

PREFACE

This volume is an outgrowth of a similarly-titled set of working papers¹ which resulted from a pair of workshops which we organized in 1995.

The background to the project was that in the fall of 1992 we were awarded a Max-Planck-Forschungspreis, a “prize” intended to support joint research between scholars employed by German universities and scholars working abroad, with only the most general restrictions on the use of the funds provided.

After some deliberation we decided that the best way we could use the money we had been given would be to organize a pair of workshops concerned with a complex of themes that we both see as central to the semantics of natural language, summarized by the phrase “Context-Dependence in the Analysis of Linguistic Meaning.” We wrote up a short informal document in which we outlined a number of what we saw as central questions in this area, about some of which the two of us tended to disagree. Then we invited a number of scholars and graduate students to participate in a two-part workshop, whose structure was designed in the model of the highly successful two-part workshop organized in 1970 by Hintikka, Moravcsik, and Suppes, which led to the volume² where Montague’s classic paper PTQ was published. The design of that workshop and of ours was to invite a relatively small number of scholars to present papers in the first session of the workshop, and then in the second session, some months later, to invite the same scholars to present commentaries on whichever paper or papers they wished to, and also to invite replies by the authors at that time or afterwards.

There were of course several differences between the Hintikka et al conference and our own. The former had a more general topic area (semantics and philosophy of language) and a smaller set of participants; its main purpose was to help stimulate the nascent interactions among philosophers and linguists, and in that it was quite successful and influential. Ours was intended to bring together scholars working in semantics and pragmatics in a variety of frameworks and from a variety of intellectual communities to discuss a particular family of issues which we tried to spell out to some extent in our preliminary description of the topic.

Some of the questions we set out in the background to the workshop concerned the articulation of the theoretical domains of semantics and pragmatics and their interactions, questions made both more complex and more urgent by the rise of theories such as those of Heim and Kamp in which semantic content is modeled in terms of context-change potential rather than in terms of simple truth-conditional content. The trend, if we may oversimplify a bit, is for more and more aspects of context-dependence to move out of pragmatics and into semantics. The

¹Kamp, Hans, and Partee, Barbara eds. 1997. *Context-Dependence in the Analysis of Linguistic Meaning: Proceedings of the workshops in Prague, February 1995 and Bad Teinach, May 1995*. Volume I: Papers. Volume II: Comments and Replies. Stuttgart: Institut für Maschinelle Sprachverarbeitung, Universität Stuttgart.

²Hintikka, K.J.J., Moravcsik, J., and Suppes, P. eds. 1973. *Approaches to Natural Language*. Dordrecht: Reidel.

crucial issue is of course not the labels “semantics” and “pragmatics”, but whether there are natural classes of phenomena that should be treated with a particular set of theoretical tools and assumptions, and if so, whether we can articulate distinct classes of phenomena and theoretical tools that are naturally grouped together, and whether these groupings correspond in some definable way to the familiar headings of “semantics” and “pragmatics”. At one time, virtually all of context-dependence was viewed as a part of pragmatics (sometimes called “formal pragmatics” to emphasize its affinity with formal semantics and its differences from other traditional parts of pragmatics), and that terminology may still be appropriate. But since context-change potential is built into the recursive semantic interpretation function in various contemporary theories, there is at least equal pressure to consider it part of the semantics, insofar as it is part of what happens compositionally (in compositional theories, at least; how high a priority to put methodologically on the Compositionality Principle is one of the points on which the two of us differ.) Within this topic, the analysis of presuppositions is one obvious central subtopic, since presuppositions have been studied intensively over the past decades from both semantic and pragmatic perspectives; anaphora, indexicality, domain restriction on quantifiers, and tense and aspect are all further natural concerns, and all of them are represented in this volume. It may be noted that our own backgrounds, and the backgrounds of the majority of our participants, are more squarely within semantics than within pragmatics, so the view of the semantics-pragmatics interface reflected here is predominantly the view from the semantics side.

Another issue that was of concern to us, and one on which we had sometimes found ourselves in disagreement, was the separability of “purely linguistic” semantic and pragmatic analysis on the one hand, and “encyclopedic knowledge” or “common-sense inference”, etc., on the other hand. This issue comes to the fore as soon as one tries to become serious about lexical content and the interaction of lexical semantics with other parts of semantics. We included this issue under our broad rubric, although it involves quite a different notion of “context-dependence” than that found in the analysis of indexicals, tenses, and focus constructions. Here in particular the phrase “linguistic meaning” becomes contentious, in a way related to the differences that one sometimes sees between semantics within theoretical linguistics and semantics within computational linguistics. This issue is also related to what the issue of what Reinhart refers to as the “Conceptual Interface” in her paper, and to a number of the issues raised by the Prague School linguists represented here, who have a clearly articulated and relatively restrictive view of the purview of “linguistic semantics”.

Yet another issue of relevance within our central topic is the analysis of discourse, and what differences in principle and in practice there might be between the analysis of individual sentences, or individual sentences in context, and the analysis of discourse. Context and its dynamics evidently become much more complex and central if more than one speaker’s model of the context and its updating must be taken into account and modeled. Discourse structure was indeed at the heart of a number of the conference presentations and several of the papers included here.

We saw the workshops as not only an opportunity to get a great group of active scholars together to discuss and debate their ideas on these and related topics, but at the same time as an opportunity for a number of younger people not only to become better acquainted with the issues that were going to be discussed, but also to get to know a significant part of the international community of natural language semanticists. So we tried to balance the advantages of a small conference where discussion can go on at a fairly high level with the pedagogical and cross-fertilization advantages of opening up the conference to graduate students and younger scholars.

To achieve these twin goals, we made the workshop invitational and the locales delightful but relatively inaccessible. We held the first session in Prague, where Partee was spending the semester as a research scholar on an IREX grant collaborating with Eva Hajičová and Petr Sgall, and the second session in Bad Teinach, a minute spa in the Black Forest about an hour's ride from Stuttgart. The invitees included both leading scholars and a number of doctoral candidates and postdocs from our own institutions, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and the University of Stuttgart, and also Charles University in Prague.

Almost all of those who received an invitation agreed to come, and almost all the participants were present at both workshops. This was essential to the success of our concept, which intended that the second workshop should consist of presentations and discussions of commentaries to the papers delivered during the first workshop. Even more important to that success was that so many of the participants—and, in particular, of those who had already contributed a paper to the first workshop—contributed one or even several commentaries. Because of this that the second workshop was even more stimulating and productive than we had dared hope, and proved to be an occasion of new intellectual substance, with clearly focused discussions and a genuinely fruitful exchange and convergence of opinion. For the success of both workshops we are grateful first of all to all of our invited participants, both those whose contributions appear in this volume, and others who attended and contributed to the formal and informal discussions that were also an important part of the whole.

Location and hospitality can clearly affect the success of a workshop or conference. The beauty of Prague and the great hospitality of our colleagues there, who took on all of the local arrangements and practical organization of the first session of the workshop (February 11-15, 1995), was another large factor in the success of the first workshop and hence of the whole enterprise, and we want to take this occasion to thank once more our hosts Eva Hajičová and Petr Sgall and their group for their wonderful hospitality and organizational skills and effort. Bad Teinach also turned out to be a lovely setting for the second session of the workshop (May 21-25), consisting as it does of little more than a Kurhotel and a factory that puts local water into large numbers of bottles, situated in the middle of a beautiful and restful nowhere, with wooded paths and scenic benches conducive to continuing discussions outside the workshop sessions. The second workshop was organized from Stuttgart. Here almost all the work was done by Sybille Laderer, secretary to the IMS at Stuttgart. In fact, Sybille deserves very special thanks, for it is she who manned the control tower through much of this entire enterprise, including the initial publication as a pair of Working Papers volumes of the IMS.

Not only did almost all those who were invited come and give papers and/or commentaries, almost all of those papers and commentaries were made available in written form for the Working Papers volume, and most of those, in the same or updated versions, can now be found in the present volume. A few papers from the earlier volumes were withdrawn from this volume, one substitution was made (the paper by Abusch and Rooth on empty-domain effects for presuppositional and non-presuppositional contexts replaces the original paper by Abusch on the now parameter in future contexts), and the paper by Zimmermann was subsequently (but previous to this volume) published by CSLI Publications and is reproduced here with their permission.

The large number of comments—together with, in some instances, additional reactions to those comments from the authors of the papers they were comments to—give the present collection a cohesion which, it seems to us, publications of this sort do not often achieve. We are intensely grateful to all those whose enthusiasm and conscientiousness have made the workshops, the preliminary proceedings, and this collection into what we hope and believe will be seen

as an important contribution to the ongoing development of the treatment of context in formal semantics and of the shifting boundaries and articulation of the relationship between semantics and pragmatics.

We have already mentioned our indebtedness to our colleagues in Prague and to Sybille Laderer in Stuttgart, as well as to all the participants. In the final phase of bringing the present volume into existence, we are immensely grateful to our series editor, Ken Turner (assisted by Jon Herring), who shepherded the project to completion, patiently and persistently working with whichever of us was managing to respond over a long period, and doing a great deal of work on his own at times when neither of us was managing to devote the necessary attention to this project. Without Ken's active involvement and help, this publication would never have seen the light of day. The two of us take full responsibility for any shortcomings in the resulting work; for its positive qualities, we are happy to share responsibility with all of those we have thanked above.

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