The Pragmatic Circle

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Abstract

Classical Gricean pragmatics is usually conceived as dealing with far-side pragmatics, aimed at computing implicatures. It involves reasoning about why what was said, was said. Near-side pragmatics, on the other hand, is pragmatics in the service of determining, together with the semantical properties of the words used, what was said. But this raises the specter of 'the pragmatic circle.' If Gricean pragmatics seeks explanations for why someone said what they did, how can there be Gricean pragmatics on the near-side? Gricean reasoning seems to require what is said to get started. But then if Gricean reasoning is needed to get to what is said, we have a circle.

1. Introduction

According to our view, which we call 'Critical Pragmatics,' utterances are the subject matter of pragmatics. Utterances are intentional acts of speaking, writing or signing, usually for the purpose of communication, and usually in service of further goals, such as developing a plan, persuading someone to do something, teaching, learning, passing the time, or whatever. The utterance is an act by the speaker, which the listener interprets, by divining the intentions behind it and the results that will ensue from it, using many tools that are used for interpreting all sorts of actions, and some that are specific to language. Pragmatics, the study of utterances as ways of doing things, is central and critical to the study of language.

In saying that utterances are the basic subject matter, we do not mean to imply that for certain purposes abstracting from many of the properties of

1

utterances to construct models that focus on other properties of utterances may be useful. This is typically done in formal approaches to semantics. For example, Kaplan's uses sentences in context rather than utterances in his *Logic of Demonstratives*. A 'sentence in context' is an abstract object, consisting of a sentence type and a context, where a context is a quadruple of consisting of an agent, time, location and possible world. Unless the abstract theory constructed from these elements could be applied, by taking the sentence, agent, time, location and world of a sentence in context to be the sentence used in an utterance by a speaker at a time in a location in the world of the theorist, and testing the predictions of the model as to truth and reference against the properties of the utterance, the formal theory would be of little value to understanding natural language.

2. Near-side and Far-side Pragmatics

In the classical conception of pragmatics, due mainly to Grice, Austin, and Searle, the natural dividing line between semantics and pragmatics is based on the intuitive concept of *what is said*. Setting subtleties aside, Grice's picture is that what the speaker says is determined by the semantics of the sentence he uses, and then pragmatics takes over, to figure out the best explanation for his saying what he did, in light of the conversational principles. We call this 'far-side' pragmatics, that is, pragmatics on the far-side of what is said. Austin's *locutionary act* and Searle's *propositional content*, subtleties aside, strip the concept of what is said of its illocutionary force to arrive at a conception of what meaning and reference give us, that is, the proposition expressed, whether asserted, commanded, or queried; speech act theory takes over to tell us what is done, in various circumstances, in virtue of this (purified) act of saying. (A number of terms are used for the content of this purified act of saying. Recanati still uses 'what is said'; Cappelen and Lepore use the term 'semantic content'; relevance theorists use the term 'explicature'. First as a neutral place-holder, then later as a technical term, we will use the term 'locutionary content.')

This is oversimplified, however, for as Grice points out, we don't get to what is said without resolving ambiguities, and the reference of proper names, indexicals and demonstratives. Cappelen and Lepore add resolution

of standards of precision to the list. These are issues on the 'near-side' of what is said, and insofar as pragmatics is needed to resolve them, we must also consider 'near-side' pragmatics.

'Literalism' is Recanati's term for a family of pragmatic theories that hold that what is literally referred to and literally said depends wholly, or very largely, on semantics, with no supplementation, or only minimal supplementation, by pragmatic considerations. Pure literalism seems clearly to apply only to small parts of natural language, like mathematics, where issues of tense and indexicality, for example, are not relevant. Such issues seem to dictate a somewhat more liberal literalism that allows that objective facts about the utterance, like the speaker, and the time and place it occurs, may be needed to determine issues of truth and reference. Arguably, resolving issues of indexicality and tense only require such objective facts, and not discovery of the speaker's intentions.

If, however, we are to incorporate the whole list of issues that arise on the near-side, given one paragraph back, we seem to be forced to a weaker form of literalism, advocated by Cappelen and Lepore, and called 'minimalism.' Semantic content depends on resolving reference, ambiguity and issues of precision---but that's it.

Three questions arise. First, is everything needed on the list, or must it be expanded? Second, in order to resolve the issues on the list, whether expanded or not, do we need to employ Gricean reasoning, which aims at discovering speaker's intentions? Third, can we employ Gricean reasoning on the near-side? We'll consider the second and third questions, and return to the first.

To resolve issues involving some indexicals, such as 'I' and (perhaps) 'today,' Gricean reasoning is not needed. For such indexicals, the meaning of the expression and the objective facts about the utterance suffice. But in resolving other issues, even those on the unexpanded list, pragmatic considerations, in the sense of considerations about the speaker's intentions above and beyond merely speaking English, will enter in. For example, if

Julius is talking about someone named 'Aristotle' in his seminar on Greek philosophy, we will take him to be talking about the philosopher and not Aristotle Onassis. This does not seem to be an objective, perceivable fact about his utterance, like the time and place and speaker. It seems to involve his intentions---not merely his intention to speak English, but to use the name 'Aristotle' to refer to one person rather than another. Our inference that this is what he intends to do seems easily explained, within the Gricean framework, by considerations of relevance. Similarly, we resolve anaphors, demonstratives, and ambiguities and vagueness by appeal to what makes sense in the conversation. (Indeed, we may use such considerations to determine which words we actually heard, and which syntactic structures are being employed.)

But does it make sense to use Gricean pragmatics on the near-side? Classical Gricean pragmatics, aimed at computing implicatures, is usually conceived as dealing with far-side pragmatics. It involves reasoning about why what was said, was said. Near-side pragmatics, on the other hand, is pragmatics in the service of determining, together with the semantical properties of the words used, what was said. But this raises the specter of 'the pragmatic circle.' If pragmatics seeks explanations for why someone said what they did, how can there be near-side pragmatics? Gricean reasoning seems to require what is said to get started. But then if Gricean reasoning is needed to get to what is said, we have a circle.

3. Recanati's spectrum

Perhaps the best way to explain our approach to this problem is to start with François Recanati's recent book *Literal Meaning* (2004). Recanati's scheme for sorting out the issues involved in current debates about semantics and pragmatics has been deservedly influential. He sees the range of positions as having two poles, literalism and contextualism:

> [The literalist holds that] we may legitimately ascribe truth-conditional content to natural language sentences, quite independently of what the speaker who utters this sentence means... [Contextualism] holds that

speech acts are the primary bearers of content. Only in the context of a speech act does a sentence express a determinate content. (3)

Recanati goes on to distinguish a number of intermediate positions. The minimalist position is essentially the one we described above, where what semantics provides is supplemented by a short list of other factors to get to 'semantic content'; this is the position of Cappelen and Lepore, in their book *Insensitive Semantics* (2005).

Recanati and relevance theorists are far over to the contextualist side. Both camps call on Grice. Literalists use Grice's ideas to create a sort of shock-absorber between our intuitions about what someone says and what their theories deliver as semantic content; the intuitions are supposed to confuse semantic content with conversational implicatures. The contextualists see (broadly) Gricean reasoning about speaker's intentions involved throughout the process of interpretation.

In discussing Perry's 'Critical Referentialism' or 'reflexive-referential theory' developed in Perry (2001), Recanati sketches an approach that seems to us to be quite plausible, capable of resolving the pragmatic circle, and promises to do justice to both literalist and contextualist insights and theoretical ambitions. He is discussing an utterance of the sentence "I am French." On the reflexive-referential view, an utterance u of this sentence by Recanati has the singular proposition that Recanati is French as its *referential* content. Its reflexive content would be the proposition that u is uttered by someone who is French---reflexive because it is a proposition about the utterance *itself*. (For more about the reflexive-referential theory, see the appendix.) Recanati says:

> ...the reflexive proposition is determined before the process of
> saturation takes place. The reflexive proposition can't be determined
> unless the sentence is tokened, but no substantial knowledge of the
> context of utterance is required to determine it. Thus an utterance u of
> the sentence `I am French' expresses the reflexive proposition that the
> utterer of u is French. That it does not presuppose saturation is

precisely what makes the reflexive proposition useful, since in most cases saturation proceeds by appeal to speaker's meaning... The reflexive proposition is admittedly distinct from that which the speaker asserts... but why is this an objection? [The reflexive proposition] comes as close as one can get to capturing, in propositional format, the information provided by the utterance in virtue solely of the linguistic meaning of the sentence "I am French." (65-66)

This is pretty much the approach we hold. One caveat:[i] we do not hold that an utterance *u* of "I am French" *expresses* the proposition that the utterer of u is French. We describe that proposition as giving the reflexive truth-conditions of *u*, or being the reflexive content of *u* (with meaning fixed). These truth-conditions are available to any competent speaker, and, need to be appealed to in understanding both the generation of and the comprehension of the utterance. But we do not claim or think it is what is said or is the proposition expressed.[ii]

What we propose is a) that the reflexive content, with meaning fixed, is the content provided by semantics, in the sense in which a literalist wants such a thing for theoretical purposes, that is, constructing a compositional, truth conditional theory of meaning; b) while the reflexive content is not *what is said*, it provides a description of what is said, that serves the purpose of allowing Gricean reasoning about why something, meeting the description, was said. In this way, we avoid the pragmatic circle.

4. Avoiding the Pragmatic Circle

Consider a simple example:

(1) I'll take that one (said by a man in a supermarket line to the clerk).

Let's suppose the clerk's attention was distracted by the clerk at the next register as the customer uttered (1), so he was looking behind his back and could not see that the customer was pointing to a pack of Marlboros. The clerk hears the utterance and knows how English works. As he turns back to

the customer, he thinks of utterance (1) as "the utterance I just heard" or something along those lines. The clerk knows, simply on the basis of hearing the utterance, recognizing the words, and grasping the semantics of English:

> (2) The utterance I just heard is true if the person who uttered it is referring to some item, and that person is using 'will take' to mean *would like to purchase* or to mean *will pick it up and walk off with it*, and that person would like to purchase that thing (if that's what they meant), or intends to pick it up and walk off with it (if that's what they meant).

The proposition the clerk grasps, solely on the basis of semantics and perception of the utterance, as its truth-conditions, is the (or more precisely *a*) reflexive content of the utterance (1), which might be put like this:

> (3) $\exists x,y,R,$ x uttered (1) & x referred to y with 'that one' & x meant R with 'will take' & $R(x,y)$ & *R=would like to purchase* ∨ *R=will pick up and walk off with*.

Now (3) is not by any stretch of the imagination what the speaker of (1) *said*. The speaker of (1) wasn't talking about his own utterance, and the possible references and meanings of the words he used. Still (3) does give conditions under which the utterance (1) is true, as determined by the semantic rules of English and the meanings of the words used.

(3) provides a starting point for pragmatic reasoning, both near-side and far-side. The clerk can ask himself, given the reflexive truth-conditions of (1), plus the fact that he heard it, what are the likely witnesses for the existential quantifiers in (3)? As we envisage the situation, the likely answers are:

> (4) The likely speaker is the man in the front of the line, whom he is looking at when he turns back from talking to the other clerk; this man is looking at the row of pack of cigarettes displayed behind the counter, where people under eighteen can't get them;

(5) He probably meant *would like to purchase*, since that's what non-thieving people usually mean in the supermarket, and he's not wearing a mask or acting threatening in any way;

(6) He probably was referring to one of the packs of cigarettes, since that seems to be what he's looking at, and everything else in the store he could have just put in his cart without having to ask for it---but I don't know which pack.

Based on this reasoning, he arrives at:

(7) Given (4), (5) and (6), the utterance I just heard is true if the person who uttered it is referring to one of the packs of cigarettes behind the counter, and he would like to purchase it.

That is, what he has grasped, on the basis of semantics, more perception, and reasoning, is

(8) That $\exists y$, A used 'that one' to refer to y, y is a pack of cigarettes, and A would like to purchase y.

Grasping (8) might naturally lead the clerk to say something like, "Which pack did you wanted?"

In this example, (3) is the minimal, literal output of semantics. It gives the conditions the utterance has to fulfill to be true, given the semantics of English. Arriving at (3) does not require resolution of reference, ambiguity and standards of precision. (3) can be generated compositionally. The need that authors like Cappelen and Fodor feel to include resolution of reference, ambiguity, and vagueness as part of the 'semantic content' is not motivated by the needs of semantics nor by the needs of pragmatics. Perhaps it was motivated by the view that a proposition like (3) is unsuited to serve as the input to pragmatic reasoning, but in fact, it is not.

5. Content and Implicature

Notice that (8) is still not what would be taken, on ordinary referentialist principles, as what was said or the proposition expressed. That would instead be (9):

> (9)   That **A** would like to buy **B** (where **A** is the speaker, and **B** is the object the speaker pointed at and referred to).

Our clerk wouldn't ordinarily be taken to have grasped (9), since his only way of thinking of **B** is reflexive, or as we also say, *utterance-bound*:

- The pack of cigarettes that the speaker of *u* referred to;

or at least *speaker-bound*:

- The pack of cigarettes that this fellow referred to;

Our clerk clearly didn't need to grasp (9) in order to begin reasoning about pragmatic issues on the near-side; that's how the pragmatic circle is avoided. But notice that he also doesn't need to grasp (9) to begin pragmatic reasoning on the far side. That is, he doesn't need to ask himself a question of this form:

> (10)   Why did the speaker say that *S*?

He need only ask himself a question of the form:

> (11)   Why did the speaker produce an utterance *u* that is true iff *D(u)*?

That is, the clerk doesn't need to have in mind a sentence *S* that will *express* the proposition the speaker expressed with *u*; it suffices to have a sufficiently rich utterance-bound description *D* of the conditions under which *u* is true. Having gotten as far as (8) the clerk may reason:

(i)   This fellow produced an utterance *u* that is true if and only if there is a pack of cigarettes that he referred to with 'that,' and he wants to purchase that pack of cigarettes.

(ii)   He wasn't telling me that because he thought I had an abiding interest in his desires.

(iii)   He probably wanted me to get the pack and put it on the counter.

It is this reasoning that motivates the clerk's question, "Which pack did you want?"

Suppose now that when the clerk turns around there are two people standing next to each other, either one of which might have been the speaker of **u**. So the clerk can't even make it to (8); he can't identify the speaker. Still, he is in a position to figure out the implicature (iii) and ask his question. When one of the possible speaker's points to a pack of cigarettes, it will answer both of his questions: who was the speaker, and which pack do they want me to put on the counter?

So what is said doesn't really serve either of the boundary fixing-functions Grice used it for. It isn't the output of semantics, and it isn't the input to far-side pragmatics. In both cases, what we need is the reflexive content with the meaning fixed; that is, the condition the utterance must satisfy to be true, given the facts the semantics provides: the facts about the meanings of the words used and their modes of composition in the language used.

6. Reflexive Content and Searle's Propositional Content

While J.L. Austin inaugurated speech act theory, its main developer and exponent after Austin's untimely death was his student John Searle. The concept of propositional content plays a central role in Searle's thinking, and, like what is said in Grice's scheme, sets the boundary between semantics and (far-side) pragmatics.

On Searle's view (1969), various speech acts may have various *illocutionary points*, but the same propositional content. The illocutionary point of a speech act may put conditions on the content of the speech act. A commissive, such as "I will go to the store," requires that a future act of the speaker be represented by the propositional content. The directive illocutionary point, in contrast, determines that the propositional content of a speech act with that point---the request, "Will you go to the store," for example---must represent a future act by the addressee.

Now consider my request to you, "Will you go to the store?" and your promise in response, "I will go to the store." It seems that these speech acts share the propositional content that you go to the store. But this shared propositional content doesn't specify any role you must have to the utterance, and of course this differs from utterance to utterance. What is needed, in addition to the shared propositional contents, is the differing reflexive contents of the utterances. The reflexive content of the first requires that its addressee goes to the store by some (contextually determined) point after the utterance; the reflexive content of the second requires that its speaker do so.

It is in grasping the reflexive content that the hearer understands the intended relationships between the speaker and the utterance. The same point holds for the time of the utterance. Consider, "I will finish the paper by tomorrow," and "I did finish the paper by yesterday," the first said by you on Monday and the second on Wednesday. We want to recognize both the sameness of content; what is asserted Wednesday is just what was promised Monday. But the different illocutionary forces impose different conditions on the time of the utterances; the first has to occur before the time the paper's completion is promised, the last after the paper's completion is reported.

Searle's theory of speech acts poses two different tasks for the concept of propositional contents. On the one hand, it represents the basic content on which the diverse illocutionary forces operate. On the other hand, it is the content that meets the conditions imposed by certain illocutionary points and forces. But, as we argued for the multiple tasks Grice's theory imposes on the concept of what is said, these two tasks cannot be accomplished by a single

content. The referential content of an utterance can be taken as that basic shared content of different speech acts but, instead of referential content, reflexive content is needed to serve as the content fulfilling Searle's 'propositional content conditions.' The theory of speech acts, as well as the theory of implicatures, requires adopting a pluralistic view of utterance content in terms of locutionary and reflexive contents as the one we sketch here. They all are too demanding on a single content, whatever it is called: 'what is said,' 'propositional content,' 'proposition expressed' or 'truth-conditions of an utterance.'

7. Literalism and Contextualism

Let's end by returning to Recanati's contrast. Assuming everyone agrees to talk ultimately about utterances, we can put things like this. Literalists hold that our abstract semantical theories can ascribe truth-conditional content to the utterance of sentences just based on the meanings of the parts of the sentence and how they are put together. Contextualists hold that only speech acts or utterances express determinate contents, which depend on many aspects of context.

Either view seems clearly correct to us. Abstract semantics can provide reflexive truth-conditions for utterances. Such truth-conditions are not yet propositions, but conditions *on* utterances; such a condition plus an utterance gives us a proposition, the proposition that the utterance satisfies the conditions, what we call the reflexive or utterance-bound content. But the *referential* content of the utterance, the proposition usually taken to be the counterfactual truth-conditions, or the proposition expressed, or what is said, or the propositional content, or the locutionary content (our own favorite term, explained in Korta & Perry (forthcoming) depends not only on the semantic properties of the sentence used, but also on the contextual properties of the utterance.

So a critical pragmatist, one who takes utterances as central and critical to both pragmatics and semantics, and who acknowledges that with language

we convey information about things in the world *by* putting conditions on our own utterances, can be both a literalist and a contextualist.

Saying this does not resolve all disputes about the role of various contextual elements in the truth conditions of utterances, and in particular whether the list provided by Cappelen and Lepore needs to be extended to get from the reflexive content to the locutionary content.

Consider, for example, domain restrictions. Suppose Maude says "I invited everyone to the party," in a context in which she clearly conveys that she invited everyone in the neighborhood to the party. How should we think of this? If we confine ourselves to Cappelen and Lepore's list, the restricted domain doesn't make it into the locutionary content. Maude's utterance is true only if she has invited everyone in the universe to her party. Only far-side pragmatics gets us to the proposition that she invited everyone in the neighborhood.

An alternative way of looking at it is that Maude's had no intention of saying or expressing anything false; she intended to utter something that was true if and only if she had invited everyone in the neighborhood to the party. Her plan is that her hearer's will recognize that she is talking about the neighborhood, and take her to be saying something about it, not that they will take her to have been literally expressing an obviously false proposition. In addition to the items of Cappelen and Lepore's list, we need to allow that speaker's may intend to say things about various items that are contextually available, and that these intentions can be recognized for what they are without an unexpected circuit through obvious falsehood and far-side pragmatics.

Let Maude's utterance be **u**. Within our theory, the question at issue is whether the reflexive and referential contents of **u** are given by (12) or (13):

(12a) **u** is true iff $\exists x$ Speaker-of(x, **u**) & $\forall y$ Invited-to-the-party(x,y)

13

(12b)   Given that Maude is the speaker of **u**, **u** is true iff ∀ y (Invited-to-the-party(Maude ,y))

So the reflexive content is (12c) and the referential content (what the speaker says, or the explicature, the proposition expressed, the semantic content, locutionary content, or whatever one calls the input to far-side pragmatics) is (12d):

(12c)   That ∃ x Speaker-of(x, **u**) & ∀ y Invited-to-the-party(x,y)

(12d)   That Maude invited everyone (in the world) to the party.

(13a)   **u** is true iff ∃ x, ∃ D Speaker-of(x,**u**) & Intended-domain(**u**, D) & ∀ y (y in D → Invited-to-the-party(x,y)

(13b)   Given that Maude is the speaker of **u** and the neighborhood is the intended domain of **u**, **u** is true iff Maude invited everyone in the neighborhood to the party.

So the reflexive content is (13c) and the referential content (what the speaker says, or the explicature, the proposition expressed, the semantic content, locutionary content, or whatever one calls the input to far-side pragmatics) (13d):

(13c)   ∃ x, ∃ D Speaker-of(x, **u**) &Intended-domain(**u**, D) & ∀ y (y in D → Invited-to-the-party(x,y)

(13d)   That Maude invited everyone in the neighborhood to the party.

While both possibilities may be stated within our approach, it is not quite neutral. There is no doubt that from the materials provided by semantics alone, plus the identity of the speaker, (12) delivers a candidate for what Maude said (or the explicature, or the semantic content). The words 'everyone,' 'invited,' 'party,' 'to,' 'the,' and 'I' give us all we need for (12a), and the only bit of contextual information that is needed to get to (12b) and (12c),

14

the identity of the speaker, a constitutive fact of the utterance, available to the hearer by perception in normal circumstances. So far-side pragmatics is not needed. Hence, this minimalist route is a way of avoiding the pragmatic circle. Hence, the pragmatic circle provides some motivation for the minimalist strategy.

It is hard to see any other motivation. To generate the right implicature from the proposition that Maude invited everyone in the world to the party, one needs to suppose that the speaker's plan is to say something blatantly false, and have the hearer infer from this that she must be trying to convey something else, and figure out what it is. To make it plausible that this is the speaker's plan, it does not suffice to note that there is a candidate that can be assembled from conventional meanings alone, with minimal, non-Gricean appeals to context, on the near side. There is an additional claim involved, that the speaker's plan was to make this proposition available as a premise in Gricean reasoning. The hearer has to smell a falsehood, and seek an explanation at the level of implicature, and this has to be the speaker's plan.

If, as critical referentialism supposes, another proposition is available for the input to Gricean reasoning, (13c), then this sole consideration for strategy (12) seems to lose any force. We need only suppose that the speaker intends to be talking about the people in the neighborhood, and thinks that the hearer, using Gricean reasoning, will figure this out. The hearer does not need to seek an explanation for the speaker saying something false, but merely seek a relevant candidate domain for the speaker to be talking about, and to intend to convey information about. As Recanati puts it,

> I concede to the minimalist that it is possible to *define* the (minimal) semantic content of the sentence as that which results from saturation alone; but I claim that this notion of content is an idle wheel in the overall theory of language and communication. (Recanati (2006), 3)

So, our approach is not neutral between (12) and (13) in just this sense: Insofar as one finds it intuitively implausible that the speaker intends to put

forward something blatantly false, one is provided an avenue for avoiding this claim, without running afoul of the pragmatic circle.

Appendix: Critical Referentialism

The reflexive-referential theory of meaning and content (RRT), also known as critical referentialism, has the following basic tenets and uses the following notation:

1. The basic subject matter of semantics and pragmatics are the *contents* of utterances, where utterances are taken to be intentional acts, at least typically involving the use of language. Utterances are assumed to occur at a time, in a place, and to have a speaker.

2. The paradigm is the use of a declarative sentence. For such utterances, the contents of utterances are *propositions*. Propositions are abstract objects that are assigned *truth-conditions*. Propositions are conceived as classificatory tools, rather than denizens of a third realm. Theorists use propositions to classify utterances by the conditions under which the utterances are true. This use of propositions is a development of a capacity of ordinary speakers, who classify not only utterances but also other cognitive states and activities by their truth-conditions, typically, in English, with the use of 'that-' clauses.

3. We adopt a notation for propositions that is compatible with a number of different theories of what propositions are, and choices of abstract objects to model them. The proposition that **Elwood** lives in **Dallas** can be thought of as the set of worlds in which Elwood lives in Dallas, or the function that yields truth for worlds in which he does and falsity for worlds in which he doesn't, or as a sequence of the relation of living, Elwood and Dallas, or in a number of other ways.

   Now suppose that Elwood is in fact the shortest podiatrist. The proposition that **the shortest podiatrist** lives in **Dallas** will be the same proposition as that **Elwood lives** in **Dallas**. The roman boldface in our language for specifying propositions indicates that the constituent of the proposition are the objects designated (named or described) by the

boldface term, rather than any identifying condition that may be associated with that term.

On the other hand, the proposition that *the shortest podiatrist* lives in **Dallas** does not have Elwood as a constituent, but the identifying condition of being the shortest podiatrist; this is what is indicated by the boldface italic. This proposition will be true in worlds in which, whoever the shortest podiatrist is, he or she lives in Dallas. The proposition that *the shortest podiatrist* lives in *the city in which* **John F. Kennedy** *was shot* is true in a world in which whoever the shortest podiatrist is, he or she lives in whatever city in which Kennedy was shot. This will be the same proposition as that *the shortest podiatrist* lives in *the city in which* **the 34th President** *was shot*. The boldface roman indicates that Kennedy himself, the person described by 'the 34th President,' is a constituent of the condition that identifies the city. On the other hand, the proposition that *the shortest podiatrist* lives in *the city in which the 34th President was shot* is true in worlds in which whoever is the shortest podiatrist lives in the same city in whoever was the 34th President was shot.

4. RRT assigns *contents* to utterances based on the idea of *relative truth-conditions*: Given certain facts, what *else* has to be the case for the utterance to be true? We illustrate the idea with an example. Let **u** be an utterance of "You are irritating David," by Kepa, addressed to John, and expressing the proposition that John is getting on David Israel's nerves.

   a. Given that **u** is uttered by Kepa in English, and given the meanings of the words &c., and that Kepa is addressing John, and that Kepa is using 'irritate' with its meaning of 'get on the nerves of,' and that Kepa is using 'David' to refer to David Israel, **u** is true iff **John** is getting on the nerves of **David Israel**.

   The proposition that **John** is getting on the nerves of **David Israel** is called, at various times, the *referential* content of **u**, the

official content of **u**, and the content of **u** with the facts of meaning and context fixed and nambiguities resolved, notated 'Content$_C$.' ('Nambiguity' is the phenomenon of more than one person, place or thing having the same name.)

b. Given *only* that **u** is uttered in English, and given the meanings of the words, but none of the other facts listed above, **u** is true iff there are *x, y,* and *z* such that *x* is the speaker of **u**, *x* is addressing *y*, *x* is exploiting a convention that assigns 'David' as a name of *z* to refer to *z*, and either (i) *x* is using 'irritate' with its meaning of 'get on the nerves of' and *y* is getting on *z*'s nerves, or (ii) *x* is using 'irritate' with its meaning of 'cause inflammation' and *y* is causing the inflammation of some part of *z*.

The proposition identified by the sentence to the right of the 'iff' is what the RRT calls a reflexive content of **u**. The word 'reflexive' honors the fact that the proposition in question has **u** itself as a constituent; it gives us the truth-conditions for **u** in terms of conditions on **u** itself.

c. Given everything in (b), plus the fact that the speaker of **u** is using 'irritate' to mean 'get on the nerves of,' and is using 'David' to refer to David Israel, **u** is true iff there are *x*, and *y* such that *x* is the speaker of **u**, *x* is addressing *y*, and *y* is getting on David's nerves. This is also a reflexive content; it is what we call *indexical* content or Content$_M$---content with the meanings fixed and ambiguities resolved, but not the contextual facts.

d. Given everything in (b), plus the fact that Kepa is the speaker, he is speaking to John, and is using 'irritate' to mean 'get on the nerves of,' **u** is true iff there is a *z* such that Kepa is using 'David' to refer to *z* and John is getting on *z* 's nerves. Here the context is given, and the meanings that are being exploited, but the nambiguity is not resolved. Notice that the proposition

expressed by the sentence to the right of the 'iff' is not reflexive in our official sense; its constituents are Kepa and John, and don't include the utterance. However, it is not fully referential either, since it involves an identifying condition of David, and not David himself. Sometimes such contents, which no longer have the utterance itself as a constituent, are called 'incremental,' and the referential content is called 'fully incremental.'

5. The official or referential content is what is ordinarily taken as the proposition expressed, or *what is said*; that is the basis of the account of locutionary content in the article. But the other contents are available to describe the various communicative intentions and uptakes that occur, as is also illustrated by examples in the article.

Acknowledgments

Notes

[1] Or perhaps quibble. As long as 'the proposition expressed' is introduced, as by Kaplan (1977), in terms of 'what is said,' it shouldn't be taken to be the reflexive content. But of course 'the proposition expressed' is a technical term, which could be given other meanings.

[1] For the alternative view that something like this minimal reflexive content should be taken as *what is said*, see Stojanovic (2006).

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