

## COGNITIVE AND PRAGMATIC PERSPECTIVES ON SPEECH ACTIONS EDITORIAL TO RIL 10.3

The present issue of *Research in Language* contains six articles focused on the actional use of language in a cognitive-pragmatic framework. This functional perspective is rooted in speech act theory, but has extended its scope beyond the original model. The texts grew out of the discussions that arose during the first conference in the series “Meaning, Context and Cognition (MCC)”, organized by the Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics at the University of Łódź, Poland, in March, 2011. The collection includes five texts which use cross- and intercultural approaches to language phenomena and one contribution that addresses a theoretical problem.

The volume opens with “Tentative Reference Acts? ‘Recognitional Demonstratives’ as Means of Suggesting Mutual Knowledge – or Overriding a Lack of It” by **Manfred Consten** and **Maria Averintseva-Klisch**. The article explores German oral corpus data with the aim of identifying recognitional use of strong proximal demonstratives which explicitly shape the speaker-hearer discourse structure. The examples include referring to persons and things which are neither prementioned, nor accessible in a particular discourse situation; for example, “these Chianti bottles”. It is argued by the authors that “recognitionals” are tentative reference acts, which function as speakers’ indications of their understanding of mutual knowledge, whether real or pretended. Such acts are said to create a situation in which hearers are free to either accept the referential act or deny it and ask for clarification, which in turn may invite the speaker to change their intended local discourse topic. Having analysed German corpus examples and three discourse functions of proximal demonstratives (i.e. the marking of non-topical referents, the marking of usually negative emotive emphasis, and recognitional use), the authors convincingly argue that recognitional and indefinite demonstratives belong to the same type of expressions as they both constitute kinds of recognitional use related to (pretended) “cognitive proximity”, i.e. a kind of mental closeness relation between speakers and referents.

In the next text, “Complements and Refusals in Poland and England: A Case Study”, **Joanna Bhatti** and **Vladimir Žegarac** discuss significant cross-cultural differences in the way compliments and refusals are made and responded to in Polish and English, the varied strategies behind these acts, and their affective, emotional dimension. The article is a report on the authors’ pilot study and offers implications for linguistic theory within the field of linguistic politeness with focus on the cognitive and affective aspects of analysed acts. The authors argue that although the reported research was based on relatively approximate cultures, the findings reveal significant systematic cross-cultural differences relating to refusals, while the differences relating to compliments are both fewer and more subtle. The data suggests that the cross-cultural similarities and differences observed can be explained in terms of (a) a universalist view of institutional

speech acts and face concerns in rapport management, (b) the Relevance-theoretic view of communication and cognition as oriented towards maximizing informativeness, and (c) some culture-specific values.

**Ksenia Shilikhina's** "Metapragmatic Evaluation of Verbal Irony by Speakers of Russian and American English" is an investigation of metapragmatic assessment of verbal irony by speakers of Russian and American English. The research combines ideas from metapragmatics, folk linguistics and corpus linguistics. Empirical data are drawn from the Russian National Corpus (RNC), the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). Based on the belief that spontaneous evaluation of linguistic behavior is an important function of both explicit and implicit metapragmatic uses of language, the author investigates distributional adjectival patterns of the Russian word *ирония* and its English counterpart *irony*. Both lexical items are treated as implicit indicators of folk metapragmatic awareness. The author claims that connotations of irony-related adjectives not only reflect users' everyday linguistic practices, but also contribute to the notion being perceived as vague and has a reflection in theoretical models of irony.

The article "*Die Kleine House-Apotheke: Receptions of the American, German and Polish Gregory House and varied translations of the pronoun 'you'*", authored by **Anna Urban**, discusses two audiovisual translations (German dubbing and Polish voiceover) of selected episodes of the American television medical drama *House, M.D.* with focus on translation strategies applied in rendering the pronominal form of address "you". Analysis of the data, richly illustrated with contrastive examples, is further used to evaluate the German guide to the TV series written by Michael Reufsteck and Jochen Stöckle *Die kleine House-Apotheke. Ein Beipackzettel zur Kultserie*. The author claims that the reduced pronominal paradigm in English, which does not distinguish between a formal and an informal address pronoun, has created two different protagonists in Germany and Poland. Consequently, she advises caution in the process of the planned translation of the German guide into Polish.

In an intercultural perspective, "Exploring Male and Female Voices through Epistemic Modality and Evidentiality in Some Modern English Travel Texts on the Canaries" by **Francisco Alonso-Almeida** and **Isabel Gonzales-Cruz** is a report on a study of the usage of evidential and epistemic modals in a corpus of eight English texts belonging to the genre of travel writing. The texts were selected from the vast English literature dealing with the Canary Islands. Four of the books examined were written by men and the other four by women travellers visiting the islands in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The text selection covers a time span of twenty four years, from 1887 to 1911. The researchers explore how writer authority is expressed by the authors' indication of the degree of certainty with regard to the content of their narrative, i.e. epistemic modality, as well as their source of information, i.e. evidentiality. Further, the data are compared to reveal possible gender-related differences.

The volume closes with "What is Said and Indirect Speech Reports" by **Joanna Odrowąż-Sypniewska**. The author discusses the Controversial Aspect, a notion derived from Cappelen and Lepore's *Insensitive Semantics* (2005, Blackwell), which says that speakers do not have privileged access to what they say. The author summarises Cappelen and Lepore's view and its criticism put forward by Gross (2006), and proceeds to suggest her own arguments against the claim. She concentrates on two readings of

what is said and claims that having accepted Cappelen and Lepore's broad understanding of what is said, the notion is both trivial and incompatible with other elements of semantic minimalism, viz. its tests for context sensitivity, while with a narrower approach, it is controversial and plausibly false. The data used in the discussion are indirect speech reports, which are shown to be technically insufficient, and in fact inappropriate, evidence for the content of what is said as understood in insensitive semantics.

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