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(Received 6 May 2022)

Alessandro Capone, *Pragmatics and philosophy: Connections and ramifications* (Perspectives in Pragmatics, Philosophy & Psychology **22**). Cham: Springer, 2019. Pp. iv + 311.

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Alessando Capone has worked for more than two decades in the fields of pragmatics, semantics, philosophy of language, and philosophy of mind. His latest book offers an up-to-date, comprehensive overview of his work as well as an attempt at tracing its many 'connections and ramifications' within a more general understanding of the language faculty.

The relationship between pragmatics and philosophy is not new to either field. In Capone's book, however, it assumes a precise methodological dimension. Pragmatics, in Capone's intentions, must not only be grounded on the empirical investigation of language use but must also take advantage of 'a more philosophical approach to language, where a number of *a priori* considerations can be applied to the formation of a theory of language' (1). Once this is done, some of the traditional problems in pragmatics assume a novel and, arguably, more tractable form.

The central thread of the book is the so-called semantics/pragmatics debate. Traditional theories of meaning typically distinguish between a semantic component, dealing with the most stable, literal, context-independent dimension of meaning, and a pragmatic one, dealing with those aspects of meaning that depend on contextual factors, such as the environmental conditions of use of linguistic signs and the intentions of language users. If anything, the research done in semantics and pragmatics in the last decades across a range of different phenomena has decisively shown that the distinction is far from obvious.

Capone addresses the debate by investigating two fundamental sets of problems – broadly corresponding to the two main parts in which the book is divided. The first is the problem known as 'Grice's circle' (Levinson 2000), which, in a nutshell, corresponds to the observation that not only does pragmatics take input from semantics, as assumed by the Gricean canon, but semantics also takes input from pragmatics. Explicatures (Sperber & Wilson 1986) embody the inferential processes by means of which contextual factors contribute to explicit, truth-conditional meaning, covering a large range of phenomena at the semantics/pragmatics interface, from deixis to presupposition. This observation obviously causes concerns of circularity.

Capone's strategy to address the problem rests on the hypothesis that explicatures are, 'in principle and *de facto*, not cancellable' (2) and, as a consequence, 'the pragmatics we consider in pragmatic intrusion has some features in common with truth-conditional semantics' (5–6). Although the idea that explicatures are not cancellable must be traced back to earlier work by Capone himself, in the book its relevance to the semantics/pragmatics debate is disclosed in great detail and given broader theoretical relevance and empirical coverage.

In Capone's framework, the notion of explicature is intertwined with that of intentionality. Literal meaning alone, it is observed, is a fallible guide to the seriousness of speakers' communicative intentions. A claim that, to use Capone's own example, *Bush will be remembered for bringing prosperity to the USA* (53) tells us very little about the speaker's intentions unless it is embedded in its context of utterance, including, in the example at hand, the shared background knowledge of the disastrous state of the stock market immediately after Bush's presidency. Importantly, insisting on literal meaning does not help. A claim that *Look, I am seriously telling you that Bush brought prosperity to the USA* (53) may favour an interpretation whereby the speaker has serious communicative intentions but does not resolve the contradiction with the available contextual information.

Enriching literal meanings by exploiting pragmatic intrusion becomes, henceforth, a necessary means for interpreting and manifesting the communicative intentions of speakers. But this also means that '[o]nce intentions are projected through pragmatic means, they cannot be cancelled' (20) as doing so would irrevocably disrupt the intelligibility of what is said. More precisely, doing so would mean allowing pragmatics to 'overrule pragmatics' (54) – a logical impossibility with paradoxical consequences for the very possibility of linguistic communication.

In Part I of the book, this view is discussed in relation to issues of modularity – in particular, the feasibility of regarding pragmatics as a specialized and (to a measure) informationally encapsulated cognitive module. A fascinating case study in this respect, discussed in Chapter 4, 'On the tension between semantics and pragmatics', concerns the comparison between communicative systems such as pidgins – where literal meanings are inevitably limited and extraordinary weight must be placed on

pragmatics – and legal texts – where, conversely, there is a commitment to regiment contextual effects as systematically as possible and, therefore, extraordinary weight is placed on literal semantic means. The study of these communicative systems, somehow located at the extremes of the spectrum of attested linguistic practices, leads to the further hypothesis that explicatures are 'strong candidates for inferences that tend to become semanticized' (81) and offers a lens through which we can observe and comprehend diachronic processes of conventionalization and grammaticalization.

Other domains where Capone's views on explicatures find relevant applications include the attributive/referential distinction in the interpretation of definite descriptions and the distinction between knowing how and knowing that – a topic that, despite having received significant attention in the philosophical literature, has seldom been discussed from a linguistic perspective.

Part II of the book further extends Capone's perspectives on the semantics/pragmatics debate by discussing the topics of quotation, indirect report, and presupposition. Capone correctly observes that much of the linguistic and philosophical literature on these topics is vitiated by a deceptive focus on written language and a regrettable lack of attention to their pragmatic – and, more prominently, dialogic – dimension. This is especially evident in the case of quotations and indirect reports. According to Capone, it is crucial that we understand such linguistic activities as social praxis more than writing conventions, Wittgensteinian language games – also close in spirit to Goffman's (1981) notion of 'framing' – where the intentions of the original speaker and reporter must be projected faithfully and made accessible to the addressee by means of transparent inferential processes.

Capone applies his view to a number of thorny problems that include: mixed quotations (or 'mixed indirect reports', as Capone prefers to call them) – a class of reports that shares properties with both direct and indirect discourse; alleged effects of referential transparency within quoted contexts; first-person implicit indirect reports – that is, those reports that do not overtly display the grammatical features of indirect reports, but imply the evidential base of indirect reports; and grammatical errors and, in particular, the role they play in the practice of indirect reporting. In all of these cases, Capone's principal aim is to illustrate the complexity of the negotiations that must take place between reporter and reported in finding an optimal balance between faithfulness to the linguistic and cultural features of the original speech and intelligibility of what is reported. This complex dialogue between properties of the linguistic code, actionality, and theory of mind demonstrates the limitations of accounts that restrict themselves to the literal dimension.

The last two chapters further extend Capone's framework to the topic of presupposition. In contrast with a tradition that regards presuppositions as nondefeasible and relegates them to the sentential domain, Capone defends the 'admittedly controversial claim that presuppositions are normally defeasible inferences' (263). The resulting view of presuppositions stresses once again their dialogic dimension and highlights the limits of regarding them solely as a sentential phenomenon. This view is further supported by an especially interesting discussion

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of clitics in the context of modal subordination demonstrating that the apparent opacity of the presuppositions triggered by pronominal clitics is a product of the fact that clitics refer back to enriched propositions (rather than minimal ones). In this way, Capone reconnects his view of presuppositionality with the more general framework that is defended in the first part of the book.

Overall, Capone's book offers an extraordinarily rich overview of the state of the art in the semantics/pragmatics debate and does so by reviewing a broad range of topics in linguistic theory. This is always done in the context of comprehensive critical reviews of the different positions expressed in the literature, oftentimes by reconnecting streams of the research that are otherwise divided across disciplinary boundaries.

Importantly, Capone never abstains from examining the issues at hand from the perspective of his own theoretical standpoint as he has developed it in his previous works. In this way, he is able to take the reader right into the heart of the debate through the lens of a meaningful theoretical stance. Furthermore, the book offers to the interested reader the opportunity to appreciate the relevance of the debate to the more general understanding of the language faculty, both as a cognitive machinery and as a praxis of communication and social interaction.

For these reasons, the book represents, in my view, an extremely useful tool to all professionals interested in an up-to-date, comprehensive, theoretically-driven over-view of the state of the art in the semantics/pragmatics debate as well as to those scholars from adjacent fields who wish to approach traditional issues in pragmatics from a critical up-to-date perspective.

Taken as a whole, Capone's work offers a formidable argument that language is irreducibly dialogic. This is demonstrated by the observation that, more often than not, a narrow focus on literal meaning and a lack of attention to the actual praxis of language fails to provide us with satisfying explanations of even some of the most familiar aspects of language. Abandoning such narrow focus brings only advantages. It allows us to place language at the intersection between mind and action. It also gives us a chance to reconnect philosophical and empirical traditions that have been kept apart for too long and whose interaction can only be fruitful.

One general remark concerns the use of a priori considerations in support of particular theoretical stances. On several occasions, Capone exploits reasons of simplicity (in the form of an updated version of Occam's Razor) to dismiss an analysis that relies on both semantic and pragmatic primitives in favour of one that is entirely pragmatic. This strategy is used, for example, in the discussion of the attributive/referential ambiguity in the interpretation of definite descriptions. It is proposed that a purely pragmatic account of the ambiguity is to be preferred because it is more parsimonious than one that also requires reference to semantic principles. Whereas considerations of simplicity are without doubt a powerful tool in any scientific enterprise they should, in my view, always be complemented by empirical evidence. To be sure, this is hardly a criticism of Capone's work. To begin with, his use of a priori considerations in the study of linguistic phenomena is discussed and

motivated from the first pages of the book and represents one of the most significant points of connection between pragmatics and philosophy. Furthermore, these considerations always take place in the context of extensive discussions of the actual linguistic data. This also means, however, that Capone's work is as much an achievement as it is the starting point for further research. With his novel – sometimes admittedly controversial – hypotheses, Capone urges us to reconsider the received canon and think outside the boundaries of the more traditional methods of linguistic theorizing. Such efforts, however, should also pay significant attention to solidifying the empirical foundations of the theoretical edifice.

A last remark that I wish to put forward concerns the organization of the book. Although the different chapters contribute together to a number of general themes and, in this way, allow Capone to delineate the more general contours of his views on language, they are written in such a way that they can be accessed independently. This makes the book a very flexible tool. However, it also means that the reader who wishes to read the book in its entirety is confronted with a significant degree of redundancy as a number of concepts are inevitably repeated across different chapters.

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Virginia Hill & Alexandru Mardale, *The diachrony of differential object marking in Romanian* (Oxford Studies in Diachronic and Historical Linguistics 45). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. Pp. xiv + 272.

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Hill and Mardale's book *The diachrony of differential object marking in Romanian* stands out from the vast majority of works dedicated to the complex landscape of differential object marking in Romanian in several respects. First, as opposed to analyzing just the modern standard Romanian picture (as is commonly done), it focuses on the emergence and development of this phenomenon against a typological background. It thus combines two perspectives, namely diachronic syntax