

KEPA KORTA & JOHN PERRY. 2011. *Critical Pragmatics: An Inquiry into Reference and Communication*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The fundamental idea put forward by Korta & Perry ('K&P' hereafter) in this lively and stimulating book is that, in order both to understand how communication works and to get a better handle on classic puzzles about reference, we need to recognize that a sentence uttered in context has more than one set of truth conditions. Its referential truth conditions determine whether the utterance is true or false, but it does not follow that the significance of the utterance to the hearer lies in those referential truth conditions. Of more use may be the utterance's 'reflexive' truth-conditions.

Reflexive truth-conditions differ from referential truth-conditions in that grasping them does not require identifying the referents of singular terms. If I utter the words 'She is here now', you need to know who the referent of 'she' is and the time and location of my utterance in order to grasp its referential truth-conditions. These are extra-linguistic facts: your knowledge of English alone won't deliver them up to you. However, your knowledge of English alone *will* tell you that my utterance is true if and only if the female referred to by my use of 'she' is at the place of utterance at the time of utterance. These are the reflexive truth-conditions of my utterance, in K&P's terms. They are 'reflexive' because, rather than being about objects and situations in the world beyond the utterance, they are about the utterance itself. Often, K&P argue, it is the reflexive truth-conditions of the utterance that allow the speaker to fulfil her goals. Self-introductions are the most obvious example. Spoken by the author of this review, (1) has the same referential truth-conditions as (2). Clearly, though, (1) is a more effective way of introducing myself than (2). According to K&P, the reason for this lies in the reflexive truth conditions of (1), as given in (3). By choosing to refer to myself using 'I', I present myself to the hearer in a manner that enables him to get a useful 'cognitive fix' on me, qua the person he perceives to have uttered the sentence, so that he is able to relate that person to any information he has in his mental 'Mark Jary file' (or, if he does not have one, to open a new file and store the perceptual information he is receiving in that location).

- (1) I am Mark Jary.
- (2) Mark Jary is Mark Jary.
- (3) The speaker of (1) is Mark Jary.

In choosing to utter (1) as a means of introducing myself, K&P argue, I am making the best possible use of the means at my disposal to manage the roles that I and my utterance play in the cognitive life of the hearer. Indeed, K&P's contention is that there is much to be learnt about singular reference by taking a pragmatic, utterance-based perspective on singular terms. This is in contrast to the classic work on this topic, from Russell and Frege through Strawson and Donnellan to Kaplan, which has tended to factor out the utterance and concern itself with the sentence. In the debate between referentialists and descriptivists, K&P side with the former, arguing that many of the problems faced by referentialists can be seen in a different light if an utterance-based approach to singular reference is taken. K&P's pragmatic defence of referentialism dominates the first half of the book: the first four chapters introduce



the topic and the technical machinery that K&P employ, while chapters five to eight deal with demonstratives, indexicals, names and descriptions by appealing to various types of utterance-bound truth conditions.

The latter half of the book is concerned with issues more traditionally located in the domain of pragmatics. In chapter 9, K&P consider utterances such as ‘It’s raining’, where, it has been argued, there is an articulated constituent specifying the location of the precipitation, the debate being whether this is an indexical slot supplied by the syntax or a purely pragmatically-supplied element.

In chapter 10, K&P introduce their notion of locutionary content, distinguishing it from Grice’s notion of ‘what is said’ and from Searle’s notion of propositional content. Of particular interest in this chapter is the way that the utterance-bound reflexive truth-conditions of an utterance can assist in conveying illocutionary force. K&P argue that the reason that an utterance such as (4) is better suited to undertaking a commitment than (5)—which expresses the same referential proposition—is that the reflexive truth-conditions of (4) (i.e. (6), roughly) present the agent of the act as the speaker of the sentence—i.e. as one who can undertake that commitment; (4) also places the deadline for completion in the future, thereby fulfilling the propositional constraint on commissives that they must relate to a future act (Searle, *Speech acts: an essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge: CUP, 1969). While (5) is also about the speaker and also places the deadline in the future (at the time of writing), this information is not encoded by the reflexive truth-conditions of (5). Consequently, (5) is a less apt means of undertaking a commitment than (4), due to the cognitive burden it places on the hearer, who needs to know both the name of the speaker and the date of the utterance in order even to consider the possibility that (5) might be intended as a promise.

- (4) I will finish the review by the end of this month [uttered by Mark Jary in August 2013].
- (5) Mark Jary finishes the review by the end of August 2013.
- (6) The speaker of this sentence will finish the review by the end of the month in which the sentence is uttered.

In chapter 11, K&P employ a range of examples to argue that utterance-bound truth conditions also play a crucial role in the communication of implicatures. This position is put forward in greater detail in K&P (“Three demonstrations and a funeral”, *Mind and Language* 21: 137-240, 2006), so I will not summarise it here. What is new, however, is the moral that K&P derive from their observations. They argue for a repositioning of Grice’s maxims of manner ‘from the periphery of Gricean theory’ (p. 138), on the grounds that the communication of implicatures depends not so much on *what* is said, but on *how* it is said. In this spirit, K&P propose a ‘Maxim of manner of reference’ (p. 136) enjoining speakers to choose a means of reference that provides the hearer with the type of cognitive fix on the referent that will facilitate the inference of implicatures.

In chapter 12, K&P relate their ‘critical pragmatics’ to other theories of utterance content. Their approach is generally ecumenical, in that they find points of contact

with both minimalists and contextualists. With contextualists such as Recanati and Relevance Theorists, they hold that there is a clear dividing line between the explicit content of an utterance (i.e. ‘enriched what is said’ or ‘explicature’) and its implicatures, even if pragmatic reasoning is involved in the derivation of both. However, K&P also hold that the various minimal propositions expressed by an utterance (viz. various utterance-bound propositions) may have a role to play in its interpretation, a position which K&P see as aligning them with authors such as Cappelen and Lepore (*Insensitive semantics: A defense of semantic minimalism and speech act pluralism*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005) and Borg (*Minimal Semantics*. Oxford: OUP, 2004). K&P differ from the semantic minimalists, however, in that they seek to examine how these minimal propositions are employed by speakers and hearers in the communication of utterance content. The book ends with an interesting chapter that seeks to tie together the authors’ views on content with their view of utterance interpretation.

Written in a jaunty and engaging style, this book is well suited to those who want a relatively straightforward introduction to ideas developed in Perry’s *Reference and Reflexivity* (2001), and K&P’s “Three demonstrations and a funeral” (2006). However, the book is much more than an introductory text. It is also an argument for a shift in the theoretical perspective. Despite the influence of Austin and Grice, the figures of Russell and Frege loom large in contemporary theorising about language. As K&P note (p. 162), these authors were largely concerned with removing ambiguity and nuance from natural language, so that the pursuit of knowledge could be facilitated by the ability to make precise, transparent statements. Although not working towards the same end, much modern pragmatic theorising nevertheless mirrors this project in that it sees the process of utterance interpretation as being, in no small part, geared towards specifying the precise content of the explicit component of the speaker’s meaning, which then serves as the basis for the calculation of implicatures (or for the rational reconstruction of that process). K&P, by contrast, see the identification, by the hearer, of the speaker’s intentions as being possible without identifying the explicit content of her utterance. This is a very welcome move, as it encourages us to think about linguistic encoding in different terms: not as a way of directing the hearer to the speaker’s explicit content, but as a means of directing him towards the implicatures she intends to communicate, so that he might thereby grasp the intended significance of her utterance.

Mark Jary
University of Roehampton
m.jary@roehampton.ac.uk

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For the *SAGE Handbook of the Philosophy of Social Sciences*, editors Ian Jarvie and Jesús Zamora-Bonilla assembled 39 contributions from some of the leading scholars of the field. A remarkable number of contributions are from practicing scientists. This is tes-