

**BETWEEN (STABLE) MEANINGS AND  
(UNSTABLE) INTERPRETATIONS**

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## Plenary Lectures

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#### Underspecified word meaning, pragmatics and the lexicon

A longstanding position on the nature of the encoded or ‘standing meaning’ of a substantive word (including most nouns, verbs and adjectives) maintains that it is a full-fledged concept, that is, a semantic entity, which can contribute directly to truth-conditional content.

According to a range of other recent views, a word’s meaning is semantically underspecified: it does not specify a concept/sense which can contribute directly to truth conditions, but is either too rich or too meagre and has to be transformed in some way before it can express a specific semantic content. Recanati (2004) calls these ‘wrong format’ positions, that is, they are positions on which word meaning *per se* is the wrong kind of thing to figure as a component of content. Consideration of the phenomenon of polysemy (a word or root associated with multiple semantically related senses) plays a major role in motivating these underspecification accounts, both at the level of theoretical argument (e.g. Bosch 2007, Carston 2013) and of empirical results from tracking the processing of polysemous words (e.g. Frisson 2009). The ‘underspecification hypothesis’ concerning standing word meaning is currently in quite a strong position and meshes well with the account of word meaning modulation, advanced by relevance theorists, as an on-line pragmatic process of utterance comprehension which, arguably, underlies polysemy (Wilson and Carston 2007).

However, in this talk, I will argue that there are unresolvable problems with both versions of the underspecification position. In brief, the ‘too rich’ position inevitably involves importing into the lexicon an arbitrary subset of encyclopaedic world knowledge to deal with ‘default’ senses, while still needing a pragmatic account of less frequent interpretations. In brief, the ‘too meagre’ position, according to which there is a core schematic meaning, has never yielded adequate concrete proposals for any word’s meaning (I claim there is a principled reason for this) and it is an idle wheel in the accounts of both linguistic communication and natural language semantics.

I propose a different sort of account altogether, one which requires making a distinction between the kind of lexicon that features in a narrow construal of language (I-language, as in the generative grammar tradition), with its focus on syntactic computations and constraints, and the lexicon of the broader public language system, which is a repository of communicative devices whose conceptual contents are what the inferential pragmatic system operates on. In the narrow I-lexicon, the words (or roots) listed have no meaning, conceptual or schematic, while in the C-lexicon of the broader communicational language system, words are stored with their polysemy complexes (bundles of senses/concepts that have become conventionally associated with a word and perhaps others that are not yet fully established as stable senses). The account, as I conceive it, is fully compatible with the relevance-theoretic pragmatic account of lexical adjustment/modulation in utterance understanding without requiring that a word has an encoded meaning which consists of a single concept/sense from which all context-specific uses are derived.

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**Pragmatic effects and relevance theory: Finding stability in instability**

Positive cognitive effects as proposed in the most recent iteration of relevance theory (Wilson and Sperber 2012) have been argued to reside among a broad set of “pragmatic effects” stemming from a number of sources. *Cognitive-side effects*, arising from perceptual and cognitive processes which can parallel language functioning proper, *socio-cognitive effects* inherent in linguistic and non-linguistic human interaction, *structural effects*, incidentally triggered from the forms taken by many linguistic constructions and *multi-modal effects*, reflecting powerful emotional resonance and related embodied processes, all may contribute to comprehended linguistic meaning in complex interacting ways (Colston 2015).

The talk will present empirical evidence supporting some of these pragmatic effect claims. It will also incorporate embodied simulations as another potentially potent source of meaning (Bergen 2012), operating both within and without relevance theoretic positive cognitive effect computation. The degree to which all these effects can interact—on occasion cascading among one another with, despite some moderate predictability, a bit of chaotic randomness—will also be discussed.

The aim is to note the interweaving of the varieties of meaning streams involved in human linguistic communion, ranging from lower-level, pseudo automatic a-linguistic responses through social interaction and linguistic processing proper up to complex implicitly co-calculated inferential integration.

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## Sessions 1-9

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#### **Enumeration in English economic discourse: A cognitive perspective**

Cognitive linguistics as one of the most influential frameworks within linguistics draws scholars' attention to the study of aspects of language within cognitive paradigm. The structures of language are analyzed as reflections of conceptualization and categorization principles, as well as processing mechanisms. In this paper the cognitive approach is applied to the analysis of enumeration.

The study of enumeration can be traced back to the ancient time when it was known as a rhetorical device. From a linguistic point of view, enumeration was considered within grammatical issue of homogeneous parts of speech until it was proved to be a stylistic device. A series of linguistic studies of enumeration were devoted to its ornamental use in the language of fictional prose where the analysis of stylistic functions of enumeration was of primary importance. Within a stylistic approach enumeration was treated as a means of a dynamic description which conveys subjective and expressive meaning. Moreover, it was considered to bring humour and relaxed atmosphere to the literary piece.

The application of the cognitive approach allows establishing the nature of enumeration as a processing mechanism for organizing and conveying information. As the world changes at an increasingly quickening pace the problem of rapid analysis, processing and comprehension of large amount of information becomes ever more important. Thus, there is a need for information structuring, as well as the knowledge representation. Enumeration as a means of conceptual organization and categorization is considered to be one of the structures for representing knowledge and processing of information. The paper aims to analyze enumeration as a means of representation of domain-specific information. Furthermore, in this study we have focused on semantic peculiarities of enumeration in economic discourse. Enumeration as a means of knowledge representation is considered to be of homogeneous and heterogeneous nature. While only heterogeneous enumerations were studied by stylistics, both homogeneous and heterogeneous enumerations are of interest for cognitive linguistics.

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#### **Modality in relevance theory**

The present paper is concerned with the relevance-theoretic treatment of the semantics and pragmatics of modal expressions. I shall briefly argue that Papafragou (2000) is currently the most elaborate and accurate account available. The main contribution of the paper is to propose an adjustment of Papafragou's (2000) model, which is intended to increase its cross-linguistic applicability.

It is generally accepted that the interpretation of a modal expression is highly context-dependent. Papafragou (2000) shows how a unitary semantics for modals is still possible and includes the notion of a modal domain in her semantic template. Following Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995), Papafragou (2000:41) assumes that a thought or a proposition may be entertained and stored in memory in several different ways. In Papafragou's (2000) modal

semantics, the proposition in the scope of the modal is either entailed by or compatible with a domain of propositions, and the domain restrictors (e.g. ‘normative’ and ‘factual’) reflect the way in which the propositions in the modal domain are entertained:

*Can*: p is compatible with  $D_{\text{factual}}$   
*Must*: p is entailed by  $D_{\text{unspecified}}$   
*Should*: p is entailed by  $D_{\text{normative}}$

Some modals – e.g. *must* – need domain saturation, while other modals – e.g. *can* and *should* – restrict the domain lexically.

Papafragou’s (2000) model has been applied to English (Papafragou 2000) and to Persian (Rahimian and Vahedi 2010). Like most Indo-European languages, English and Persian encode restrictions on modal force lexically, and the restriction is either ‘compatibility’ or ‘entailment’. In many non-Indo-European languages – e.g. Ummarmiutun (fieldnotes), Yupik (van der Auwera and Ammann 2008) and Giktsan (Peterson 2010) – modal force is not lexically restricted – at least not to ‘entailment’ or ‘compatibility’. With the Ummarmiutun modal suffix *-hungnaq-* as illustration, I propose a refinement of Papafragou’s (2000) modal semantic template inspired by Boye’s (2012) cognitive semantic work on epistemic meaning, such that we distinguish between more or less specific restrictions on ‘support’:

Full	Strong	Neutral
Full	Less than full	

Adapted from Boye (2012:22)

Revised modal semantics:

*Can*: p is neutrally supported by  $D_{\text{factual}}$   
*Must*: p is strongly supported by  $D_{\text{unspecified}}$   
*Should*: p is strongly supported by  $D_{\text{normative}}$   
*Hungnaq*: p is less than fully supported by  $D_{\text{belief}}$

The paper also suggests how the proposed refinement of Papafragou’s (2000) model can accommodate evidential meaning as well, while maintaining the notional difference between epistemic modality and evidentiality.

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### **Experimental evidence for the relevance-theoretic treatment of conjunction ‘and’**

Traditionally, the connective ‘and’ is analyzed in semantic and pragmatic theories as having a basic minimal meaning that is equivalent to logical conjunction (Grice 1989). On this basic meaning, conjunction has the property of commutativity and is thus symmetric, as in (1).

(1) a. Bern is the capital of Switzerland and Warsaw is the capital of Poland.

b. Warsaw is the capital of Poland and Bern is the capital of Switzerland.

However, the commutativity of logical conjunction is not attested in many cases in natural language in which we observe the property of asymmetry, as in temporal (2a) and causal (2b) cases.

(2) a. Mary woke up and took her shower  $\neq$  Mary took her shower and she woke up.

b. John pushed Maggie and she fell  $\neq$  Maggie fell and John pushed her.

Semantic and pragmatic approaches argue that temporal and causal interpretations are derived *via* pragmatic and discourse factors (Grice 1975; Posner 1980; Schmerling 1975; Levinson 1983; Carston 1993; Blakemore and Carston 1999; Blakemore and Carston 2005). A recent syntactic study (Bjorkman 2010) proposes to explain the difference between different interpretations of ‘and’ by postulating different syntactic structures: coordination of CP for symmetric and coordination of TP for asymmetric uses.

The two perspectives make different predictions. On the one hand, according to the pragmatic approach, the processing of symmetric (logical) interpretations should be the quicker since the logical meaning is the core meaning for the natural language conjunction and other interpretations are inferred by pragmatic principles. On the other hand, the syntactic approach predicts that symmetric ‘and’, i.e. logical interpretations, should take more time to be processed because they involve the CP structures which are larger than the TP structures.

A first experimental study to verify these hypotheses has been carried out by Thompson et al. (2012) whose results partially confirmed the syntactic approach hypothesis. However, only the difference between logical and causal cases reached statistical significance.

In this paper, we will present a pilot study on French ‘et’ carried out for its logical, temporal and causal interpretations. The results have shown an opposite picture to the one found for English by Thomson et al. Indeed, the interpretations that were read with the smallest latencies were the logical ones, followed by causal and temporal. In other words, the experiment involving the French ‘et’ supports the pragmatic approach to conjunction, and more particularly the relevance-theoretic account.

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### **The meaning and interpretation of the Norwegian evidential marker ‘visst’**

The Norwegian non-truth conditional unaccented advverb *visst* belongs to the group of evidential markers that Lazard (2000) calls ‘the mediated’. As shown in a corpus study (Borthen and Knudsen 2014), *visst* can be used to present the content of the utterance as hearsay information (1), inferred knowledge (2), or information achieved through direct perception, with the extra effect of indicating that the speaker was unprepared (3).

#### **(1) Hearsay**

Det første jeg har sagt det var visst “Kamerater, vi sulter”  
 ‘The first thing I said [as a child] was VISST «Comrades, we are starving’

#### **(2) Inference**

Ei stripe lys slipper ut døra [...] Det er visst kveldsåpent.  
 ‘A strip of light is visible from under the door. [...] It [the store] is VISST open.’

#### **(3) Perception + mirativity**

– Men fisken er jo død. – Nei, den rører visst på seg.  
 ‘- But the fish is apparently dead. – No, it is VISST moving.’

In all these cases, the speaker has evidence for the propositional content of the utterance. Thus, Lazard’s proposed semantics for these kind of expressions, ‘it has appeared that *p*’, fits nicely. This meaning is the point of departure for a more specific pragmatic interpretation in context.

Lazard (2000) acknowledges the role of pragmatics for the interpretation of the mediated expressions, but he is not explicit on how the pragmatic inference process takes place. Furthermore, like many evidential expressions, *visst* is usually, but not always, associated with reduced speaker commitment and pushes towards sarcasm in some contexts. How can we account for frequent interpretations that are not obligatory but still cannot be seen as conversational implicatures? Such interpretations seem to belong neither to semantics, nor to pragmatics.

We give a relevance-theoretic analysis of the semantics and pragmatics of *visst* and argue (partly based on Wilson 2015) that procedural expressions such as *visst*, *raise* the activation level of a procedure or set of procedures rather than encoding inferential algorithms. We furthermore claim that *visst* encodes several procedural constraints and that it is not surprising that an expression that encodes more than one procedure may be seen as relevant even in cases where not all the encoded procedures contribute to the specific context-dependent interpretation.

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### **The implicit in humour: In search of the magic ingredient**

The implicit in humour has been approached before by Dolitsky (1983), who claimed that “the unsaid” has a crucial role to play in humour to such an extent that “listeners or readers will not find a story funny unless they can identify that which was not said, but was a necessary underlying element, or that which was said, but should not have been”. She also emphasizes readers’ expectations of a text which are essential for humour. Raskin (1985) shows the importance of the implicit in jokes by filling in all possible assumed details of specific scripts and thus making a joke unfunny, or rather meta-funny – funny in its awkwardness and obviousity. A meta form of the unsaid was also postulated by Fry (1963), who saw it in the frame cues (do you know the one about....?, wink of the eye, etc.) or in the joke processing by the hearer, who would experience a sort of frame oscillation following the punch line. The issue is also tackled by Hurley et al. (2011) who claim the presence of huge amount of common knowledge, especially beliefs of all kind, which is activated in various mental spaces arising in context. Since as Giora (2003) claimed, we are one track minds who cannot handle information simultaneously, especially contradictory information, its presence often results in humour. Yus (2003), Curco, Jodłowiec (1992, 2015) and Piskorska and others discuss the issue from the relevance-theoretic perspective in terms of recoverable contradictory propositions, weak implicatures or recovering inferences.

In my own work I have emphasized three aspects of the implicit in humour. On the one hand, there is a continuum of specific references from the most implicit, the allusive, the cultural to the least implicit, direct ones (e.g., in references to the physiological domain or cursing – see also Chafe 2007), on the other, we need to take into account the quantity – the number of humour-evoking elements in a text most of which would be implicit to some degree (esp. a text longer than the jokes, although there is also research on jab lines in jokes, see Tsakona 2003). Thirdly and most importantly when discussing the implicit we need to take into account various types of contextual, text-specific frames (as opposed to general knowledge frames Raskin talks about, although these categories do overlap), including characters and events, as well as places and objects (cf. Chłopicki 2001, 2016). The key issue I am going to address is that of the metonymic nature of the references to text-specific frames as well as other humour evoking elements – it is assumed that humour-evoking metonymy is a different to regular metonymy as it often employs “less-frequented metonymic paths”. The question remains to be answered whether the implicit after all is the/a magic ingredient without which humour is impossible to achieve.

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### **Rendering social class in translation as a case of stable meanings and unstable interpretations**

The translator's difficulty involved in rendering meanings in translation can be seen as a question of dealing with stable meanings and providing unstable interpretations: a variety of interpretations are inherent in the translation process. With social dialects, the issue seems to be even more complex – there are no easy norms to adopt in translating non-standard speech. In my paper, I will discuss the concept of social dialect as an indicator of social class. I will then describe social dialect as an exponent of stable meaning in the original text, which the translator attempts to transpose into a target language. Next, I will present social dialect as a translation problem. I will argue that a failure to render a social dialect in translation is a case of providing unstable interpretation and ultimately of failing to achieve translation equivalence. I will base my analysis on my own experience of translating social dialect in two 19th century works of literature: *Lady Audley's Secret*, a novel by Elizabeth Braddon, and two short stories (*Room in Le Dragon Volant* and *Carmilla*) included in a collection of short stories, *In a Glass Darkly*, by Sheridan Le Fanu. The types of social dialects discussed will be: working class dialect, uneducated/rural speech and aristocratic speech.

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### **Children's processing of metonyms: evidence from eye movements and picture selection**

**Introduction:** Metonymy is a communicative device in which the speaker exploits associative conceptual links in making a reference, for instance to a person playing the first violin as “the first violin”. Similar to other types of figurative language such as metaphor and irony, the comprehension of metonyms appears to be pragmatically challenging for children due to the discrepancy between what is communicated and the literal meaning of the utterance. The few previous studies on metonymy acquisition suggest some understanding in preschool children, but the number of children tested is low and the results to some extent conflicting (Nerlich, Clarke and Todd 1999; Rundblad and Annaz 2010; Van Herwegen, Dimitriou and Rundblad 2013). Surprisingly, Falkum, Recasens and Clark (2016), who looked at younger children, found that three-year-olds outperformed four- and five-year-olds in a metonymy comprehension task, presumably due to a ‘literal bias’ in the older age groups. However, since these previous studies used exclusively offline measures, information about the time course of children's metonymy processing is still missing. In our eye-tracking study, we investigate which interpretations children consider during the online processing of metonyms and compare the gaze data with the results of an offline picture selection task.

**Method:** We have developed a novel metonymy comprehension task in which we track participants' eye movements while sentences containing metonyms unfold. Each participant is shown four pictures on a screen (see Fig. 1), accompanied by a short, orally presented story which contains the same word used either with a metonymic (1) or literal meaning (2):

(1) Metonym: “Here are two men who like telling stories. The ears is funny.” (2) Literal: “Here are two body parts. The ears are red.”

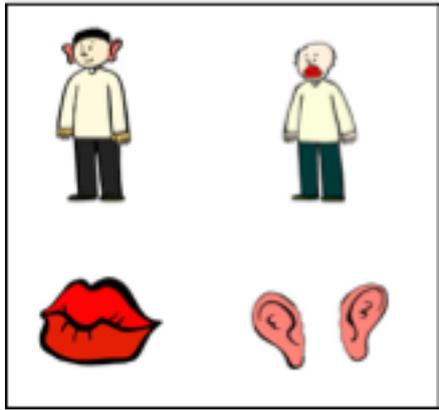


Fig. 1. Example picture of metonymy experiment

After each story, participants are asked to point to the correct picture and to justify their choice. In total, 20 test items per participant are presented (10 metonyms, 10 literal).

Participants are Norwegian children between 3 and 8 years and an adult control group. The data collection is currently ongoing, but will be completed at the end of June 2016.

**Results and Discussion:** A preliminary analysis of the data of 20 adults and children reveals some interesting tendencies. Like adults, children seem to prefer to look at the metonymic target picture when hearing a sentence including a metonym. However, in their offline responses, children overwhelmingly select the competing picture, suggesting a literal interpretation. We discuss these differences between online and offline responses in the light of children's developing metalinguistic abilities.

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#### Observations on holophrastic negation

Negation, NPIs, Negative Indefinites and « Free-Choice Items » have given rise to a large amount of literature during the last decades (cf., among others, Bernini and Ramat 1996; Miestamo 2005, etc.). However, the same cannot be said about the status of negative markers such as French *non* 'no!', Italian *no*, Catalan *no*, Roumanian *nu*, Portuguese *não*, Polish *nie*, etc. (cf. Kupść and Przepiórkowski 2002). As is well known, these markers sometimes are referred to as « prosentential » or « holophrastic ». In languages like French, sentential negation is expressed with *ne... pas...*, while a negative answer is expressed with *non* [n]. In many other languages, however, the negative marker used as exponent of « standard negation » or « sentential negation » seems to be homophonous with the marker used as one-word answer to a preceding question. This is the case of Castilian *no*, Catalan *no*, Roumanian

*nu*, Portuguese *não*, etc. The aim of this contribution is to discuss the status and the nature of these « holophrastic » markers. By the way syntax is not the whole story: these negative markers may show phonetic reduction, thus showing a more or less advanced process of cliticization or affixation. We'll ask to which extent they obey the phonetic laws of the language and to which extent they escape syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations (cf. the case of vowels extra-length in occurrences such as *noooo!!!!*). It will be shown that due to its emphatic nature, holophrastic negation belongs to the most variable linguistic expressions. From this point of view they are particularly instable from the formal point of view. This formal instability will be said to correlate with functional polyvalence (cf. among others the case of negation used in question tags).

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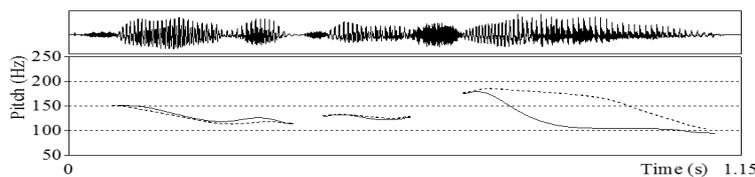
### **The interaction of syntactic and prosodic procedural constraints on the information structure of Norwegian utterances**

We construe the difference between a so-called two-sided ('exactly') and one-sided ('at least') reading of the numeral 4,000 in B's responses in the Norwegian talk exchange of (1) as a difference between the sum of NOK 4,000 presented as irretrievable for A and the same sum presented as discourse-given. The latter implicates B's affirmation of the proposition that A wants B to address ('Yes, I do have that money').

- (1) A: *Har du virkelig råd til å bo på det dyre hotellet?*  
 'Can you really afford to stay in that expensive hotel?'  
 B1: *Jeg har fire tusen.*  
 'I have four thousand'  
 B2: *Fire tusen har jeg.*  
 literally: four thousand have I

Our paper is about the ways in which different intonations superposed on B1 and B2 convey procedural information that causes A to select a two-sided or a one-sided interpretation of the numeral. A listening experiment showed that differentiation by means of intonational contrasts is efficacious when the syntactic order is SVO (B1), but the OVS structure of B2 seemed harder to disambiguate with prosody. Some OVS stimuli revealed that the fronted DO got a focus reading for a small majority of listeners when it carried the focal phrase-tone of the Intonation Utterance (IU), though the front position would seem to support a topic reading. B2 may be produced with an unaccented or an accented V after the focally accented

numeral *fire tusen*, as illustrated by the two (!) f0 contours below. The dotted contour  $\cdots$  of one of the pitch tracings matches the annotation in (a), while (b) represents the unbroken contour — of the other pitch tracing.  $H^-$  in the labeled bracketing annotation is the elevated phrase-tone that terminates the Focal Phrase (FP) and boosts the fronted DO, and  $L\%$  is the low terminal boundary tone. (a) represents a stimulus that contains no word-accent after the phrase-tone  $H^-$ . (b) represents a stimulus with the low-pitched word-accent on the V *har* that follows the DO. 23/50 responses to (a) judged the sum of money to be topical, 27/50 supported the focus reading. For (b) the result was 32/50 for the topic reading, 18/50 for the focus reading. We shall discuss the reasons for the impact of (a) and (b) on the distribution of the competing interpretations and for the fact that intonation is a better procedural discriminator for B1 than B2.



- (a)  $\cdots$  : [ 'fire ]<sub>AU</sub> [ 'TUSEN ]<sub>AU</sub>  $H^-$  ]<sub>FP</sub> har jeg  $L\%$  ]<sub>IU</sub>  
 (b) — : [ 'fire ]<sub>AU</sub> [ 'TUSEN ]<sub>AU</sub>  $H^-$  ]<sub>FP</sub> [ 'har-jeg ]<sub>AU</sub>  $L\%$  ]<sub>IU</sub>

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### Gettierizing language understanding

According to Epistemic View on language understanding, to understand a bit of language (a word, a sentence, a phrase) one has to know its meaning. This view, taken for a long time as a default stance in natural language semantics, was recently criticized by several authors including Pettit (2002). Pettit offers a Gettier-style argument aiming to show that it is possible to understand a word without having knowledge of its meaning. In his example, a person learns the correct meaning of an unfamiliar word, however, she learns it from an unreliable source. According to Pettit, in this case the speaker acquires understanding of the word she asks about without acquiring knowledge of its meaning.

This paper has two goals. First, I discuss and dismiss a counterargument offered by Green (2010) against Pettit's case. According to Green, since words are just types of artifacts, we should think about their understanding in terms of grasping the function (or how-it-works) of an artifact. However, claims Green, if I am instructed about the function of an object by an unreliable source, even if the instruction is luckily correct, I do not understand the function until I have an opportunity to try whether the object in fact works this way. I examine all the details of Green's analogy and conclude that his argument is flawed. Second, I provide my own assessment of Pettit's case. I highlight the fact that in Pettit's scenario the speaker learns the new word as a translation of a well known word of her own language. I offer two conclusions. First, it is not obvious that Pettit's scenario actually puts a threat on the Epistemic View. Second, in a more obvious scenario, in which a speaker learns a completely new word from an unreliable source, we lose intuitions boosted by Pettit's original case, that speaker understands a word even though she does not know its meaning.

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**Context, questions, and pragmatic enrichment**

Contextualists argue that pragmatics contributes to the explicature of an utterance beyond reference assignment and disambiguation: there is ubiquitous enrichment of encoded lexical meanings (as when ‘drink’ is interpreted as ‘regularly drink larger-than-advisable quantities of alcohol’, or ‘bachelor’ is interpreted narrowly to exclude, e.g., the Pope). Evidence for enrichment comes from truth-value judgments, a strategy justified by wide agreement that explicature is the utterance’s intuitive truth-conditional content.

This method of individuating explicature has been questioned by those who favour a minimalist approach to the proposition expressed. I consider an argument from Borg (2012, 2016), who claims that apparent enrichments reflect not the original content that the utterance was used to communicate, but decisions about how to sharpen/loosen that content in order to judge the utterance true or false. An example is “There’s no drink left”, uttered at a party, which according to contextualists would have the explicature *there is no alcoholic drink left*. But what if the party guests later discover a full, but locked, wine-cellar? Intuitively, the utterance is still true, so does this mean the explicature was *there is no **accessible** alcoholic drink left* (Borg 2016)? Her point is, the putative enrichment does not settle all questions that arise about the conditions under which the utterance would be true. This undermines contextualists’ argument that enrichment results in the utterance’s truth-conditional content; it thus supports Borg’s minimalism.

First, I respond to Borg’s arguments by showing that when one considers the context in which an utterance is made, it is much clearer what questions affect truth-value judgments than Borg suggests. There is no reason to expect the explicature of an utterance to settle further questions that arise subsequent to interpretation of the utterance for the contextually-relevant purposes (as in Borg’s example where, I suggest, we are actually considering the explicatures of different – imagined – utterances of the same sentence). Borg’s arguments do not, then, motivate abandoning the appeal to pragmatic enrichment. In the second part of the paper, I discuss whether the idea that enrichment involves sentence meanings being developed to answer contextually-relevant questions can serve as a general constraint on enrichment (Schoubye and Stokke 2015 give one such account). I show that this is challenged by cases of enrichment that is not motivated by any salient question, or that exceeds what would suffice to meet expectations of relevance, informativeness, etc., arising in the context.

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### Stable omissions with stable density profiles?

#### An Information Theory-based exploration of article omission in German

Everyday we are faced with a very prominent omission. Constantly, we produce and understand utterances like “Kannst morgen Haus angucken” (You can have a look at (the) house tomorrow). Consider a missing (definite or indefinite) article, as the article is obligatory preceding singular nouns in German. This is called Article Omission (AO).

#### The Aim

Simple observations do not explain the reasons of AO. In Information Theory, Shannon (1948) asked how information (i.e.  $-\log_2 P(\text{word})$ ) is encoded and distributed over a message within the bounds of channel capacity (maximum possible rate of information bits; cf. Shannon (1948:3)). Aylett and Turk (2004), DeLange et al. (2009), Jaeger and Levy (2007) (among others) have shown that speakers tend to avoid syntactic redundancy. Accordingly, AO might “densify” utterances to reduce redundancy in the limits of channel capacity. Furthermore, what role does Uniform Information Density play?

(1) Uniform Information Density Hypothesis (UID)[...] Speakers prefer utterances that distribute information uniformly across the signal (information density). Where speakers have a choice between several variants to encode their message, they prefer the variant with more uniform information density (Jaeger 2010:24).

We train trigram Language Models on our corpus (17 different text types; size of vocabulary ca. 62,000) and calculate Surprisal values (i.e.  $-\log_2 P(\text{word}|\text{context})$ ) with SRI Language Modeling Toolkit (SRILM).

#### Results

Our data show high Surprisal of the noun without preceding article, whereas the article itself has a quite low Surprisal and additionally lowers the Surprisal of the noun (Figure 1, examples in plot titles).

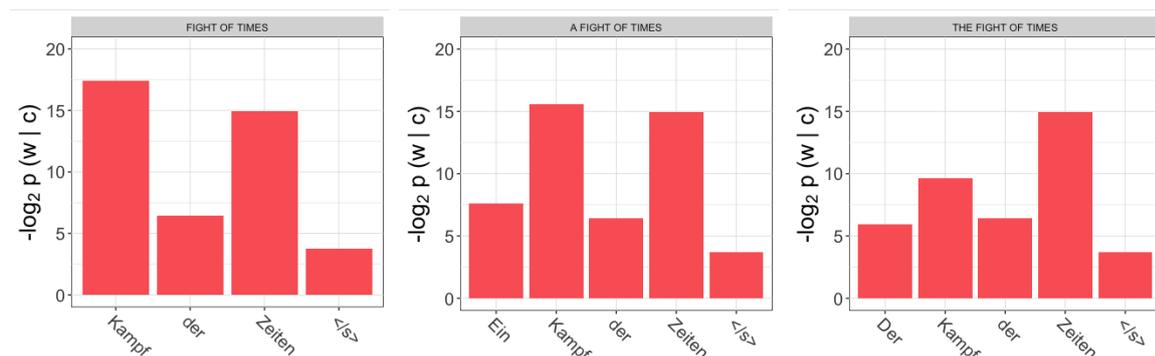


Figure 1: Surprisal profiles: AO, indefinite, definite article

These results were similar in non sentence-initial position. Next, we trained a model based on POS-tagged text (Figure 2).

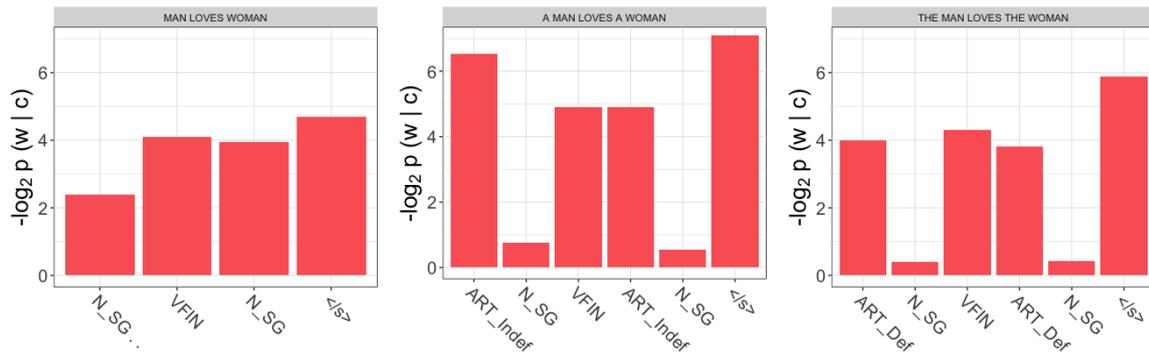


Figure 2: Surprisal profiles of POS-tags: (Art) Noun – finite verb – (Art) noun

A preceding article lowers the Surprisal of a noun in any case clearly. This obvious impact leads to a quite uniform distribution of information and avoids troughs under the lower bound of channel capacity. Same testings in a ‘hybrid’ model, containing detailed information (case, gender, prepositions) reinforce these results.

### Conclusion

This investigation focused on a possible reason for AO. By information theoretic measure (Surprisal), we observed a uniform distribution of information in case of AO. This effect is observed on different levels of abstraction. Thus, we can presume that a more uniform distribution of information within a message might compensate effects of other factors which influence linguistic encoding.

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### Lying and misleading – a relevance-theoretic perspective

The aim of the paper is to examine the lying/misleading distinction from a relevance-theoretic perspective (cf. Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995, 2004; Wilson and Sperber 2012). Lying has been subject to extensive discussion and empirical analysis, and has received a number of various accounts in several fields of philosophy: Barnes (1994), Sorensen (2007), Fallis

(2009), Martin (2009), Carson (2010), Saul (2012a, 2012b), to mention just a few. Within philosophy a lie has been classically defined in opposition to truth as saying something one believes to be false with the intent to deceive one's listener. Recently, lying has been discussed in relation to misleading (cf. Meibauer 2005, 2011; Saul 2012a, 2012b; Stokke 2013, 2014, 2016), where lying is equated with deceiving by assertion and misleading with deceiving by particularized conversational implicature. Whereas traditional accounts of lying adopted Kant's (1797) position that lying is never morally justified, and, consequently, that lying is always morally worse than merely misleading, the recent research has led philosophers to a conclusion that there is no significant moral difference between lying and misleading.

Although sometimes there may be no moral difference between lying and misleading, obviously there is a linguistic difference. Since the paradigm cases of misleading while not lying are cases where the speaker **says** something true in order to conversationally implicate something false, it seems indispensable to define the notion of 'saying' in order to define the lying/misleading distinction. Philosophical and pragmatic literature abounds in the accounts of 'what is said', which has been discussed under a variety of terms, but naturally there is no agreement as to the content of 'what is said' and as to the borderline between 'what is said' and 'what is implicated'. Saul (2012b) claims that no existing account of what is said adequately captures lying as opposed to merely misleading. Stokke (2016) maintains that the distinction between lying and misleading is sensitive to discourse structure, i.e. whether an utterance is a lie or is merely misleading sometimes depends on the topic of conversation, represented by the so-called questions under discussion. Meibauer (2014), in turn, postulates that deliberately false implicatures are not always a case of misleading and are a part of an act of lying. The paper is an attempt to take a stance in the debate on the lying/misleading distinction and tackle the issues mentioned above from a relevance-theoretic perspective; one of the goals is to see how the relevance-theoretic understanding of "what is said" (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995, 2004; Wilson and Sperber 2012; Carston 2002, 2009; Carston and Hall 2012) affects the lying/misleading distinction.

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**The psycholinguistic perspectives on creativity and L2 speaking: the centrality of meaning**

Creativity has been highly promoted in communicative language teaching, yet there seems to be a lack of clarity about its nature and components. This paper seeks to analyse how creativity is represented in the speaking process, specifically in decoding/encoding meaning and coding meaning into forms, and how it affects the L2 learner's fluency, accuracy and complexity in oral performance. Meaning is constructed in the learner's mind and adjusted to the communicative purposes. It is the causal factor of communication while language is the code for transmitting the communicative intention. To successfully implement creative language activities that enhance L2 oral communication, it is essential to understand the place of creativity in the human mind, reveal the cognitive mechanisms of the creative process and specify the factors responsible for the creative output in oral performance. The study compares the psycholinguistic processes underlying speaking, which run on mental representations, require mental resources (cognitive energy, extensive knowledge representations, attention, and imagination), and involve the entire body and mind of the language user. In the present analysis, creative language use is understood as the construction of unknown meanings and the transformation of the learner's linguistic and conceptual background. The investigation relies on cognitive research and draws on three theoretical approaches to creativity: 1) the linguistic approach: manifested through language play and occurring at formal and semantic levels (Cook, 2000); 2) the product approach: involving the generation of new ideas that are surprising, intelligible and valuable (Boden, 2001); 3) the process approach: involving several types of thinking such as 'ordered' and 'chaotic thinking' (Finke 1996), 'combinational, exploratory and transformational thinking' (Boden 2001). In addition, the paper discusses the role of social interaction and background knowledge in creative output. Finally, the implications of creative teaching of L2 speaking skills are discussed.

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## Syntactic derivation or pragmatic enrichment? An experimental study on the syntax of fragments

**Background.** Speakers frequently use apparently nonsentential expressions, or *fragments* (Morgan 1973), (1a) instead of full sentences (2b). Despite their reduced form, given an appropriate context, fragments convey the same meaning as sentences.

(1) a. [Flight attendant to passenger:] Something to drink? (Stainton, 2006, 123)

b. Would you like something to drink?

The mismatch between a fragment's propositional interpretation has been attributed to syntactic derivation (Merchant 2004) and to pragmatic enrichment of a bare XP (Barton and Progovac 2005; Stainton 2006). I present two experiments which indicate that at least the mechanism proposed by Merchant (movement of the fragment to the left periphery and deletion of the remnant) is not able to predict the data.

**Experiment 1** Frazier et al. (2013) report two rating studies supporting Merchant's (2004) account. In their experiment 1 participants find complementizer-less complement clause (CC) short answers (1a) worse than those with an overt complementizer (1b). The authors claim that this pattern matches the acceptability of the CCs as topics (2c).

(2) What did Susan confess? (Frazier et al., 2013, 32)

a. \*She stole from her roommate. (ok as indirect answer)

b. That she stole from her roommate.

c. \*(That) she stole from her roommate, she confessed.

Nevertheless, the grammaticality pattern in (2c) has not been empirically verified. Furthermore, some of the items in the study have factive matrix verbs, which prefer CCs with overt complementizers (Kiparsky and Kiparsky 1970). I replicated the study in English and German with non-factive matrix verbs and testing the CCs both as fragments and topics shows. In English there was no significant difference between conditions, while in German complementizer-less CC were significantly better as fragments, but worse as topics (see Fig. 1). This indicates that CC topicalization is not an appropriate testing ground for Merchant's theory.

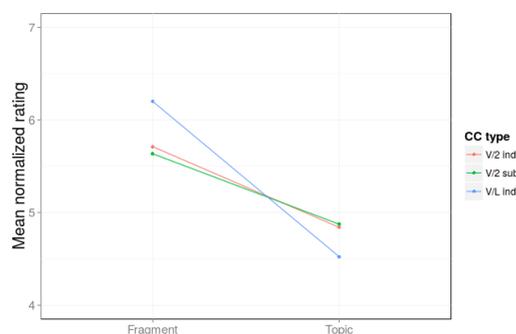


Figure 1 Mean judgments in Exp. 1.

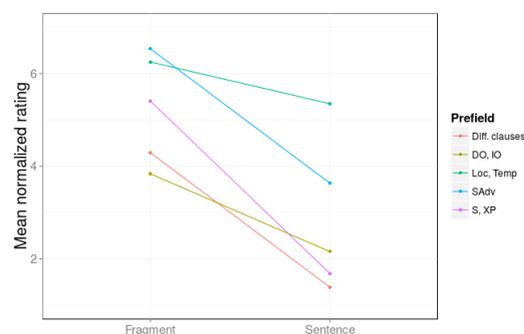


Figure 2 Mean judgments in Exp. 2.

**Experiment 2** My second experiment focuses on a well-known restriction of topicalization: Multiple prefield constituents in German. In German it is widely assumed that only one

constituent may precede the verb in the so-called prefield. Despite this, Muller (2003) reports many cases of double prefield constituents found in corpora.

Merchant predicts only those configurations to be acceptable fragments which are acceptable in the prefield. I thus tested three of the presumably acceptable (1. Locative + temporal PP / adverb; 2. direct + indirect object; 3. subject + adverb) configurations and two ungrammatical configurations (1. extraction from different clauses; 2. subject + XP) as short answer fragments and as topics. All stimuli were presented in a context (3) (an introductory sentence is omitted here) licensing the double prefield configuration.

(3) A: "Wer steckt dahinter?"

B: "Ganz bestimmt Sabrina (steckt dahinter)" SAdv, XP

'Who is behind this?' - 'Certainly Sabrina is behind this.'

Figure 2 shows significant interactions between Sentence/Fragment and most of the prefield configuration types. I argue that this constitutes a challenge to Merchant's theory and discuss the consequences of my results for the analysis of fragments.

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### Conceptualising the unexpected perlocutionary effects of misuse or lack of vocabulary

Using a language correctly and efficiently depends on communicative competence (Canale 1980; Canale and Swain 1983; Bachman 1990; Celce-Murcia et al. 1995). Being competent in a language amounts to, among others, having internalized its grammar, vocabulary and norms and conventions of usage, and, as a speaker, producing utterances that are grammatically correct and pragmatically adequate to the communicative situation. But being communicatively competent does not necessarily entail constant competent behaviour or an appropriate level of competence. Competence is a gradual and comparative characteristic (Medina 2011), so individuals may be more or less competent in certain linguistic domains, or their competence in such domains may be greater or lesser than that of other people.

On plenty of occasions, indeed, speakers may not use exact and precise lexical items because they replace them with wrong ones (vague and general words acting as placeholders), correct words do not come to their mind or speakers simply lack those words. Although this could result in misunderstanding (Dua 1990; Banks et al. 1991; Weigand 1999), interlocutors may negotiate what is actually meant and restore mutual understanding. However, misuse of words or lack of right ones may have unwanted and unexpected perlocutionary effects: the hearer may wrong the speaker as regards her competence in the language and degrade her as a user and knower thereof.

This presentation purports to conceptualise and describe such negative effect. It arises as a consequence of the weak implicatures that the speaker's behaviour may prompt the hearer to derive and may, depending on the hearer's benevolence and sympathy, impact negatively on the speaker's reputation as a communicator. Borrowing from the branch of philosophy known as social epistemology, this presentation will argue that such effect is a specific type of epistemic injustice (Fricker 2003, 2006, 2007): conceptual or lexical competence injustice. This presentation will also differentiate this type of epistemic injustice from testimonial injustice (Fricker 2003, 2007), hermeneutical injustice (Fricker 2006) and contributory injustice (Dotson 2012).

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### **Humour and weak communication**

However varied the forms that verbal humour takes may be, they are all intended to evoke an affective response in the recipient. As often attested in real life situations though, identifying something as humorous, that is as intended to evoke entertainment and induce laughter, does not automatically lead to amusement. This is partly due to individual preferences and partly due to differences in cultural assumptions held by humour recipients.

In this paper we would like to discuss responses to humour related to some cultural factors. More specifically, we are concerned with verbal jokes which are recognized by the recipient as designed to be funny and whose locus of humour is quite conspicuous, but which fail to make him laugh since there is no relevant activation of background assumptions in the course of joke processing. For example, many jokes related to Donald Trump's presidential campaign can be easily understood by non-American audiences, who may nevertheless not be amused when hearing or reading them. An illustration might be the following one-liner: *What is the Beach Boys song "Kokomo" about? All the places Donald Trump has bank accounts* (<http://www.jokes4us.com/celebrityjokes/donaldtrumpjokes.html>), which is easily understood to be funny, but which may not be found hilarious. At first glance, this could be explained by the observation that non-Americans are not concerned with American political life but on the other hand, many jokes which do not deal with any topics of practical concern are still entertaining. We would like to argue that the explanation of this kind of response to jokes (understanding without amusement) occurs due to the fact that when processed by a culturally alien audience, such a joke does not lead to activating an array of weak implicatures/implications (cf. Sperber and Wilson 1986/95, 2012, 2015), which is necessary for evoking amusement. The point is that the interpretation process involving a host of weak assumptions suddenly becoming manifest in the interpreter's mind can occur only in audiences who share (much of) the cognitive environment with the original source of a joke and who have internalised knowledge on the topic of the joke (as cultural metarepresented assumptions). As it turns out, then, an interpretation potentially leading to amusement has to be of a specific kind and the differences among individual affective responses to jokes can be (at least partly) accounted for in terms of the strength of communication (Jodłowiec 2015; Piskorska 2012, 2015, 2016a, 2016b).

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### **Prosody and cognitive processing of lecture discourse**

The goal of this paper is to discuss the results of an experimental phonetic study of some relevant perceptual and acoustic cues in terms of their impact on the cognitive mechanisms for processing information in spoken English-language lecture discourse.

Findings from divergent investigative domains such as cognitive psychology and neurophysiology prove that prosody takes precedence over semantic information due to mechanisms of processing information on neurophysiologic level. However, the empirical data on the role of prosody versus semantics on the perception of discourse structure in linguistic works are relatively scarce.

The purpose of the present study was to establish the relevant perceptual and acoustic cues that determine effective processing of oral information in lecture discourse. The differentiation was made possible by the use of the systemic methodological approach, specifically, an appeal to the listeners' mind through psycholinguistic experiment. The participants were given as speech stimuli contrasting excerpts of real life recorded academic lectures, performed by different speakers. The voice samples were judged as 'good', 'satisfactory' or 'poor' depending on the degree of information processing. In order to gain empirical evidence of this distinction a series of subjective, introspective methods of phonetic investigation as well as objective, instrumental methods were used. First, the selected samples have been analyzed in terms of complex hierarchical discourse information structure. That is the segmentation of discourse in terms of a segment's relative importance to the coherence. After, prosodic means were correlated with discourse structural information segments. The following prosodic parameters and their interplay within the discourse structure have been studied: speech melody, utterance stress, rhythm, tempo and pausation, loudness, timbre. Instrumental analysis provided a thorough analysis of their acoustic correlates: fundamental frequency, intensity, duration and partially spectrographic analysis of sounds. The data from the three selected samples have been compared and tested statistically in a reliable way.

The results indicated that there exists a linguistic model of effective prosodic marking of information lecture discourse structure that facilitates cognitive processes of information perception and processing. The model clarifies optimal zones for functioning of perceptive and acoustic cues projected on to a lecture discourse as a whole.

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### **Polish *TO* as an eventive operator: a procedural element of information structure?**

Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995: 202-212) suggest that interpretative effects typically ascribed to the information structure of utterances may be simply rooted in their incremental, relevance-guided processing on the part of the hearer, without dedicated theoretical machinery (e.g. categories of "topic" and "focus"). I have further explored this relevance-theoretic, processing-based notion with respect to the main exponents of information structure in English and Polish, namely sentential stress placement and word order variation (e.g. Sax 2011).

In this paper I turn to an important exponent of information structure in Polish that has no direct analogue in English, namely the word *TO*, which is involved in both cleft-like structures as in (1), and contrastive-topic structures such as (2):

(1) *To JANEK gra w brydża.*

It's John who plays bridge.

(2) *JANEK to gra w BRYDŻA.*

John, as far as he is concerned, likes to play bridge.

I will sketch out a relevance-theoretic analysis of Polish *TO*, rooted in the incremental processing of utterances. On this view, *TO* functions as a kind of operator over partially defined events. My analysis draws upon Progovac's (1998) analysis of Croatian *TO* as an 'event pronominal', and on Patona's (2012) approach to Polish *TO* as a 'contrastive relator' (inspired by den Dikken 2006).

I will consider how Polish *TO* fits into the relevance-theoretic distinction of procedural vs. conceptional meaning and touch upon some of the salient issues in the literature on *TO* (Huszcza 2000; Linde-Usiekniewicz (*to appear*), references therein);

(a) Should (1) and (2) be taken to be two instantiations of the same *TO* or rather different homophonic words? (e.g. *TO<sub>1</sub>* and *TO<sub>2</sub>*)

(b) What kind of element is *TO*? (a particle, clefting device, adverbial, conjunction, etc.)

(c) How do the information-structural uses of *TO* relate to other uses, e.g. copular and conditional constructions?

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### From procedural meaning to procedural showing

According to Sperber and Wilson (1986/95), pragmatics should be concerned not only with linguistically encoded non-natural meaning (meaningNN), as defined by Grice 1989, but with all acts of ostensive communication. Furthermore, these acts form a continuum of cases that ranges from meaningNN to showing. According to relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986/95; Wilson and Sperber 2012), all ostensive acts carry with them a presumption that the communicator is aiming at optimal relevance, with optimal relevance defined as a function of cognitive effects, on the one hand, and hearer's processing effort, on the other. As first noted by Diane Blakemore (1987, 2002), on this framework, we might expect to find linguistic components whose function is to guide inferential computations and thus reduce hearer's processing effort and/or lower the risk of misunderstanding. Thus some elements of language, such as discourse connectives (Blakemore (1987; Iten 2005; Hall 2007) and pronouns (Wilson and Sperber 1993; Hedley 2007; Scott 2016) have been analysed as encoding not concepts, but procedures. Blakemore's notion of procedural meaning has been hugely influential. In this paper I build on work on non-verbal communication by Wharton (2009) to explore cases

where communicators use non-linguistic and, arguably, non-encoded means to guide a hearer's inferential processes. I consider how these cases might be analysed in relation to the notion of procedural meaning and explore the idea that some non-coded communicative behaviours may amount to cases of procedural showing. The communicative act both triggers the search for relevance and directs the addressee to where that relevance might be found, but without encoding a specific instruction. I suggest several potential candidates for such an analysis. For example, contrastive stress in English can affect the interpretation of an utterance in several ways (Scott, in press) but does so via interaction with the normal workings of the relevance theoretic comprehension procedure, without the need for specific encoded instructions. This broadening of what it means to be procedural has consequences both for analyses of communicative behaviours and for the conceptual-procedural distinction more generally.

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#### **Strategic speech and canons of construction**

Canons of interpretation are rules employed by lawyers to justify decisions. Robyn Carston has depicted that they mirror the reformulations of the Gricean principles by Lawrence Horn. The Q-principle (a heuristic: say as much as you can) is mirrored by the canon '*Expressio unius est exclusio alterius*' (expression of the one is exclusion of the other). By contrast, the I-principle (say no more than you must) is expressed by the canon '*Eiusdem generis*' (of the same kind) (Carson 2013: 18). There are cases where the canons yield converging results: 'Children under ten get in free'

Inference: "Children ten or over do not get in free" (Carson 2013:17).

Imagine the above is a notice at a swimming pool. It does not mention children at higher ages, so they are excluded from getting in for free (Q heuristic). Simultaneously, this is 'equivalent to an utterance of 'If a child is under ten, then she gets in free' and so falls under the I-principle and heuristic ('Say no more than you must,' 'Enrich to the stereotypical/normal case')' (Carson 2013: 18). Nevertheless, it is often the case that the principles lead to contradictory conclusions. In the *Holy Trinity vs US case* the discussion was whether a provision forbidding the importing to the US of labour of any kind, which was followed by a list of exceptions (singers, actors, lecturers), also precluded the importing of a priest. The court decided that the American church was allowed to employ the clergyman. This is a counterintuitive decision, since priests were not explicitly listed as exceptions.

If we look at the case through the lens of Carston's theory, we discover that the court faced a dilemma. The application of the *expressio...* should have lead to the exclusion of a clergyman from the exception. By contrast, the *eiusdem...* should allow the exemption to encompass the activities at stake. Consequently, a question arises: what made the court choose the *eiusdem...* principle rather than the *expressio...* principle? My claim will be that to answer this question we need a third, second-order strategic principle with a strategic maxim:

Strategic principle (SP): assume that the speech is cooperative, infer all the possible consequences of the canon's application (enrichments) and then apply the second-order strategic maxims to the inferred enrichments (anticipate which enrichments your hearer/speaker will choose/ignore)

Strategic maxim – pursue your goal through selecting conforming enrichments.

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**Ambiguity, equivocation, multivocality:  
a case for a new descriptive label**

The paper examines a whole host of utterances (including various types of puns, chiasmic and garden pun utterances) which are diverse structurally and therefore have rarely if ever been discussed together, yet which have one essential feature in common. In seeming violation of the relevance theoretic comprehension procedure, they lead their interpreter to derive and hold in the mind two distinct interpretations of the same linguistic form and to use them both in working out the full import of the utterance. It will be argued that the peculiar interpretive outcome of such utterances is not captured by existing nomenclature, embracing such terms as *ambiguity* or *equivocation*, which are in general use, as well as such notions as *weak communication* and *poetic effects*, which belong to the terminological arsenal of relevance theory. A case will be made for introducing the term *multivocality*, which would not only serve as a more adequate descriptive label, but which would have the potential for inspiring new lines of research in linguistic pragmatics.

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**Exclamatives, exclamations and speaker's meaning**

Exclamations are utterances that do not merely convey some informative content, but that are designed to *express* certain emotions or attitudes such as (pleasant or unpleasant) surprise. Examples include the following:

[On receiving an unexpected present:] Such a nice present!

[Mary, having made plans for a picnic in expectation of good weather, to Peter on the way to the picnic place: ] It's raining!

These expressions could be uttered without expressing this element of surprise, therefore it is clear that the expression of surprise with these utterances is a purely pragmatic phenomenon. Moreover, the precise character or sense of the emotion or attitudes conveyed seem to vary from instance to instance, and range from mild, pleasant surprise to strong indignation over unexpected events.

However, many languages have dedicated grammatical forms to convey this element of surprise. English, for instance, has an exclamative sentence type (3) and particles that may be used to indicate exclamatory force (4):

What a lovely place for a picnic!

Wow, you're already here!

That languages may have dedicated grammatical forms or lexical items to indicate exclamatory force shows that the study of exclamatives and miratives must seek to identify the stable meanings of these forms and dovetail with an account of how these stable meanings influence the unstable pragmatic interpretations that utterances using these forms intended to induce.

In this paper I argue that this task can be best achieved by combining three strands of relevance-theoretic pragmatics:

1. The idea that exclamatives are instances of metarepresentational use (Sperber and Wilson 1995);
2. The idea that what is communicated in exclamatives and exclamations are impressions, rather than definite propositions, and that impressions are communicated by slightly increasing the manifestness of a whole range of mental representations;
3. The idea that utterances may not only communicate by conveying Gricean *meaning\_NN*, but also by *showing*, i.e. providing direct evidence for some thoughts.

In particular, I argue that exclamatives and exclamations are metarepresentationally used utterances re-conveying impressions that some information has left on the communicator. This is not purely a matter of *meaning\_NN*, but (especially in the case of exclamations) may involve a more or less strong element of *showing*, based on prosodic and gestural features. Thus, what is communicated in exclamatives and exclamations is typically not reducible to Gricean speaker meanings. I outline implications of my approach by contrasting this to the accounts by Zanuttini and Portner (2003), Rett (2011) and Zeevat (2013).

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### On cancellable and non-detachable meanings

Drawing boundaries between different kinds of meaning is not easy, but there are certain tests that help to accomplish this goal. This holds, in particular, for the cancellability test which has been the subject of intensive research in pragmatics for some years now (Burton-Roberts 2010, 2013; Capone 2009, 2013, 2015; Jaszczolt 2009, 2016). However, it has been neglected that the feature of cancellability is closely connected to the feature of non-detachability. The aim of my poster is to shed light on this connection. For that purpose, I will go back to the Gricean sources and carve out the logic behind the features of cancellability and non-detachability. Once we acknowledge the fact that these features logically depend on each other and actually form a “twin idea” (Grice 1961: 128), issues of cancellability are much easier to handle.

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**Metaphorical imagery in action – the law and language interface**

This paper comments on metaphorical imagery as used in the process of applying the law. In particular it focuses on how certain metaphorical images may guide lawyers in their decision-making process often without their being aware of the fact that they deal with metaphors. This may be the case even in the environments in which metaphors as such are explicitly unwelcome.

The examples discussed are all based on Polish legal cases and come from various contexts both from civil and criminal law. They include images of “white plastic cards” vis-à-vis debit cards, an image of “piercing the corporate veil”, and an image in which a victim “chooses” the person to be prosecuted in criminal law. It is shown that although they play a key role and really act in legal contexts, they form a mixture of “ordinary” images and “legal” images, which are present both in language and cognition and which, quite frequently, provide a tacit foundation for a final legal decision.

The variety of roles and contexts in which metaphorical imagery turns to be of special importance stays in accord with the relevance-theoretic perspective on the nature of metaphors. One of the aims of the paper is to illustrate the convergence of the theory and the “legal” facts and to show a path leading to further, evidently needed research.

The data discussed here were culled for a project on metaphors in legal language in which the author has worked for the last three years (project DEC-2013/09/B/HS5/02529 led by Prof. S. Wojtczak, Department of Law, Lodz University, Poland).

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