

Introduction

Istvan Kecskes and Jacob L. Mey

The Mouton Series in Pragmatics is committed to publishing books that attempt to explore new perspectives in pragmatics research. The present volume focuses on intention, common ground, and speaker-hearer behavior. These issues have been investigated by researchers for several decades; in recent years, however, some innovative approaches have been proposed that have shed new light on old issues, and the papers collected in this volume represent these new perspectives. It is important to note that the authors do not wish to reject existing views and theories. Rather, they attempt to revise them by adding new information and amalgamate old and new into a synergic whole.

In this introduction, we will not summarize the content of each paper as it is usually done in volumes such as this. Instead, we will briefly explicate the issues that the studies address, and give a short account of the status quo.

1. Intention

Recent studies (e.g., Verschueren 1999; Gibbs 2001; Arundale 2008; Haugh 2008) have pointed out that the role intention plays in communication may be more complex than proponents of current pragmatic theories have claimed. In particular, there is substantial recent evidence that militates against the continued placement of Gricean intentions at the center of pragmatic theories. While this evidence mainly comes from the socio-cultural, interactional line of research in pragmatics, the cognitive-philosophical line (such as represented by neo-Gricean Pragmatics, Relevance Theory, and Speech Act Theory) still maintains the centrality of intentions in communication. According to this view, communication is constituted by recipient design and intention recognition. The speaker's knowledge involves constructing a model of the hearer's knowledge relevant to the given situational context; conversely, the hearer's knowledge includes constructing a model of the speaker's knowledge relevant to the given situational context. Communication is supposed to be smooth if the speaker's intentions are recognized by the hearer through pragmatic inferences. Consequently, the main task of

pragmatics is to explain how exactly the hearer makes these inferences, and determine what is considered the speaker's meaning. In a recent study, Levinson (2006) confirms that (Gricean) intention lies at the heart of communication, and proposes an "interaction engine" that underlines human interaction.

In contrast, the sociocultural-interactional paradigm considers intention to be 'problematic', and underlines its equivocality. According to this view, communication is not always dependent on speaker intentions in the Gricean sense (e.g., Verschueren 1999; Nuyts 2000; Mey 2001; Haugh 2008). In fact, one of the main differences between the cognitive-philosophical approach and the socio-cultural interactional approach is that the former considers intention an *a priori* mental state of speakers that underpins communication, while the latter regards intention as a *post factum* construct that is achieved jointly through the dynamic emergence of meaning in conversation. Since the two approaches represent two different perspectives, it would be difficult to reject either of them *in toto*. The complexity of the issue requires that we consider both the encoded and co-constructed sides of intention when analyzing the communicative process. In his paper in the present collection, Haugh proposes that the notion of intention need only be invoked in particular instances where it emerges as a *post factum* construct, salient to the interactional achievement of implicatures.

2. Common ground and egocentrism

Current pragmatic theories have failed to describe common ground in its complexity: they usually retain a 'communication-as-transfer-between-minds' view of language, and disregard the fact that disagreement and egocentrism of speaker-hearers are just as fundamental in communication as are agreement and cooperation (cf. Kecskes 2008).

Some researchers (e.g., Stalnaker 1978; Clark and Brennan 1991; Clark 1996) consider common ground a category of specialized mental representations that exist in the mind *a priori* to the actual communication process. As Arnseth and Solheim (2002) have pointed out, both Clark and Brennan's joint action model (1991) and Clark's contribution theory (1996) retain a communication-as-transfer-between-minds view of language, and treat intentions and goals as pre-existing psychological entities that are subsequently somehow formulated in language. In these theories, common

ground is considered to be relatively static, as *a priori* mental representations of the interlocutors, on the basis of which they conduct successful communication in a cooperative way, while their intentions are warranted.

The other approach to common ground has emerged as a result of recent research in cognitive psychology, linguistic pragmatics, and intercultural communication. Investigating how the mind works in the process of communication, cognitive researchers such as Barr and Keysar (2005), Colston (2005) have argued that mutual knowledge is not as significant as assumed by most people; instead, they formulated an emergence-through-use view of common ground, conceptualizing it as an emergent property of ordinary memory processes (e.g., Arnseth and Solheim 2002; Koschmann and LeBaron 2003). This dynamism is also emphasized in other studies (e.g. Heritage 1984; Arundale 1999), where it is stressed that real everyday communication is not dependent on recipient design and intention recognition, as it is claimed by most theories that have grown out of Grice's approach. The process is more like a trial-and-error, try-and-try-again-process that is co-constructed by the participants. It appears to be a non-summative and emergent interactional achievement (Arundale 1999, 2008).

With this dynamic revision of common ground, the role of cooperation is also challenged. Investigating intercultural communication, Kecskes (2007) argues that in the first phase of the communicative process, instead of looking for common ground, lingua franca speakers articulate their own thoughts with the linguistic means that are easily available to them. Earlier, Barr and Keysar (2005) had claimed that speakers and listeners commonly violate their mutual knowledge when they produce and understand language. Their behavior is called 'egocentric', because it is rooted in the speakers' or listeners' own knowledge instead of in mutual knowledge. Other cognitive psychologists too (e.g., Keysar and Bly 1995; Giora 2003; Keysar 2007), have shown that speakers and listeners are egocentric to a surprising degree, and that individual, egocentric endeavors of interlocutors play a much more decisive role in the initial stages of production and comprehension than is envisioned by current pragmatic theories envision. This egocentric behavior is rooted in speakers' and listeners' relying more on their own knowledge than on mutual knowledge. People turn out to be poor estimators of what others know. Speakers usually underestimate the ambiguity and overestimate the effectiveness of their utterances (Keysar and Henly 2002).

Findings about the egocentric approach of interlocutors to communication are also confirmed by Giora's (1997, 2003) graded salience hypothesis and Kecskes' (2003, 2008) dynamic model of meaning. Interlocutors seem to consider their conversational experience more important than prevailing norms of informativeness. Giora's (2003) main argument is that knowledge of salient meanings plays a primary role in the process of using and comprehending language. She claims that "privileged meanings, meanings foremost on our mind, affect comprehension and production primarily, regardless of context or literality" (Giora 2003: 103). Kecskes' dynamic model of meaning (2008) similarly emphasizes that what the speaker says relies on prior conversational experience, as reflected in lexical choices in production; conversely, how the listener understands what is said in the actual situational context depends on his/her prior conversational experience with the lexical items used in the speaker's utterances. Smooth communication depends primarily on the match between the two. Cooperation, relevance, and reliance on possible mutual knowledge come into play only after the speaker's ego is satisfied and the listener's egocentric, most salient interpretation is processed. Barr and Keysar (2005) argue that mutual knowledge is most likely implemented as a mechanism for detecting and correcting errors, rather than as an intrinsic, routine process of the language processor.

Papers in the second part of the volume explore and discuss both these sides of common ground. Here, it is important to emphasize that neither the ideal interaction approach of Clark and his followers nor the cognitive psychologists' approach appear wholly convincing when taken by themselves. Common ground comprises both *a priori* and *post factum* elements. Consequently, the egocentrism of interlocutors may be dominating in certain phases of the communicative process (where reliance on *a priori* elements happens to be more important) than it is in other phases of the same communicative process. While the papers in this volume represent a move in the right direction, further research is needed to investigate this complex issue.

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