....</b>	<b>15</b>
Ontology and naturalism in linguistic theory	
<b>David Bordonaba-Plou .....</b>	<b>16</b>
Expressing disagreement in different ways: A study of experimental philosophy of language	
<b>Mark Bowker.....</b>	<b>17</b>
The cognitive context-sensitivity of generic generalisations	
<b>Leïla Bussière.....</b>	<b>18</b>
Communicating with colourings	
<b>Laura Caponetto &amp; Bianca Cepollaro .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Bending as counter-speech	
<b>Victor Carranza.....</b>	<b>20</b>
Varieties of affected meaning	
<b>Tadeusz Ciecierski.....</b>	<b>21</b>
Actions, products, demonstrations	

<b>Ludovica Conti</b> .....	<b>22</b>
Empty names and abstract objects	
<b>Laura Delgado</b> .....	<b>23</b>
The logic of polyreference	
<b>Matej Drobnák</b> .....	<b>24</b>
On the inferential roles	
<b>Gabriel Dupre</b> .....	<b>25</b>
The faculties of language	
<b>Izabela Duraj-Nowosielska</b> .....	<b>26</b>
Butler’s problem in the light of the Polish words <i>intencja</i> ‘intention’ and <i>zamiar</i> ‘intention, intent’	
<b>Dominik Dziedzic</b> .....	<b>27</b>
Demonstratives from the perspective of multidimensional semantics	
<b>Jacopo Frascaroli</b> .....	<b>28</b>
Meaning as experience. On the analogies between linguistic and perceptual meaning-making	
<b>Wolfgang Freitag &amp; Nadja-Mira Yolcu</b> .....	<b>29</b>
Illocution and the expression of mental states	
<b>Grzegorz Gaszczyk</b> .....	<b>30</b>
Lying with subordinate speech acts	
<b>Chris Genovesi</b> .....	<b>31</b>
Circle takes the square: Pragmatics, hermeneutics, and utterance interpretation	
<b>Mindaugas Gilaitis</b> .....	<b>32</b>
On some objections to the normativity of meaning	
<b>J.P. Grodniewicz</b> .....	<b>33</b>
The representational structure of linguistic understanding	
<b>Justyna Grudzińska</b> .....	<b>34</b>
Lexicon-semantics interface: a case study	
<b>Rory Harder</b> .....	<b>35</b>
Understanding demonstratives together	
<b>José V. Hernández-Conde</b> .....	<b>36</b>
An expectation-based view of human communication	

<b>Leopold Hess</b> .....	<b>37</b>
Inferentialist semantics for lexicalized social meanings	
<b>Antonina Jamrozik</b> .....	<b>38</b>
Anaphora: an inquisitive approach	
<b>Zuzanna Jusińska</b> .....	<b>39</b>
Slur reclamation and meaning change	
<b>Tom Kaspers</b> .....	<b>40</b>
Asserting and alethic pluralism	
<b>Filip Kawczyński</b> .....	<b>41</b>
Reference-shifting of proper names	
<b>Joanna Klimczyk</b> .....	<b>42</b>
The quasi-disagreement problem for contextualism about epistemic modality	
<b>Philipp Kremers</b> .....	<b>43</b>
De-Platonizing counterpossibles	
<b>Chang Liu</b> .....	<b>44</b>
That's not what I meant: toward an ethics of interpretation	
<b>Josep Macià</b> .....	<b>45</b>
Presupposition cancellation and the semantic view of presuppositions	
<b>Filipe Martone</b> .....	<b>46</b>
Polysemy is not a problem for referential semantics	
<b>Andrei Moldovan</b> .....	<b>47</b>
Persuasive presuppositions	
<b>Joanna Odrowąż-Sypniewska</b> .....	<b>48</b>
Faultless disagreement, weak assertives, and commitments	
<b>Eduardo Pérez-Navarro</b> .....	<b>49</b>
Indexical relativism?	
<b>Alexandru Radulescu</b> .....	<b>50</b>
On detonating	
<b>Wojciech Rostworowski</b> .....	<b>51</b>
Anaphora-based theory of complex demonstratives	
<b>Jakub Rudnicki</b> .....	<b>52</b>
Relativist semantics for demonstratives	

<b>Krzysztof Sękowski .....</b>	<b>53</b>
What the problem of deviant realisations tells us about the role of semantic intuition in thought experiments	
<b>Aeddan Shaw &amp; Piotr Wesolowski .....</b>	<b>54</b>
“You Keep Using That Word, I Do Not Think It Means What You Think It Means”. Challenging the notion of competent speakers in contemporary ordinary language philosophy	
<b>Charlie Siu .....</b>	<b>55</b>
Against the coarsening approach to imprecision	
<b>Katja Stepec .....</b>	<b>56</b>
Focus on interlinguistic relations	
<b>Maciej Tarnowski.....</b>	<b>57</b>
Proper names and demonstratives in fiction	
<b>José Manuel Viejo .....</b>	<b>58</b>
Singular thought, acquaintance, and belief ascriptions	
<b>Dan Zeman.....</b>	<b>59</b>
Parity, faultlessness, and relativism: a response to Ferrari	
<b>Tomasz Zyglewicz .....</b>	<b>60</b>
Belief reports are ambiguous	
<b>    Philosophy of Argumentation Workshop .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Luis F. Bartolo Alegre.....</b>	<b>62</b>
Towards a stronger concept of argument	
<b>Marcin Będkowski.....</b>	<b>63</b>
In defense of the distinction between arguments and explanations	
<b>Cristina Corredor.....</b>	<b>64</b>
What is interactional in an argumentative dialogue?	
<b>Kamila Debowska-Kozłowska.....</b>	<b>65</b>
Finding a best model for the argument strength evaluation– the case of the NSH-Arg, the Sym-Arg, and the Squ-Arg	
<b>Francesca Ervas.....</b>	<b>66</b>
Metaphors for fallacies <i>ad misericordiam</i>	

<b>Martin Hinton &amp; Jean Wagemans .....</b>	<b>67</b>
An analysis of an argumentative text produced by the GPT-3 AI text generator	
<b>Pietro Ingallina, Tommaso Ostillio &amp; Giulio Sciacca .....</b>	<b>68</b>
In-group rhetoric in polarised online communities	
<b>Antonis Kakas.....</b>	<b>69</b>
Argumentation: Universal reasoning	
<b>Barbara Konat, Agata Kwiek &amp; Wiktoria Rossa.....</b>	<b>70</b>
Arguments in Polish televised pre-election debates	
<b>Marcin Koszowy, Steve Oswald, Katarzyna Budzyńska, Barbara Konat &amp; Pascal Gyga .....</b>	<b>71</b>
A methodological proposal to study argumentative uses of rephrase: Cognitive and linguistic insights	
<b>Brian Ladd &amp; Jean Goodwin .....</b>	<b>72</b>
Extreme arguments: Jihadist argumentation in the sermons of Anwar al-Awlaki	
<b>Paweł Łupkowski.....</b>	<b>73</b>
QRGS - Question Responses Generation via crowdsourcing	
<b>Daniel Mejía Saldarriaga.....</b>	<b>74</b>
The problem of meaning and the nature of disagreement	
<b>Tomáš Ondráček .....</b>	<b>75</b>
An attack in a crisis communication	
<b>Katharina Stevens .....</b>	<b>76</b>
Precedent-setting and slippery slopes	
<b>Jean H.M. Wagemans .....</b>	<b>77</b>
On the hermeneutics of argumentation	

# Plenary Lectures



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**Thought and talk about iterated attitudes**

The immediate target questions for this paper are:

- 1) Can we grasp iterated propositional attitudes independently of our understanding of the corresponding reports (or ascriptions)?
- 2) Are thoughts about iterated attitudes constitutively independent of the language used to express them?

The theoretical context of the investigation, however, gives rise to the following foundational question in the philosophy of language:

- 3) To what extent, if any, are intentionalism and interpretationism compatible?

I begin with an exploration of interpretationism, starting with its relation to intentionalism, thereby addressing the foundational question 3. I then consider the relationship between interpretationism and (e.g. long-arm) functionalism, before arguing that a non-reductive subject-based interpretationism is preferable to a reductive state-based one. Finally, I consider the role of the interpreter in interpretation, rejecting a need for epistemic constraint, or substantive interest, but expressing sympathy with a pragmatic view on which the pure form of interested agency is central.

Turning to the metaphysical question 2, I articulate a number of ways in which thought might be held to be constitutively dependent on language, and contrast them with forms of causal dependency. In particular, the process, act, or object of thinking might be constitutively dependent on language. I focus on the intermediate possibility, in which linguistic representations mediate thought. I also note the possibility of mixed, as opposed to pure views on this issue, illustrated in connection with numerical cognition.

I conclude by addressing the psychological question 1. Evidence from the false belief test puts pressure on the claim that young children – who are good communicators – are able to form Gricean intentions. But further evidence concerning the attribution of iterated attitudes, or ‘recursive mindreading’ leads me to the tentative conclusion that two cognitive systems are involved, and a mixed view concerning constitutive dependence may be correct.

**Keywords:** interpretationism, intentionalism, iterated attitudes

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### **All the faces of proper names. A polysemous account**

Proper names are usually considered as devices of singular reference. Considered as word-types, however, they also exhibit other kinds of uses (Burge 1973, Fara 2015a,b, Jeshion 2015a,b, Elbourne 2005, Leckie 2013). I propose an account of proper names in terms of a generalized conception of polysemy, which I call rule-based systematic polysemy. The traditional theories of polysemy attempt to account for the multiplicity of stable senses for one linguistic unit, where the sense of a word determines its propositional contribution. Yet the insight that we may glean from the works of Kaplan (1989a,b) concerning the concept of linguistic meaning calls for a generalization of the understanding of the phenomena of polysemous meaning. According to Kaplan, expressions do not necessarily exhibit a meaning that provides content, i.e. propositional contribution, directly, but may instead rely on a rule that for the same word gives (possibly) different contents in different contexts. Combining the ideas of Kaplan with the traditional accounts of polysemy (Apresjan 1973; Pusteyovsky 1995; Pethö 2001), I will propose a two dimensional account of the latter that allows for connecting words not just with sets of stable senses, but also with sets of content generating rules (Kijania-Placek 2018).

I intend to argue that the multiplicity of kinds of uses of proper names considered as word-types can be accounted for by the rule-based systematic polysemy, in which case we do not expect a set of stable senses determining concrete contents but rather a set of rules that generate contents in contexts. Basing the linguistic meaning of a name on a set of rules will allow for an explanation of both the productivity as well as the systematicity of their uses. Each proper name may thus be used to express a virtually unlimited number of contents but, due to the systematic nature of the underlying mechanisms, the contents are cross-linguistically uniform and predictive. A rules based approach to polysemy thus allows us to account for both its conventional and generative aspects (Recanati 2017).

**Keywords:** polysemy, proper names, Kaplan

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### **X-Phi results and (armchair) philosophical theorizing**

I will discuss whether, and how, x-phi results should have an impact on the revision of philosophical theories, even from the point of view of an entirely armchair approach to philosophy. I will argue that some x-phi results are completely irrelevant to philosophical theorizing, simply because they do not collect any data worthy of philosophical reflection. Among those are the experiments on reference and the recent probe on the story of The Ship of Theseus. However, I will suggest that other results do provide input that might lead to theory revision (even if the latter, should, I believe, be an armchair enterprise). Among those, Knobe's original probe on intentional action and (perhaps) some of the results of x-phi studies on the Gettier cases.

**Keywords:** experimental philosophy, intention, knowledge

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### **Pragmatics and argumentation**

The relationship between argumentation and language has recently attracted a great deal of attention through various publications in the field of argumentation studies (see e.g., Boogaart et al., 2021; Hinton, 2021; Oswald et al., 2018, 2020). In this talk I propose a historical overview of this relationship by narrowing the scope of my inquiry onto the various ways in which argumentation studies, over the last 50 years, have drawn on research in the field of linguistic pragmatics, which I will limit here to its speech act-theoretic and inferential traditions, respectively based on the seminal groundwork of Austin and Grice (Austin, 1962; Grice, 1989).

I will first discuss various points of contact between the two disciplines, as they have been put forth by researchers in argumentation over time. I will accordingly consider (i) extant theoretical integrations, (ii) available bi-disciplinary methodological options, (iii) the proximity between objects of study, and (iv) a range of concepts overlapping between the two disciplines. In the second part of my talk, I will examine current work at the interface of argumentation and pragmatics and reflect, with some examples, on promising future directions which demonstrate that the research potential of this interface is far from being exhausted.

**Keywords:** pragmatics, argumentation, speech act theory

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## **Exploring valence in judgments of taste**

(based on joint work with Elsi Kaiser, University of Southern California)

In the literature on personal taste, it is often assumed that judgments of taste are evaluative. The assumption is very prominent in the expressivist tradition, according to which to say/judge, for example, that rhubarb is delicious is tantamount to recommending (approving, speaking in favor of) rhubarb, while to say that it tastes awful is tantamount to rejecting (disapproving of, speaking against) it. Nevertheless, the evaluative character of predicates of personal taste (henceforth PPTs) has received relatively little attention from a semantic point of view; which is surprising, given that the notions of evaluativity and (positive and negative) valence have been central in psychology and in certain fields philosophy (value-theory, metaethics, aesthetics). Our aim is to fill out this lacuna. More precisely, we have set three objectives.

First, we aim to show that PPTs don't neatly divide into positive (such as 'delicious', 'fun') and negative (such as 'disgusting', 'boring'): there are PPTs, we claim, that are neither positive nor negative, such as 'surprising' and 'easy'. Second, we will discuss how such neutral PPTs behave. While they are not lexically marked as either positive or negative, they can be used to express a positive evaluation as well as a negative one, depending on the context. Third, there exists a large literature in psychology on the topic of valence that reveals far-reaching cognitive asymmetries between positive and negative information, be they expressions, such as 'good' vs. 'bad', or attitudes, such as liking vs. disliking. We suggest that similar asymmetries also arise with respect to PPTs, and will propose an account of those.

**Keywords:** evaluativity, valence, predicates of personal taste

# **Main Sessions**

## **PhiLang 2021**

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### **“Total signification”, utterer’s meaning, and what is said**

On the standard interpretation of Grice’s philosophy of language, his Theory of Meaning deals with how an utterer can mean something by an utterance, and his Theory of Communication deals with how an utterer can convey additional content that goes beyond the content of the sentence she uttered. It is also widely held (Neale 1992) that these two theories are intricately connected, and by identifying and elaborating the connections between them we can provide a comprehensive, systematic Gricean account of intentional communication. Connecting the two theories into a unified Gricean account rests on the identification of three concepts: (a) the “*total signification*” of an utterance, (b) *what is meant* by the utterer in uttering something (utterer’s occasion-meaning), and (c) *what is said plus what is implicated* by her in the same utterance. Yet influential arguments (Saul 2002, 2010; Zvolenszky 2012) hold that if we interpret Grice’s philosophy of language along these lines, the emerging picture is oversimplified and remains incomplete. Two types of obstacles stand in the way of a unified Gricean account. First, one can identify unmeant parts of the “total signification” of the utterance, such as the *make as if to* cases (in irony), unmeant conventional implicatures, slips of the tongue and poor translations, unmeant entailments, and audience implicatures (the Problem of Unmeant Components). Second, one can recognize some elements in the “total signification” which were neither said nor conventionally or conversationally implicated by the utterer, such as so-called “near-sayings” and “near-implicatures” (the Problem of Exhaustiveness). In our talk we argue for two points. (i) Grice originally intended the Theory of Communication to be a mere *supplement*, an add-on, to his Theory of Meaning, so the “unification” of the theories comes naturally. (ii) The two problems – about Unmeant Components and about Exhaustiveness – can be solved within the Gricean framework. The alleged counter-examples either exemplify various kinds of communicative error with little or no theoretical importance for Grice’s original project, or can be treated by the conceptual tools Grice provided (cases of *make as if to say*). Further, “near-sayings” do not pose a problem for the account simply because Grice was never committed to a thesis about exhaustiveness. “Near-implicatures” aren’t counter-examples either: the conditions don’t refer to the actual state of mind of the audience hearing/reading the utterance. Instead the conditions are from the utterer’s perspective—they are about *audience-oriented intentions of the utterer*.

**Keywords:** Grice, speaker’s meaning, total signification of an utterance, what is said, what is implicated, “Make As If to Say”

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## **Ontology and naturalism in linguistic theory**

Does a naturalistic linguistic theory with empirical concerns necessarily need to posit its entities as *realia*?

In recent times there has been a “return of *Languaging*” (Cowley 2019a). This term, by putting forward the idea that there is a thing called ‘language’, aims to pull the rug out from under “mainstream linguistics”. Languaging operates against the centrality usually granted to the linguistic aspects of what are, in fact, wider complex phenomena. Instead, languaging advocates for a profound reconsideration of the scopes of the “language sciences”, aiming to include the lived aspects of “ coordinations of coordinations” (in Maturana’s terms) within a biosemiotic framework. One of its fundamental tenets is the idea that the usual toolbox of linguistics made of concepts such as “languages”, “systems”, “words”, “grammar”, etc., is merely a collection of *abstracta*, i.e., products of human metareflexivity (Harris 1981). This implies a radical reconsideration of their explicative power with regard to providing a theory of many human basic everyday actions (Cowley 2019b, Love 2017).

Limitations of the project around this notion have been already highlighted in different respects (Orman 2016, Saraceni & Jacob 2018, Colombetti 2014).

I propose another standpoint to critically assess languaging, namely empirical work in linguistic relativity through the interactionist approach (Batisti 2017, 2020). *Prima facie*, this strand of work agrees in expanding an excessively narrow notion of “language”, but still appeals to many concepts “banned” by radical languaging. However, they agree on the multimodal character of lived social interaction; on the importance of cultural and affective factors in describing linguistically mediated interactions; on critically reassessing the role of *ex post facto* categories (Enfield & Sidnell 2017).

I argue that (i) motivations and scopes of languaging can be agreed upon, but they need moderation in view of empirical research programs; (ii) a deflated linguistic ontology is desirable (Collins 2010).

**Keywords:** languaging, ontology of language, naturalism, linguistic relativity, metaphilosophy, theoretical linguistics



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## **Expressing disagreement in different ways: A study of experimental philosophy of language**

During the last 15 years, one of the themes that have largely attracted attention in the field of philosophy of language are *taste disagreements* (see Kölbel 2004; Lasersohn 2005; MacFarlane 2014), which have been depicted with examples such as the following:

- (1) Laila: Artichokes are tasty.
- (2) David: No, artichokes are not tasty.

Most authors use examples as (1)-(2) to represent taste disagreements. In their examples, the way the second speaker expresses disagreement is always an *explicit mark of disagreement*, simple negations like ‘No,’ or ‘Nuh uh,’ or other expressions like ‘I disagree,’ or ‘That’s not true.’

This work defends that, although a majority of authors have used this characterization, it is not adequate to represent taste disagreements because taste disagreements are formulated using a vast array of different expressions, and not only the structure ‘negation (No/I disagree/That’s not true/That’s false) +  $x$  is not  $\phi$ .’ To this end, I will build a corpus of taste discussions using Reddit threads; then, I will run several analyses using R Studio<sup>1</sup> to determine the diversity of ways used by speakers to express disagreement. Specifically, the work will show that, in addition to the fact that the structure ‘negation +  $x$  is not  $\phi$ ’ is not common in the corpus, speakers also use many other different expressions to express disagreement, such as affirmative assertions expressing incompatible assessments, rhetorical questions, sentences containing the verb ‘miss,’ or ‘prefer,’ ironic statements, or locutions with the word ‘wrong.’

**Keywords:** taste disagreements, experimental philosophy, corpus linguistics, Reddit threads, marks of disagreement

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://rstudio.com/>.

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## **The cognitive context-sensitivity of generic generalisations**

This paper introduces *cognitive* context-sensitivity, which contrasts with *linguistic* context-sensitivity. When a sentence is cognitively context-sensitive, the truth-value assigned to the sentence can vary with context, without any shift in the interpretation of the terms or structure of the sentence. The notion is deployed to explain the context-sensitivity of generic generalisations, such as ‘Indians eat beef’, which seems false, for example, when uttered in Context 1:

Context 1: ‘Eating habits vary around the world. The French eat croissants. Mexicans eat tortillas. Indians eat beef.’

The generic seems true in Context 2, however:

Context 2: ‘Despite the cultural taboo, Indians eat beef, but it is less common than in Europe’.

Rachel Sterken has argued that this context-sensitivity is best explained by a context-sensitive quantifier. Sterken’s key evidence is that the context-sensitivity of generics is not mirrored in their adverbially-quantified variants (e.g. ‘Typically Indians eat beef’). If the context-sensitivity of generics stemmed from the subject or predicate, that context-sensitivity would be reproduced by adverbially-quantified generalisations.

This paper presents an alternative. Following Sarah-Jane Leslie, generics are understood as expressing default associations between kinds and properties. Context-sensitivity is explained through variations in the mechanism of default association. Associations between kinds and properties are not stable throughout all contexts. The property *eats beef* is not associated with the kind *Indians* when we have been primed by Context 1 to focus on the characteristic properties of a kind. We are willing to associate the kind and property in Context 2, however, when no such priming has been established.

Adverbially-quantified generalisations do not express default associations. The role of the quantifier is to shift from this default mode of generalisation to an alternative mode defined by the quantifier. Adverbially-quantified generalisations are therefore unaffected by this cognitive context-sensitivity.

**Keywords:** generic generalisations, context-sensitivity, default generalisation, default association, cognitive context-sensitivity, linguistic context-sensitivity

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## **Communicating with colourings**

According to Frege, two sentences with the same sense and reference express the same thought. But they may differ in colourings. Colourings are lexical items or grammatical constructions that do not affect the thought a sentence expresses: for example, the use of informal or formal address in French ('tu' vs. 'vous'), the use of 'but' or 'and' as a conjunction. Nonetheless, these items have specific linguistic meanings. As such, colourings resemble Grice's conventional implicatures: inferences that are entailed by the conventional meaning of lexical items, but are compositionally independent of the explicit contribution of a sentence (Grice 1975, Potts 2005).

Sander (2019) argues that Gricean implicatures do not subsume the category of colourings. He classifies Fregean colourings in (1) colourings without content: purely aesthetic phenomena, (2) colourings with content, of which some are (a) communicative colourings and (b) non-communicative colourings. Non-communicative colourings are not conventional implicatures, as, according to Sander, the speaker does not intend to communicate specific inferences by their use.

I show that this argument relies on a notion of communication focused on the speaker's intentions. According to this notion, what a speaker communicates is what she intends to communicate. However, a more intersubjective notion of communicative intentions is compatible with Grice's theory of conversation. Under this notion, certain expressions used by speakers are attributed with a communicative intention by her audience based on what speakers generally intend when using these expressions. Since so-called non-communicative colourings trigger specific inferences, a speaker who uses them communicates these inferences. Therefore, I vindicate the communicative role of all colourings with content, and their treatment as conventional implicatures.

**Keywords:** philosophy of language, Fregean colouring, conventional implicature, pragmatics, communicative intention

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### **Bending as counter-speech**

Langton (2018) has recently identified a counter-speech strategy – what she names ‘blocking’ – tailored to address implicit hate speech. To ‘block’ is to spell out and question the objectionable contents an utterance surreptitiously conveys. If successful, blocking makes the speaker’s implicit speech act misfire: they will have either to perform it out in the open or drop it. In this paper, we identify and examine a further strategy to counter implicit hate speech on the spot. Such a strategy we call ‘bending’.

To ‘bend’ is to deliberately give a distorted uptake to a speaker’s illocutionary move – precisely, an *ameliorative* uptake, which may turn that move into a different, non-hateful, contribution. To illustrate, consider the following scenario. Maria, Jason, and a few colleagues are considering potential invitees for a graduate roundtable. Jason says, “My supervisor would avoid inviting, you know, affirmative action students”. Even though Maria perfectly gets that Jason is implicitly suggesting that they adopt the same line of conduct as his supervisor, she goes on replying, “I know. It’s terrible how prejudiced some professors are around here”. In responding to Jason’s move *as if* it weren’t a suggestion (but, say an expression of indignation), Maria engages in *bending*. We argue that, if successful, her bending maneuver may make Jason’s bigoted suggestion misfire – and indeed turn it into an egalitarian exposé.

Overall, the paper adds to the counter-speech literature by putting forth a new way in which we can counter implicit hate speech. It also uncovers the positive potential of uptake distortion. While distortion has so far rightfully been taken to undermine speakers’ illocutionary agency and to exacerbate oppression (see, e.g., Kukla 2014), our investigation surprisingly shows how such a dynamic might be employed to derail hate speech and thus counter its oppressive power.

**Keywords:** counter-speech, hate speech, uptake, blocking, discursive injustice

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### **Varieties of affected meaning**

Terms such as *fucking* or *damn* are referred to as *expressives*. These convey truth-conditionally irrelevant, projective information about the speaker's affective states (Potts 2005). Yet, evaluative terms such as *obnoxious* or *disgusting* can trigger the same sort of inferences when they occur as modifiers. And, as Schlenker (2005) points out, even neutral adjectives such as *expensive* or *old* may trigger attitudinal inferences when they occur as non-restrictive modifiers (NRMs). Even though they occur in the scope of the if-clause, these modifiers trigger attitudinal inferences:

- (1) Context: John has one dog.  
If John's {fucking, damn, obnoxious, disgusting, expensive, old} dog starts barking, feed him.  
⇒ If John's dog starts barking, feed him. (truth-conditional irrelevance)  
⇒ The speaker has a negative attitude towards John's dog. (projective attitudinal inference)

Thus, expressives, evaluatives and neutral terms can trigger expressive inferences when they occur as NRM. My hypothesis is that this observation helps us understand (i) how non-expressive terms become expressive and (ii) why expressives have the same distribution that non-restrictive modifiers. The intuition is that expressive inferences are triggered as conversational implicatures that may become conventionalized. From a diachronic perspective, those terms marked as taboo have more chances to convey stronger emotions and thus to semantically encode expressivity (Hom 2012). From a synchronic perspective, examples such as (1) show that expressivity is inherently related to the discourse function of NRM, i.e. on the constraint on NRM to provide attitudinal information in order to be felicitous.

**Keywords:** expressives, evaluatives, non-restrictive modification, implicatures

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## **Actions, products, demonstrations**

In recent years the action-product distinction (Twardowski 1912) found an important application in the debate over the nature of objects of attitudes (cf. Moltmann 2013, 2017). However, one might claim that its philosophical importance still remains underrated and – to a large extent – ignored. In my paper, I would like to inquire into one possible application of the distinction in the theory of demonstratives.

As it is broadly accepted, typical uses of demonstratives are accompanied by demonstrations. The concept of demonstration, however, manifests the action-product ambiguity. Hence it is important to distinguish two related ideas of demonstration, I shall dub them “demonstration qua action” and “demonstration qua product”. The difference between the two manifests in several respects of which I shall stress the involvement of potential demonstrata (the potential objects demonstrated) in the latter (but not in the former) as well as the related modal differences.

Now, I shall suggest that the correct semantics for demonstratives should treat both notions of demonstration seriously by incorporating a slightly modified Fregean Theory of Demonstrations (FDT) (Kaplan 1989) as a framework filling the link between demonstrations qua actions and demonstrations qua products. The main idea of FDT is to treat demonstrations (qua actions!) as being associated with certain modes of presentations or quasi-descriptive contents that determine the class of potential demonstrata as objects that fit the modes of presentations in question. From this point of view the postulated manners of presentations might be interpreted as functions that map demonstrations qua actions into demonstrations qua products (i.e. demonstrations involving potential demonstrata).

I shall close the paper with the discussion over the relation of the view sketched above to the debate regarding the semantic importance of demonstrations and referential intentions (cf. Bach 1992, Reimer 1991, Roberts 1997, Perry 2009, King 2014, Radulescu 2019). I shall argue, among other things, that paying attention to the distinction in question and incorporating FDT into the theory of demonstratives enables the construction of an account that assigns a semantic importance *both* to demonstrations and referential intentions.

**Keywords:** action-product distinction, demonstrations, demonstratives, demonstrata, referential intentions

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## **Empty names and abstract objects**

In this talk, I will explore the possible applications of some theories about empty names in philosophy of language to definitions by abstraction in philosophy of mathematics.

In the first part of the talk, I will compare empty names and arbitrary ones, suggesting to classify the latter as a particular sort of empty names. As empty names, we usually mean non-referring terms but, in this context, we focus on the specific terms that turn out not to be able to fix only a determined referent, due to their definitions. An example of such sort of terms is provided by singular terms that are introduced by Abstraction principles, namely bi-conditional of the form:  $\S\alpha=\S\beta\leftrightarrow R(\alpha,\beta)$ <sup>2</sup>. Fregean and Neologicist arguments show that such sort of principles provides a good definition of the above mentioned abstraction operator ( $\S$ ) but is not able to provide a good (implicit) definition of the singular abstract terms. I endorse an arbitrary reading of such terms<sup>3</sup> and emphasise their similarity with the empty names provided by Russellian theory<sup>4</sup>.

In the second part of the talk, I suggest to formalise theories that involve such sort of terms by a Meinongian negative free logic. This theory involves the axioms of classical second-order logic without identity (SOL) for an "un-restricted" quantification, four axioms of non-inclusive negative free logic with identity (NFL=<sup>5</sup>) for a "restricted" quantification and identity, the comprehension axiom schema (CA) and, as the only inferential rule, modus ponens (MP).

**Keywords:** empty names, abstract objects, arbitrary names, abstraction principles, logicism

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<sup>2</sup>An abstraction principle (AP) typically introduces and rules an operator term-forming ( $\S$ ) as a new symbol of the language, by stating the equivalence between two relations: the identity between the complex singular terms obtained by the above mentioned operator and another relation (R) that holds between the arguments of such operator.

<sup>3</sup>Cfr. Boccuni Woods 2018, Horsten 2019.

<sup>4</sup>Cfr. Russell 1905.

<sup>5</sup>N1)  $\forall\alpha \rightarrow (E!t \rightarrow \alpha(t/v))$ ; N2)  $\exists v E!v$ ; N3)  $s = t \rightarrow (\alpha \rightarrow \alpha(t/s))$ ; N4)  $\forall v (v = v)$ .

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## **The logic of polyreference**

In my previous work, I have defended a novel view of the semantic of proper names, i.e., the Polyreferential View. According to this view, proper names can have more than one semantic referent, indeed as many as bearers of the name there are. However, the view still sees proper names as referential terms that contribute their referents to the propositional content. This has the implication that a sentence containing a polyreferential name would thereby express many propositions or contents, as many as referents for the name there are. This paper proposes a logic for this new semantic relation of *polyreference* and gives an account of compositionality.

Given a standard way of understanding sentence truth as depending on the truth of the proposition it expresses, we have that for any sentence  $S$ ,  $S$  is true when it expresses a true proposition *and*  $S$  is false when it expresses a false proposition. So, most sentences containing polyreferential terms will be true, and they will be false. As a result, we will not be able to reason from the truth or falsity of sentences in the standard way – e.g. “David is happy and David is not happy” expresses many different propositions, only some of which are contradictions, for many others are true propositions, e.g., when Hume is happy and Lewis is not (among many other possibilities). Although in this framework, some standard reasonings would not be valid, the paper argues that this is not necessarily a bad result. I suggest that when taking the fact that names have multiple bearers seriously, our intuitions about the truth and falsity of sentences, and of the validity of inferences may change. The logic proposed, however, can cope with most of our ordinary reasonings with proper names.

**Keywords:** polyreference, proper names, multiple propositions



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### **On the inferential roles**

Inferentialism (Brandom, Peregrin) is a specific view according to which the meaning of a sentence is understood in terms of the inferences in which the sentence plays a role. The standard way of representing the meaning of a sentence is then by its inferential potential, i.e. a set of a) sentences from which the sentence can be inferred and b) sentences (inferential consequences) which can be inferred from the sentence and some collateral premises. The focus of inferentialists has been strongly oriented on meaning on the level of full sentences which caused that the questions of a) what the meaning of subsentential expressions (especially substantive vocabulary) is, and b) how speakers linguistically process (reach understanding of) expressions/utterances were rather neglected by inferentialists.

In this paper, I contribute to the development of normative inferentialism by addressing both of these questions. The main aim of this paper is to present a novel inferentialists view on the meaning of subsentential expressions which a) develops in detail the inferentialists dictum that the meaning of an expression is its inferential role and b) provides an answer to the question of what role subsentential expressions play in hearer's understanding of an utterance.

The core idea of the presented view is that speakers represent the meaning of a subsentential expression by general information related to an expression and stored in long-term memory. When activated (by specific orthographic/phonological stimuli), a part of information related to an expression is made available in working memory and subsequently used in the construction of (a part of) the inferential potential of an uttered sentence. In other words, the inferential role of an expression lies in providing collateral premises which a hearer uses for the construction of the inferential potential of the sentence in which the expression is used.

**Keywords:** inferentialism, linguistic understanding, inferential role, linguistic processing, rich meaning approach

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**The Faculties of Language**

Generative linguistics is the study of an internal, computational system. Theoretical claims about the nature of this system have undergone substantial revisions, but this core claim has remained. In this talk, I identify some tensions resulting from such development, and propose a resolution. I argue that the disparate constraints placed on this system are not jointly satisfiable by any unified system, and so a linguistically-informed psychological theory must feature multiple distinct but interacting ‘language faculties’.

On the one hand, trends in generative linguistics have been towards simplicity, generality, and abstractness in linguistic models. Early approaches featuring substantial amounts of language-, and construction-, specific structure have been succeeded by the Minimalist Program, which aims to reduce all linguistic operations to its minimally necessary operation, Merge, which forms a unit from any two linguistic items. Evolutionary constraints appear to mandate such a minimal system: the recency of linguistic evolution precludes complex psychological adaptation.

On the other hand, the characteristic argument that such a computational system exists, the poverty of stimulus argument, serves to show that large amounts of linguistically specific structure (e.g. that involved in question-formation, adjunct-ordering, or phonological reduction) is not learnable from the child’s linguistic environment. It is inferred that this structure must be a product of quite specific innate linguistic knowledge.

These create conflicting pressures on the computational system. Theoretical and evolutionary arguments suggest it must be simple and abstract, while learning considerations require significant language-specific structure.

This tension results from the assumption that these distinct developments target a single, unified, system. We resolve this tension by positing distinct interacting language faculties. A core, minimalist, grammar, alongside lexical, phonological, and semantic faculties. Each faculty can then account for specific poverty of stimulus constraints, without requiring any one to be so complex as to raise evolvability worries.

**Keywords:** generative linguistics, the minimalist program, philosophy of linguistics, theoretical psychology, language evolution, modularity of mind

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**Butler's problem in the light of the Polish words *intencja* 'intention' and *zamiar* 'intention, intent'**

In Butler's thought experiment (1978), a man named Brown rolls a cubic dice hoping to throw a six; when he throws a six, we still will not say that Brown threw a six intentionally. Contrary to that, in the situation when Brown puts a cartridge into one of the six chambers of the revolver, spins the chamber and points the revolver at Smith – if he kills him, we are inclined to conclude that Brown killed Smith intentionally. Butler's two stories were later on supplemented with a few more by Mele, Sverdlik (1996), including non-moral cases of shooting and moral cases of throwing a dice; six resulting scenarios were in turn (with slight modifications) tested experimentally by Nadelhoffer (2004). The results are typically interpreted in such a way that the attribution of intentionality apparently depends on the moral assessment of the commented act.

I try to show that the effect observed in the Butlerian scenarios is not so much related to moral judgements, as to the fact that the conditions of applicability for the English word *intentionally* include the rationality of the link between the action performed by the subject and its planned result – which the word *intention* does not necessarily imply. I also explain the mechanism of “filtering out” some of the meaning of *intention* at the transition from the nominal to the adverbial form, referring to certain parallel phenomena in the Polish language. If we look at the presented scenarios from the perspective of the Polish words *intencja* and *zamiar*, both typically taken as equivalents of *intention* (the second of which, unlike the first, introducing the condition of rationality in predicting the effects of the action by the subject), it turns out that to the scenarios to which *intentionally* applies, one can apply both the words *intencja* and *zamiar*, whereas those that exclude the attribution of *intentionally*, exclude *zamiar* as well (still being compatible with *intencja*). So one can assume that Brown intended (*miał zamiar*) to kill Smith in general, and what he was doing at the moment was aimed at achieving this ultimate goal (perhaps he had a ‘plan B’ in case he did not succeed), while he could not *generally* intend to throw a six (at least not in a situation typically evoked when talking about rolling a dice). In the former case, i.e. in the context of an overall *zamiar*, the (relatively) low probability of its realisation at a given moment is clearly neglected in language, but it cannot be ignored in the microsituation of throwing a dice, to which the concept of *zamiar* will therefore not apply. The effects occurring in the other scenarios can be explained in a similar way, which basically undermines the hypothesis that it is the speaker's moral judgment that is crucial for the attribution of intentionality.

**Keywords:** Butler's problem, intention, intentionality

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## **Demonstratives from the perspective of multidimensional semantics**

The main goal of this talk is to discuss the assumptions present in the literature on demonstratives from the viewpoint of the latest field research and to defend a hybrid model of their meaning; that is, a model that employs both truth (TC) and use conditions (UC) to capture the overall meaning of natural language expressions in a multidimensional way.

The talk has two major components: conceptual and empirical.

The central claim of the first part is that multidimensional frameworks offer helpful tools to address certain theoretical issues that alternative theories face and to account for all empirical aspects of demonstratives. Accordingly, the following two arguments may be raised against any unidimensional theory.

**Argument from diversity:** the standard model of spatial distinctions is insufficient to constitute a reliable typology of demonstratives: in addition to spatial features, demonstratives indicate a wide range of contextual features. The need for a dedicated UC dimension to store information on relevant contextual factors is one of the points raised in the talk.

**Argument from simplicity (of truth):** any demonstrative sentence is true or false depending on the properties of a certain object, regardless of it being the target of a demonstration in any way. Therefore, the TC content of a demonstrative sentence should be allowed to be independent of any contextual constraints pertaining to the actual demonstration.

The main aim of the second part of the talk is to discuss unique predictions that can be derived from the analysis of demonstratives in terms of the hybrid model. These predictions concern the process of pragmaticalization, nature, and cognitive significance of both UC and TC contents. Presentation of an experimental study designed to test these predictions accompanies the discussion in this part of the talk.

**Keywords:** demonstratives, truth-conditional meaning, use-conditional meaning, hybrid semantics, compositionality, experimental study

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### **Meaning as experience. On the analogies between linguistic and perceptual meaning-making**

Is there a relationship between the way we make sense of linguistic utterances and the way we make sense of any other percept (say, an image, a sound, a natural scene)? In other words, is there a relationship between language comprehension and perception in general?

If we are to judge by most standard accounts of language comprehension, there is not. Language comprehension seems a matter of possessing a rich grammar (syntax) that supports highly articulate modes of meaning (semantics), which can be used in many ways conversationally (pragmatics). Perception, on the other hand, seems a matter of turning the array of sensory stimuli into meaningful configurations according to completely different principles: Gestalt laws, shape extraction, feature integration, etc. There is no syntax, semantics or pragmatics of perception. This leaves us with a divide, which most current accounts struggle to motivate, between language and other fundamental cognitive faculties.

Here, I want to suggest that this divide is largely specious. A careful scrutiny of what happens during both language comprehension and perception reveals deep analogies between the two. With a systematic comparison, I will show that the two processes are subject to the same underlying principles and pose the same recurring problems. We make sense of utterances in the same way that we make sense of our environment. As such, a theory of language comprehension should focus less on traditional language-centric notions and should instead be seen as part of a general theory of perception. I will discuss the consequences of this view for some traditional problems in the philosophy of language, such as the semantics/pragmatics divide, the hermeneutic circle and the ineffability of contextual meanings.

**Keywords:** language comprehension, perception, *Prägnanz*, relevance, semantics/pragmatics divide, radical contextualism

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## **Illocution and the expression of mental states**

Linguistic acts are typically Janus-faced: They are directed both ‘outward’ in their capacity of constituting illocutionary acts and ‘inward’ in virtue of expressing mental states. According to classical speech act theorists, the illocutionary and expressive dimensions of speech are connected necessarily: (T) An illocutionary act (of a suitable type) is *ipso facto* also an expressive act (see, e.g., Searle 1983; Alston 2000). For instance, according to (T), asserting *p necessarily* involves the expression of a belief that *p*.

We examine (T) by discussing two *prima facie* counterexamples. (CE1) One can, apparently, perform an illocution without *being in* the corresponding mental state. In defence of (T), some claim that the speaker *S* has then not illocuted but only pseudo-performed an illocution (Reinach 1913; Rosenthal 1986). We, however, take expression to be non-factive; it is possible, though normatively defective, to *express* a mental state without being in that mental state (see Searle 1969; cf. Austin 1962). (CE2) Coerced illocution: The illocutionary act is performed, the corresponding mental state is not present, but the performance is *not* normatively defective. We discuss several responses in defence of (T): (i) that no illocutionary act has been performed at all (see Kenyon 2010; Hawley 2018); (ii) that the illocution is not performed by *S*, but by the coercer (see Wittgenstein PI II, x; Searle 1983); (iii) that *S* is insincere (and hence violates an illocutionary norm) but that this is excused by the circumstances.

While we deem (iii) to be (T)’s most plausible defence, there is no conclusive argument in its favour. We, therefore, also consider giving up (T): In cases of coerced illocution, *S* illocutes without expressing the corresponding mental state. *S* is then not violating any illocutionary norms. We discuss some consequences of this view.

**Keywords:** illocutionary acts, mental state expression, expressive acts, coerced speech, sincerity

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## **Lying with subordinate speech acts**

According to the consensus view, we can lie only with assertions; a lie is just an *insincere assertion* (e.g., Carson 2006, Sorensen 2007, Fallis 2009, Stokke 2018). Recently, however, the consensus view has been challenged by proposals according to which we can lie with other speech acts (e.g., *promises* (Marsili 2016), *non-declaratives* (Viebahn et al. 2020), and even the so-called subordinate or auxiliary speech acts, e.g., *conversational implicatures* (Meibauer 2014), *conventional implicatures* (Stokke 2017), *presuppositions* (Viebahn 2019)). This paper defends two claims: (i) *pace* Viebahn et al. (2020), we cannot lie with non-declarative utterances, and (ii) we can lie with declaratives other than assertion.

Firstly, I argue against a recent proposal by Viebahn et al.'s (2020) who claim, based on their experimental study, that non-declaratives carrying believed-false presuppositions should be regarded as lies. I show that such a conclusion is based on an unwarranted identification of *lying with non-declaratives* with *lying with presuppositions embedded in non-declaratives*.

Secondly, I propose a departure from the consensus view: lying is not restricted just to assertions but to all speech acts carrying *assertoric commitment*. Apart from assertions, I submit, such a commitment can be carried by conventional implicatures, some presuppositions and some conversational implicatures. Although these linguistic acts do not form a unified category, all of them can be treated as subordinate speech acts (see conventional implicatures in Potts (2005), presuppositions in Macagno (2016), García-Carpintero (2018), and conversational implicatures in Green (2017)). Because they are speech acts, they have their own norms and sincerity conditions. Moreover, they can be embedded in all types of utterances, also non-declarative ones. I show that this can generate premature conclusions that we can lie with non-declaratives carrying such speech acts. These acts, although subordinate, can be lies on their own.

**Keywords:** assertion, lying, presupposition, conventional implicature, conversational implicature, embedded speech acts

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### **Circle takes the square: Pragmatics, hermeneutics, and utterance interpretation**

Pragmatics and hermeneutics have some shared aims: utterance meaning and interpretation. However, there is not much discussion between these two traditions in contemporary discourses concerning topics such as language, meaning, and interpretation. In this paper, I examine this shared interest and specify some ways in which these two disciplines can be put into productive conversation. Specifically, at issue is the retrieval of meaning at the interface between semantics and pragmatics. By using insights from hermeneutic research, my claim is that for pragmatic reasoning to get up and running it must enter into the hermeneutic circle “in the right way” (Heidegger 1996: 143). In this paper, I claim that the starting point of pragmatics is mereological, and therefore must confront the hermeneutic circle. I argue that the hermeneutic circle poses an issue to those who claim the autonomy of semantic and pragmatic theorizing from continental theorizing on the matter. I do so by reflecting on the works of H. G. Gadamer where hermeneutics receives its foremost modern articulation. Hermeneutics offers a fundamental account of the conditions for human understanding. What Gadamer’s research uncovers is the universal presence of some prior understanding (what he calls ‘prejudice’) as a precondition for meaningful interpretation. First, I examine the problem of Grice’s circle in pragmatics. Briefly, this is the issue that in order to get to what is said (i.e., the starting point for Gricean reasoning about why a person would utter *x*), Gricean reasoning is required to determine it. After, we survey two recent attempts from Relevance Theory (2012) and Critical Pragmatics (2014) to resolve Grice’s circle. I claim that both attempts simply push the issue of the hermeneutic circle back a step. I offer some comments as to how we can enter into the circle ‘in the right way’.

**Keywords:** hermeneutics, pragmatics, Gadamer, Grice, prejudice, Grice’s circle



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### **On some objections to the normativity of meaning**

The philosophical debate about the normativity of meaning is meant to reflect on one of the most fundamental questions about the nature of language and its use. However, it has been noted that the dispute seems to result in ‘a basic clash of intuitions’ (Glüer & Wikforss 2009) and that the opposing sides ‘have reached a stalemate’ (Whiting 2009). This suggests that a more critical assessment of the debate itself – the meaning of the questions asked as well as the implicit presuppositions and the concepts that shape them – is needed.

This paper aims to contribute to the discussion not by means of proposing and defending new arguments in favour of either view, but by analysing and reflecting on the existing dialectic. It seeks to achieve this aim by critically engaging with some of the objections raised against semantic normativity by anti-normativists like Kathrin Glüer, Anandi Hattiangadi and Åsa Wikforss as well as discussing some of the ideas put forward by normativists like Hans-Johann Glock, Severin Schroeder and Daniel Whiting. The upshot of the discussion is meant to provide a clearer representation of some of the arguments and concepts that guide the debate, though the proposed analysis, if correct, should also add some support for the normativist case.

**Keywords:** linguistic meaning, semantic normativity, correctness, prescriptivity, rules

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## **The representational structure of linguistic understanding**

Linguistic understanding is a central element of our social lives; it contributes to the achievement of communicative success, facilitates action coordination, and enables the acquisition of testimonial knowledge. Nevertheless, characterizations of linguistic understanding offered by philosophers of language are very heterogeneous.

We can divide existent philosophical theories of linguistic understanding into two groups: *direct* and *indirect*. The distinction is based on the way in which the state of understanding postulated by a given theory represents the content of the linguistic input. According to indirect views, the content of an utterance ( $p$ ) is represented *as being said by a given speaker*. When Speaker says that  $p$ , Hearer's understanding of the utterance has the content:  $r = \textit{that Speaker said that } p$ . According to direct views, the content of a state of understanding is just the content of the utterance, i.e.,  $p$ . Theories within both groups are further differentiated based on the type of mental attitude identified with linguistic understanding.

Building on the strengths of available philosophical accounts and drawing from empirical research on various aspects of language comprehension, this paper offers a new account of the representational structure of linguistic understanding. In contrast to existing theories, it postulates that the representational structure of linguistic understanding consists of multiple interdependent representations (both direct and indirect) generated by a dual-stream process. Additionally, the proposed model marks a middle ground between two competing accounts of the relation between comprehension and acceptance: *Cartesian*, according to which we are free to either accept or reject comprehended contents, and; *Spinozan*, according to which we automatically accept whatever we comprehend.

**Keywords:** linguistic understanding, language comprehension, *Cartesian* vs. *Spinozan* model, validation, epistemic vigilance, testimony

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### **Lexicon-semantics interface: a case study**

The paper contributes to the discussion on the relation between compositional and lexical semantics (e.g., Winter 2001). We propose that scope readings of certain multi-quantifier sentences are chosen according to the meanings of the prepositions involved. This claim allows us to account for some previously unexplained scope phenomena such as the frozen scope puzzle. The example in (1) permits both the surface and the inverse scope order:

(1) Mary draped a sheet over every table.

Sentence (1) can be understood to mean that there is a different sheet draped over every table (inverse reading: *every table* > *a sheet*), it can be also understood to mean that there is one sheet draped over all the tables (surface reading: *a sheet* > *every table*). In the example in (2), however, scope is fixed to the surface order:

(2) Mary draped a table with every sheet.

We follow Harley (2002) in assuming that (1) and (2) have parallel structures, and the semantic distinctions between the two structures are caused by the differences in the contributions made by the two different prepositions involved: the locative preposition *over* in the ambiguous example (1) and the instrumental preposition *with* in the frozen variant (2). One open question for this account is why locative prepositions can invert scope. In this paper, we address this question and propose that locative prepositions induce dependencies reversing the ordering of the quantifiers involved. This is due to the fact that locative prepositions imply ‘disjointness’ (entities do not occur at more than one place simultaneously), and hence can be interpreted as partial functions (from physical objects to locations). For example, *over* can be interpreted as the function (dependency)  $p : |S(\text{heet})| \rightarrow |T(\text{able})|$ , the intended meaning being that for any table, we have a set of sheets draped over that table. By quantifying over this dependency, we get the inverse ordering of the quantifiers involved. Temporal prepositions (e.g., *after*, *before*) also induce inverse scope – this is due to the fact that they also imply ‘disjointness’ (events do not occur at more than one time), and hence can be interpreted as partial functions (from events to times). The reason why inverse readings are blocked with certain prepositions (e.g. *with*) is that instrumental prepositions are interpreted as mere binary relations (do not imply ‘disjointness’), and hence do not induce dependencies reversing the ordering of the quantifiers involved.

**Keywords:** lexicon-semantics interface, scope ambiguities, prepositions

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## **Understanding demonstratives together**

What is required in order for there to be understanding of a use of a demonstrative---a word such as “this” or “that”? Going back to an insight of Frege's, one range of cases suggest that, in order for there to be understanding, the interlocutors must think, not only of the same object as referent, but think of it in appropriately related ways. What is this appropriate relation? Going back to an insight of Dummett's, there are also cases in which understanding does not require that the interlocutors even think of the same object. Taking these two types of cases together constitutes a puzzle that poses a challenge for a general account of demonstrative understanding. How can we say anything in general when there is such wild variation in requirements upon demonstrative understanding? Is it possible to theorize fruitfully about it?

After presenting the puzzle, I solve it. I begin doing so by outlining a framework in which potential solutions may be stated. The framework emphasizes how demonstrative understanding, as a species of linguistic understanding, occurs between interlocutors in the context of a joint activity. As a part of a joint activity, demonstrative understanding involves normative requirements set upon the interlocutors' individual activity. Furthermore, a joint activity has a purpose, which is the source of those normative requirements. Thus, on this framework the following question naturally arises: What is the purpose of linguistic understanding, and a fortiori demonstrative understanding? Different answers to that question generate different potential solutions to the puzzle of wild variation. I show how the puzzle is solved by the answer that the basic purpose is mutual intelligibility: making sense of each other.

**Keywords:** demonstratives, reference, communication, pragmatics, Frege's puzzle, felicitous underspecificity

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### **An expectation-based view of human communication**

According to the classical view of successful communication (SC) ideas can be shared by people, so communication succeeds if the idea grasped by the hearer is the same as the speaker's idea. Under this view, SC is explained either resorting to the notion of shared contents between speaker and hearer –or relaxing the shared-content condition and claiming that contents can be merely similar. Anyway, all these approaches accept some amount of invariantism, either as shared contents, or as context-independent conditions for the evaluation of SC. Unfortunately that is not an option for contextualism, according to which hearers attend to context when they identify the content, so there would not be context-independent contents/meanings/conditions. Hence, the explanation of SC is still a major challenge for any advocate of contextualism.

My goal is to show that SC is not a crucial problem for contextualism, because cooperation may be accounted for in the absence of shared meanings and concepts. In particular, I will take as starting point the Gricean view of communication and meaning, in order to articulate my proposal around a procedural definition of SC, whose successful character would be determined by the end point of the conversational exchange and not by a sort of agreement between the speaker and the hearer. This approach will be based on a set of communicative principles that, by means of the generation and satisfaction of expectations about the responses of the other subjects, guide and explain the conversational behavior of both the speaker and the hearer. Lastly, I will show that, since every subject knows her own expectations about the behavior of the other participants –in response to her own conversational contributions–, the satisfaction of expectations is a more reasonable basis for communication than the recognition of intentions of the Gricean view.

**Keywords:** communication, expectations, contextualism, meaning, concepts

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### **Inferentialist semantics for lexicalized social meanings**

Social meanings are semiotic contents attached to various social actions, statuses, resources, and situations (Haslanger ms.). By *lexicalized* social meanings (LSMs) I will understand social meanings attached to the uses of specific words and expressions. A clear case of LSMs are slurs, which refer to groups based on descriptive characteristics but convey social meanings of derogation or subjugation (Stanley 2015). LSMs also include expressions that are overtly politically charged (“free enterprise”) and ones that purport to be innocuous (“mother”). My goal is to consider LSMs as a linguistic category and propose a (dynamic, context-oriented) semantics for them.

LSMs affect context beyond what is said: they *impose* certain (problematic) contents and thereby structure the context in specific ways ((Davis and McCready 2020, García-Carpintero 2017 on slurs, Haslanger ms., Stanley 2015 more broadly). I propose to account for this property in terms of inferentialist semantics (based on Brandom 1994; this is to be distinguished from providing inferentialist accounts for the encoded meaning of slurs, cf. Whiting 2008).

In an inferentialist picture of communication, the discursive significance of an utterance is (partly) constituted by the inferences it licenses. That, however, depends on what auxiliary premises are available. Discursive contexts can be construed as structures that make certain auxiliary premises available and rank them for salience. LSMs are *discursive context-structuring devices*: they make certain sets of auxiliary premises salient. What those sets are depends on the broader contexts of social values, practices, stereotypes, schemes etc. E.g., the use of “Boche” to refer to a German does not encode the content “Germans are cruel and therefore despicable” or commit the speaker to the validity of an inference scheme “if x is German, x is cruel and despicable”, but structures the discursive context in such a way that “Germans are cruel”, “Germans are despicable” become highly salient auxiliary premises, potentially licensing such problematic inferences. The difference between a slur and its neutral counterpart, or between e.g. the descriptive “market-based economy” and value-laden “free enterprise” lie not in their extensions, but in the sets of auxiliary premises they make salient in the context.

**Keywords:** semantics, inferentialism, social meaning, slurs, context

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### **Anaphora: an inquisitive approach**

In this talk I focus on the connection between attention and anaphoric reference, and on the possibility of incorporating it into the framework of Dynamic Inquisitive Semantics (Dotlačil & Roelofsen 2019). While the aforementioned connection has been taken into consideration by some semantic theories (Bittner 2014, Nouwen 2003), the majority of the formal analyses of the language remains silent in this respect, including the theories belonging to the branch of Inquisitive Semantics.

The first part of the talk is devoted to exploring the connection between attention and anaphora in itself. I provide a brief overview of the psychosemantic evidence in favour of this connection as well as justification for taking this kind of evidence into account when constructing a formal semantic theory.

The second part concerns the possibility of modifying an already existing formal theory – Dynamic Inquisitive Semantics – making it possible for it to account for the connection between attention and anaphora. I begin with a brief overview of the basic tenets of the framework of Inquisitive Semantics along with the explanation of why this framework in general, and the system of Dynamic Inquisitive Semantics in particular, can be considered to be especially well-suited for incorporating into it the notion of attention in connection to anaphora. Lastly, I move on to the presentation of my proposition of the implementation of this idea. I introduce the notion of Attention Centre and provide a means of representing it formally in Dynamic Inquisitive Semantics in such a way that it is useful in accounting for anaphora resolution.

**Keywords:** anaphora, attention, Inquisitive Semantics, Dynamic Semantics, psycholinguistics

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## **Slur reclamation and meaning change**

In this talk I want to present my account of slur reclamation. It seems that explaining slur reclamation *via* pragmatic mechanisms competes with accounts which posit a semantic ambiguity between the derogatory and the reclaimed slur. I argue that these views are not rivals – they complement each other. I claim that it is impossible to explain meaning change without appealing to pragmatic mechanisms, especially in the case of slur reclamation given the socio-political motivation of this process.

First, I briefly present two accounts of slur reclamation: Jeshion's (2020) Polysemy View which takes slur reclamation to be a process of semantic change; and Bianchi's (2014) Echoic View which takes reclamatory uses of slurs to be echoic uses of language as they are defined in the Relevance Theory (Wilson and Sperber 1986). I then discuss some data concerning the histories of reclamation of slurs "queer" (Bronsema 2004) and „nigger" (Rahman 2012) which bring me to presenting arguments against the Polysemy and Echoic views. I argue that while both of them provide valuable insights, neither can fully account for the slur reclamation process. Lastly, I propose the Combined View of slur reclamation which postulates meaning change while fleshing out the pragmatic mechanisms necessary for it to occur. The Combined View takes Jeshion's characterization of stages of slur reclamation as its basis and supplements it with a stage of echoic uses of the slur as it is explained by Bianchi.

**Keywords:** meaning change, pragmatics, reclamation, semantics, slurs, relevance theory



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### **Asserting and alethic pluralism**

Is it true that sunsets are beautiful? The layperson would presumably reply that it is, but for philosophers this is a controversial issue. Not because philosophers are too bogged down in their philosophical quandaries that they are oblivious to the charms of a good sunset, but because they doubt whether aesthetic discourse is apt for truth. For instance, deflationists about truth say: sunsets are beautiful, so it is true that sunsets are beautiful, because one can vacuously attach “it is true that...” to all statements that express one’s convictions. Yet, correspondence theorists argue that “Sunsets are beautiful” is not a genuine representation of reality, but that it is rather a projection of a non-cognitive attitude, and since only representations can be apt for truth, it cannot be true that sunsets are beautiful.

Usually, one’s views on truth-aptness are implied by one’s theory of truth. However, pluralists about truth usually side with the deflationists by supporting minimalism about truth-aptness. Yet, contrary to the deflationist, the alethic pluralist lacks a knockdown argument for this view. Therefore, pluralists have to argue that “Sunsets are beautiful” is truth-apt by arguing that the theoretical costs of endorsing expressivism, error theory, fictionalism, etc. about aesthetic discourse is higher than the cost of truth pluralism. Yet pluralism about truth is quite costly, so these kinds of arguments are not very persuasive.

I argue in this talk that pluralists can develop a unified account of assertions by focusing on the act of *asserting* and the various purposes of this act. Through Sellars I show how social norms can be reified by the act of asserting. Since there are different kinds of norms, there are “varieties of truth”. (Sellars 1968, IV §26) These norms either drive or are driven by ontology and invoke anti-realist and realist truth properties respectively.

**Keywords:** alethic pluralism, asserting, truth, truth-aptness, Sellars

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### **Reference-shifting of proper names**

In Kripke's theory there is only one condition that has to be fulfilled to keep a reference-chain sound, i.e. to avoid reference-shifting. The condition says that a 'learner' of a name has to have the intention to use the name with the same reference with which a 'teacher' uses it. The reference-shifting argument against Kripke's theory – originally presented by Evans – boils down to demonstrating that sometimes even though the condition is fulfilled, reference does shift. John Burgess in his 2014 paper is trying to defend Kripkean picture by arguing that such a reference-shift can be explained on the ground of the causal chain theory.

In my paper I present three arguments against Burgess. First, I argue that he misinterprets Evans's position. Namely, he wrongly assumes that Evans demands an explanation of reference-shift which would be independent of the causal chains theory. Second, I argue that Burgess makes a mistake when he excludes situations of having a *de dicto* beliefs about the 'wrong' object as possible scenarios in which reference-shift can occur. I show that *de dicto*-situations can generate the shift as well as *de re*-situations do. Third, I draw on Dummett's arguments to show that the alleged solution proposed by Burgess – consisting in enriching the causal chain theory with the requirement of having a *de re* belief about the bearer of a name – in fact makes the theory irrelevant.

**Keywords:** proper names, Kripke, Evans, causal chain theory, Madagascar, reference-shifting

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### **The quasi-disagreement problem for contextualism about epistemic modality**

In my presentation I challenge the widely held view, saying that traditional contextualism fails badly for accommodating conversational modal disagreement. On standard interpretation of the contextualist challenge, as I call the challenge pressed on contextualists to answer, contextualism is said to be unable to explain how it can be that two speakers A and B who are situated in the same epistemic circumstances can disagree with each other if A says: “We ought to bet on (the horse) Exploder” and her interlocutor protests by saying “We ought to bet on (the horse) Blue Blazer”. In this sort of context, call it BET, the contextualist interpretation of the conversational situation is taken to go as follows: *in view of what A knows/or in view of the information A has* A and B ought to bet on E and *in view of what B knows/or in view of the information that B has* A and B ought to bet on BB”. But if the epistemic perspectives of A and B are of equal admissibility, they cannot disagree but talk past each other.

I will offer a contextualist-friendly answer to the disagreement challenge by showing that many so-called modal disagreements when approached from contextualist perspective are what I call “quasi-disagreement problems” (QDP). “QDP” is my name for the allegedly insoluble problem that contextualists are said to have with explaining the possibility of conversational modal disagreement.

I will argue that contextualism can accommodate disagreement by determining the context-relevant perspective that makes up for the meaning of the relevant sentence expressing epistemic modality. The contextualist answer to the QDP which I propose inscribes into a novel approach to the analysis of semantic modality, which I call “framework-context contextualism”.

**Keywords:** contextualism, epistemic modality, framework-context contextualism, disagreement, discourse meaning

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### **De-Platonizing counterpossibles**

Emery and Hill (2017) argue that standard counterexamples pose no threat to vacuist semantics of counterpossibles, i.e. the claim that all counterfactual conditionals with a metaphysically impossible antecedent bear the truth-value ‘true,’ because we are well-advised to explain the intuitive appeal of these examples in terms of pragmatics rather than semantics. In particular, they argue that certain counterpossibles seem to bear the truth-value ‘false’ only because of the effects of conversational implicatures or because the respective audience has an insufficient understanding of the metaphysical status of the antecedent. Recently, Sendlak (2019) has argued that Emery’s and Hill’s argument is untenable because it commits them to the implausible assumption that literally all counterfactuals bear the truth-value ‘true’ (irrespective of the metaphysical status of their antecedents). Sendlak claims that “[w]hile Emery and Hill manage to stress the important pragmatic aspect of counterfactuals, their proposal in its current form requires completion” (Sendlak 2019, 531). In this talk, I offer a more ‘complete’ version of Emery’s and Hill’s argument. In particular, I will argue that Sendlak’s criticism is no reason to worry for vacuist semantics because we can reformulate Emery’s and Hill’s defence in a more rigorous way by utilizing Stalnaker’s (2002) concept of ‘common ground’. More generally, I will argue that a major problem of much contemporary work on the semantics of counterpossibles is that it does not question the traditional division of labor between semantics, pragmatics, and psychology of language that emerged in a context in which formal languages took center stage.

**Keywords:** semantics-pragmatics distinction, conditionals, counterfactuals, counterpossibles, semantics of counterfactuals, pragmatics of counterfactuals

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**That's not what I meant: toward an ethics of interpretation**

What are the fair interpretations of what someone says? For instance, should “Black Lives Matter” be interpreted as conveying that “Black lives are as valuable as non-black lives” or that “Only black lives are valuable”? Despite the recent focus on normative issues of language, this question has not received enough discussions in philosophy of language. This paper lays the foundation of an ethics of interpretation by making two contributions. First, it surveys three possible answers to the question and raises arguments against them. Second, it develops a contractarian theory of ethics of interpretation, i.e. an interpretation is fair when it would be chosen by a hypothetical hearer who is ignorant of his identity in a “linguistic original position.” I will also show its implications for legal philosophy and feminist philosophy of language.

**Keywords:** interpretation, fairness, contractarianism, philosophy of language, applied ethics

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### **Presupposition cancellation and the semantic view of presuppositions**

There is a promising view of presuppositions which treats them as semantic entailments, and which models them using partial meaning functions. This promising view is challenged by the views put forward by those authors (for instance Soames 1989, Green 2000, Potts 2005 and Abbott 2008) that argue that presuppositions (like conversational implicatures) are cancellable. For instance, consider:

(1) Ali's brother isn't wise, because Ali does not have a brother (Potts 2005)

Even if Ali does not have a brother, (1) can be felicitously uttered and be regarded as true; but, according to the semantic view of presuppositions, (1) could not be felicitously uttered and could not be true, because its first clause would not express any proposition and should, therefore, be neither true nor false.

I will argue that the appropriateness of (1) is compatible with the semantic view's prediction that (1) is neither true nor false and does not express a full proposition. What I will call "the *Fumfling* company reply" points to the fact that (2), which contains an expression that clearly has no meaning ("*fumfling*" is an expression that I made up) can also be uttered felicitously:

(2) John is not fumfling, because "to fumfle" does not mean anything

(2) would most naturally be used as a reply to someone who has uttered a sentence such as "John is fumfling" (or "John might be fumfling", etc.). But, the analogous claim is true of (1): (1) is most naturally used as a response to someone who has made an 'opposing' claim such as "Ali's brother is wise" or "I wonder if Ali's brother is wise".

The *Fumfling company reply* does already deflate the force of the objection posed by (1). Still, to strengthen my case, I will also provide an explanation of why exactly (1) and (2) are felicitous that is compatible with the partial function view.

**Keywords:** presupposition, negation, cancelation, meaning, context

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### **Polysemy is not a problem for referential semantics**

Polysemy is often said to be kryptonite for referentialist doctrines. When it comes to language, the complaint is that, given polysemy, word meanings cannot be specified in terms of real-world entities as referential semantics does. But the polysemy complaint might also be directed at thought. The idea is that, given polysemy, concepts cannot be Fodorian atoms, i.e. pairs of unstructured symbols and extralinguistic referents. In sum, polysemy invites all sorts of radical reactions to traditional referential, truth-conditional semantics. In this talk I will argue that such radical reactions to referentialism are unwarranted. First, I will argue that genuine polysemy might not be as widespread as people believe, at least with respect to nouns. This makes the prospects for referential semantics look much less grim. Second, I will argue against the idea that genuine polysemes must have a *single, univocal* meaning, from which polysemous senses are somehow derived. I argue that the same data might be explained simply in terms of storage and meaning transfer. Third, I will argue that speakers often have vague mental states with respect to polysemous terms. That is, they frequently do not consciously resolve the polysemy of the words they deploy. This lightens the burden of pre-pragmatic disambiguation processes, and it might help explain the data from copredication as well. If I am right, genuine polysemy does complicate the picture, but this is no reason to abandon referentialism.

**Keywords:** referential semantics, polysemy, meaning, copredication, philosophy of language

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### **Persuasive presuppositions**

Sbisà (1999), Langton (2018) and others have observed that informative presuppositions can have a persuasive character. A content  $p$  presupposed by an utterance of a sentence, which is not part of the common ground at the time of the utterance, tends to be more persuasive to the audience when  $p$  is put forward for accommodation than when  $p$  is implied in some other way or directly asserted. As several authors have observed (Greco 2003, von Stechow 2008, Stalnaker 2014), there are multiple reasons why listeners may decide to accommodate an informative presupposition: for instance, the listener trusts the speaker for some reason (say, the speaker is an expert on the subject), when the cost of interrupting the conversation is too high (including the social cost, for instance, if the speaker has made it clear that she does not admit interruptions), in the context of a literary work of fiction, etc. But willingness to accommodate and being persuaded is not one and the same thing. In consequence, I will first investigate how these two differ and whether the reasons mentioned do play a part in explaining the persuasive character of informative presuppositions. Second, I discuss the mechanism by which presuppositions become persuasive, given that none of the reasons mentioned above are conveyed in any way. The hypothesis I will consider here is that the speaker invites the audience to infer that the content of the presupposition is uncontroversial, generally known, or credible for contextual reasons such as the above.

**Keywords:** pragmatic presupposition, informative presupposition, persuasive, accommodation, conversational implicature



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### **Faultless disagreement, weak assertives, and commitments**

One of the challenges that any theorist of vagueness faces is to account for there being two kinds of disagreement over vague predicates like “tall” and “rich”: canonical disagreements concerning clear cases and faultless disagreements concerning borderline cases. I’ll argue that one needs to maintain that the illocutionary force of borderline utterances is different from that of clear utterances. Whereas the latter might be correct assertions, the former should be *assertives* weaker than *assertions*, since they express only a weak belief of the speaker.

I believe the idea that borderline utterances should not be classified as correct assertions to be a compelling one no matter to which view of assertion one subscribes. In terms of commitment, the speakers of borderline utterances typically are not making commitment to reaffirm, justify and defend them. They are tentatively proposing to add the content of their utterances to the common ground, but with much less conviction than a speaker who utters a statement concerning a clear case. Following Geurts (2019) I take common ground to be mutual commitments of the speakers and assume that communication consists in negotiating social commitments. Crucial from my point of view is Geurts’s claim that mutual commitment does not entail belief and by making a speech act with the content  $p$  the speaker commits to ‘act *in a way that is consistent with the truth of  $p$* ’ (2019: 4, my emphasis). This is precisely what happens when borderline cases are concerned. The speaker commits to act in a way that is consistent with the truth of what she says but she does not commit to the truth of it. Nevertheless her act has some impact on the future course of the conversation. For instance, one of the aims of making borderline assertive  $p$  is to prevent *not  $p$*  from being added to the common ground (see Incurvati & Schlöder 2019: 755).

**Keywords:** assertion, assertive, borderline utterance, commitment, common ground

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### **Indexical relativism?**

The particular behavior exhibited by sentences featuring predicates of personal taste such as “tasty” may drive us to claim that their truth depends on the context of assessment, as MacFarlane does. MacFarlane considers two ways in which the truth of a sentence can depend on the context of assessment. On the one hand, we can say that the sentence expresses a proposition whose truth-value depends on the context of assessment. This is MacFarlane’s position, which he calls “truth relativism” and, following Weatherson, I rebrand as “nonindexical relativism”. On the other hand, we can say that what proposition a sentence expresses depends on the context of assessment. MacFarlane calls this position “content relativism”, and rejects it on two grounds. First, he takes it to lead to implausible readings of sentences like “I asserted that licorice is pleasing to my tastes” according to which, by using such sentences, the speaker is saying that licorice is pleasing to the assessor’s tastes. Second, MacFarlane considers content relativism unable to account for the speaker’s authority over the content of her assertions, as she would have no right to deny that it is a particular assessor’s tastes that she is talking about. In this paper, I too argue against content relativism, which, again following Weatherson, I rebrand as “indexical relativism”. However, my arguments against the theory are different from MacFarlane’s, which I find unsound. In particular, after exploring what embracing indexical relativism commits us to by comparing it with other theories to which it looks superficially similar, I show that any version of indexical relativism will be unable to account for at least one of the phenomena that have been standardly used to motivate nonindexical relativism – faultless disagreement and retraction.

**Keywords:** predicates of personal taste, relativism, indexical relativism, audience sensitivity, faultless disagreement, retraction

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## **On detonating**

A simple and attractive token-referential view about “now” is that, when used in a speech act, its tokens pick out the time of that speech act. However, there is a large class of speech acts, often called “answering machine cases”, where our intuitions about the temporal locations of speech acts do not match our intuitions about the referents of tokens of “now”.

Consider this speech act: at  $t_1$ , A writes a note to B, saying “It’s raining now”. At  $t_2$ , B reads the note. A thus said that it was raining at  $t_1$ . Now ask yourself: when (and where) did the speech act happen? When did A say that it was raining at  $t_1$ ? I lack clear intuitions here. But that use of “now” clearly refers to  $t_1$ .

Nor is this a feature of speech acts that we can disregard: other actions have it too. Consider killings. C shoots D at  $t_1$  and  $p_1$ , while D is standing at  $p_0$ . D dies from the wound at  $t_2$  and  $p_2$ . Now ask yourself: when (and where) did C kill D? This is a long-standing debate in the metaphysics of killings; we do not need to settle it here. What matters for our purposes is that none of the answers from that debate delivers what the simple token-referential theory needs: temporal locations of speech acts that would match our intuitions about the referents of tokens of “now”.

The rest of the paper is devoted to evaluating other views about answering machine cases, and to developing the following view: a token of the word “now”, when used in a locutionary act by a user who intends for it to have certain *detonation conditions*, refers to time  $t$  iff the detonation conditions of that token thus used are met at  $t$ .

**Keywords:** indexicals, answering machine cases, speech acts, the metaphysics of actions referential mechanism, deferred utterances

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### **Anaphora-based theory of complex demonstratives**

Complex demonstratives, i.e. expressions of the form “this/that F”, “these/ those Fs”, combine an explicit deictic component with a purely descriptive one. They are usually used to refer to things, yet on some occasions, they function like genuine quantifier phrases, which they syntactically resemble. For this reason, complex demonstratives pose a problem about their proper semantic treatment. Some theorists treat complex demonstratives as directly referential terms (e.g., Borg 2000, Braun 1994), others argue that they are quantifiers (e.g., King 2001); there are also some alternative proposals, according to which complex demonstratives are referring terms with quite complex functions (see Roberts 2002 or Elbourne 2008).

In my talk, I am going to present a novel and possibly uniform theory of complex demonstratives. My proposal rests on the idea that these expressions act as anaphoric: the interpretation of a complex demonstrative depends on certain components of the context – whether linguistic or not – in the way that can be modeled parallel to anaphora resolution. In particular, I will treat complex demonstratives as presuppositional expressions and develop my account based on the view that presuppositions are a kind of anaphora (see Van der Sandt 1992). In order to implement my ideas, I will use the formal framework of Discourse Representation Theory (Geurts et al. 2020), appropriately developed. A complex demonstrative will be interpreted as introducing a discourse referent together with a set of presuppositions which need to be resolved differently, depending on the type of demonstrative use. I will argue that we should incorporate complex “accessibility criteria” (cf. Gauker 2008) into DRT algorithms of anaphora/presupposition resolution in order to explain how a complex demonstrative secures its value in a context in a typical referential use. I will argue that the anaphora-based approach to complex demonstratives can explain a wide range of their uses.

**Keywords:** anaphora, complex demonstratives, context, reference, semantics

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### **Relativist semantics for demonstratives**

In my talk I shall present a novel, relativist, non-intentionalist semantics for demonstratives designed to accommodate certain linguistic data stemming from a recent exchange between Gauker (2008) and Montminy (2010). I shall assume, following Salmon (2018), that demonstrations are parts of Kaplanian contexts and build the rest of the semantics around this assumption.

In short, the core of my idea is that typically demonstrations, as chronically referentially ambiguous (Wittgenstein 2001), provide a set of objects of potential reference. In the second stage, one of those objects is fed into the content function and becomes the extension of the demonstrative based on the state of the discourse at the moment of assessment of the reference. This means that provided different states of discourse at, say, different times, the reference of a single uttered demonstrative can possibly change over time. This idea allows for explaining the mentioned Gauker-Montminy data.

In my talk, I shall also compare my relativist semantics with two other possible non-standard views that I call *noreferentialism*, and *polyreferentialism*. The first was formulated by Leth (2019) and states that demonstratives do not refer at all, while the second is an extrapolation of the work of von Fintel and Gillies (2008, 2011) in the area of epistemic modals, and of Delgado (2019) in the area of proper names, to the area of demonstratives.

**Keywords:** semantics, demonstratives, relativism, reference, indeterminacy

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### **What the problem of deviant realisations tells us about the role of semantic intuition in thought experiments**

One of the hot topics in today's analytic philosophy is the role of intuition in the philosophical methodology. Most influential theories of the role of intuition in the philosophical methodology seem to accept the assumption that the role of all kinds of intuitions is the same in all branches of philosophy (see Bealer 1998, Deutsch 2015, Cappelen 2012). According to those theories, the role of all intuition is the same in the whole discipline, even if they assume that that intuition just does not play any role in the whole philosophy.

In my speech I will criticize that assumption. I will show that semantic intuition plays a unique role in deliberating thought experiments, which is not played by other kinds of intuitions (i.e. epistemic intuition, ethical intuition, etc.). I will adopt Williamson's view that verdicts about the situations described in thought experiments are verdicts about counterfactuals (Williamson 2007). Against that view several arguments were raised. A lot of them concern the so-called *problem of deviant realisations* (e.g. Malmgren 2011; Ichikawa and Jarvis 2013). That problem arises when we have to determine whether a particular state of affairs is a genuine realisation of a description of some thought experiment. I will show that semantic intuition is a capacity which enables us to determine whether a particular case is a deviant or a genuine realisation of thought experiment, which is a part of investigating any kind of thought experiments. I will fit that role of semantic intuition into Williamson's views on thought experiments. My results mean that semantic intuition plays a different role in philosophical methodology than other kinds of intuitions, and that semantic intuition takes part in investigating thought experiments in all branches of philosophy.

**Keywords:** thought experiments, intuitions, semantic intuitions, problem of deviant realisations, methodology of philosophy

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**“You Keep Using That Word, I Do Not Think It Means What You Think It Means”.  
Challenging the notion of competent speakers in contemporary ordinary language  
philosophy**

Ordinary Language Philosophy has enjoyed something of a renaissance in recent years, with Nat Hansen discerning constructive and critical projects within the more general approach of enquiring into the ordinary understanding of certain terms by competent speakers of a language (Hansen 2018). Of the two projects, the critical approach, initially spearheaded by Baz (Baz 2012) and, more recently, by Fischer (Fischer et al. 2019), has attracted the most attention. Both projects, however, seem to take “competent” as being synonymous with the somewhat nebulous term of “Native Speaker”, a move which is on decidedly shaky ground.

This paper presents the results of a repeat of Hansen & Chemla’s 2015 examination of Austin’s famous “donkey stories” when served with and without glosses (Hansen and Chemla 2015). This time, however, the experiment is repeated amongst a cohort of competent non-native speakers of English to see if there are any significant differences between the two groups. The reasons for this are threefold: firstly, language competence is often confused with language awareness, as defined by the Association for Language Awareness (ALA) as “explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use”, and that the latter is preferable for any ordinary language research; secondly, that competent “non-native” speakers typically have greater language awareness than the “native speakers” typically recruited in such studies; thirdly, that the Foreign Language Effect details that reasoning is typically improved when conducted in a second language (Keysar, Hayakawa, and An 2012), constituting yet another reason to conduct research amongst competent non-native speakers.

It is believed that this will have implications for both ordinary language philosophy and experimental philosophy as a whole in terms of our understanding of a competent speaker.

**Keywords:** ordinary language philosophy, donkey stories, Austin, language competence, language awareness, experimental philosophy

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### **Against the coarsening approach to imprecision**

Recently, several authors (Klecha 2018, Hoek 2018, Carter 2019) argued that simple sentences containing numerical expressions (e.g. Michael Jordan is 6'5) are literally false and that the reason why they communicate true contents is that their literal contents are coarsened by a partition over the common ground that models what information is relevant in a conversation. This talk focuses on Sam Carter's (2019) version of such account, which is primarily motivated by the need to explain the contrast between "Lena arrived at 9 o'clock, but she didn't arrive at exactly 9" (more acceptable) and "Lena didn't arrive at exactly 9, but she arrived at 9 o'clock" (less acceptable). He proposes that while both sentences are literal contradictions, the slack regulator "exactly" makes the partition over the common ground maximally fine-grained, which is why when we update a context with the coarsened contents of the conjuncts successively, only the second pair of conjuncts results in the absurd state. I argue that Carter's account overgenerates and provide an alternative explanation for the non-commutativity data: it overgenerates because in conversations we can care about fine distinctions in one domain without caring about fine distinctions in another (e.g. Q: How old are the exhibits? A: The Picasso painting is exactly 83 years old, and the dinosaur is 1 billion years old); the alternative explanation involves likening Carter's minimal pair to "Lena went to a bank, but she didn't go to a financial bank" and "Lena didn't go to a financial bank, but she went to a bank". I then, by using data from anaphoric reference and implicature, offer a partial defense of an alternative account (Sauerland and Stateva 2011), on which numerical expressions denote intervals whose widths vary from context to context and "exactly" in general serves to shrink the interval denoted by the numerical expression it applies to.

**Keywords:** imprecision, loose talk, literal content, what is said, question under discussion, non-commutativity, relevance



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### **Focus on interlinguistic relations**

Since we accept a plurality of languages, it seems natural to assume interlinguistic relations to account for meaning equivalence or translation. A pressing question regarding those interlinguistic relations concerns the kind of vocabulary that can be used to describe them. Particularly interesting is the extent to which such a vocabulary differs from a vocabulary that can be used to capture global and local features of language.

Philosophy and linguistics discuss global and local features of language (cf. language as ‘singulare tantum’ and in its diversity in Elberfeld 2012). Both kinds of features can be described with meta vocabularies, such as formal (e.g. Chomsky hierarchy), semantic (any meaning-orientated philosophy of language) or pragmatic (e.g. Brandom 1994). However, to describe relations between languages, I argue for a specific meta vocabulary. To look for it, a holistic framework is suggested as a starting point to narrow down requirements regarding an interlinguistic vocabulary.

Holism describes a single language as a linguistic whole, which is established by the relations between its parts, while the properties of those parts are transferred by the relations. Those properties specify the part as belonging to that linguistic whole (Esfeld 2002). While holism suggests anti-foundationalism and local identity conditions for single languages and vocabularies, it also allows for global pragmatic properties of languages (Brandom 1994, 2008).

This has consequences for an interlinguistic meta vocabulary: holism supports the widely accepted assumption that every meta vocabulary is part of a single language. Holism also implies that an interlinguistic meta vocabulary should be based on the global features of language, which points towards a pragmatic meta vocabulary. To describe interlinguistic relations, I argue for a pragmatic meta vocabulary in the form of equivalence relations while focusing on the differences to meta vocabularies for language-features.

**Keywords:** analytic philosophy, holism, interlinguistic relations, translation, Brandom, equivalence relations, meta-vocabulary

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### **Proper names and demonstratives in fiction**

There are not many so troubling areas for testing various accounts of proper name reference as the discourse about fictional objects and fictional discourse itself. Do proper names of fictional characters refer directly or by means of description? Can we treat uniformly the meta-fictional uses of proper names (names of fictional objects *as objects of fiction*) and its use in the language of fiction?

In my talk I will follow Alberto Voltolini (2014), who suggested that those problems may be overcome within the indexicalist framework of proper name reference. In his paper Voltolini argues that treating fictional uses of names as demonstratives allows us to intuitively cope with the problem of “double names” which refer both to actual and fictional entities (e.g. “Antonio Salieri”, the name of both the Italian composer and the fictional character of Milos Forman’s film “Amadeus”; see Predelli 1997). I will extend Voltolini’s solution using the treatment of indexicals as “hybrid proper names”, developed by Kunne (1992), Predelli (2006) and Ciecierski (2020), to show that such an account may be usefully applied to cope with meta-fictional statements (especially the problem discussed in Klauk 2014) as well as uses of proper names in mixed fictional and meta-fictional contexts, which cannot be achieved by using Voltolini’s solution alone. I will also use Rami’s (2014) indexical theory of proper name reference to provide a plausible mechanism for direct reference in fictional contexts by making use of Rami’s category of parasitic referential intentions. I will argue that if one is willing to accept the intentionalism in regard to demonstrative reference, then the view that fictional uses of proper names are demonstratives may offer a solution to many problems raised in contemporary debate on fictional names.

**Keywords:** proper names, demonstratives, indexicals, fiction, fictia, direct reference

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### **Singular thought, acquaintance, and belief ascriptions**

The view that singular thought requires that an agent be acquainted with the object the thought is about has been famously challenged by Hawthorne and Manley (2012, 2014) and King (2020). In a nutshell, they argue that we can truthfully utter belief-ascribing sentences of the form ‘*X* believes that *a* is *G*’ (where ‘*a*’ is to be replaced with a referential expression), even if the agent designated by ‘*X*’ is not acquainted with the object referred to by ‘*a*’. This, in conjunction with

- (i) a certain general assumption about what is necessary for the truth of belief ascriptions (the so-called ‘*harmony assumption*’, according to which any belief ascription requires for its truth that the ascriber believe the proposition which the belief ascription’s embedded sentence would express, were it uttered in isolation),

and with

- (ii) a certain ingredient of a very common characterization of singular thought (the so-called ‘*sufficiency assumption*’, according to which believing a singular proposition about an object is sufficient for having a singular thought about it),

is used to show that the view that singular thought is governed by an acquaintance constraint of some sort has absurd consequences. I argue that it is the harmony assumption that is to be blamed for these consequences (and not the acquaintance-style requirements on singular thought), and then provide an alternative thesis about the necessary condition for the truth of belief-ascribing sentences.

**Keywords:** singular thought, acquaintance, belief ascription, reference, harmony

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### **Parity, faultlessness, and relativism: a response to Ferrari**

In a series of papers, following a remark of Wright's (2012), Ferrari (2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2020) has accused relativists of a MacFarlanean stripe of not being able to account for "parity" – the idea that, when we argue over, for example, culinary matters such as the tastiness of sushi, we adopt a "live and let live" attitude towards those holding beliefs opposed to our own (while holding on to our beliefs). Our practice in matters of taste, however, differs from our practice in other areas: in moral matters, for example, we are not as eager to adopt such an attitude towards those with opposed beliefs. This variability needs an explanation. Relativism, Ferrari contends, cannot account for either phenomenon because of its rigidity, which stems from its core claim that the standard of the assessor trumps any other standards in a given context, regardless of the matters at stake.

In this paper, I show that relativism has the resources to account for both phenomena highlighted by Ferrari. The thrust of our proposal is a move from the level of assertions and their characteristics (truth, correctness etc.) to standards and their traits. I start by pointing out that appeal to standards is easily available in discourse, and that in fact in many situations it is the standards themselves that we are interested in, not the truth or correctness of assertions (Field 2009, Kusch 2016). I then show that taking the truth and correctness of one's assertions to be relative to the standards of an assessor is compatible with a "live and let and live" attitude towards the standards of one's assertions. At the same time, I observe that our attitude towards the standards of those holding opposed beliefs to our own varies with the matters at stake: it is stricter in moral matters and laxer in matters of taste. Thus, mere consideration of our attitude towards standards addresses both issues in one fell swoop. To be sure, this is a "shallow" explanation, but an explanation nevertheless – one that has gained legitimacy by being appealed to in the very debate between relativism and its rivals (Sundell 2011, Plunkett & Sundell 2013, Plunkett 2015, Diaz-Leon 2017, etc.), and thus one that the relativist can easily embrace.

**Keywords:** relativism, parity, variability, matters of taste, moral matters, standards

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### **Belief reports are ambiguous**

Pete believes that every six-year-old can learn to play tennis. Even though he has no idea that six-year-old Anna exists, it seems felicitous to utter the following:

- (1) Pete believes that Anna can learn to play tennis.

Motivated by such attitude reports, Kyle Blumberg and Harvey Lederman put forward a revisionist view of belief reports (Blumberg and Lederman 2021). On a crude version of their view, the utterer of (1) strengthens Pete’s “regular” beliefs with the information from the common ground, namely that Anna is six years old.

In this paper, I argue that an ambiguous theory of ‘believe’ better accounts for all the relevant data. More specifically, I claim that ‘believe’ is ambiguous between (i) an explanatory/predictive sense, which behaves more or less along the lines of the standard Hintikkian analyses; and (ii) an evidential sense, which behaves similarly to the epistemic *must* (Von Fintel and Gillies 2010). On my account, the utterer of (1) signals that the prejacent is known only indirectly/inferentially and that Pete’s beliefs are an important source of evidence for the relevant inference. My analysis correctly predicts that (1) and its negation can both be true in the same context. It also provides a more compelling explanation of the non-redundancy and dream reports data invoked by Blumberg and Lederman. Furthermore, it avoids the counterintuitive consequence of Blumberg and Lederman’s account that belief reports do not report beliefs. I conclude by giving an independent reason to expect attitude reports to be ambiguous.

**Keywords:** ambiguity, attitude reports, belief reports, revisionist reporting, evidentiality

# **Philosophy of Argumentation Workshop PhilArg 2021**

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### **Towards a stronger concept of argument**

The standard definition of “argument” is satisfied by any series of statements in which one (of the statements) is marked as the conclusion of the others. This leads to the counter-intuitive result that “I like cookies, therefore, all swans are white” is an argument, since “therefore” marks “all swans are white” as the conclusion of “I like cookies”. This objection is often disregarded by stating that, although the previous sequence is an argument, it fails to be a good one. However, when we compare our previous argument with a definitely bad argument like “this swan is white, therefore, all swans are white”, we see that there is an important difference between them. Whereas the former fails to fulfil our intuition of what an argument is, the latter does qualify as an argument, but as a bad one. In this talk, I will sketch a definition that better captures this feature of our intuition of what an argument is in three steps. Following Díez and Moulines (1999), I first reduce inductive validity to deductive validity through what we may call the method of deductivisation. Second, through epistemic predicates (cf. Thompson 2002), I introduce a broader concept of validity that accounts not only for deductive and inductive validity, but also for a weaker type of validity that may be called pseudo-validity. I show that these pseudo-valid arguments can also be deductivised with the help of the above-mentioned epistemic predicates. Finally, I re-define the concept of argument as any series of statements that is at least pseudo-valid, which leaves the “cookies argument” outside of this definition.

**Keywords:** informal logic, fallacies, argument theory, validity, definition of argument

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### **In defense of the distinction between arguments and explanations**

In his paper, Matthew W. McKeon (2013) reconstructed two main rationales for distinguishing arguments from explanations. The first rationale states that arguments and explanations differ in structure. The second one claims that although (at least some) explanations and arguments share the same structure, they have different functions and serve different purposes. McKeon refutes both arguments and abandons a seemingly well-established distinction.

In my presentation, I will undertake a revision of McKeon's argumentation. I will argue that his stance is based on a rather superficial account of reasoning and its verbal expression.

McKeon adopts the distinction between evidential and explanatory reasons and demonstrates that the very same set of premises may represent both kinds of reasons. The proponents of the distinction between arguments and explanations would agree with McKeon that a given set of propositions may represent both explanatory and evidential reasons, but it does not undermine the distinction in question.

I will suggest that the above-mentioned distinction can be defended both as a structural and functional one. Concerning the former, I will recall the Lvov-Warsaw School ideas regarding classifications of reasoning (e.g. Ajdukiewicz 1955, Ajdukiewicz 1964). Regarding the latter, I will show how the distinction between argumentation and explanation can be defended from the speech acts theory's point of view (e.g., Austin 1975, Searle, Vanderveken 1985, van Eemeren 2014, Budzyńska 2010).

**Keywords:** explanation, explanatory reason, evidential reason, Lvov-Warsaw, speech act theory



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### **What is interactional in an argumentative dialogue?**

The aim of this contribution is to put forward and argue for an understanding of the interactional aspect of argumentation that is not limited to the perlocutionary effect of convincing. My point of departure is the pragma-dialectic view that attempting the perlocutionary goal of convincing is an essential condition of the illocutionary act of complex argumentation (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, 2004). Correspondingly, the essential condition of the speech act complex of argumentation is that the advanced argument counts as an attempt by the arguer to justify the conclusion to an addressee, i.e. to convince them of the acceptability of the conclusion. But this tenet, in my view, amounts to taking the speaker's intentions (the speaker's illocutionary point in Searle's terminology) to be the determinant of the success of the illocution.

In contrast to the above, and following the Austinian view of speech acts put forward by Sbisà and others (Sbisà 2002, 2006; Witek 2015), the interactional dimension of speech is at work in bringing about certain conventional effects that affect the normative positions of the interlocutors, namely, their duties, obligations, and responsibilities, as well as their rights, entitlements, permissions, and the like. These effects are conventional in that they depend on the interlocutors' mutual recognition, or otherwise social acceptance that they have come in force. In previous work I have contended that some of these changes in the interlocutors' normative positions have a dialectical character. Notwithstanding this, when the dialogue is argumentative, it still has to be shown that the interlocutors' recognition or social acceptance of the effected changes is determinant for the felicitous performance of an act of arguing, beyond and above the speaker's intentions. My aim is to argue for the plausibility of this view.

**Keywords:** interactional aspect of argumentation, illocutionary acts, perlocutionary acts, Austin, speaker intentions

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### **Finding a best model for the argument strength evaluation– the case of the NSH-Arg, the Sym-Arg, and the Squ-Arg**

Rather than offering a measure of argument strength, the direct way presupposes such a measure. The indirect way determines argument strength based on the cognitive responses of a (sampled) population. As a data-driven account, it can be tailored to specific contextual factors. The challenge is to identify the set of measurement dimensions that provide an all-things-considered best model of perceived argument strength, i.e., an empirically adequate descriptive model that fits the data well. In this study, we adopt an indirect measure, i.e. Zhao et al.'s (2011) scale of perceived argument strength in order to check its applicability for the evaluation of three reconstructed arguments from *Epicureans on Squandering Life* supporting the focal conclusion that “We should not fear death” (Aikin & Talisse, 2019). The three arguments are the *no subject of harm argument* (NSH-Arg), the *symmetry argument* (Sym-Arg), and the *squandering argument* (Squ-Arg). The NSH-Arg and the Sym-Arg are readily identified as independent lines of support for the focal conclusion. The Squ-Arg, by contrast, emerges in the dialectical process, involving a series of turns interlocutors must take first. As Zhao et al.'s (2011) studies both failed to show evidence for the relevance of *novelty* to perceived argument strength, we dropped this factor from the scale, retaining eight items: believability, convincingness, importance, confidence, friend, thoughts, agreement, reasons. These items were used to test the reliability and the validity of the NSH-Arg, the Sym-Arg, and the Squ-Arg. As in Zhao's procedure, evaluating the suitability of the proposed scale for each argument was followed by calculating thought favorability-indexes based on the thought listing procedure. Correlations between the multi-item scale's ratings and the listed thoughts (i.e., the argument strength and favorability indexes) were checked for complementarity. The scale enabled evaluation of argument strength for the NSH-Arg and the Sym-Arg, but not the Squ-Arg, as neither the original nor the modified model for this argument fitted the data well.

**Keywords:** argument strength, perceived argument strength, cognitive response, favorability-index, Zhao

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### **Metaphors for fallacies *ad misericordiam***

Metaphors provide arguments with greater vividness and forcefulness, but can also entail emotional attitudes and value judgments (Semino 2008; Burgers 2016). Metaphors are “more emotionally engaging than literal expressions” (Citron-Goldberg 2014: 9) and can affect reasoning because of their covert framing effects (Thibodeau-Borodisky 2013). In particular, metaphors “can be exploited to the purpose of persuading by emotional appeal rather than rational argument” (Haack 1994: 4), especially in the case of “emotive metaphors” (with a negatively/positively-valenced vehicle), like “Poverty is a disease” or “My girlfriend is a gem”. Their evaluative connotations may determine the intended meaning of the premises and lead to acceptance of the conclusion of fallacious arguments.

The paper considers the fallacy *ad misericordiam*, i.e. the “appeal to pity by one party to try to get another to accept a conclusion” (Walton 2004: 15). It aims to understand whether and to what extent a metaphor in the argument premise can lead to committing the fallacy *ad misericordiam*. Two empirical studies were designed to test the following hypotheses:

H1: Participants are more prone to accept the conclusion of a fallacy *ad misericordiam* when a metaphor – rather than its literal counterpart – occurs in the argument premise.

H2: Participants are more prone to accept the conclusion of a fallacy *ad misericordiam* when an emotive metaphor – rather than a non-emotive metaphor – occurs in the argument premise.

The first study had 3 “metaphorical framing” conditions: conventional metaphors, novel metaphors and literal counterparts. The second study had 3 “affective framing” conditions: positively-valenced, negatively-valenced and non-emotive conventional metaphors.

Two groups of N=40 participants were presented with a series of verbal fallacies and asked whether the conclusion followed from the premise. Preliminary results show that participants fall into the fallacy especially in the case of conventional metaphors (study 1) and in the case of negatively-valenced metaphors (study 2).

**Keywords:** emotive metaphors, fallacy *ad misericordiam*, emotional appeal, metaphorical framing effect, affective framing effect, conventional metaphors, negative-valenced stimuli.

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**An analysis of an argumentative text produced by the GPT-3 AI text generator**

In this paper, we apply CAPNA (the Comprehensive Assessment Procedure for Natural Argumentation) (Hinton 2021) in evaluating the arguments produced by an Artificial Intelligence text generator, GPT-3, in an opinion piece written for the Guardian newspaper. Although the CAPNA is designed to examine all elements of argumentation, the analysis presented here focusses on the reasoning employed by the AI, rather than its choice of linguistic expressions or any pragmatic considerations. This reasoning evaluation is conducted using the Argument Type Identification Procedure (Wagemans 2020) to establish, firstly, that an argument is present and, secondly, where its type can be appropriately placed in the Periodic Table of Arguments. Once this has been done, Procedural Questions are used to test the acceptability of the premises and the strength of the inference.

The analysis shows that the arguments put forward by the AI text generator contain obvious weaknesses. From this we can conclude that the automated generation of persuasive, well-reasoned argument is a far more difficult task than the generation of meaningful language, and that AI systems producing arguments require a method of checking the plausibility of their own output. To this end, we hope to establish the CAPNA as a pseudo-algorithm which can be further developed into an integrated argument checking system, allowing future text generators to both assess the arguments found in texts from which they learn and to avoid putting forward obviously weak reasoning.

Keywords: CAPNA, ATIP, periodic table of arguments, reasoning evaluation, artificial intelligence, GPT-3

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### **In-group rhetoric in polarised online communities**

In this paper, we investigate the behavioural implications of populist propaganda on social media. Specifically, we outline the causal relationship between prolonged exposure to biased content on social media and subversive behaviour offline. To this end, we analyse the populist narrative on social media in two successive steps.

Firstly, we investigate why populist narrative becomes so viral on social media. In this regard, we show that social media algorithms allow populists to initiate aggressive availability cascades with far-reaching consequences. In particular, we show that these cascades bring populists' followers together into the same online social spaces (e.g., Facebook or WhatsApp groups), where they autonomously develop shared sociolinguistic institutions (e.g., stereotypes or epithets about opposed political factions).

Secondly, we show that these online social spaces often become echo-chambers featuring intense group polarisation, and, as a result, become communities promoting singular worldviews. Indeed, in-group rhetoric justifies any belief that fits local sociolinguistic institutions regardless of its plausibility. Hence, community members promptly repress and marginalise any member who questions what the community upholds amidst general approval. As polarisation increases over time, community members increasingly lean toward shared acceptance (rather than shared refusal) of subversive actions that embody their general beliefs.

Finally, we support our analysis with evidence showing that the MAGA movement's genesis and evolution replicate the patterns mentioned above. In fact, Donald Trump's social media propaganda about alleged electoral fraud during the last American Presidential Elections is identifiable as the primary cause of the recent events at Capitol Hill in Washington DC. In other words, our analysis corroborates the thesis that links Donald Trump's propaganda on social media and the assault on Capitol Hill.

**Keywords:** group polarisation, social media, populism, echo-chambers, availability cascades, sociolinguistic institutions

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### **Argumentation: Universal reasoning**

We examine the question whether argumentation can form the basis for any form of reasoning: both informal and formal logical reasoning. In particular, we examine if it is necessary to distinguish between strict logical reasoning, as in Classical Logic, and the process of argumentation, as two ontologically different types of reasoning.

We propose that such a distinction is not necessary: Argumentation is the wider framework encompassing all reasoning with strict or formal logical reasoning being a special boundary case. This position is grounded on three technical results.

**Result 1:** In the 1990s, it was shown that using argumentation it was possible to reformulate (and in some cases extend) most, if not all, known logical frameworks of non-monotonic reasoning in Artificial Intelligence (AI). These non-monotonic logics were initially formulated to address the goal of AI of capturing and automating human reasoning, e.g. common-sense reasoning. This AI approach to argumentation, sometimes referred to as, *Computational Argumentation*, was motivated and to some extent grounded on earlier foundational work on argumentation in Philosophy and Cognitive Science.

**Result 2:** Recently, the same approach to Computational Argumentation was used to reformulate the formal logical reasoning of classical Propositional Logic in terms of argumentation. *Argumentation Logic* is defined in a technical and formal way and shown to be equivalent to classical deduction whenever the given theory of premises that we are reasoning from is consistent. Argumentation Logic thus smoothly extends formal classical reasoning into the type of non-monotonic, defeasible reasoning human reasoning as in the above first result.

**Result 3:** Concerns human reasoning and argumentation from the point of view of Cognitive Science, where we want to capture and account well for the data obtained experimentally by observing humans reasoning. By synthesizing the framework of Computational Argumentation from AI with cognitive principles from Cognitive Science we obtain a framework, called *Cognitive Argumentation*, that is able to capture well the empirical data in various cases, such as conditional or syllogistic human reasoning.

These three technical results bind together to support the *universality of argumentation* for reasoning: *Reasoning is Argumentation*.

**Keywords:** Logic in Argumentation, Argumentation Logic, Human Reasoning, Informal Logic, Classical Logic, Computational Argumentation, Cognitive Argumentation.

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### **Arguments in Polish televised pre-election debates**

We present two annotated corpora of arguments from televised debates held before a Polish parliamentary election. The corpora are distributed as part of the Argument Interchange Format database (Reed et al., 2017) and model argumentative and pragmatic relations using Inference Anchoring Theory. The corpora are publicly available at: <http://corpora.aifdb.org/debateTVP> and <http://corpora.aifdb.org/debateTVN>. Our corpora can be used for qualitative analysis of argumentation and for teaching purposes (such as critical thinking courses). We also hope to make steps toward argument mining for Polish language using emerging NLP technologies.

Inference Anchoring Theory (IAT) joins dialogical and logical facets of persuasive communication by introducing anchoring relations between the two (Reed and Budzynska (2011), Budzynska and Reed (2011)). Argumentative structures are built in dialogical interactions between debate participants, with the use of various speech acts and illocutionary forces. We follow previous work on televised political debates by Visser et al. (2019) who analysed presidential election debates in the United States in 2016, as well as the work of Hinton and Budzyńska-Daca (2019) in their comparison of rhetorical strategies in US and Polish pre-election debates.

Corpus material comprises the transcribed debate aired by Telewizja Polska (Polish Television - TVP) on 2019-10-01, before the parliamentary election. Corpus annotation was conducted using the OVA+ tool by the participants of a BA seminar, and inter-annotator agreement was assessed with CASS-Kappa (average above 0.6).

We present initial results from experiments on argument mining with the use of the recently released spacy-pl (Tuora and Kobylinski, 2019) framework and distributional semantic model of premise-conclusion semantic similarity measures based on word embeddings (Kocon and Gawor, 2018) and sentence embeddings.

**Keywords:** argument corpora, televised debates, Inference Anchoring Theory, corpus annotation, argument mining

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### **A methodological proposal to study argumentative uses of rephrase: Cognitive and linguistic insights**

Rephrase is the dynamic phenomenon in discourse through which a speaker reformulates what has been previously said, altering its content for rhetorical gain. From an argumentative perspective, a rephrase relationship holds between two non-overlapping constituents of argumentation if both constituents occupy the same position in the argument structure and fulfil the same argumentative function. Speakers may rephrase either their own words (self-rephrase) or those of others (other-rephrase) for a number of reasons: to clarify their point, to help the audience memorise it, to demonstrate argumentative density, to escape towards safer deniability options, to show skills etc. Preliminary findings from our corpus work show that rephrase is far from being a marginal phenomenon – across our four corpora, despite being 2.7 times less dense than supports (inferences, pro-arguments), i.e. 23% vs. 60% respectively, rephrase is 1.4 times more frequent than another broadly studied type of argument – con-argument (also called “conflict” or “attack”), i.e. 23% vs. 17%.

Our proposal introduces a *pragma-rhetorical methodology* in argumentation studies which combines corpus analysis and experimental examination to investigate argumentative uses of rephrase. We combine the study of both *illocutions* of rephrase, i.e. speaker’s intentions such as ordering, requesting, promising, asserting, agreeing, arguing, as well as *rhetorical perlocutions* of rephrases, i.e. results brought about by performing an illocutionary act to its consequences on the feelings, beliefs or actions of the hearers. We anticipate that (i) our methodology will yield new rephrase corpora ready for implementation in argument technologies (argument mining and argument analytics) and (ii) that uses of rephrase will be shown to be rhetorically effective as felicitous perlocutions by virtue of their various cognitive advantages.

**Keywords:** rephrase, corpus analysis, rhetorical perlocution, illocutionary act, argument mining



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### **Extreme arguments: Jihadist argumentation in the sermons of Anwar al-Awlaki**

Notorious Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) preacher, Anwar al-Awlaki has been the inspiration for many acts of terror worldwide. Even after his death in 2011, his sermons have continued to motivate terrorists, including those who perpetrated the *Charlie Hebdo* murders (Bergen, 2015; Meleagrou-Hitchens, 2020). In this study, we analyze the argumentation of two of Awlaki's most salient discourses: his 2007 audio recording *The dust will never settle down*, and a 2010 article in the AQAP English language magazine *Inspire* entitled *The cartoon crusade*. Drawing from Walton's approach to argument schemes (Walton, Reed, & Macagno 2008; Walton, 2021), we explore argumentative patterns in these texts. In particular, we aim to determine whether extremist discourse is characterized by equally "extreme" argument schemes—perhaps those which, like the appeals *ad verecundiam*, *ad baculum* and *ad adversarium* (McMurtry, 1986), border on informal fallacies, and/or establish highly polarized, Us/Them, identities. Our work is thus an early pilot of the long-term potential of argument mining to complement other computational approaches such as Bag of Words (Zhang & Zhou, 2010) in serving as a tool for terrorist threat assessment.

**Keywords:** extremist discourse, argument schemes, argument mining, informal fallacies, threat assessment

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## **QRGS - Question Responses Generation via crowdsourcing**

The talk describes a study of question responses generation of a certain type (direct, indirect and evasive responses) via a crowdsourcing technique (named QRGS: Question Responses Generation System). QRGS was designed and implemented with the aim set for providing supplementary data for the study of the question-response space (see Ginzburg et al. 2019). The idea is to use the crowdsourcing method for relatively easy and effective collection of specific linguistic data (inspired by the previous solution described in Łupkowski and Ignaszak 2017). QRGS consists of a story with a simple plot. A user is asked to read the story and impersonate its main character. As the story unfolds a user is confronted with four questions and (s)he should answer them in the way the main character would.

In the talk I will present the results of studies with QRGS for English and for Polish. I will also discuss the effectiveness of the approach in terms of the collected data volume and its correctness. The potential improvements of the QRGS system and the use of gathered data for the needs of the Erotetic Reasoning Corpora will also be addressed.

**Keywords:** questions, responses, dialogue, crowdsourcing, gamification

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### **The problem of meaning and the nature of disagreement**

Disagreement is a particularly interesting phenomenon for argumentation studies because it is useful to analyse the function and the possibility of argumentation (Jacobs & Jackson, 1989; Leff, 2000; van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1984). However, it seems that there is no clear criterion for determining if a specific case of disagreement is worth analysing, that is, for understanding whether the disagreement is genuine or spurious. It has usually been said that a disagreement is genuine when the interlocutors share a degree of epistemic parity, and when the object of discussion is the same. When this is not the case, it is assumed that a discussion persists because of an error (as explained in Gómez, 2012; Mason, 1993; Mejía, 2019; Perelman, 1979). That is, either the disputants fail to be equally clear and precise in their positions, or they are not really arguing about the same thing.

In this presentation, I will argue that this characterization of genuine/spurious disagreement does not consider the difficulty involved in clarifying the meaning of the object of disagreement. To do this, first I explain how the problem of meaning involves the problem of the nature of the disagreement. Second, I examine different positions regarding the clarification of the meaning: 1) all terms must be sufficiently clarified *before* beginning an ‘argumentative stage’, otherwise there will be a spurious discussion (Geach, 1966); 2) clarification of meaning should not precede argumentation (Davidson, 1994); and 3) no matter to what extent there is clarification of meaning, there are genuine and irresolvable disagreements (Gallie, 1956). In this sense, I will claim that to answer the question of the genuine/spurious character of a disagreement there should be an understanding of the clarification of meaning in an argumentative discussion first.

**Keywords:** genuine disagreement, spurious disagreement, problem of meaning, argumentative stage, irresolvable disagreement

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### **An attack in a crisis communication**

Many texts in today's discussion on crisis communication are dedicated to problems of *apologiai*, responses of organizations to an attack, but attacks, *katēgoriai*, themselves are usually left aside. However, without an attack, there is no need for a response. Thus, these two are intimately connected, and any analyses of organizational response seem to be incomplete and unsatisfying without analyses of the reason for this response, the attack (cf. Ryan, 1982).

An attack is usually considered to have two key components (Pomerantz 1978; Benoit and Dorries 1996; Benoit 2015): *responsibility* and *offensiveness*. The accused has to be held responsible for an action, and the action itself has to be considered offensive or harmful (cf. Benoit, 1997: 178). These two components have different objects to which they are connected. Although the accuser can use both in one attack, the responsibility is connected to an accused and offensiveness or harmfulness to an action. Furthermore, both key components might vary in their strength in a different way. An accuser might perceive some action as very harmful and yet find the accused bears little responsibility and vice versa.

The aim of this paper is twofold: to present a possible way to analyse an attack using the Toulmin model of an argument (Toulmin 2003) and discussed how different strengths of two components might be useful for the determination of a reasonable response.

**Keywords:** crisis communication; (persuasive) attack; Toulmin model; *katēgoriai*; *apologiai*

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### **Precedent-setting and slippery slopes**

I argue that reasoning about setting precedents must include considerations about slippery slopes such that the argument scheme for the argument for setting a precedent should include a critical question about slippery slopes. To support my claim, I draw attention to the nature of a precedent as a decision that creates a reason for making the same decision again in relevantly similar circumstances, independent of the original decision's merit. I show that for decisions to have this reason-creating power, there has to be a second-order reason for treating a precedent-decision as binding. I argue that all, or at least the most common of these second-order reasons connect the bindingness of the precedent to the ability of others to form reliable expectations on its basis. Thereby, they influence the kinds of later circumstances in which the precedent should be considered binding: Precedents typically bind in kinds of circumstances that these others could reasonably be expected to consider relevantly similar. As a result, precedents create reasons for repeating decisions in circumstances that, to others, appear relevantly similar to the circumstances of the original decision, independent of the decision-maker's opinion. Because following a precedent creates another precedent, the result is the famous step-by-step process of precedential norm creation. This means that precedents are by their nature starting points for slopes. Of course, such slopes may lead to good or bad further decisions and they may or may not include effective stopping points. Not every precedent-created slope is a slippery slope. Nonetheless, where a decision will set a precedent, the decision-maker should ask the critical question: "Does setting this precedent create a serious risk for a slippery slope or increase such a risk to such a degree that likely benefits of setting the precedent are outweighed?"

**Keywords:** slippery slopes, precedent setting, precedential norm creation, critical questions, bindingness

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### **On the hermeneutics of argumentation**

It can be quite challenging to recognize and identify arguments in the wild. First of all, there is the embarrassment of choice. Ever since Aristotle wrote up a list of arguments in his debate manual called the *Topica*, philosophers and rhetoricians have provided many different taxonomies of arguments, fallacies and other means of persuasion. Which of these lists is best suited for accomplishing the task?

Second, there is a methodological problem. Traditional approaches to argument identification leave it up to the analyst to choose the argument type from the list that best matches the characteristics of the argument under scrutiny. But this is easier said than done. What should the analyst do, for instance, if there is only a partial match? How many discrepancies between the ideal and the real are allowed? And even if there is only a minor discrepancy, why wouldn't it be just another type of argument, one that is not yet mentioned in the list?

It appears, then, that existing identification methods do not take into account that arguments come in many different linguistic realizations. The lack of hermeneutical considerations or guidelines accompanying their lists of argument types may frustrate both the heuristic process of finding the best match for the argument under scrutiny and the justificatory process of motivating the choice of the most fitting candidate.

This talk elaborates on a recently developed alternative method for argument identification that is procedural rather than comparative. Focusing on the first two steps of the Argument Type Identification Procedure (ATIP) (Wagemans, 2020), it is explained which transformations the analyst might perform to provide a theoretically informed and justifiable reformulation of the statements functioning as the conclusion and the premise of an argument.

**Keywords:** ATIP, hermeneutics, argument identification, fallacies, reformulation



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