

## ***Guest Editor's Preface***

Raffaella Giovagnoli

Università di Roma "Tor Vergata"

Dipartimento di Ricerche Filosofiche

raffa.giovagnoli@tiscali.it

The aim of this collection of essays on the philosophy of language is to present different perspectives on pragmatics in its relationship with semantics and moreover some interesting results for social interaction and personal identity. Generally speaking, a theory of meaning tends to be better provided by the analysis of the use of ordinary language; this theoretical option could characterize hermeneutic, pragmatic or analytic perspectives as well.

We want to underscore the dimension of pragmatics for the philosophy of language because we give importance to the use of ordinary language. In this sense, the classical notion of semantics changes its sense with respect to several categories such as "reference", "content", "context" and "meaning". We point on peculiar traits of ordinary discursive practices; this theoretical option requires however a fruitful dialog with neurological, biological, sociological or psychological orders of explanation. To stress on pragmatics is fundamental to provide valid arguments as regard individual identity and interpersonal or intercultural relationships. The pragmatic context in which our utterances acquire value becomes also the axis on which all the linguistic and semantic phenomena can rotate and that shows a wider vision of language. If we abandon a univocal conception of meaning and if we permit that it sticks to the use, it emerges that language is closely familiar with life, history, interpersonal relationships and culture.

There are three essential points Professor John Searle wants to get across in his article in addition to the analysis of relations of nonlinguistic to linguistic intentionality. First he wants to emphasize how the structure of prelinguistic intentionality enables us to solve the problems of the relation of reference and predication and the problem of the unity of the proposition. The second point is about deontology. The basic intellectual motivation that drives this second part of his argument is the following: there is something left out of the standard textbook accounts of language as consisting of syntax, semantics and phonology with an extra-linguistic pragmatics thrown in. Basically what is left out is the essential element of commitment involved in having a set of conventional devices that encode the imposition of conditions of satisfaction on conditions of satisfaction. The third part of the article is

about the creation of a social and institutional ontology by linguistically representing certain facts as existing, thus creating the facts. When we understand this third point we will get a deeper insight into the constitutive role of language in the construction of society and social institutions.

Richard Evans maintains that a standard decomposition of the capacity to participate in social practices goes something like this: the interpreter arrives on the scene with a stock of generic practice-types. He looks at the current scene to fill-in the current tokens of these types. He looks at the current state of these practice tokens to see what actions are available to him. He uses his current desires to choose between these various possible actions and argues that this standard explanation is defective, drawing on arguments by Searle and Wittgenstein and Garfinkel. He proposes an alternative explanation, in which the participants must continually show each other the state of the scene in order to maintain the scene's intelligibility. Raffaella Giovagnoli wants to describe a notion of autonomy in social terms namely in discursive practice. She thinks that together with speech acts in ordinary language we must provide a description of the role of prelinguistic practices for autonomy. Autonomy develops in a language game that is connected with cooperation. The language game she refers to takes into consideration neurobiological processes which bridge the gap between brain and world and represent the "motor" of our activity in the world. Jennifer Hudin argues that the utterances made by the renowned talking parrot, Alex, could be considered as language. The argument supporting her thesis are: 1) Alex demonstrated the capacity for recursion, 2) Alex satisfied the Davidsonian requirement for a talking entity to have language and 3) Alex satisfied the Searlean requirements for meeting speech acts.

Felice Cimatti shows how identity requires a pragmatic approach based on social perspectives embedded in the use of personal pronouns. In this essay, he shall attempt to confront the problem of the meaning of the word "me". According to Cimatti, the word "me" designates, for each human being, his or her personal interior Ego. Every human being is naturally an Ego – it is a question of learning the particular linguistic sound (or the particular sign gesture in a sign language) in which it is named in one's mother tongue. In fact, it is not important, for our analysis, that the Ego be innate or developed gradually through experience. The important point in the psychological hypothesis is that the Ego is an entity (psychological and internal, to be exact) of one kind, while the word "me" is an entity of a different kind. The second hypothesis, which we will call the *externalist hypothesis*, responds affirmatively to question a), and maintains that "me" indicates a certain individual body, that of the person who is using the word "me". The paper of Riccardo Dottori is centered on the phenomenon of the comprehension

among speakers. He focuses on the Aristotelian inheritance in the thought of Gadamer and plausibly proposes two notions of competence required for reciprocal comprehension: the “communicative competence” and the “linguistic competence”. Fabrizia Giuliani presents a contribution that is part of a larger work on the concept of life and its ways of representation. Here she sets forth a first investigation, performed in the linguistic area. A study on the semantics of the word explored in some specific contexts. She is going to examine words and sentences used with persuasive finalities, that is examples of rhetorical praxis used by subjects belonging to different cultural origins and groups. Fabrizio Palombi's paper proposes some considerations on the relations between “subject,” “language” and “world” in the perspective of the overcoming of the traditional opposition between “inner” and “outer.” The author will deal preliminarily with the renewed topicality of the problem of psychologism in the light of the neurosciences, touching on the theme of Being-in in Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), a philosopher who valorized the practical and pragmatic dimension of the phenomenological tradition. After that, he will make use of some topological properties of the Möbius strip and of the psychoanalytic investigation of language to illustrate the structure of subjectivity proposed by Jacques Lacan (1901-1981). Guido Seddone's contribution attends to treat the question about the “following a rule” in the philosophy of the late Wittgenstein. The relationship between pragmatics and semantics is placed in the conception of rule as a sign, which indicates how to take an action is to be situated in a precise context of human practices and behavior. Some recent outcomes of contextualism seem to go in an utterly anti-Wittgensteinian direction as they maintain that there is no such thing as linguistic meaning.

Claudia Bianchi focuses on indexicality as it is at the core of many major philosophical problems. In the last years, recorded messages and written notes have become a significant test and an intriguing puzzle for the semantics of indexical expressions. A parallel may be drawn between the determination of the reference of the indexical expressions in recorded messages or written texts, and the determination of the *illocutionary force* of recorded or written utterances. To this aim, she will endorse the intention-based approach proposed by Stefano Predelli - and in particular his fundamental distinction between “context of utterance” and “context of interpretation”. Danielle Macbeth insists on a less familiar theme from Peirce i.e. the claim that even purely deductive logical reasoning is not merely formal but instead constructive or diagrammatic- and hence experimental and fallible. Frege's two-dimensional logical language could represent a paradigm of a “constructive” logic in Peirce's sense. David Lauer offers a detailed critical reading of Robert Brandom's project to give an expressive bootstrapping account of intentionality, cashed out as a normative-

phenomenalist account of what he will call genuine normativity. He claims that there is a reading of *Making It Explicit* that evades the predominant charges of either reductionism or circularity. Daniele Santoro's paper aims at showing, by means of a transcendental strategy, that in Brandom's theory modal vocabulary underlies the conceivability of the very inferential structure in which normative vocabulary is involved. Pragmatism can nevertheless vindicate its analytic prospects within the tradition that goes from Kant to Sellars and Wittgenstein. James Swindler attempts to add to (not to supplant) the categories of knowledge, the "a positio", characterized by active, intentional and collective involvement of language users in the existence and nature of objects of reference needed for the truth of statements about artifacts.

I wish to thank Professor John Searle, Jennifer Hudin, James Swindler, Hans Sluga and the Berkeley Social Ontology Group (now BSOG) for insightful comments and "a lot of fun". I thank the participants in the preliminary workshop on *Pragmatics as the Basis for Semantics* I organized with Daniele Santoro at the LUISS University in Rome. I would thank Guido Seddone for his precious collaboration and all the authors for their very interesting contributions and for their patience. I am grateful to Pier Marrone for inviting me as guest editor of the present number of *E&P*.