

Pragmatic Perspectives
on Language and Linguistics

Volume I:

Speech Actions in Theory and Applied Studies

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Speech Actions in Theory and Applied Studies

Edited by

Iwona Witczak-Plisiecka

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P U B L I S H I N G

Pragmatic Perspectives on Language and Linguistics Volume I:
Speech Actions in Theory and Applied Studies,
Edited by Iwona Witzak-Plisiecka

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PREFACE

SPEECH ACTIONS IN THEORY AND APPLIED STUDIES

Speech Actions in Theory and Applied Studies, the first of the two volumes of *Pragmatic Perspectives on Language and Linguistics*, brings together twenty essays which critically examine linguistic action and explore ways in which it can be accounted for.

The notion of language in action is central to the still contentiously under-defined field of linguistic pragmatics, whose ambitious and possibly (nearly) insurmountable aim of accounting for the nature of meaning in context has motivated a constantly growing amount of research and a great number of theoretical debates over the last decades. The articles presented in this collection are all focused on “doing things with words”, but in most cases do not subscribe to speech act theory in the tradition of John L. Austin and John R. Searle. The linking thread through the volume is not a theoretical commitment to one of the speech act theoretic models, but the authors’ perspective on language as a means of action, on how linguistic expressions become effective in context and how this effectiveness can be explicated. The papers represent different pragmatic approaches and varied level of expertise in the research area; among the authors there are eminent linguists and philosophers, who have had a great impact on linguistic pragmatics, well established researchers, and young beginners. The texts include purely theoretical discussions, case studies, reports on research falling within a modern field of experimental pragmatics, detailed analyses of speech and transcribed interactions, meticulous contrastive and corpus studies of the interrelation between form and meaning, comments on intercultural communication, and pedagogical implications of pragmatic reflection on the nature of language. Without purporting to cover all relevant topics, this variety reflects the complex character of linguistic pragmatics and integrates studies which cross-cut other research fields.

The seven papers gathered in the first part of the volume, “Speech Action in Theory”, are concentrated on theoretical issues pertaining to speech as a type of action. The first paper, “Fragments and speech acts” by

Robert M. Harnish, directly addresses speech act theory and extends the model put forward in *Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts* (1979) by Kent Bach and Robert M. Harnish, to successfully accommodate fragments, i.e. all kinds of sub-sentential expressions within the framework. The next text in the section, “What do interjections contribute to communication and how are they interpreted? A cognitive pragmatic account”, also concentrates on “fragmentary” expressions, however, the scope is functionally narrowed to interjections, for which the author, Manuel Padilla Cruz, proposes a relevance theoretic account. In “Convention, intention and speech act performance”, a theoretical-methodological paper, Eleni Kriempardis addresses the long-standing discussion concerning the role of convention and intention in speech act-theoretic accounts of linguistic action and proposes her novel solution to the interpretational problem related to “speaker meaning” by redefining the scope of the notion. In a similar theoretical-methodological vein, Friedrich Christopher Doerge engages in a discussion with Claire Horisk’s appraisal of semantic minimalism and her simultaneous criticism of the Gricean framework, defending the latter. The next two papers elaborate neo-Gricean ideas by using relevance-theoretic apparatus in their investigations. Maria Jodłowiec’s text is a voice in praise of the possibilities which relevance theory offers for accounts of complex everyday interaction, while Susana Olmos, illustrating her discussion with contrastive English and Spanish examples and especially the use of the Spanish connective “pero”, uses the theory to account for different degrees of explicitness in communicating attitudes. Finally, Albin Wagener returns to the Gricean framework in his account of intercultural discordant communication.

Part two, “Case Studies & Experimental Pragmatics”, opens with a report on an experimental research into irony processing in Polish and in English as a second language, carried out by Katarzyna Bromberek-Dyzman together with Karolina Rataj and Jacek Dylak. Hanna Pułaczewska examines intercultural differences in interactions recorded in the German and the Polish versions of the *Big Brother* television reality show. The next two papers, by Matylda Weidner and Karolina Stefaniak, examine doctor/patient verbal interaction with emphasis on its institutional aspect and power asymmetry and the notion of face respectively; both analyses are based on corpus examples. The following two texts are devoted to metaphors in media discourse at the time of crisis. Monika Kopytowska provides an account of metaphorical rhetoric used in presenting the Iraq war on CNN, while Stephanie Peeters, in a more methodology-focused paper, examines metaphors and their theoretical models. Last, but not

least, Adam Bednarek, with the use of corpus methodology, comments on the socio-pragmatic aspects of the use of Canadianisms in Toronto.

Part three, “Pragmatics, Grammar, and Language Pedagogy”, contains five essays, of which the first three explore areas of more “formal” pragmatics through analyses of grammatical forms and the interface which the analysis of these forms share with context-grounded research. Christoph Haase provides a pragmatic interpretation of grammaticalisation phenomena related to encoding of causativity in English verbs, José Amenós-Pons puts forward a relevance-theoretic account of the relation between tense and time in English and Spanish narrative forms, and Kamil Kamiński comments on pragmatic motivation for conversion with focus on “verbing”. The fourth text in this section, “Teaching and learning pragmatic features in the foreign language classroom: Interfaces between research and pedagogy” by Mirosław Pawlak, provides valuable ideas for both respect and instrumental use of pragmatics-oriented categories and knowledge in a language classroom, whose application may enhance the development of the most difficult, viz. pragmatic, type of competence. Next, Lieven Buysse reports on the peculiarities of discourse markers use in the English of Flemish university students. The final text by Silvia-Emilia Plăcintar offers practical implications of implementing aspects of politeness theory in a business communication course; the discussion is illustrated with examples of (more or less) successful communication from a pedagogical case study.

This collection is supplemented by texts gathered in volume two, under the somewhat provocative title *Pragmatics of Semantically Restricted Domains*, whose contents exhibit emphasis on the “semantic” specificity of the represented research areas.

I would like to thank John Crust of Lodz University, Poland, for his help in proofreading a large part of this volume.

Iwona Witczak-Plisiecka

PART I:

SPEECH ACTION IN THEORY

CHAPTER ONE

FRAGMENTS AND SPEECH ACTS

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Think of exclamations alone, with their completely different functions: Water!, Away!, Ow!, Help!, Fire!, No! Are you inclined still to call these words ‘names of objects’?

—Wittgenstein, 1953: section 27

1. Introduction

If you pay attention, when people talk (or write things down) they often do not use complete sentences; they use ‘fragments’—expressions which on the face of it are just words or phrases, such as Wittgenstein’s examples above, though Wittgenstein’s point is not ours.¹ These uses may be exclamations (they could have other uses too), but they are also exclamations with more content than just what is provided by the words alone. Here we will outline a theory of speech acts and communication with enough detail to accommodate our pragmatic intuitions regarding the interpretation of the utterance of fragments (which we will sometimes shorten to “fragment interpretation”). We will do this in two steps: first, we review a general theory directed primarily at the use of complete sentences; second, we investigate the extension of this theory to fragments. First, a bit of a background.

¹ Wittgenstein was reacting to his earlier view in the *Tractatus* that words are names, and the organization of words in a sentence “pictures” the way the world must be if the sentence is true.

2. A Bit of Background²

The problem that fragments present to the theory of language is sometimes seen almost exclusively through the lens of syntax (and semantics): are such items just words (or phrases), or are they “short for” sentences?³ And how should a systematic theory of the syntax of a language (a grammar or a parser) deal with them? Such a perspective has given rise to the “ellipsis wars”. The big divisions in the project of specifying the linguistic properties of fragments is between those who “generate” fragments from sentences, those who “base-generate” fragments, those who do neither, but define the linguistic properties of fragments off of their occurrences as constituents in sentences that are “generated”. There are other divides as well. Among “sentential” theories, some authors propose an “empty element” account⁴ vs. the traditional deletion account.⁵ Some describe syntactic ellipsis in terms of “reconstruction”⁶, and some deny that there is a syntactic phenomenon of ellipsis at all.⁷ We will not take sides on this issue.⁸

But the problems fragments present can also be seen through the lens of pragmatics and cognitive science: how are such fragments interpreted? Clearly the syntactic-semantic question and the pragmatic question are related in that if fragments are “short for” sentences, then a correct grammar of sentences and a theory of how we interpret them will give us a theory of fragments almost for free. However, if some are not “short for” sentences, then we will need interpretive strategies that depart from the sentential model in some important respects. In this work we will assume that not all fragments are “short for” sentences and so fragments must be

² See Harnish (2009) for a more detailed discussion of these issues.

³ This umbrella term is meant to be neutral for ellipsis, abbreviation or any other kind of shortening.

⁴ See e.g. Williams (1977).

⁵ Consider the sentence “The man who didn’t saw the man who did”. Contrast the empty element account (a) The man who didn’t [leave]_{VP} saw the man who did [__VP], with the deletion analysis (b) The man who didn’t [leave]_{VP1} saw the man who did [Delta₁]_{VP}.

⁶ See e.g. Fiengo and May (1994).

⁷ See e.g. Dalrymple (2005).

⁸ For surveys of ellipsis see Hankamer and Sag (1976), Chao (1988), Morgan (1989), Lappin (1996), Lappin and Benmamoun (eds.) (1999), Merchant (2001, 2004, 2006), Stainton (2005, section 3; 2006a, chapters 5, 6), Barton (1990, 2006).

dealt with on a case by case basis.⁹ Given this assumption, the problem becomes one of facing the following questions:

- Q1. [Pragmatics] What is the best account of the (correct, successful) interpretation of the utterance of a fragment in a context? In particular:
- a. How can a speaker intend to communicate a given message (in many cases an illocutionary force and propositional content) by uttering a fragment in a context?
 - b. How can a hearer recognize what the speaker is intending to communicate in such cases?
- Q2. [Cognitive Science] What mental mechanisms and representations subserve acts of intended and successful communication using fragments?

The issue of the pragmatics and cognitive science of fragments has not profited from the kinds of debates and interactions that their syntax (and semantics) has. The first major inquiry, due to Barton (1990) can be sloganized as (revised) Chomsky plus (revised) Grice. Barton locates her theory between two competing theories. The first is structural (syntactic/semantic), the second is pragmatic. On the structural side Barton wants to deny that fragments are best accounted for by extending the phenomena of linguistic “ellipsis” (sentential or discourse) to them. On the pragmatic side, Barton wants to deny that the interpretation of fragments can be explained by the operation of a single non-modular principle such as in Relevance Theory. The second major inquiry, due to Stainton (2006a, b), locates the interpretation of fragments within cognitive science: speakers use more than linguistic competence to understand fragments, they use general knowledge and inferential abilities, and this means that information from a variety of sources and in a variety of formats (linguistic, perceptual, memorial) must be integrated during the process of the interpretation of fragments, as with any other utterance.

Each proposal has its virtues, but each has certain limitations as well: they agree that there are genuine fragments that need to be interpreted; they seem to disagree on the scope of the theory in that Stainton is willing

⁹ As is the view of some of the leading people working on these various aspects of fragments: Barton (1990), Merchant (2004), and Stainton (2006a).

to give the sententialist most of discourse ellipsis, whereas Barton's theory extends her pragmatic theory to include it. (Here we are inclined to agree with Stainton.) They agree on the central role of "inference" in fragment interpretation, but they differ on issues of modularity. (Here too we are inclined to side with Stainton.) Both Barton and Stainton take a combined pragmatic-cognitive science point of view, though the ratio is different for each of them. Barton appeals to implicature to help handle both syntactically and pragmatically controlled cases, but there is not very much discussion of mental representations, operations on them, or cognitive faculties. In Stainton in turn there is much more discussion of these latter cognitive science issues. Stainton seems to abjure implicature in handling the interpretation of fragments. Neither Stainton nor Barton has much to say about the interpretation of the force of fragments. When one decides to give force equal billing with content it becomes clearer that what is needed is a more speech act oriented approach, one that fits fragment interpretation into a language framework of performing and communicating with speech acts in general.

3. The Framework Applied to Sentences

Here is what often happens when we talk. Speakers *utter* things (utterance act), and in uttering things they often *say* things (locutionary act), and in saying things they often *do* things (illocutionary act). And typically speakers bother with all this because they want to *communicate* something to a hearer, and even have some *effect* on the thought and/or action of that hearer (perlocutionary act). This much it would seem is just Austinian common sense. What is not common sense, but part of a theory, is how to best describe these acts, and how to explain the possibility of successful communication. The general framework for approaching these issues to be testing for adequacy in this work is not new. Indeed, it is about 30 years old—positively retro. It is a version of the theory of speech acts and communication put forward in Bach and Harnish (1979). Here is a brief reminder of the main relevant features of that theory.¹⁰

¹⁰ One reason for this choice of this speech act theory over, say, rule-based theories such as Searle (1969) or Alston (2000), is the implausibility of many fragments being governed by illocutionary rules of the required sort: utter *e* in context *C* iff *P*. Such rules would endow these fragments with an unlimited number of meanings—one meaning for every possible completion of the fragment. See Harnish (2006), Harnish and Plunze (2006) for further discussion. The other

Communicative Intentions. Following Grice, we take it that successful communication involves the hearer recognizing what it is that the speaker intends to communicate. Once that happens, communication, at least, is successful, even though additional effects, such as boredom or persuasion may or may not follow. Communicative intentions are intended to be recognized, and when they are, communication is successful.

Communicative Inference. Also following Grice, we take it that this recognition involves a kind of ‘inference’ the hearer makes, an inference to the best available explanation of why the speaker uttered what they did under the circumstances. For instance, a hearer who understands a speaker to be offering to pay the hearer \$5, will have this thought because it is the best available explanation of why the speaker uttered “*I’ll give you \$5 for that*” in circumstances where the hearer is selling something and is waiting for bids on it.

Strategies. Of course, there are multiple ways this inference can go. The sentence might be ambiguous or semantically incomplete, the references might be underdetermined, the speaker might not mean what they say (literality), the speaker might mean more than they say (indirection). The theory outlines inferential ‘strategies’ for these possibilities.

Presumptions. The theory also outlines factors that help ‘cause’ a hearer to make these inferences. We call these ‘presumptions’, which are largely shared by speaker and hearer, though they are defeasible and can be overridden by additional information. We propose, roughly:

- A. that speakers typically presume that the hearer shares enough of the language to understand what is said, and
- B. that hearers typically presume the speaker is speaking with some identifiable communicative intention, and
- C. that hearers typically presume the speaker is speaking ‘cooperatively’, viz. relevantly, truthfully, sincerely, etc.

Speech Acts. Finally, we propose a theory of speech acts that intersects with the above. We recognize all the above Austinian categories, and

major approach, due to Searle and Vanderveken (1985), has difficulties handling sentential mood, and so will be difficult to extend to fragments. See Harnish (2007) for detailed discussion.

further subdivide illocutionary acts into those that are basically ‘communicative’ and those that are basically ‘institutional’ (or ‘conventional’). We offer taxonomies of each category, and we offer (summary) analyses of about fifty particular acts.

A Sample. Consider a sample literal and direct (L&D) inference from Bach and Harnish for a full sentence:

- L1. S utters ‘*John will pay Sam back*’
- L2. S means that John will repay Sam (rather than John will seek revenge on Sam) by ‘*John will pay Sam back*’¹¹
- L3. S is saying that John will repay Sam
- L4. S, if speaking literally, is constating that John will repay Sam
- L5. S could be speaking literally
- L6. S is constating that John will repay Sam

What further information allows L6 to be inferred? Basically information from linguistic and nonlinguistic sources. Linguistically, the mood of the sentence (declarative) restricts the class of (L&D) speech acts to those that are constative (involve the expression of beliefs and are truth-evaluable). Nonlinguistically, it involves settling on the exact force within the range of constatives. For instance, the speaker might be simply asserting, or guessing, suggesting, predicting, conceding, assenting, retracting, objecting, etc. that John will repay Sam, and which, if any, of these is recognized by the hearer will depend on the contextual (including the cooperative nature of the talk-exchange) and background information. For instance, if it is part of the knowledge of the context and talk-exchange up to the utterance that H just claimed that no one would repay Sam, then the speaker could be taken as objecting. If the speaker had claimed that John would not repay Sam, but then the hearer had given a reason why he would, then the speaker could be taken as conceding etc.

¹¹ The locution ‘means that ... by ...’ is actually a hybrid of two meaning specifications from Grice. The first is ‘applied timeless meaning’: “Such specifications aim to give one the correct reading ... on a particular occasion of utterance” (1989: 89). These involve directly quoting the words and in effect selecting a meaning. The second is ‘utterer’s occasion meaning’, which says what the speaker, not the words, means on an occasion, and these involve indirect quotation (1999: 89). L2 in effect takes the first and rolls it into the second. We will see a reason later for perhaps decoupling these two.

Bach and Harnish saw no possibility at the time (or maybe ever) of regimenting contextual and background knowledge in such a way as to be able to pair utterances of sentences with (L&D) illocutionary acts. The best that can be done is to say that given L1-L6, and the Presumptions, it is possible to specify contextual and background information that would make it reasonable for the hearer to take the speaker to be *F-ing that P* per L5/L6. We should not expect to be able to do more for fragments. But can we do as much? Let's begin, as Bach and Harnish did, with the inferentially simplest case: literal and direct. Let's also assume the theory of illocutionary acts from that book as a first approximation.¹²

4. The Framework Applied to (Free) Fragments: First Approximation

Fragments come in degrees of non-sentencehood, and in typically spoken or written form.¹³ So it might be useful to first try to locate fragments (both spoken and written) in the space of expressions that are typically used to express a force and/or content.¹⁴

TYPICALLY SPOKEN SENTENTIAL

Major Moods: Snow is white, Leave the room!, Who is buried in Grant's Tomb?, Is snow white?, Snow is WHITE?

Minor Moods: John likes beer, doesn't he?, Does John resemble his father or his mother, Move or/and I'll shoot, What a nice dress

TYPICALLY SPOKEN SEMI-SENTENTIAL

Sayings/Proverbs: Waste not, want not; Monkey see, Monkey do; No pain, no gain; Out of sight, out of mind; Like father, like son

Pragmatic Idioms: How(s) about a beer?, Where does he get off saying something like that, Be that as it may, Take it easy!, Buzz off!, Up yours!

Greeting/Leave-Takings: Hello, Good morning/evening/night/bye

¹² Harnish (2005a) explores the strengths and weaknesses of "expressed attitude" theories of speech acts (such as Bach and Harnish) vs. "normative" theories (such as Alston's).

¹³ We need a taxonomy of the use of fragments that goes much deeper than this, one analogous to the dominant taxonomies of illocutionary acts. For a first approximation see Larson (1984).

¹⁴ See Merchant (2006, section 3.6) for an overlapping list, not including moods.

Fragments: Want some coffee?

TYPICALLY SPOKEN NON-SENTENTIAL

Vocatives: John! Hey! You over there!¹⁵

Fragments: Off with his head! On with the show! From Maui, On the floor

TYPICALLY WRITTEN SEMI-SENTENTIAL

Special Registers: Cookbooks, recipes, diaries, headlines, telegrams, telegraphic, instructions

TYPICALLY WRITTEN NON-SENTENTIAL

Labels/Titles: Strawberry Jam, 12% Alcohol by volume, Starbucks

Street Signs: Dead End, 60 Day/ 50 Night, I-10

As can be seen, we have located fragments in the cells: spoken X semi-sentential, spoken X non-sentential, written X non-sentential. We turn now to the question how to account for the interpretation of such fragments, given a theory for non-fragments.

5. Modifying the SAS

Bach and Harnish (1979, section 10.4) noted there are instances of what they called “taking a syntactic liberty”, i.e. the “use of ungrammatical sentences or even nonsentences with identifiable illocutionary intents” (1979: 231). Many examples were cited, from the mangled grammar of accident reports, through cases of “scope shifting” and “lexical omissions”¹⁶ to cases such as (repeated):

¹⁵ See Zwicky (1974) for an interesting discussion of vocatives. He argues that vocatives can be divided into “calls” and “addresses”, and that NP vocatives differ syntactically and pragmatically from referential NPs.

¹⁶ What Bach (1994) called ‘conversational implicature’. It is an open question whether the utterance of fragments to perform illocutionary acts with propositional content is an instance of implicature, although some authors (e.g. Elugardo and Stainton, 2004) treat it as such (see Harnish part I, 2009). On the one hand, intuitively, the information that “completes” a fragment seems as much “implicit” in what is said as in other examples. On the other hand Bach’s canonical examples of completion implicatures involve the full sentences, such as ‘Al is finished’ or

- (1)
- a. Close [the] cover before striking [the match]
 - b. No smoking [allowed]
 - c. The Steelers [are] going for a field goal
 - d. [This is] Lucerne two-ten low-fat milk
 - e. [This road is] Slippery when wet
 - f. [Give me tickets for] Two nonstudents, please

Bach and Harnish noted that one problem for this class of locutions is that the theory outlined earlier in the book (what was called the “Speech Act Schema” or SAS) requires a level of representation stipulating what is said: S says that P. But in some of the above cases, especially the non-sentences, that “locutionary” level does not seem to be applicable. Bach and Harnish’s way out was to postulate some extra processing in its stead:

H, assuming the CP [Communicative Presumption] to be in effect is able to figure out what S means by what he utters, perhaps by associating a grammatical sentence with the locution uttered. Perhaps what one does, using strategies developed through experience is ascertain [what is said] directly, without the mediation of a grammatical sentence. (1979, 231)

The first (“indirect” i.e. through words) way involves H having an idea as to what S intended to utter and from this to what S meant. This is something we do when faced with speech errors such as slips of the tongue, mispronunciations or malapropisms. At least occasionally it is possible to introspect the revised words. For instance, to get the kids joke: “Two peanuts were walking down an ally; one of them was a salted/assaulted” it is necessary to hear the single phonetic string as possibly two separate word strings. The second (“direct”) way bypasses revised wording and goes directly to what S meant. Bach and Harnish say nothing about what this second way might look like nor how it might be “developed through experience”. It is worth looking again at this phenomenon.

The minimal modification, one discussed by Bach and Harnish (1979, chapter 2), is to add to the ‘said that’ locution, by allowing other forms of saying. The most natural extension is to what are called “referentially transparent” uses of ‘said’ i.e. ‘said of’ as in:

‘Mary is ready’.

- (2) John *said of* [the guy next door] that problems with the pregnancy were likely

Here the description ‘the guy next door’ is taken to be the speakers description and not a description John would accept, who thinks the neighbor is female. This may work for a few of the above examples (note that we had to cheat with bracketed material):

- (3)
 a'. He said of the match book and the match [to] close cover before striking
 e'. He said of the road that [it is] slippery when wet

But for the rest, it is very awkward, e.g.:

- b'. ?He said of the situation [that] no smoking [is allowed?]
 d'. ?He said of [the] Lucerne two-ten low-fat milk that [it is] Lucerne two-ten low-fat milk
 f'. ?He said of two tickets and the giving relation: two nonstudents, please

In conclusion, it looks like for some fragments we need to bypass a strictly locutionary stage (saying that, saying of).¹⁷ That gives us a spectrum of cases:

1. (*Enriched*) *saying that*: in uttering ‘on the table’ [when asked where the knife is] S said that the knife was on the table
2. *Saying of*: in uttering ‘on the table’ [when noticing someone looking for the knife] S said of the knife that it was on the table
3. *Utterance saying*: In uttering ‘Two non-students, please’ S said ‘Two non-students, please’

So what we should do first is see how some of the examples mentioned above from Bach and Harnish might work:

- (1'a) Close cover before striking

This is relatively simple for two reasons. First, it is more of a small clause than a fragment in that it has readily identifiable sentential structure and

¹⁷ See Bach (2001) for a discussion of other objections to a locutionary stage.

only NP related material needs to be recovered. Second, its typical use on e.g. matchbooks gives it the status of something like an instruction, in an abbreviated form that has become standardized¹⁸ as to what cover to close (the one with the token on it) and what to strike (a match). So determining what the message is requires little figuring out. The SAS is “short-circuited” by the standardized information. Exactly how to state this is currently up for grabs, but it might look something like this:

Standardization ‘Close cover before striking’ is standardly used to instruct the reader to close the cover of the matchbook it is printed on when striking a match on its scratch surface.¹⁹

(1'b) No smoking

This is also a fairly standardized example—it may in fact be a kind of pragmatic idiom, which is productive in the gerund position (no parking, no running, etc.). We hear it as ‘Don’t smoke’ even though the natural completion turns it into a constative: ‘No smoking is allowed’ or even better ‘Smoking is not allowed’. Again, little figuring out is required once it is determined that it is being uttered literally; exactly how to state this is also currently up for grabs, but it might look something like this:

Standardization ‘No smoking’ is standardized for directing the hearer/reader to not smoke in the vicinity of the location of the utterance/sign.

(1'e) Slippery when wet

One way of viewing this is as a standardized indirect utterance:

(L&D constative) This road is slippery when wet

¹⁸ See Bach and Harnish (1979: 193) for a first approximation to a definition of standardization.

¹⁹ See Sadock (1974) for a discussion of the grammar of “labelese”. In particular he notes a variety of relationships the understood referents, usually of what would be the object NP, bear to the fragment: (i) the referent is the label itself (‘Do not remove under penalty of law’), what the label is on (‘Do not puncture or incinerate’), if a container, its contents (‘Stir well’). There are obvious similarities to “cookbookese”.

(Indirect directive) Drive carefully (because this road is slippery when wet)

Standardization ‘Slippery when wet’ is standardized for directing the reader to drive carefully on the road the “utterance” is next to because it is slippery when it is wet.

(1’f) Two nonstudents, please

The literal use of ‘please’ is evidence that a directive is in the offing. However, circumstances must provide the information regarding the exact force and mode of communication:

- (f’) Give/Sell me tickets for two nonstudents (L&D directive)
- (f’’) I would like tickets for two nonstudents (L&D constative + Indirect directive)

Let’s turn back to some of our earlier fragment examples, moving from the more sentence-like to the least.

PROTO-MOOD FRAGMENTS

In these examples, the fragment seems to carry some force information as part of its structure (words, syntax, intonation). We can use the device of indicating with words what a completion of the fragment might look like.

Exclamations

(4) What a nice dress! [that is]

This can be analyzed as a minor mood.²⁰ However, here we will explore the idea that they are fragments (too). Intuitively, exclamatives such as these express a pro-attitude toward the item “mentioned” in the fragment. That is the function of the mood of the sentence, including the word ‘nice’. The understood element is the item being remarked about. It is not clear what the “logical structure” or “propositional content” of such an exclamative is, but one candidate would be: ‘That dress is nice!’ Evidence that this is so (vs., say: ‘That is a nice dress’) is that it is easy to highlight

²⁰ See Harnish (1983: especially 353), Sadock and Zwicky (1985, section 2.3.1).

‘nice’ for sarcasm, but not ‘nice dress’.

Directives

- (5) [Let’s get] On with the show!
- (6) [*Cut/*take] Off with his head!

The first could well be a pragmatic idiom. There are limits to its productivity in that substituting other NPs creates forms that are intelligible, but sound like plays on the original (e.g. ‘On with the movie!’). The second construction is much more productive, even clothing can be mentioned (but not arbitrary possessions). However, it does not seem to involve simply leaving out words that could be there (*‘Cut off with his head’). That may suggest a special construction, with a special use:

- (6) ‘Off with (3rd person possessive) NP’ is used to direct the hearer to cut/take off (3rd person possessive) NP.

Questions

- (7) [Is this] From Columbia?
- (8) [Do you] Want some coffee?

Raising intonation on these forms may carry the force of an Yes/No interrogative sentence, but without sentential propositional content. Since a Yes/No interrogative requires something propositional to Yes or No, something is needed to be the “subject” of the remark, and that is recovered from context:

- (7) ‘From Columbia?’ is used to ask for a response whether X is from Columbia or not
- (8) ‘Want some coffee?’ is used to ask for a response whether the hearer wants some coffee or not.

NEUTRAL FRAGMENTS

Sadock and Zwicky (1985) give the following examples, and say that they have a variety of uses (they do not say if all expressions have all these uses):

- (9)
- a. Some whiskey (Quantifier)
 - b. Six of the pink ones with sprinkles on top (Cardinal Number)
 - c. All of you with beards (Quantifier)
 - d. Lord Threshingham (Proper Name)
 - e. The left shoulder, please (Definite Description)

To make this plausible, let us take examples from (9a) and supply some words to indicate possible contexts for their use:

- (9')
- a. [Please give me] Some whiskey: request
 - b. [Give me] Some whiskey: order
 - c. [Would you like] Some whiskey: offer
 - d. Some whiskey [falling, watch out]: warning
 - e. Some whiskey [or your life]: threat
 - f. [All you've got is] Some whiskey: dismay
 - g. [Oh goody] Some whiskey: delight
 - h. [That is] Some whiskey: identify the liquid

And Stainton (2006b and elsewhere) gives many examples of Verb Phrases, Prepositional Phrases, Adjective Phrases, Adverbial Phrases etc. used as fragments:

- (10)
- a. [The hammer is] on the floor (Statement)
 - b. [Get down] on the floor (Command)
 - c. [Take me] to Segova (Request)
 - d. [On the floor] Quick(ly) (Command)
 - e. [These Twinkies were] purchased at Walmart (Statement)

It would not be hard to tell an ad hoc story for each of these that would do the job of the words in brackets. For example, in the case of (10a) vs. (10b) we need only imagine scenarios of a bank robbery as opposed to a carpenter and his assistant. According to the Bach and Harnish story rehearsed earlier, in each case S will be presumed to be speaking with some recognizable illocutionary intent, and H will try to recognize that intent on the basis of knowledge of 'on the floor', contextual and background information. In the case of (10a) we imagine a carpenter asking his assistant for the hammer, the assistant saying he does not have

it, both of them looking around, the carpenter spotting it as close to the assistant and uttering ‘on the floor’. Again, after the utterance H will presume that S expects the hammer to be locatable on the floor and H will look there for it. In the case of (10b), being in the middle of a bank robbery is likely to remind H of such scenes from movies or literature where people fell to the floor. And the threatening demeanor and gestures of the robber will either reinforce this, or independently give H this idea. These stories do not require the fragment to be “short-for” (elliptical-for, an abbreviation-of, etc.) anything sentential. Even assuming (with Stainton) that only propositions can be communicatively meant, not everything “in” the proposition need be a value of something “in” the utterance.²¹ How, then, might the connection between the fragment (with its mutually believed linguistic properties), the context, background information, etc., and the proposition meant be organized?

Perry (1994) was perhaps the first to suggest using Kaplan’s (1989) “structured propositions”.²² Think of propositions as structured entities “containing” what they are about. Some propositions might involve only properties and/or relations, so-called “general” propositions such as that all men are mortal. Others might involve properties and/or relations but also some individual object, so-called “singular” propositions such as that Socrates is mortal. Such propositions can be the content of e.g. an assertion, and one that is communicatively successful, in virtue of having the identity of the intended constituents recognized by H (as meant by S). When we say that in producing an utterance the speaker expresses a certain proposition, that can cover two importantly different relations. Perry (ibid) distinguishes between “constructing” a thought or proposition, as when one asserts a proposition unrecoverable from the context, and “completing” a thought or proposition, as when at least one constituent of the proposition is recovered from context. In this latter case, the expression uttered can be viewed as expressing a schematic proposition, a proposition with a missing constituent in need of completion.²³ Most

²¹ See Stanley (2000) and Cappelen and Lepore (2005) for the contrary view relative to sentences. We withhold final judgment on this question for sentences, however.

²² See also Elugardo and Stainton (2003) for further discussion. Both Perry, and Elugardo and Stainton, focus on singular propositions for fragments, but in principle general propositions could be recovered from context as well.

²³ Perry calls these incomplete propositions “issues”. This terminology has not caught on. Note that these need not have just one hole in them, though presumably

importantly, this schematic proposition can be viewed in some cases as “in the air”. When it is, the utterance of an expression that identifies the missing constituent can be sufficient, in the context to allow the hearer to recover a complete proposition. For example, in the carpenter case the property/relation is carried in large part by the linguistic expression ‘on the floor’, and the object (the hammer) which has been fixed by past experience (its the only hammer they have on the job) is the object S and H are seeking, and is what S now sees.²⁴ So the singular proposition <HAMMER, ON THE FLOOR>²⁵ is the content of S’s assertion, as well as what H grasps when H understands that assertion.

How psychologically is S able mean that proposition, and how is H able to grasp that? Those are good questions, but for cognitive science, not for pragmatics.²⁶ In addition to not having a general theory of perceptual

the more holes, the harder it will be to complete them correctly.

²⁴ We assume that ‘the floor’ has been taken care of; the status of predication (what ‘be’ would do in an utterance) is still dark.

²⁵ Where HAMMER is the actual hammer, and ON THE FLOOR is the property/relation of being on the floor.

²⁶ Though someone might practice both. For instance, Elugardo and Stainton (2003, section 5), building on work of Levine and Pylyshyn, sketch a story of how this might go in a modular cognitive architecture. Although I am sympathetic to its broad outlines, some of the details are puzzling. For instance, they propose that there is a mentalese demonstrative **IT** associated with a percept, **a**, such that **IT**_a refers to the thing you see. “It does so in virtue of demonstrating a percept, namely **a**, that itself represents the dog. The demonstrated percept in turn, represents the dog in virtue of certain causal facts about the perceptual situation, including facts about the visual indexes that play a causal role in tracking the perceived dog.” (ibid: 292) But it is unclear why the percept **a** itself is not the “visual demonstrative” picking out the dog and allowing the subject to think and speak of the dog. The constraint that thinking is done in mentalese (the “language of thought”) does not necessarily rule out percepts or imagistic copies of them (we can remember what a visual object looked like). Fodor’s (1975) original discussion of the structure and vocabulary of mentalese left the question of the referential role of percepts/images (“images-under-descriptions”) officially open: “What I regard as an open empirical question is the mechanisms by which descriptions and images are related” (1975: 193). Fodor’s main negative argument against images is directed not at their referential role, but their role as truth-bearers: “It is ... no more problematic that there should be a language in which reference is defined for images than that there should be a language in which reference is defined for words ... But I see no way of construing the notion that there might be a language in which *truth* is defined for icons instead of symbols ...” (180).