The challenge of metonymy

Deirdre Wilson

Relevance theory offers well-developed inferential accounts of metaphor and irony, but metonymy (e.g. the use of *suit* for business executive, or *the crown* for the monarchy) has long presented a challenge. How can the speaker of (1)-(3) be seen as providing *evidence* of her intention to refer to a patient, a customer and a group of people, without introducing wholesale non-inferential associative processes into pragmatics?

(1)   The *appendicitis* in bed 3 is threatening to write to the newspapers

(2)   Can you take the *pepperoni pizza* his glass of wine?

(3)   *Buckingham Palace* is refusing to comment.

The standard solution has been to resort to 'transfer of meaning' rules (e.g. 'Reinterpret *appendicitis* in certain circumstances as denoting a patient with appendicitis'), but this proposal is neither inferential enough nor generalizable enough to be adequate. After briefly outlining a new approach, developed jointly with Ingrid Lossius Falkum, which treats metonymy as a type of neologism, or word coinage, understood in exactly the same way as other types of word coinage (e.g. denominal verbs, noun-noun compounds), I will consider some of the challenges that this new approach in turn might meet.

Pragmatic development, sense conventions and non-literal uses of language

Ingrid L. Falkum

A growing body of developmental evidence suggests that pragmatic abilities emerge early. Cognitive theories of pragmatics emphasise the foundational role of these early abilities for language acquisition. However, a puzzling feature of pragmatic development is pre-schoolers' difficulties with non-literal uses of language (e.g., "I love you so much I could *eat you up*!"), about which contemporary pragmatic theories typically have little to say.

        Recent years have seen an increasing interest in children's appreciation of conventions, that is, regularities in social behaviour on the basis of which we coordinate our actions. In the domain of language, sense conventions are regularities in the uses of words to convey particular senses. In lexical acquisition, they allow children to assume that for a certain sense there is a word that speakers expect to be used in a language community, and that when a speaker uses an unfamiliar word it has a sense distinct from words they already know (Clark, 1993). However, while an appreciation of sense conventions plays a crucial role in language acquisition, it may be a source of interpretive inflexibility when familiar words are used with unconventional meanings, as in non-literal uses of language. I discuss the hypothesis that children's growing sensitivity to sense conventions impedes their pragmatic reasoning with non-literal uses in the pre-school years.

Metaphor, non-propositional effects and meaning-making in L2

Elly Ifantidou

In this paper, I further examine the role of metaphor as a facilitator of pragmatic interpretation in L2 (see Ifantidou 2019, Ifantidou and Hatzidaki 2019). Given the mounting neurolinguistic evidence, the long philosophical tradition (Aristotle's views in *Rhetoric*; see also Ricoeur 1978; following Carston 2010; Sperber and Wilson 2015, Wilson and Carston 2019), and the evidence from L2, I argue that we can assign a *semantic* function to what seems to be mere psychological, accompanying factors to the informative crux of the metaphor.

With this view in mind, data collected from twenty-four expressions in naturally-occurring metaphorical and literal sentences in English was statistically analyzed in terms of (a) correct interpretation of unknown words and (b) implicatures retrieved by thirty eight Greek participants.

The question addressed is the following: when the linguistic context cannot fully support metaphor interpretations, what else could? The current evidence on L2 metaphors which prime comprehension and implicature retrieval in contexts of fragmented propositional meaning attenuates metaphor as a merely linguistic tool that can enhance understanding, and reinforces the view that metaphorical processing involves a blend of language information with perceptual experiences (such as images and emotions).

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Is free enrichment always that free? Revisiting ad hoc concept construction

Manuel Padilla Cruz

Mutual parallel adjustment comprises various sub-tasks (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995; Carston 2002). One of them is *disambiguation* of the potential senses of lexical items and/or of specific sentential constituents. The other sub-tasks may be either *linguistically mandated*, if they are triggered by linguistic material in the acoustic input, or *non-linguistically mandated*, if they are performed by the inferential module as a necessary step to obtain a fully-fledged propositional form (Carston 2000).

Linguistically mandated inferential developments include (i) assigning reference to personal, anaphoric or cataphoric pronouns, and place and time deictics; (ii) delimiting the temporal coordinates of the actions denoted by verbs, and (iii) establishing certain relations – e.g., temporal, causal, etc.– between states of affairs alluded to in propositions (Carston 2000, 2002; Carston and Hall 2017; Hall 2017). Non-linguistically mandated developments are known as *free enrichment* and encompass (i) supplying *unarticulated constituents* necessary to obtain a fully propositional form (Carston 2000), and (ii) *lexical adjustment*, or fine-tuning the denotation of the concepts encoded by content words (Sperber and Wilson 1998; Wilson 2011).

This presentation will suggest that lexical adjustment needs not always be portrayed as a non-linguistically mandated sub-task. Rather, in some cases it may be enacted by the morphological components of some words, such as diminutive and augmentative morphemes. Although, as *expressives* (Blakemore 2011, 2015; Wharton 2016), these morphemes may trigger the representation of the speaker's affective attitude towards the referent of the nouns to which they are attached, they might also trigger *ad hoc*, or occasion-specific concepts. This claim will be supported with examples from a Romance language like Spanish.

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Pragmatics and writing

Billy Clark

While the relevance-theoretic account of communication focuses on both communicators and interpreters (amongst other things), there has been more focus on the pragmatic processes of interpreters than on those of communicators. Building on work by earlier researchers (working from relevance-theoretic and other perspectives), this presentation makes suggestions about how to develop a fuller account of the pragmatics of production in general and of writing in particular. It also considers how these ideas can be applied in developing the practice of writers in a range of contexts and media, including in classroom activities.

Favourites, Likes and Retweets: Relevance and Ostensive Communication Online

Kate Scott

Relevance theory deals with ostensive acts of communication. According to Sperber and Wilson (1986/95, pp. 53-4) '[s]omeone who engages in any kind of ostensive behaviour intentionally draws some attention to himself' and by doing so makes manifest the assumption that 'he is trying to be relevant'. An addressee is entitled to assume that the communicator is aiming at optimal relevance, and this plays a crucial role in the interpretation process. Online communication and social media have created new ways of interacting and communicating, and thus new ways in which the boundaries of work in relevance theory might be extended. Users of social network sites may have the option to publicly 'like' or 'favourite' somebody else's post, and social media also makes it very easy to share or re-broadcast (for example, by retweeting) somebody else's utterance. This paper considers these new means of interaction in light of the relevance-theoretic framework. As acts of ostensive communication, they raise expectations of relevance. I present an analysis of the sharing of content online as an attributive act. I argue that the different motivations for retweeting identified by boyd et al. (2010) align with the different ways in which attributive acts might achieve relevance.

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Looking into eyes for onomatopoeia

Ryoko Sasamoto

This study is concerned with the reception of onomatopoeia in the English translation of digital manga. The recent shift in media consumption means we need a new perspective. However, previous studies into manga often relied on eliciting reader opinion via interview. In order to gain more empirically supported evidence, we would need a different tool, one which does not rely solely on subjective opinion.

One such method is the use of eyetracking technology, which provides an insight into readers' interpretation process, allowing for readers' opinion to be analysed with greater scrutiny. Relevance Theory, a cognitively grounded theory into communication, could underpin findings from such an analysis.

Findings of this study indicate that personal preference as well as the word-ness of onomatopoeia are influencing engagement with the comic page and the recovery of sound effects alike. This suggests that eyetracking analysis also provides empirical evidence for a Relevance theoretic analysis of onomatopoeia as giving rise to non- propositional effects while locating on the *showing* and *saying* continuum (Sasamoto and Jackson 2016). The aim of this paper therefore is to address an explanatory gap in the accounts of the relationship between digital technology and the interpretation process.

Relevance explains the strawman fallacy

Louis de Saussure

The strawman fallacy (SMF) consists in attributing to a Speaker, on the basis of her utterances, ridiculous or scandalous thoughts which she didn't mean to communicate. A striking fact with the SMF is that it is the original Speaker who suffers the burden of proof that her utterance was misinterpreted, whereas in ordinary misunderstandings, correcting an addressee's wrong interpretation raise no issue nor burden of proof.

In this talk, I try to show that the SMF rests on two factors. The first one is the (theoretical) availability of the pragmatic interpretation in the circumstances. The second one is that, more importantly, the author of a SMF exhibits better pragmatic skills than the targeted original speaker.

SMFs mostly occur in argumentative settings in front of an audience towards which it is directed. Obviously, the target of an SMF cannot be driven to accept that she meant something different, and the audience does not always come to believe that the wrong interpretation is correct. I argue that the more relevant an interpretation is, the more likely it is to serve as a successful SMF, and that the SMF is a winning argument for reasons of social dominance rather than for informational ones.

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The communicative nature of human language: an evolutionary perspective

Stavros Assimakopoulos

Pragmatics has traditionally focused on the ways in which speaker-intended meanings are inferred in solid communicative contexts, excluding from its remit the role that inferential processing may play in an account of human language as a natural object. In this paper, I explore the possibility that all linguistic stimuli fall under the scope of relevance-theoretic pragmatics, and more specifically the communicative principle of relevance, even when they are not transparently embedded in a speaker's overt communicative behaviour. The argument I pursue in this vein is that, being externalized objects with their own characteristics that set them apart from their internalized mental counterparts, linguistic stimuli are automatically treated by our cognitive system as ostensive, because they would otherwise not have evolved to invariably impinge on the attention as they typically do. In this picture, the evolutionary advantage of external language lies precisely in its unique ability to reveal meaning with an amount of precision that cannot be reached through the use of other types of ostensive stimuli and pragmatic inference becomes an underlying feature of the way in which external languages link up with our internalized conceptual system.

Unintentionally Sending a Message – the Extended Gricean Model

Constant Bonard

In this talk, I argue that people sometimes send messages which can be accounted by neither the code model nor the ostensive model of communication. I give examples of such cases from speech, art, clothing, emotion expression, and non-communicative behavior. The cases I discuss resist the code model because the messages sent are underdetermined by the relevant codes. They resist the ostensive model because they are produced without communicative or informative intentions. To account for such cases, we need what I call *the extended Gricean model*.

The extended Gricean model applies beyond ostensive stimuli to include all CRC stimuli, stimuli which can have effects on the audience that are Commonly Recognizable as Controllable. (Ostensive stimuli are a special subset of CRC stimuli.) If S produces a CRC stimulus, this gives reasons to his or her audience to suppose that S is sending messages beyond those encoded in the stimulus. It allows the audience to draw inferences similar to those predicted by the ostensive model. The extended Gricean model shows how such inferences apply to non-ostensive stimuli.

Affective science, emotion and relevance

Daniel Dukes and Tim Wharton

Central to work in the affective sciences is the claim that for a particular object or event to elicit an emotional state, that object or event needs to be, in some sense of the word, *relevant* to the person in whom that state is elicited. In the cognitive appraisal school of emotion, in particular, *relevance* plays an explicit role, a consequence of the fact that it is in cognitive appraisal theory that emotion is most closely associated with goals, objectives, values, concerns etc. (Moors et al., 2013). However, although a few emotion theorists have thought more carefully about what emotional relevance might mean, surprisingly little research has been focused on the notion of relevance itself. This is all the more remarkable given that Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995) provided a psychological theory of relevance more than 30 years ago showing how the search for relevance drives human cognition. We present the first results of an interdisciplinary collaboration in which we draw on the influence that relevance theory has had on pragmatics to suggest ways in which the notion of relevance in psychological theories of emotion might be developed (Dukes et al., in prep). Since relevance

plays such an explicit role in emotion theories, we claim that this is not simply desirable, it is imperative. We also suggest ways in which affective science can influence relevance theory.

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Meaning non-verbally: communication in people with aphasia

Caroline Jagoe & Tim Wharton

The potential for pragmatic insights to be enriched, and even generated, from investigation of people with communication disabilities has been vastly underutilised in theoretical pragmatics. An adequate pragmatic theory must account for the full range of human communication, including that of people with communication disabilities. A similar argument has been made regarding pragmatic explanations of the natural non-verbal behaviours accompanying speech, which has lagged behind exploration of non-natural linguistic meaning. These two domains – pragmatic research into the meaning of non-verbal behaviours and clinical research into the communicative strategies of people with aphasia (the communication disability that commonly follows a stroke) – have the potential to inform each other.

This paper will take, as its starting point, the idea that an ostensive stimulus is typically a complex of linguistic elements which usually convey propositional information, and non-verbal behaviours which carry emotional or attitudinal information supplementing the verbal content. Many people with aphasia, however, rely much more heavily on the use of non-verbal behaviours. What do these convey? Is meaning even the right word to use to describe their contribution? This paper will use the "bi-dimensional continuum" in which meaning and showing are plotted against determinate indeterminate intended import (Sperber and Wilson 2015, p. 147) to demonstrate the complexity of non-verbal communication in dyads where one partner has severe aphasia.

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