

Introduction

A day of the conference on the Philosophy of Language and Linguistics held at the Interuniversity center (IUC) in Dubrovnik, September 7th to 11th, 2014, was dedicated to Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson's work. This issue of the Croatian Journal of Philosophy publishes most of the papers given at this conference.

Sperber and Wilson presented an introductory paper on their work which here bears the title "Beyond Speaker's Meaning" in which, after considering some of the difficulties raised by Grice's three-clause definition of speaker's meaning, they argue that constructing an adequate theory of communication involves going beyond Grice's notion of speaker's meaning. Thus they argue that the characterisation of ostensive communication introduced in relevance theory can provide a conceptually unified explanation of a much wider range of communicative acts than Grice was concerned with.

Anne Bezuidenhout in her contribution entitled "Cognitive Environments and Conversational Tailoring" explores the psychological notion of context as cognitive environment (CE) that is part of the Relevance Theory (RT) framework and describes the way in which such CEs are constrained during the course of conversation as the conversational partners engage in "conversational tailoring".

Zsófia Zvolenszky in her paper "Inferring Content: Metaphor and Malapropism" looks into Sperber and Wilson's reasons for holding the view that metaphorical utterances occupy one end of a continuum that includes literal, loose and hyperbolic utterances with no sharp boundaries in between them. She labels this the continuum argument about interpreting metaphors. Zvolenszky aims to show that this continuum argument doesn't work. For if it were to work, it would have an unwanted consequence: it could be converted into a continuum argument about interpreting linguistic errors, including slips of the tongue, of which malaprops are a special case.

Diana Mazzarella in her paper "Pragmatics and Epistemic Vigilance: The Deployment of Sophisticated Interpretative Strategies" looks into Sperber and Wilson's suggestion that competent hearers can deploy sophisticated interpretative strategies in order to cope with deliberate deception or to avoid misunderstandings due to speaker's incompetence. She investigates the cognitive underpinnings of sophisticated interpretative strategies and suggests that they emerge from the interaction between a relevance-guided comprehension procedure and epistemic vigilance mechanisms.

Nenad Mišćević in his contribution “Pejorative and Relevance: Synchronic and Diachronic Issues” considers a possible relevantist treatment, in the spirit of Wilson and Sperber’s work, of pejoratives and argues for several claims concerning them: 1. The negative content of pejorative is the normal part of their lexical meaning. 2. He argues for an evaluative-content approach for the relevantist, in contrast to its neutral-content alternative. 3. He sees an interesting parallel between the echoing-cum-reversal processes Wilson and Sperber propose for irony and the repeating-and-reversing process typical of appropriation of pejoratives. 4. A brief application of the relevantist understanding of metaphor is proposed as a tool for understanding the genealogy of pejoratives of figurative origin.

Nenad Smokrović in his paper under the title “Argumentation as a means for Extending Knowledge” bases his claim on two focal points: 1. Reasoning is designed for argumentation, and 2. Argumentation process is an exceptionally successful media that provokes usage of methods reliable for the extension of knowledge. He relies on Sperber and Mercier’s evolutionary psychological approach to argumentation. Taking this ground as a departing point, the goal of the paper is to broaden that particular approach with epistemological insights based on Williamson’s safety theory of knowledge.

The last paper by Dunja Jutronić is a contribution of a sociolinguist based on her own field research. Her paper under the title of “Cognitive Pragmatics and Variational Pragmatics: Possible Interaction?” looks into a possible way in which cognitive pragmatics can help out variational studies in explaining the processes of language change. After broadly setting the scene this article proceeds by giving basic information about variational pragmatics and then concentrates on Sperber and Wilson’s relevance theory and its possible interaction with social sciences, namely its application in sociolinguistics. The hope is that such discussions can bring closer cognitivists, i. e. relevantists, to sociolinguists, i. e. variationists.

The last two papers by Nenad Smokrović and Dunja Jutronić were not presented at the above mentioned conference but were given at Dan Sperber’s symposium held in March 18th 2013 in Rijeka. The symposium was organized by the Philosophy Department in Rijeka together with the Croatian Society for Analytic Philosophy. We thought it appropriate to include it in this selection since they also discuss Sperber and Wilson’s work. We are grateful for Dan Sperber’s presence at Rijeka symposium and both Sperber and Wilson’s presence at Dubrovnik conference. This issue is dedicated to them both.