Review of Hanna Pishwa (ed.). *Language and social cognition: Expression of the social mind.* Berlin / New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2009, vi + 476 pp., ISBN: 978-3-11-020586-2.

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Human nature is intrinsically social. We are, therefore, always aware of, sensitive to and responsive to the intersubjective world, in which we are present through our embodied (we could say whole-person) interaction. Language is naturally an elegant device serving to coordinate, (re)organize, manage and apprehend this social reality, but it is by no means the only mode of our intersubjective presence. This encapsulates what lies at the very heart of many approaches to language today, including Cognitive Linguistics. It is also the thrust of Pishwa's volume, felicitously rendered in the title *Language and social cognition: Expression of the social mind*. The book constitutes a noteworthy contribution to the current linguistic movement that places the natural habitat of the speaker, *viz.* the community, at the heart of language analysis (cf. Zlatev et al. 2008; Kronenfeld 2008).

Language acquisition and the concomitant personal development do not happen in a vacuum, but are socio-culturally determined and conditioned to the extent that neither language nor personhood could ever crystallize without social and cultural influences. Just as there is a continuum from semantics to pragmatics, so the boundary between individual cognition and social cognition, referred to variably also as the shared mind, collective cognition, distributed cognition, or intersubjectivity, is blurred. The individual and socio-cultural planes of cognition form one integrated whole—that which is shared intersubjectively is not possessed in its entirety by any single individual, and that which is individual results from the social, but also contributes to it in a collective manner (cf. Keller 1994).

What are the functions and place of the social element in this whole constituting the human mind? How does it relate to human (inter)activity and how does it influence its various levels? These are the questions posed by the authors of the seventeen chapters of the present book. The articles are organized into three sections devoted to language (Chapters 2–6), discourse (Chapters 7–12), and linguistic structures (Chapters 13–17). The book starts with an introductory note from the editor, placing the volume in its research context and summarizing contents briefly. The volume closes with a subject index.

The first section, *Social cognition and language*, looks at the interrelations between human cognition, its encoding, and culture. The holistic picture that emerges from the discussion here is that it is inherently human to be continually

and entirely part of a larger whole, a community of interacting subjects united by a common communicative system. Individualism transpires here to evolve from and rely on human intersubjective engagement, which, in turn, collectively ensures social cohesion and continuity. Thus, a socio-culturally and spatio-temporally situated subject is shown to be the center of attention for any linguistic pursuits, and language emerges as the grounding of material and abstract reality, as cognized by conceptualizers.

Chapter 2 (Gontier) provides a historiographic sketch of the shift from referential to social treatment of language in scientific thought. The author shows how language came to be seen as a universal potential, an inborn and natural predisposition, whose schematic structures become specific and definite manifestations through interactive exposure to a culture. The article delineates the path that led from an objective to an increasingly intersubjective approach to language, in which the object of study is perceived as indicative of culturally established conventions coordinating social life, rather than absolute truths reflective of the world.

Hougaard and Hougaard (Chapter 3) espouse a genuinely social framework of sense constructed interactively by embodied agents engaged holistically in actual communication and drawing on all available resources. Hence, understanding, knowledge and meaning emerge for the individual from the embodied, other-oriented, contextualized, holistic and co-coordinated interaction with the intersubjective world. They are, therefore, inherently social, and individuals are inescapably shaped by their intersubjective histories. Along such lines of thought, the authors put forward a fused, or integrated, view of interaction and sense-making, in which no arbitrary divisions are assumed and, in which, meaning construction is not decontextualized or reduced to a monomodal perception of language. How the body and its movements contribute to sense-making is exemplified on the basis of an interactive situation involving a patient with aphasia and her speech therapist.

Patent (Chapter 4) considers the schema of a person in Chinese and American communities, which reveals unexpected similarities between the two drastically divergent worlds. The findings lead to the conclusion that there exist a range of universal schematic "supracultural models" which receive culture-specific instantiations relative to different communities. The particular realizations of such schemas can be observed in language, which "is reflective of conceptual structure" (p. 80). The conceptual dimension, in turn, when shared, is constitutive of culture. The latter is viewed as a dynamic, multifaceted, flexible system of solutions and devices employable in interactive situations, which exhibits cross-cultural divergences, but which is not deprived of a common universal denominator.

Chapter 5 (Kuha and Bolgün) focuses on the concept of privacy and its conceptualization in Finnish and Turkish. It is demonstrated that the schema is

grounded in, and responsive to, the changes in the social situation of the two communities. The latter language does not encode the category in question as a noun, but only in the adjectival form, which, as pointed out by the authors, has an impact on the semantic scope of the category and its possible implications. Nominalization encourages reification, which renders an otherwise abstract concept much more concrete, comparable to an object. The authors even suggest that such objectification makes it "more natural to construct privacy as . . . a possession that can be protected by law".

Chapter 6 (Sharifian) discusses the notion of cultural cognition, which is presented as a collective, macro-level phenomenon emerging from the interaction of micro-level individual cognitions. The system is complex, dynamic and highly responsive to the actions of the interactors, none of whom is in possession of the entire system. Language is viewed as a "memory bank" through which cultural cognition, along with the conceptualizations it stores, is (re)constructed, maintained, and distributed through space and time. This anchoring of thought and language in culture is exemplified on the basis of a number of languages.

Section 2, *Social cognition in discourse*, concentrates on how speakers co-construct and negotiate an emergent interactive space with the use of conventional and novel, if not violational, resources and solutions. To be intersubjectively successful, which has been identified by Keller (1994) as the main motivation in human interaction, the subject must comply with conventionally sanctioned rules of conduct so as to be understood, while also finding new ways of expression not to become bland. This ties in perfectly with what Hanks (2010: 10) postulates when he points out that in language use there is a continuous interplay between "norms and exploitations".

Holtgraves and Anderson (Chapter 7) perceive social cognition as accounting for how interactors adhere to intersubjective rules of communication. Interaction is naturally a matter of balancing the conventional Gricean maxims of conduct and violations thereof in such a way as to be intersubjectively intelligible, without losing one's idiosyncratic subjectivity and becoming too frigid and fossilized. The intra- and inter-personal dimensions of human cognition, the individual and the social, are integrated into one whole. The authors emphasize that judgment formation and, in fact, any action hinges not only on the cognizer's internal experiential knowledge and cognizing abilities, but also on their awareness of and responsiveness to the communicative context (e.g. setting, topic, attitude toward the interlocutor, relation between interlocutors, etc). Any human action is, therefore, socially underlain.

Chapter 8 (Langlotz) discusses the intercultural pitfalls encountered by Swiss tourist information officers due to their deficient competence in English. To solve the communicative problem, they engage in a creative intersubjective process of sense-making, which is situated, contextualized and based on play

with "conventionally encoded social concepts" (p. 205), and which has recourse to such indirect means as irony. Langlotz shows how a local, context-sensitive personal identity is expressed and negotiated through creative interactive strategies relative to an emergent co-constructed communicative model of reality. This conversationally established local reality, which may often violate conventional expectations, must be shared by the interlocutors in order for communication to be successful. Social cognitive competence, in this context, can be seen as a reservoir of entrenched default frames representing intersubjective relational structures and processes. These frames, however, are flexible, dynamic and responsive to context, thus allowing speakers to adjust to and/or direct any social situation so as to make sense of it.

Bridges and Barlett (Chapter 9) turn to the processes of constructing and communicating knowledge schemata concerning the concept SUCCESS, which they examine through close qualitative analysis of an interview with a former L2 administrator. Communication is here viewed as "an intersubjective, co-constructed accomplishment" organized by all its active participants, in which conceptual content is structured and its elements are prioritized according to a pre-conceived schematic outline of what is to be conveyed. It is also affected by speaker's perspective. The authors demonstrate that social cognition determines the perspective taken on a given topic, filters and organizes the message to be expressed, thus playing an essential role in knowledge communication.

Koller (Chapter 10) concentrates on the process of creation and discursive dissemination of a positive corporate identity, i.e. a desired brand personality model constituting the image of a given company in the business community. The article seeks to identify the structure of such socio-cognitively established brands, while also unraveling the textual means through which they are constructed. These objectives are achieved through qualitative analysis of corpus data, conducted in light of Critical Discourse Analysis. Ideal 'selves', textually projected and reinforced by companies, are shown to be driven by metonymic and metaphorical structuring, reflected in the use of pertinent linguistic devices, which are ultimately biased toward the brand under construction.

Ritchie (Chapter 11) addresses the socio-cognitive and emotive dimensions of science in the context of the discovery of the "double helix structure of the DNA" and the elaboration and distribution of the expertise in the community. The focus is on playful behaviors in scientific communication, which enhance creativity, facilitate and organize the social reality of science, advance its information channels and products. Collaboration of a network of scientists, competition neutralized through playfulness, constructive criticism and constant exchange of ideas make research much more efficient. The author emphasizes that the notion of social cognition incorporates not only individual awareness of social relational structures, but also the interactive events which form, maintain, distribute and extend the social macro-phenomenon. This process-product

dyad of cognition is an integrated whole. Intersubjective situations naturally provide a facilitative environment for acquiring, testing, and adjusting social skills required for successful functioning in a community (see Andersen 1973).

In a largely theoretical investigation, Kreuz and Caucci (Chapter 12) consider the social aspects of verbal irony. The authors emphasize how convenient this figure of speech is and how it can be used for a wide spectrum of social reasons, such as politeness, humor, originality, persuasion, and reducing the impact of negative evaluation. Insofar as it breaks the Gricean principle of quality, and similarly to other nonliteral uses of language, its understanding will never be absolute, even when facilitated by the use of verbal or nonverbal cues suggesting the figurativeness of the intended reading. The authors argue that there are individual, regional, and even gender- or occupation-specific discrepancies in the use and understanding of irony. Citing evidence on "online reading measures", the authors argue that ironic comments on positive situations tend to take more comprehension time. There are further differences in the use of irony resulting from such social variables as shared background knowledge, intimacy, or mode of interaction.

Section 3, *Social cognitive functions of single structures*, narrows its scope of investigation to specific linguistic categories. It is demonstrated here how the choice speakers make with respect to linguistic and paralinguistic means of expression affects the meaning of the message and its intersubjective impact, and how this choice is influenced by a whole range of socio-cognitive factors contextualizing the speech event. Subjects are sensitive to and aware of the manifold social subtleties and of many of the implications of their expressive decisions. Cognitive models, circumscribed within cultural models, are shown to be schematic structures, which have a plethora of manifestations in particular contexts. Similarly to some of the contributions in the previous section, here too, a number of papers take advantage of corpora, which are representative of the macrostructural plane of language, in turn, giving us access to collective cognition (cf. Glynn in press; Krawczak and Glynn in press).

The first contribution to the last section (Chapter 13, Fiedler and Freytag) considers attribution, which concerns the identification of causes, and its relation to language. The authors discuss, in theoretical terms, the influences of the use of four types of predicates, occurring in utterances describing intersubjective situations, namely, descriptive action verbs, interpretive action verbs, state verbs, and adjectives. The choice of a given category to encode a particular interpersonal event is posited to affect the interpretation in terms of internal or external causation, controllability or its lack on the part of the subject, and local or global character of the object of conception. This will naturally determine the course of cause attribution and further impact upon the functions language serves. Expeditious use of such linguistic devices may

enable cooperative communication, but they may also lend themselves to efficient manipulation.

Chapter 14 (Schulze) explores recurrent collocational patterns in English in search of implicit messages encoded therein. The view taken here is that the social world, to which we all tend and in which we all evolve, function, and (inter)act, is subject to (inter)textual mediation. Hence, Schulze posits that social or collective knowledge, sustainable and ratifiable through textual use, can be recovered from the analysis of large corpora, which can "provide insights into the multi-faceted nature of general, accumulated and cultural knowledge". The author analyzes the occurrences of pre-constructed phrases with *hindsight*. Such "multi-word units" have specific semantic and pragmatic associations and are used by speakers in relevant contexts, as determined by prior communicative experience. Close inspection of the usage features associated with such "recurrent word combinations" in large textual data sets gives us insights into the social knowledge circulating in the community.

Bednarek (Chapter 15) concentrates on the implicit and explicit (both verbal and nonverbal) expression of emotions in English and their discursive function. Emotions are seen as embodied constructs, integrating physical, psychological and social dimensions of human existence. They are implicated in a cause-and-effect chain insofar as they result from some external conditioning factors and possibly elicit from the "Emoter" a particular reaction. Language expressing affect is shown to be used by speakers to justify or explain behaviors, opinions, or to make demands less direct. It is also demonstrated that when emotional states are ascribed to other subjects, it is common to append it with some justification clarifying the attribution. Every culture will have "potential schemata" of emotions that are part of the general world knowledge, and which serve as reference points against which to interpret and negotiate "actualized schemata", as realized in context. Bednarek here joins the long-standing assumption that potential cognitive models acquire actual sense when instantiated, and that they are underpinned by cultural models.

The next contribution (Chapter 16, Kitis) to the section on the social cognitive function of individual expressions also deals with emotions. It discusses *fear* predicates in English and Greek and their unidirectional historical journey from propositional, through subjective expressive to intersubjective meanings. This move from more descriptive to increasingly pragmatic uses is also visualized on the formal dimension, where the verbs drop their complementizers and surface medially in parenthetical uses. The original motion meaning has been bleached completely so that only the subjective and intersubjective meanings remain. The author emphasizes the social underpinning of emotions and the existence of a metonymic link between the physical symptoms of an emotion, its internal influences, and interpersonal extensions dictated by intersubjective sensitivity.

The last paper (Chapter 17, Chilton) is devoted to metaphorical representations of space, time and society. Chilton starts by accentuating the primacy of spatial experience and its rendering in language by means of prepositions, presenting the three main spatial orientations related to the human body. He then turns to a brief discussion of the theory of metaphor in Cognitive Linguistics. He concentrates on the metaphorical projections from the domain of space to that of time and presents some cross-linguistic juxtapositions to illustrate how the concept is culturally bounded. This is followed by the analysis of how social structures are conceptualized in terms of space. So not only do spatial cognitive abilities enable us to conceptualize time along the three axes, but they also structure our social cognition, making it possible to understand social structures and relations in terms of distances, directionality and other image-schematic orientations. Naturally, as is the case with time, there will be conceptual differences in such cross-domain mappings between languages.

The volume joins the growing movement in linguistics toward a holistic and integrated treatment of language. In light of this approach, it is assumed that the individual thrives on and develops from the social, and that the social subsists dynamically on and evolves systematically within its conventional frames from the interaction between individuals. This mutual symbiosis between the subjective and intersubjective planes of human cognitive functioning is the foundation of thought, meaning and language as well as any other conceptual and behavioral product of human activity. It is, therefore, impossible to consider any such objects of study without a holistic treatment of the subject psychosomatically and culturally situated in space and time. This assumption, endorsed also by the authors of the contributions to the present volume, ought to underlie any comprehensive research into language.

The book is an important say on the matter of social cognition. It brings together more general theoretical issues, and empirical studies thereof. It thus shows how cognition relates to and informs research into language, interaction, and discourse, a relation which is not always acknowledged. Despite the breadth of scope and the unquestionably important contribution to the theories of social cognition made by the book, stronger empirical advances could have been offered. Overall, however, the volume deserves attention from any socio-cognitively oriented linguist.

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