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Hans-Jörg Schmid (Ed.)

COGNITIVE PRAGMATICS

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1. Generalizing the apparently ungeneralizable. Basic ingredients of a cognitive-pragmatic approach to the construal of meaning-in-context

Hans-Jörg Schmid

1. The term *Cognitive Pragmatics*

At the time of writing, on 15 March 2012, the query “cognitive pragmatics” (inserted between inverted commas in a Google search) harvested a mere 714 real (37,400 estimated) websites from the Internet. The majority of these pages related to one of three sources: a book by Bruno Bara (2010) entitled *Cognitive Pragmatics*, a research initiative referred to by that name by Asa Kasher or, indeed, to advance announcements of this handbook and individual contributions to it. At present, then, there is little evidence that the term *Cognitive Pragmatics* is well established, and this provokes the following questions: What is Cognitive Pragmatics? What is the niche it is supposed to fill in the already highly diversified landscape of approaches to the study of language? And why (*on earth*, the reader may well be inclined to add) should a voluminous handbook be devoted to this so far apparently rather marginal field of inquiry?

Cognitive Pragmatics can initially be defined as dealing with **the reciprocal relationship between pragmatics and cognition**. Considering that pragmatics is concerned with “meaning-in-context” (Bublitz and Norrick 2011: 4), it follows that Cognitive Pragmatics focuses on the **cognitive aspects of the construal of meaning-in-context**. This pertains to both language production and comprehension, and it specifically concerns one of the key questions that pragmatics has set out to answer: What are the cognitive abilities and processes required to be able to arrive at “what can or must be said” in order to get across “what is meant” and to arrive at “what is meant” on the basis of “what is said”? This conception of Cognitive Pragmatics is, to a large extent, compatible with that proposed by Bara (2010: 1), who defines it as “the study of the mental states of people who are engaged in communication”. However, the present conception of Cognitive Pragmatics is, on the one hand, more specific than Bara’s in that it focuses on the “construal of meaning” rather than on “communication” as such, and, on the other hand, more general in that it does not talk about “mental states”, but “cognitive aspects” in general. The present purview of Cognitive Pragmatics is also much more restricted and focused than the one demarcated by the journal *Pragmatics & Cognition*, which



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seeks to explore relations of all sorts between semiotic systems as used by humans, animals and machines, in connection with mental activities: logical and causal dependence; condition of acquisition, development of loss; modeling, simulation of formalization, shared or separate biological and neurological bases; social and cultural variation; aesthetic expression; historical development. (quoted from <http://benjamins.com/#catalog/journals/pc>, accessed 15 March 2012)

2. The concept of Cognitive Pragmatics

For some linguists – especially those who study what is called the “core” of grammar with the aim of producing formal representations of its structure – the idea of there actually being a linguistic discipline that goes by the name of *Cognitive Pragmatics* may well be a rather hair-raising thought. The interbreeding of two approaches to the study of language, the cognitive-linguistic one and the pragmatic one, each of which is notorious for defying all attempts to formulate hard and fast rules and generalizations, can only result in a hybrid that epitomizes adhocness, slipperiness and vagueness. This understandable reaction precisely pinpoints the challenge that Cognitive Pragmatics and the current Handbook are facing – the challenge, as it were, of generalizing what appears to be ungeneralizable. While cognitive processes are, by definition, carried out in individual minds, which renders them to a considerable extent idiosyncratic, and while pragmatic processes are, again more or less by definition, context-dependent and thus largely unpredictable, the aim of this handbook is to identify **the general cognitive-pragmatic principles and processes** that underlie and determine the construal of meaning-in-context.

A second group of linguists – those with a “pragmatic” bent – are maybe not unlikely to observe that, in a sense at least, the expression *Cognitive Pragmatics* is a tautology. And, indeed, reading some of the classics in the pragmatic literature such as Grice’s (1975) account of implicatures and how they are worked out, or Searle’s (1975) description of the ten steps which hearers have to go through in order to arrive at the interpretation of indirect speech acts, the impression that *pragmatics* has been *cognitive* all along is clearly substantiated. The title of Sperber and Wilson’s seminal book *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* (1986, 2nd edition 1995) and their formulation of a *cognitive* principle of relevance alongside a *communicative* one provide further support. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that neither the “narrow”, “Anglo-American”, nor the “broad”, “Continental [European]” strand of pragmatics (Huang 2007: xi; cf. Bublitz and Norrick 2011: 3) is rooted in psychological or cognitive-science approaches but rather in philosophical, action-theoretical and sociological ones. The major markers of what a given scientific approach is like, i.e. its research questions and topics, methods and argumentation patterns, indicate very clearly that scholars and researchers who work in the field of pragmatics traditionally do not target psychologically plau-





sible, let alone “realistic” models of the construal of meaning-in-context, but prioritize criteria such as the parsimoniousness, elegance and descriptive and explanatory power of a theory.

To be sure, the classic pragmatic theories have spawned a range of approaches that are firmly placed in cognitive-science and cognitive-linguistic frameworks. These can indeed be considered as being distinctly *cognitive-pragmatic*, even though this term has not been applied to them so far. The following survey does not even try to do justice to this body of work, since this mission will be accomplished by the chapters of the Handbook (which also include references to relevant publications):

- Firstly, the rich body of experimental and theoretical publications by Herbert Clark and his collaborators on a wide range of cognitive-pragmatic topics such as common ground, shared knowledge, reference tracking, conversational collaboration and many others has to be mentioned here (cf. Chapter 13).
- Secondly, originally inspired by the claims made by Searle, Grice and others, Seana Coulson, Raymond Gibbs, Rachel Giora, Sam Glucksberg, Anthony Sanford and their collaborators have contributed substantially to our understanding of the construal of meaning-in-context through their work on the processing of figurative, idiomatic, ironic, humorous and other non-literal uses of language (cf. Chapters 9 and 17). This is complemented by the work by Lynn Cameron, Alice Deignan and others on the discursive and pragmatic dimensions of metaphor (cf. Chapter 16).
- Thirdly, the work by Suzanne Beeke, Dorothy Bishop, Louise Cummings, Daniela O’Neill, Ann Reboul and others in the field of developmental and clinical pragmatics has been invaluable, not only for developing therapeutic strategies for the treatment of cognitive-pragmatic deficits and developmental disorders, but also for obtaining theoretical insights into pragmatic competence (cf. Chapters 9, 10, 11 and 12).
- Fourthly, the substantial body of research into discourse processing, reference tracking and inferencing associated with such names as Mira Ariel, Simon Garrod, Morton Ann Gernsbacher, Art Graesser, Walter Kintsch, Ted Sanders, Anthony Sanford and Rolf Zwaan covers an important dimension of pragmatic processing, viz. the cognitive underpinnings of the way in which semantic and pragmatic content are incrementally “put together” during the construal of meaning-in-context (cf. Chapters 3 and 8).
- Fifthly, the term *experimental pragmatics* has entered the scene rather recently (cf. Noveck and Sperber 2004), subsuming attempts to apply established experimental psycholinguistic and psychological methods to test theoretical claims. A survey of such approaches by Breheny (2011) can be found in the first volume of this Handbook series edited by Wolfram Bublitz and Neal Norrick. Experimental pragmatics is, to a large extent, a spin-off from Relevance Theory



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- (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995), aiming to complement the dominantly theoretical work typically based on fabricated examples by experimental studies.
- Sixthly, an increasing number of cognitive linguists are becoming acutely aware of the need to complement the cognitive approach with pragmatic and socio-cultural dimensions of inquiry. Besides Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, whose conceptual blending theory has integrated a context-dependent component right from the start, key representatives include René Dirven, Dirk Geeraerts, Peter Harder, Istvan Keczkcs, Gitte Kristiansen and John Taylor (cf. Chapters 5, 6 and 7). An important corollary of this development is the insight that the role played by cognitive-pragmatic principles and processes in the emergence, constitution and change of the “linguistic system” has been grossly underestimated in the past and should be taken much more seriously (cf. Chapters 18, 19, 20 and 21).
 - Finally, of course, mention must be made of Bara’s monograph *Cognitive Pragmatics* (2010), which is an updated and translated version of an Italian book published in 1999. Bara presents an extremely wide-ranging account of communicative competence. As one reviewer remarks, “Bara’s *Cognitive Pragmatics* is a unique exploration of human mental processes in communication with many insightful connections to areas beyond cognitive science” (Wang 2011: no page numbers). And, indeed, the book contains, among other things, discussions of and references to cybernetics, animal communication, paleolithic graffiti, game theory, ethiology, evolutionary anthropology and theories of language origin and evolution. On a more critical note, the same reviewer comments that “it seems that Bara’s *Cognitive Pragmatics* framework is more descriptive than interpretive”, and that “[t]he author pays more attention to a static description of human mental processes of communication, leaving the individual’s dynamic mental process in real communicative interaction by the wayside” (Wang 2011: no page numbers). As a result, the book is less relevant for the study of the construal of meaning-in-context than its title seems to suggest.

3. The demands on Cognitive Pragmatics

What, then, are the basic demands that a viable cognitive-pragmatic theory of language has to meet? Or, in other words, how do we model a human mind that is equipped to construe meaning-in-context?

To flesh out the bare bones of these questions, a short example taken from the movie *Last Chance Harvey* featuring Emma Thompson and Dustin Hoffman in the roles of Kate and Harvey will certainly be helpful. Harvey is an American commercial composer who travels to London looking forward to giving away his daughter at her wedding but is ousted from this role by his daughter’s stepfather.





Having left the wedding in disappointment to fly back home, he learns on the phone that he has been fired and finds a bar in the airport to recover from this shock. Kate, whose job is to collect statistical information from travellers at Heathrow airport, is spending her lunch break in this bar and reading a book. The two had shared a rather fleeting and unpleasant moment the day before when Harvey somewhat harshly declined to answer Kate's questions while making his way out of the terminal after having arrived in London. Harvey has found a place at the bar, Kate is sitting at a table; the only other person present is the barman. After a short conversation initiated by Harvey picking up on their previous encounter, Kate, who has watched Harvey down his third whisky, initiates the following brief exchange:

- (1) Kate: *That'll help.*
Harvey: *Sorry?*
Kate: *I said, that'll help.*
Harvey: *Believe me, it will.*
Kate: *Right.*
Harvey: *I reckon it'll help as much as that trashy novel and a glass of Chardonnay.*

Let us focus on Kate's first utterance and discuss what is needed to construe a plausible meaning-in-context of the type 'drinking large of amounts of alcohol will not solve your problems'. Beginning with general **cognitive prerequisites**, Kate and Harvey must of course have the motor ability to produce spoken utterance and the sensory ability to perceive them. Secondly, both must have acquired, at some earlier point in their lives, what could be called "linguistic competence", i.e. lexical and grammatical knowledge (however that is to be modelled) of English, which enables them to associate meanings with the individual lexical items, grammatical elements and grammatical structures. Note that this kind of knowledge is, of course, far from sufficient to arrive at the meaning-in-context sketched above. Thirdly, Kate and Harvey have to be willing to engage in a conversation in the first place, which must not be taken for granted given the type of situation they are in. This includes the willingness to cooperate communicatively; indeed, the way this willingness is gradually building up, especially on Kate's side, is a major part of the appeal of the scene for the viewer. Fourthly, both must have acquired "pragmatic competence", that is, the general ability and willingness to interpret other interlocutors' communicative intentions. Fifthly, Kate and Harvey must have acquired a certain degree of "social competence" allowing them to make informed guesses as to the nature of this social situation: a meeting of strangers in a public place; the social norms governing such situations in Western culture; a man trying to "chat up" a woman; the social role of the barman; etc. And sixthly, Kate and Harvey must have at their disposal general world knowledge and cultural knowledge pertaining to a vast range of issues such as airports, bars, alcoholic drinks and their effects, and so on. Without taking recourse to this kind of knowledge, there is defi-





nately no way of proceeding from *that'll help* to 'drinking large quantities of alcohol will not solve your problems'.

Moving next to necessary **cognitive abilities**, both interlocutors must first of all be able to keep track of the situational context, the linguistic cotext and the ways in which both constantly change. For example, the fact that Harvey is progressing towards his fourth shot is clearly relevant for the way in which Kate phrases her utterance and Harvey eventually understands it. What is equally important to keep track of are the hypothetical mental states of the other interlocutors: Kate and Harvey, like indeed all competent speakers and hearers, seem to be acutely aware of each others' current mental states. What does the other person know on the basis of what has happened before, of what has been said before and of what can be garnered from the perception of the situation? Significantly, Kate is not only aware of Harvey's attempt to get drunk, she is also aware of the fact that he is aware of her knowledge and that she is aware of the fact that he is aware of it.

In addition, Harvey has to have the ability to connect the individual elements of the sequentially aligned linguistic input he is confronted with (i.e. *that* with *'ll* and *help*), keeping in mind the situational input and currently activated and stored knowledge. In the course of this, he has to compute conventionally and conversationally underdetermined and implicit meanings, including, among other things, the target of the deictic *that* and the contextually appropriate sense of *help*.

While it would be tempting to claim that at this point Harvey has "understood" the literal meaning that 'that will help you solve your problems' and is then able to proceed to figuring out the ironic meaning of Kate's utterance, this presumably misses the point: both the background knowledge already activated and the potential familiarity with situations where *that'll help* is used with an ironic meaning render it rather unlikely that Harvey will process the utterance in a sequential manner by first construing a literal meaning-in-context and then construing the non-literal, ironic one on the basis of additional cognitive principles. Be that as it may, Harvey does have to compute the conventionally and conversationally non-literal meanings, taking into account, as before, the utterance itself, as well as context, context, pragmatic, social, cultural and world knowledge, in order to arrive at a contextually appropriate ironic meaning along the lines suggested above.

Abstracting and abducting from this innocuous but sufficiently complex example, it can be stated that a realistic cognitive-pragmatic model of the construal of meaning-in-context has to accommodate at least the following cognitive prerequisites and abilities (cf. Table 1). The table also includes key terms and research fields traditionally associated with these prerequisites and abilities, which will not be detailed any further here, however, as they are dealt with in the subsequent chapters of this Handbook and are included in the subject index.

While providing such a general list of the major cognitive foundations of the construal of meaning-in-context does not seem to be a particularly daunting task, the proof of the pudding is, as observed above, in the generalizing. It is the mission





Table 1. Survey of demands on a cognitive-pragmatic theory

Cognitive prerequisites:	Key terms:
– motor and sensory ability to produce and perceive utterances	articulation and auditory perception
– linguistic competence	grammatical and lexical knowledge
– willingness to engage in communication	cooperation, cooperative principle
– pragmatic competence	joint attention, intention-reading
– social competence, cultural knowledge and world knowledge	social norms, context of culture, frames, scripts, cognitive and cultural models
Cognitive abilities:	Key terms:
– keep track of situational context and linguistic cotext	deixis, anaphora, cohesion and coherence
– keep track of mental states of other interlocutors	common ground, shared knowledge, mutual knowledge, audience design, given – new, accessibility, topicality
– connect linguistic and situational input and construe meanings of elements and chunks in the input	sense disambiguation (polysemy), reference tracking, anaphora resolution, pragmatic enrichment, explicature
– construe conventionally implicit meaning (taking into account cotext, context and pragmatic, social and cultural knowledge)	inferencing, presupposition, conventional (and, to some extent, generalized conversational) implicature
– construe contextually implicit meaning (dto.)	inferencing, reasoning, conversational (esp. particularized) implicature
– construe conventionally and contextually non-literal meaning (dto.)	implicature, irony, banter, humour, figurative language, metaphor, metonymy

of this Handbook to make some progress towards delivering key components of such an account.

4. The structure of this Handbook

4.1. The rationale behind the structure of this Handbook¹

To translate the conception of Cognitive Pragmatics introduced so far into a coherent arrangement of chapters in this Handbook, a distinction between four types of *input factors* and three major *targets of construal* is introduced:





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Types of input factors used in the construal of meaning-in-context:

1. The utterance/text/discourse (including preceding cotext).
2. The non-linguistic situational, social and cultural environment.
3. The linguistic system (somewhat simplistically hypostatized as a cognitively given structure).
4. Cognitive principles (i.e. general, entrenched routines) and processes (i.e. on-line applications of routines and novel cognitive processes).

Major targets of the construal of meaning-in-context:

- A. **Underdetermined** meaning (e.g. sense disambiguation, anaphora resolution, pragmatic enrichment).
- B. **Non-explicit** meaning (e.g. inferencing, reasoning, implicature, world knowledge).
- C. **Non-literal** meaning (e.g. humour, irony, figurative language).

While traditional, i.e. non-cognitive, pragmatics has mainly been concerned with the effects of 1 and 2 on A, and particularly on B and C, the picture of cognitive pragmatics drawn so far indicates that this field of inquiry focuses on the effects of the interplay of 4, on the one hand, and of 1 and 2, on the other, on A, B and C. In addition, as pointed out above, Cognitive Pragmatics should be interested in “feedback” effects of the interaction of 1, 2 and 4 with A, B and C on 3, i.e. the emergence of linguistic structure from actual language usage and processing, especially recurrent processing routines.

A very loose cross-tabulation of these two sets of categories, complemented by the “feedback loop”, yields four broad domains, which are covered by the four parts of this Handbook that follow the present introduction (which constitutes Part I).

Part II: The cognitive principles of pragmatic competence

This part deals with entrenched cognitive routines of pragmatic interpretation, i.e. the influence of 4 on A, B and C, mainly from an off-line perspective. Key issues addressed in this part are:

- relevance as a fundamental communicative and cognitive principle (Chapter 2)
- implicature and explicature as basic cognitive-pragmatic macro-processes (Chapter 3)
- inferencing and reasoning as cognitive processes in the construal of meaning-in-context (Chapter 4)
- basic conceptual principles and relations (Chapter 5)
- salience phenomena in cognitive domains and conceptual networks (Chapter 6)
- the role of encyclopaedic knowledge and cultural models (Chapter 7)





Part III: The psychology of pragmatics

This part brings the online perspective to the fore and surveys key aspects related to pragmatic processing, the acquisition of pragmatic competence and pragmatic disorders, i.e. the influence of 4 on A, B and C from an online perspective:

- the processing of pragmatic information in discourse (Chapter 8)
- the role of salience-based interpretations in the processing of utterances (Chapter 9)
- components of pragmatic ability and children's pragmatic language development (Chapter 10)
- pragmatic disorders in general (Chapter 11)
- autistic spectrum disorders (Chapter 12)
- aphasia from a cognitive-pragmatic and conversation-analytical perspective (Chapter 13)

Part IV: The construal of non-explicit and non-literal meaning-in-context

This part focuses on the cognitive principles and online processes involved in the construal of non-explicit and non-literal meaning, i.e. the joint influence of 1, 2 and 4 on B and C:

- shared knowledge, mutual understanding and meaning negotiation (Chapter 14)
- conversational and conventional implicatures in the construal of non-explicit meaning-in-context (Chapter 15)
- figurative language in discourse (Chapter 16)
- the cognitive pragmatics of humour and irony (Chapter 17)

Part V: The emergence of linguistic structure from the construal of meaning-in-context

This part deals with the effects of the interaction of 1, 2 and 4 with A, B and C on 3:

- a survey of emergentist and usage-based models of grammar (Chapter 18)
- the cognitive pragmatics of language change (Chapter 19)
- the sociopragmatics of language change (Chapter 20)
- the semantics of pragmatic expressions (Chapter 21)

Since the cognitive, psycholinguistic and psychological perspectives are to dominate this Handbook, it is considered appropriate to start out from input factor 4 and move on later to aspects closer to utterances and contexts traditionally covered by pragmatics. In the remainder of this introduction a survey of the chapters will be given.





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4.2. Survey of the chapters

Part II: Cognitive principles of pragmatic competence

Part II on “Cognitive principles of pragmatic competence” is subdivided into those cognitive principles and processes which would traditionally be considered as “pragmatic” insofar as they pertain to online processing and context-dependent content, on the one hand, and the ones that are closer to “semantic”, i.e., represented, conceptual and less context-dependent, aspects of meaning construal, on the other. Topics such as inferencing, reasoning, implicature and explicature as well as the relevance principle are at the heart of the former section (“**Pragmatic**” **Principles**), while the latter (“**Semantic**” **Principles**) focuses on fundamental conceptual principles underlying meaning construction, including conceptual networks and domains, contextual salience, metaphor, metonymy and conceptual blending, and the role and representation of encyclopaedic knowledge.

“Pragmatic” principles

Chapter 2 by **Yan Huang** on “Relevance and neo-Gricean pragmatic principles” gives a survey of the development and theoretical ramifications of the fundamental pragmatic principle of relevance. This principle has been a cornerstone of a range of pragmatic theories – most prominently those proposed by Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995), Horn (1984, 2009) and Levinson (2000) – which are inspired by Grice’s (1975) *maxim of relation* and his notion of *implicature* (see also Carston and Hall, Chapter 3, and Moeschler, Chapter 15). Huang summarizes these approaches and compares them with regard to how they explain the way in which language users construe “what is meant” on the basis of “what is said” by the application of a very limited number of pragmatic principles.

Squarely set within the relevance-theoretical framework (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995), **Chapter 3** by **Robyn Carston and Alison Hall** details this model’s account of the cognitive-communicative processes involved in the online, relevance-driven construal of meaning in context. The processes of implicature and explicature take centre stage and provide the title of this chapter. While explicature subsumes pragmatic enrichment processes that are, metaphorically speaking, close to the actually communicated propositions, including sense disambiguation (see also Taylor, Chapter 6) and anaphora resolution (see also Sanders and Canestrelli, Chapter 8), implicatures are more distant contextual implications intended to be communicated by the speaker. In the chapter, the two concepts are explained and analyzed with regard to their explanatory potential and compared to related notions in competing frameworks.

Chapter 4 by **Murray Singer and R. Brooke Lea** takes a psychological, rather than linguistic, vantage point and surveys the empirical evidence available on “Inferencing and reasoning in discourse comprehension”. Partly basing their





account on Kintsch's (1988) influential construction-integration model of discourse comprehension, the authors provide an in-depth discussion of the role of *bridging inferences*, which are necessary for comprehension, and *elaborative inferences*, which additionally enrich the construed situation model. While inference processes are regarded as tapping into stored memory representations, allowing the language user, for example, to connect information about objects to knowledge of their parts, or about events to their causes, deductive reasoning processes are based on conclusions arrived at by means of syllogisms and other forms of basic propositional logic.

“Semantic” principles

Chapter 5 by **Małgorzata Fabiszak** entitled “Conceptual principles and relations” opens the section on pragmatically relevant conceptual principles underlying the construal of meaning-in-context. Stressing the fluid boundaries between semantics and pragmatics, the author presents the current state of mainly cognitive-linguistic research on fundamental conceptual principles and relations. Key issues of the chapter include the prototypical structure of categories, conceptual networks, image schemata, idealized cognitive models, frames, metonymy and metaphor and conceptual blending (see Ungerer and Schmid 2006 for a general introduction to these notions). As befits a contribution to a handbook of cognitive pragmatics, the chapter focuses on the online processes of meaning construction integrating those conceptual structures in the context of communicative acts in social settings and also touches upon the role of individuals' embodied experience and socialization history as well as the shared knowledge of the members of a speech community.

Chapter 6 by **John Taylor** on “Contextual salience, domains, and active zones” follows up on issues discussed by Fabiszak, including the semantics-pragmatics continuum, and deals from a semanticist's perspective with the following long-standing questions (approached from a pragmatic perspective by Carston and Hall in Chapter 3 and from a psycholinguistic perspective by Giora in Chapter 9): How are hypothetically stored, represented “semantic” meanings of lexical items – the large majority of which are of course highly polysemous – instantiated in given contexts? What cognitive processes are involved in this? And how can the representation of lexical meanings be modelled in such a way that it does justice to their amazing flexibility and adaptability to variable contexts? Taking up usage-based cognitive-linguistic approaches (e.g. Lakoff 1987; Langacker 1993; Evans 2009), Taylor concludes his discussion by suggesting that the semantics-pragmatics distinction may presumably turn out to be artificial, if it can indeed be shown that representations of word meanings are essentially routinized activation patterns in conceptual networks which are extracted from actual uses in social settings (see also Harder, Chapter 18).



Chapter 7 by **Istvan Kecskes** details another conceptual foundation of the construal of meaning-in-context which is already mentioned in Fabiszak's contribution, viz. the role played by "Encyclopaedic knowledge and cultural models". While Fabiszak mainly dwells on the cognitive aspects of the representation of encyclopaedic knowledge, Kecskes systematically widens the scope to include the social and cultural dimensions of linguistically relevant extra-linguistic knowledge. The paper sketches the major pillars of a dynamic socio-cognitive model of encyclopaedic knowledge (cf. Kecskes 2008) and explains its implications for the study of meaning-in-context, thus spinning further the thread begun in the two preceding chapters. Kecskes's account of intersubjectively shared cultural models complements Fabiszak's survey of idealized cognitive models and other cognitive knowledge structures such as frames, scripts and their role in the construction of mental spaces.

Part III: The psychology of pragmatics

Part III moves the spotlight to the psychology of pragmatics and elucidates the **processing** of contextual information, the **acquisition** of pragmatic competence and pragmatic impairment and **disorders**.

Processing and acquisition

Chapter 8 by **Ted Sanders and Anneloes Canestrelli** surveys psycholinguistic research which investigates the mental operations involved in "The processing of pragmatic information in discourse". As indicated by the title, the authors' focus is on the level of discourse and on the cognitive processes behind traditional notions such as coherence and cohesion. The two major areas of investigation are the cognitive processes involved in establishing referential coherence, i.e. the ways in which language processors keep track of multiple references to representations of the same referent, and relational coherence, i.e. connecting discourse by means of logical, thematic and argumentative links. The chapter discusses variables that affect the choice and interpretation of anaphoric items, including accessibility (Ariel 1990), topicality (Givón 1995), recency of mention and others (Walker, Joshi, and Prince 1998), and probes the question whether or not the overt signalling of coherence relations by means of connectors such as *but*, *yet* or *because* is invariably conducive to ease of reading and recall of text content. The authors conclude with some reservations concerning the generalizability of experimental findings and plead for an integration of text-linguistic and psycholinguistic approaches.

Chapter 9 by **Rachel Giora** entitled "Happy New War – The role of salient meanings and salience-based interpretations in processing utterances" constitutes a psycholinguistic and pragmatic counterpart to the chapter by John Taylor, who looks at ambiguity and polysemy resolution from a cognitive-linguistic stance.





Like Taylor, Giora deals with the cognitive principles and processes determining the context-dependent access to the meanings of lexical items and larger meaning-carrying chunks, but her focus is on experimental work in the field. According to Giora, the notion of graded salience is the key to answering the question of how interlocutors swiftly and unconsciously arrive at contextually appropriate lexical meanings. Reporting on a wealth of empirical studies and illustrating their findings with original material, Giora highlights the potential of her approach in comparison with other models, among them the so-called direct-access-view (Gibbs 1994) and the relevance-theoretical approach (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995).

Chapter 10 by **Daniela O’Neill** on “Components of pragmatic ability and children’s pragmatic language development” closes the first group of chapters in Part III and links it with the second one. It starts out from a systematic description of pragmatic competence, which is seen to rely on three distinguishable types of knowledge: social knowledge, social-cognitive knowledge and cognitive knowledge. These are related to *social pragmatics*, *mindful pragmatics* and *cognitive pragmatics* respectively. Exploiting this distinction, the author then proceeds to a rich and detailed account of empirical findings on children’s pragmatic language development in these three areas. O’Neill’s account of ‘normal’ paths for the acquisition of pragmatic competence provides the backdrop for the following three chapters on pragmatic disorders.

Disorders

Chapter 11 by **Louise Cummings** opens the next section by giving a bird’s eye survey of “Pragmatic disorders”. The author summarizes the current state of our knowledge of pragmatic impairment by examining the features of specific language impairments (SLI), autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), types of right-hemisphere damage and other disorders in children and adults (cf. Cummings 2009). Specifically, Cummings considers how breakdown in the pragmatics of language adversely affects the comprehension and expression of classic pragmatic phenomena including speech acts, the processing of implicatures, the use and understanding of deictic expressions and presuppositional phenomena, the utilization of context during utterance interpretation, and the processing of non-literal language. Impairments in pragmatic aspects of non-verbal communication are also touched upon.

Chapter 12 by **Anne Reboul, Sabine Manificat and Nadège Foudon** (“Autism from a cognitive-pragmatic perspective”) zooms in on a group of developmental deficits subsumed under the label *autistic spectrum disorders* (ASD). They discuss the impact of social-pragmatic deficits on language acquisition in autistic people, distinguishing various syndromes including autism (also known as Kanner’s autism) and Asperger Syndrome. Moving to more narrowly “pragmatic” deficits, the authors explain the intention-reading ability commonly referred to as





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Theory of mind (Premack and Woodruff 1978) and demonstrate its role as a key prerequisite for successful pragmatic processing. Pragmatic deficits typical of autistic adults, which relate to problems in interpreting indirect speech acts and other non-explicit and non-literal utterances, are also discussed.

The focus of **Chapter 13** by **Suzanne Beeke** entitled “Aphasia: The pragmatics of everyday conversation” is a second classic field of language impairment. From a cognitive-pragmatic point of view, it is particularly remarkable that patients who show the lexical and/or syntactic deficits commonly associated with different types of aphasia, as Beeke puts it, “communicate better than they speak”. The author first summarizes the findings of early pragmatic approaches to aphasic spoken language, which were taken to indicate that people with aphasia seemed to have relatively intact pragmatic abilities. Following this, the bulk of Beeke’s chapter demonstrates the potential of a conversation-analytical approach to researching and treating aphasia and presents key findings corroborating the value of this perspective in relation to aphasic conversation. Richly illustrated, the chapter includes an analysis of extracts from conversations involving one speaker who suffers from agrammatic aphasia.

Part IV: The construal of non-explicit and non-literal meaning-in-context

Part IV takes the Handbook into the next level of cognitive-pragmatic inquiry: the cognitive processes involved in the construal of non-explicit and non-literal meaning-in-context. The part is divided into two sections focussing on these two aspects respectively.

The construal of non-explicit meaning-in-context

Chapter 14 on “Shared knowledge, mutual understanding and meaning negotiation” by **William Horton** follows up on Chapter 3 on inferencing and reasoning, on the one hand, and Chapter 7 on encyclopaedic knowledge, on the other, and reviews the historical development of psycholinguistic studies into common ground, shared knowledge, mutual understanding and meaning negotiation. Particular attention is devoted to controversies over the amount of mutual knowledge actually required for successful language processing and the time course of its activation. Optimal audience design models (e.g. Clark 1996), which regard common ground as a prerequisite for successful communication, are shown to compete with approaches that attribute a much less pervasive role to mutual knowledge (e.g. Keysar et al. 2000) or see it as only exerting a probabilistic influence on language use (e.g. Brown-Schmidt, Gunlogson, and Tanenhaus 2008).

Picking up themes from chapters 3 and 4, **Chapter 15** by **Jacques Moeschler** focuses on “Conversational and conventional implicatures”. This chapter presents a historical survey of the concept of implicature. Criteria for distinguishing be-





tween different types of implicatures are discussed. Moeschler then surveys implications, ramifications and modifications of the notion of implicature in the work of Levinson (2000), Horn (e.g. 2004), Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995) and others, concluding with an assessment of the role of implicatures in comprehension and communication in general.

The construal of non-literal meaning-in-context

Chapter 16 on “Figurative language in discourse” by **Alice Deignan** is the first of two contributions which deal with the use and comprehension of conventional and novel non-literal language. The topic of Deignan’s chapter is the role of metaphors and other types of figurative language, mainly metonymy, in discourse. The author demonstrates the potential of conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff and Johnson 2003) for the analysis of figurative language in actual spoken and written discourse, but indeed also highlights its limitations and shortcomings (cf. Cameron 2008; Semino 2008; Deignan, Littlemore, and Semino, forthcoming). The chapter reviews empirical research into the evaluative, interpersonal and textual functions of metaphor in discourse and briefly introduces the critical discourse approach to metaphor analysis. The forms that figurative language takes in discourse, the functionally motivated, non-random distribution of manifestations of figurative language in conversation and text, as well as the implications of the discourse-related research on our understanding of figurative language are also discussed.

In **Chapter 17**, **Geert Brône** tackles “Humour and irony in cognitive pragmatics”. Like figurative language, humorous and ironic language presents a special challenge to any pragmatic theory, since “what is meant” is particularly distant from “what is said”. Brône provides a comprehensive state-of-the-art review of theoretical and empirical research into the cognitive aspects of humour and irony. The section on humorous language takes Attardo and Raskin’s (1991) *General Theory of Verbal Humour* as a reference-point for a discussion of the ways in which canned but also conversational jokes are processed. The section on irony presents the work by Giora (2003), Coulson (2001), Gibbs (1986) and others mentioned in Section 2 above (cf. also Chapter 9) and probes the potential of cognitive-linguistic theories for the study of irony and sarcasm.

Part V: The emergence of linguistic structures from meaning-in-context

Parts II to IV of the Handbook follow common practice in pragmatics insofar as they take for granted that the online construal of “pragmatic” meaning-in-context relies on stored and entrenched “semantic” knowledge representations. Part V reverses this perspective and highlights the ways in which cognitive-pragmatic principles and processes contribute to the emergence and change of individually entrenched and collectively shared knowledge that is grammar. Among the best-





known approaches emphasizing this contribution are Traugott's (cf. Traugott and Dasher 2004) invited-inference theory of semantic change, Hopper's (1987) concept of *emergent grammar* and an increasingly wide range of usage-based approaches which regard grammar as the product of language use (cf., e.g., Langacker 1988; Tomasello 2003; Bybee 2010).

Chapter 18 by **Peter Harder** opens this part by providing a survey of "Emergent and usage-based models of grammar". Harder's account focuses not on the role of specific cognitive-pragmatic principles and processes but on the theoretical background assumptions and claims that motivate such models and the methodological challenges they have to face. Major running themes in Harder's contribution are the tension, as yet unresolved, between system and usage in linguistic theorizing and the related controversies over how to model the interplay of lexical, grammatical and pragmatic aspects of language adequately.

Chapter 19 by **Graeme Trousdale** entitled "Grammaticalization, lexicalization and constructionalization from a cognitive-pragmatic perspective" explores the potential of cognitive pragmatics for explaining various aspects of language change. Picking up threads from Harder, the chapter looks at attempts to explain the co-evolution of meanings and forms in grammaticalization studies (e.g. Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca 1994). The role of cognitive construal operations such as viewpoint and subjectivization (Langacker 1987) on pragmatic processes such as invited inferencing (Traugott and Dasher 2004) and particular aspects of language change are discussed. In the later section of the chapter, the focus shifts to *constructionalization*, a recent term referring to changes affecting conventionalized or novel pairings of form and meaning.

Chapter 20 by **Terttu Nevalainen** widens the scope of investigation to include consideration of the "Sociopragmatics of language change". Recognizing the fact that a pragmatic perspective on the emergence of meaning must not be restricted to the interplay between the language system and language use in specific situations, the chapter emphasizes the need to describe how changes and innovations spread across a linguistic community. Providing a wealth of illustrations and empirical findings, Nevalainen approaches this task by looking at the main sources and loci of innovation, discussing local and long-term effects of sociopragmatic processes such as accommodation (Giles, Coupland, and Coupland 1991; Auer and Hinskens 2005) and investigating the role of social networks and acts of social identity.

Chapter 21 by **Maj-Britt Mosegaard Hansen** aptly closes Part V and the whole Handbook with an investigation of "The semantics of pragmatic expressions". This final chapter demonstrates the relevance of a number of issues raised earlier in Part V and elsewhere in the Handbook for a notoriously difficult area of linguistic inquiry: the linguistic description of the meanings of pragmatic expressions such as connectives, discourse markers, pragmatically motivated multi-word expressions and other "context-level expressions", as Hansen calls them. Among these issues are: the contested boundary between semantics and





pragmatics, which is supplemented by the psycholinguistic question as to whether the meanings of context-level expressions are referential in nature (“semantic”) or procedural (“pragmatic”); the vexing question of how to make sense of the polysemy/polyfunctionality of context-level expressions; and the need to construct adequate models of generalizable cognitive-pragmatic factors behind the semantic change of these expressions.

5. Conclusion

Does the collection of chapters in this Handbook fill a “much-needed gap”? Ignoring the fact that the editor should of course leave it to others to answer this legitimate question, I would like to venture one or two concluding observations.

It should be fairly uncontroversial that the development of a coherent and comprehensive cognitive-pragmatic account of how language users construe meanings-in-context falls within the remit of the language sciences. So far, however, I would argue, in spite of the existence of the inspiring and illuminating work referred to in Section 2 above, that none of the existing linguistic “disciplines” has managed to provide a natural breeding-ground for such an account. Traditional “philosophical” pragmatics has failed or, better, not even tried to supply solid empirical evidence demonstrating the cognitive plausibility and validity of its largely theoretical claims, however appealing and convincing they may be. Psycholinguistics and the psychology of language, true to the nature of experimental approaches, tend to lose sight of the bigger picture behind the controlled observation of highly specific processes and phenomena related to the construal of meaning-in-context. Cognitive linguistics, with its focus on stored representations and their cognitive foundations, has so far not even attempted, let alone managed, to produce systematic models of how stored knowledge and online processing interact in the construal of linguistically underdetermined, non-explicit and non-literal meanings-in-context. In short, a linguistic discipline that feels responsible for targeting the seemingly simple general question as to how interlocutors connect “what is said” to “what is meant” and vice versa has not yet been established.

It goes without saying that this Handbook, partly due to the fact that it is a handbook rather than a monograph, is not a suitable medium for offering a comprehensive and coherent answer to this question either. What it might be able to do, however, is give a fresh impetus and provide some assistance for future efforts in the field by providing a rich survey of the questions to be asked, of avenues that promise to lead to answers to these questions and of ways to approach the task of systematically generalizing the apparently ungeneralizable.





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Notes

1. I would like to thank Dirk Geeraerts for his contribution to designing the overall structure of this Handbook, which is, in spite of some changes, still reflected in Section 4.1.

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