François Recanati
Truth-Conditional Pragmatics.
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This book continues the investigation of the relation between the 'Old Picture' (OP) and the 'New Picture' (NP) of semantics and pragmatics Recanati has been exploring under various labels since at least 1993. He calls his version of the NP 'Truth-Conditional Pragmatics' (T-CP). The general T-CP framework and its relation to rival frameworks is set out in the 'Introduction', Chapter 1, and Chapter 4. The remaining chapters apply T-CP to test cases, mostly drawn from previous publications.

In his 'Introduction' Recanati sets up the opposition between OP and NP, arguing for the superiority of the latter. The OP sees semantic competence as the ability to assign truth-conditions to sentences relative to linguistically specified contextual parameters. Pragmatic competence is not required in order to exercise semantic competence. The OP, also called 'minimalism' (because pragmatic processes of content determination are kept to a minimum), only countenances linguistically mandated 'slots' for pragmatics to fill, a 'bottom up' process called 'saturation'. On the other hand, NP allows 'top-down' or 'free' pragmatic processes to add information where, linguistically, none is mandated. For instance, we are told that the sentence

1) There is a lion in the piazza

has 'several readings', one of which can be the 'non-literal interpretation that there is a statue of a lion in the piazza' (5). This meaning of 'lion' is a result of non-mandatory 'modulation' of the meaning of 'lion', and 'is the sort of example which motivates Truth-Conditional Pragmatics' (5). Recanati does not argue for the claim that the meaning of *the word* 'lion' has been 'modulated' vs *the speaker* having meant 'statue of a lion' by uttering 'lion'. Recanati then considers three arguments against T-CP. First, how do we communicate so well if a speaker can 'modulate' the meaning of expressions almost at will? He thinks once we allow that even saturation can involve recognizing speaker's intentions, it's a problem for everybody. But surely the scale of the problem is not the same for everybody. Second, doesn't the view entail that truth conditions are not systematically related to constituents? He argues against this in Chapter 1. Third, and most seriously, there is the threat of over-generation: how does the theory predict/explain that '1)' can be used as above, but 'Everyone loves Sally' cannot be used to mean 'Everyone loves Sally and her mother'. He has no real answer to that.

Chapter 1, 'Compositionality, Flexibility, and Context Dependence', covers the essential second step in the NP—accounting for how the postulation of widespread context dependence is compatible with compositionality, the usual explanation for our ability to understand a potentially open-ended class of novel utterances. On the OP, rules of semantic

interpretation assigned semantic values to words relative to contexts, then the rules applied in accordance with the grammar to assign values compositionally to more and more complex expressions up to the level of the sentence. The fly in this ointment, according to T-CP, is the 'semantic flexibility' that modulation induces—the possibility of words like 'drop', 'cut', 'good' and 'big' 'taking on different meanings' in different constructions. Recanati is careful to distinguish the 'standing meaning' of an expression, endowed by linguistic conventions, from the 'occasion meaning' of an expression, endowed by modulation. Can occasion meanings be incorporated into a compositional theory of truth conditions? In a rather technical and underdescribed discussion of compositionality, heavily indebted to Pagin and Pelletier, Recanati argues that something approximating compositionality can be achieved. He formulates rules (44-5) which should be understood to say that 'the interpretation (content) of a complex expression is a function of the modulated meanings of its parts and the way they are put together (and nothing else)' (45). This is a 'weak' form of compositionality, presumably because the rule must find any occasion meaning of each expression. But what is their variety, limits, structure, where do they come from? Recanati only hints at partially specified principles that identify them, such as metonymy, nonliterality, and free enrichment—a process which involves providing a more specific but contextually appropriate interpretation for the relevant expression. But without a theory of these processes, compositionality can operate only on a case-by-case post hoc basis and so not deal with the over-generation problem.

Chapter 4, 'Pragmatics and Logical Form' raises the issue of the interpretation of the pragmatically composed truth conditions. Construed 'semantically', processes of modulation contribute to the construction of propositions or truth conditions. Construed 'syntactically', as by Relevance Theory, the result is another layer of representation, but in the language of thought. And how are these enriched structures related to the grammar proper? Recanati surveys from a number of sources and comes to the conclusion that deciding who, if anybody, is right here 'remains to be determined' (141).

The rest of this book is devoted to problems Recanati thinks showcase the benefits of the T-CP framework.

Chapter 2, 'Adjectives, a Case Study', notes that, traditionally, 'absolute' adjectives such as 'red' are thought to be 'intersective', i.e., a red balloon is both red and a balloon; whereas 'relative' adjectives such as 'small' and 'privative' adjectives such 'fake' are not. This distinction leads to a host of differences in the valid inferences one can draw from the expressions with the two classes of adjectives. Recanati denies these appearances by arguing that purportedly non-intersective adjectives really are intersective when one takes into account their modulated meaning.

In Chapter 3, 'Weather Reports', Recanati considers the standard view, on which sentences such as,

2) It's raining

have an argument slot for a specific location, which can be filled explicitly with a prepositional phrase like 'in Paris' or the indefinite 'somewhere', or implicitly from context. In contrast, Recanati wants to argue that 'rain' is a zero-place predicate—roughly: a rain event is occurring—and there is no such argument slot. Rather, the location is provided by modulation, in this case free-enrichment. However, in the end Recanati does not feel all alternative have been decisively refuted: 'I have to admit that the issue is far from settled' (125).

The title of Chapter 5 is 'Embedded Implicatures'. Conversational implicatures (CIs) are a species of pragmatic implication, implications of actions, of saying something. CIs have two central features: (i) they result from an inference available to introspection by the hearer, and (ii) they are global, involving the whole sentence—they arise because of something about the saying of what was said. And being conversational implicatures, they can be canceled, i.e., denied without contradicting what is said.

There are cases, though, where conditions (i) and (ii) are dropped:

3) Bill and Jane have 3 [exactly] or 4 [exactly] children

The inference with '3)' to, e.g., 'exactly', is not introspectively available nor is it the result of what is said (neither disjunct was asserted)—it is local and must be computed from each disjunct. Some CIs are 'generalized' (GCIs) in the sense of being invariant over particular contexts (unlike 'particularized' CIs), and are normally carried by saying a certain (type of) thing. But GCIs cannot account for local inferences, such as '3)' above. Enter another, non-Gricean, notion of GCI; inferences that are generated from specific linguistic items by default—default implicatures (DIs), championed mainly by Levinson. These are not inferred from the speaker saying that p, they are not available and they are typically local rather than sentential. T-CP can now propose that *embedded* implicatures are cases of modulation (free enrichment).

In Chapter 6, 'Indexicality and Context Shift', Recanati takes indexicals to be expressions 'whose semantic value systematically depends upon the context of utterance, and whose linguistic meaning somehow encodes this dependency' (181), usually via a 'token-reflexive rule' which determines the item in the context that is the value, e.g., 'I' is the speaker of this token of 'I'. Indexicals contrast with merely semantically under-specified expressions that function like free variables to which a contextual variable is assigned on the basis of speaker's intention, though it is debatable which expressions fall into which group (or both). For Recanati (vs, e.g., Kaplan) utterance is a situation in which an agent performs a locutionary act—thus implicating a language and various propositional attitudes (184). But the focus of Recanati's interest is what he calls 'context shift': 'Since the semantic values of an indexical depends on the context, shifting the context results in shifting the value of the indexical' (185). He is interested in the nature and variety of context shifts. These include items that are: shifted at will (addressee, language, standards of precision, demonstratives); shifted through pretense (direct speech reports, recorded utterances, the historical present, displayed assertions: irony, free indirect speech); perspectivals ('now', 'come'). Some authors want to add another: in some languages the values of embedded indexicals can be

determined by the context of the reported speech act or attitude.

In Chapters 7 ('Open Quotation') and 8 ('Open Quotation Revisited') we return to the issue of quotation—both 'closed' quotation, where quotation marks create a singular term for the expression contained, and 'open' quotation, where someone's words are on display or 'pictured'. Recanati argues that these are basically pragmatic phenomena that can affect truth conditions and hence grist for the T-CP mill.

This is an insightful and challenging book, filled with detailed observations, arguments and theoretical options. Recanati frequently tracks a controversy down to the point where new data, not argument, is needed to settle the issue, and he is honest enough to say so. Despite these virtues there is a major disconnect between the intended interpretation of the T-CP framework and its actual statement and implementation. The former is psychological and from the hearer's point of view, whereas the discussion of the actual (e.g., compositional) machinery and its application to all the cases is psychologically neutral (or if not, extremely naive and unrealistic), and in the third, not second, person.

If you were to skip the advertising in the 'Introduction', you would have no idea T-CP wants to treat (all!) pragmatics as 'pragmatic competence' (knowledge), and to treat that pragmatic competence as 'the ability to understand what the speaker means by his or her utterance' (1). This is an incredible restriction of the domain of the subject (speech act theory, politeness theory, turn-taking, etc. anyone?). However, since Recanati paints semantics and pragmatics in the OP with the same psychological brush, rather than as kinds of facts or information, this way of taking T-CP might be the only way to generate a real rivalry. The downside is that it distorts the history and nature of both semantics and pragmatics.

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