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Proposals for: two lectures at the Linguistic Institute, Hungarian Academy of Sciences

1. EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT MEANING IN A THEORY OF PRAGMATICS

This presentation starts from the observations that (i) all language use inevitably combines explicit and implicit meaning, and (ii) all languages have structural means at their disposal to mark implicit meaning. These fundamental design features of language (in use) seem to create a kind of pragmatic paradox: if one can talk about ‘markers of implicitness’ (a cover term for all the traditional presupposition- and implication-carrying constructions as well as implicature-generating strategies), are we then still dealing with implicitness?

Assuming further (i) that absolute implicitness does not exist (at least, to the extent that it does, we cannot say anything about it as linguists), (ii) that explicitness and implicitness are therefore not absolute opposites, and (iii) that the degree of explicitness of markers of implicitness (or ‘triggers’ for inferential processes leading to an understanding of non-explicitly-stated meaning) is quite variable, a descriptive and explanatory solution to the problem of the apparent paradox will be sought in a three-dimensional matrix to account for implicitness. ‘Salience’ along a gradable explicit-implicit dimension will be related to both ‘structure’ and ‘context’ (which will themselves be treated as thoroughly intertwined rather than separable dimensions).

A representational tool will be introduced and illustrated to provide accounts of the calibration of explicit and implicit meaning in terms of these three dimensions.

2. THINKING ABOUT PRAGMATIC TYPOLOGY

While the term ‘contrastive pragmatics’ is at least thirty years old (Littlewood 1983, Fillmore 1984, Oleksy 1984) and a tradition in the study of cross-linguistic pragmatic phenomena even older (e.g. Brown & Levinson 1978), important recent advances have been made in the systematic and detailed comparison of conversational interaction (e.g. Dingemanse et al. 2014, Wu & Heritage 2014), giving rise to prospects for a genuine form of pragmatic typology.

This paper is a modest attempt to contribute to these developments by asking how a comparative or contrastive approach can be applied to basic pragmatic phenomena such as the calibration between implicit and explicit layers of meaning in language use. The assumption is that the anchoring of implicit meaning in linguistic form is realized in different ways in different languages (and in different communicative styles). The question is how to describe such cross-linguistic differentiation. Or, are there any realistic prospects for a ‘typology’ of anchoring devices and strategies?

In order to approach this question, the paper will rely on the three-dimensional matrix to account for implicitness developed in lecture 1. The proposed approach makes it possible to ‘plot meaning landscapes.’ An attempt will be made to show that, doing such plotting cross-linguistically, it may be possible to imagine a form of pragmatic typology even in relation to some of the foundational concepts of linguistic pragmatics.

- Dingemanse, Mark, Joe Blythe & Tyko Dirksmeyer (2014) "Formats for other-initiation of repair across languages: An exercise in pragmatic typology." *Studies in Language* 38(1): 5-43.
- Fillmore, Charles J. (1984) "Remarks on contrastive pragmatics." In J. Fisiak (ed.), *Contrastive Linguistics*. Berlin: Mouton, pp. 119-143.
- Littlewood, William (1983) "Contrastive pragmatics and the foreign learner's personality." *Applied Linguistics* 4(3): 200-206.
- Oleksy, Wiesław (1984) "Towards pragmatic contrastive analysis." In J. Fisiak (ed.), *Contrastive Linguistics*. Berlin: Mouton, pp. 349-365.
- Wu, Ruey-Jiuan Regina & John Heritage (2014) "Particles and epistemics: Convergences and divergences between English and Mandarin." Paper presented at the 4th International Conference on Conversation Analysis, Los Angeles, CA, 26-29 June 2014.

Bio-blurb

Jef Verschueren (°1952) received a Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of California at Berkeley. After a long career as a researcher for the Flemish Fund for Scientific Research, he is now Professor of Linguistics at the University of Antwerp, Belgium, where he served as Dean of the Faculty of Arts from 2001 to 2009. He is the founder and Secretary General of the International Pragmatics Association (IPrA; <http://ipra.ua.ac.be>), and he directs the IPrA Research Center.

Main interests are theory formation in linguistic pragmatics (conceived broadly as a cognitive, social, and cultural perspective on language and language use), intercultural and international communication, and language and ideology. Some recent publications include the annually updated *Handbook of Pragmatics* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins; first published in 1995, co-edited with Jan-Ola Östman, now also available online), *Debating Diversity: Analysing the Discourse of Tolerance* (London: Routledge, 1998; co-authored with Jan Blommaert), *Understanding Pragmatics* (London: Edward Arnold / New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), *Ideology in Language Use: Pragmatic Guidelines for Empirical Research* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

