Haase Zsófia:
Enikő Németh T. & Károly Bibok (eds.): The Role of Data at the Semantics-Pragmatics Interface
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Recenzió

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The nature of linguistic data and evidence in different linguistic theories has recently been in the focus of linguistic interest. Several works published lately on this topic (cf. e.g. Penke & Rosenbach (eds.) 2007, Borsley (ed.) 2004, Kepser & Reis (eds.) 2005, Featherson & Winkler (eds.) 2009, Winkler & Featherson (eds.) 2009 etc.) address the most fundamental problems of contemporary linguistics in the form of the following questions:

(i) What constitutes data and evidence in linguistic theories?
(ii) What kind of relationship is there between data/evidence and hypotheses of linguistic theories?
(iii) What is the relationship between evidence and the rest of data in linguistic theories? (p. 1)

The papers included in the present volume attempt to reflect consciously on data use in particular object theoretical research, what is more, they seek and apply highly new meta-theoretical tools at the same time. In proposing 10 original contributions to the debate on the data problem in linguistics, the authors address the metatheoretical questions mentioned above from new perspectives. The basis for this is provided by various object theoretical investigations situated at the interface of semantics and pragmatics.

The volume entitled *The Role of Data at the Semantics-Pragmatics Interface* and edited by two contributing researchers of the Research Group for Theoretical Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences at the Universities of Debrecen, Szeged and Pécs was published at Mouton de Gruyter (Berlin & New York). Among the contributors, besides the two editors, we find three other researchers of the research group, as well as foreign experts of this field of study.

The introduction by Enikő Németh T. and Károly Bibok (*Introduction: The semantics-pragmatics interface from linguistic and metalinguistic perspectives*) gives a general overview and a chapter by chapter synopsis of the book. After addressing the data problem in linguistics, the second section of the first part of the introduction deals with the conceptions of the semantics-pragmatics interface in the studies presented. In the past few years several suggestions have been put forward to delimit semantics and pragmatics theoretically. According to one of the widely known conceptions, semantics can be looked upon as the

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linguistic subfield dealing with utterance meaning and pragmatics as that dealing with implied meaning. The editors point out, however, that many of the problems emerging in object theoretical research cannot be solved by applying only semantic or pragmatic methodology. As a result, all of the issues that the contributions to the present volume attempt to solve are not only semantic or pragmatic in nature but are also situated at the interface of semantics and pragmatics. Finally, the last section of the first part of the introduction concerns the methodological findings in the volume. By reflecting consciously on data use in actual object theoretical research and at the same time, applying specific metatheoretical tools, the papers suggest the following answers to the questions (i)-(iii) above. As to question (i), most contributors to the volume agree in that the common distinction of sources of data collection, i.e. introspection, corpora and experiments, is not tenable. Instead, they rely on a wide range of data sources, including, among others, various types of experiments, linguists' intuitions and intuitions of speakers not trained as linguists, written and spoken, monolingual and parallel corpora, dictionaries, etc. Besides emphasising the pluralism of data, the editors also stress two statements. First, they maintain that no general claim can be made that a type of data is inherently better than another type of data. Second, they also postulate that there are limits to all forms of data, even corpora. Finally, the conclusion is drawn that the various types of data have to be considered necessarily complementary, they are intertwined in a complex way. As regards question (ii), the authors reach the agreement that data are multifunctional in linguistic theorizing. They can not only be regarded as the empirical basis for theory formation and as tools of testing in various phases of theory formation, but they also have a special function in reporting on research. Simultaneously, data are considered theory- and problem- dependent. The relationship between theory and data is regarded as cyclic and even prismatic (in Kertész & Rákosi's (2008) sense) and it is emphasised that it is always the actual aims, problems and argumentation processes that determine what can serve as data in what functions. In connection with question (iii), and also to (i), the metatheoretical relevance of the type-token distinction is offered for consideration. Accordingly, false judgements or deficient analyses of data as separate tokens cannot destroy a theory. Consequently, what counts as evidence for theory construction is only a set, or a type, of data considered in their totality.

Part One deals with *Issues of referentiality*, Part Two bears the title *Scalar implicatures and beyond* and Part Three directs the attention to *Pragmatic ways from words to constructions and utterances*.

The first study in Part One by Márta Maleczki (*On the definiteness effect in existential sentences: Data and theories*) investigates the reasons for the presence of the definiteness restriction in existential sentences. The author claims that the definiteness restriction can be traced back both to formal semantic and pragmatic relations depending on the type and the range of the particular data base underlying the investigation. The question can only be settled if, while characterising existential sentences, we rely on the widest range of data types available. In the second paper of Part One, Zoltán Vecsey (*On the semantics and pragmatics of shifted indexicals*) contrasts the formalised model of indexicals with the relevant data of natural language use. While the formalised model precludes the possibility of the speakers shifting the context of indexicals, natural language use allows it in some cases. According to Vecsey, the contradiction can only be solved if the semantic model is supplemented by pragmatic considerations. In the last chapter of Part One, Thorsten Fretheim (*Demonstratives and reference to individuated objects vs. reference to properties of objects: A contrastive*

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analysis) addresses similar questions. The author challenges the formal model of demonstratives, i.e. the dominant view that demonstratives, both complex and simplex ones, are directly referential terms that pick out an individual. By relying on a parallel corpus of English and Norwegian, Fretheim comes to the conclusion that in both languages grammatically definite demonstratives are semantically underspecified with regard to whether they refer to an object or to a type of entity defined in terms of certain properties. His explorations revealed, however, that there is a much greater tolerance for definite demonstratives that are intended to represent a type of entity in English than in Norwegian. In his study, the author combines the use of diverse research methods, such as intuitive judgements (both that of the linguist and of speakers who are not trained as linguists) and a bilateral translation corpus of English and Norwegian texts.

The papers in Part Two deal with the semantic and pragmatic questions of scalar implicatures. The first study by Napoleon Katsos and Richard Breheny (*Two experiments and some suggestions on the meaning of scalars and numerals*) investigates the semantics and pragmatics of scalar expressions and numerals experimentally, in that the authors compare the possible variants of the empirical theory of scalar implicatures. The authors conclude that deriving straightforward empirically testable predictions from the data of psycholinguistic experiments and considering these as corroborating a particular theory requires further conceptual and experimental work. In the second paper of Part Two, Reinhard Blutner (*Some experimental aspects of optimality theoretic pragmatics*) argues for optimality theory as a conceptual framework that can help to close the gap between experimental pragmatics and neo-Gricean theories of pragmatics. The author shows that optimality theoretic pragmatics is able to account both for the synchronic and the diachronic perspective in pragmatics. As to the role of data at the semantics-pragmatics interface, Blutner discusses recent work on the phenomenon of delayed comprehension and delayed production. A phenomenon the importance of which was clearly recognised within optimality theoretic pragmatics, but was not discussed within experimental pragmatics so far.

The studies in Part Three investigate the pragmatic aspects of constructions and utterances. The first paper by Katalin Nagy C. (*The cognitive background of grammaticalization*) intends to reconstruct the semantic changes the Catalan "*anar* 'go' + Infinitive" construction underwent within the theoretical framework of historical pragmatics. In doing this, she relies on data obtained from a historical corpus. The author also reveals the cognitive background of semantic change as well as the cognitive development of lexical units undergoing grammaticalization by relying on a detailed contextual analysis. The conception of context is also clarified: The author distinguishes between contexts which offer ambiguity and thus trigger grammaticalization, and those which exclude the original lexical meaning of the grammaticalizing item and thus serve as evidence of previous semantic change. Nagy C. makes a further distinction between narrow context, which she defines grammatically, and broad context, which does not only refer to textual circumstances but also includes encyclopaedic information and inferences in context. In her study the author demonstrates that semantic change in grammaticalization can only be investigated at the semantics-pragmatics interface. Furthermore, careful contextual analysis has proved to be the most important methodological device in historical pragmatics. In the second study in Part Three Károly Bibok (*From syntactic alternation to lexical pragmatics*) demonstrates the extendibility of the lexical-constructional approach into lexical pragmatics, which holds that as words have underspecified, although semantically and pragmatically enriched meaning representations, they

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reach their full meanings in corresponding contexts through considerable pragmatic interference. The author criticises the lexical-constructional approach to syntactic alternations as it determines what kind of examples should be considered as data for what kind of word meanings, and how meanings in (explanatory) dictionaries can be used as data. Bibok states that since examples from real use of language are always bound to corresponding situations, they cannot be related immediately to underspecified meanings. Thus, the full range of conceptual meaning can only be determined through pragmatic inferences. The third paper by Enikő Németh T. bears the title *How lexical-semantic factors influence the verbs' occurrence with implicit direct object arguments in Hungarian*. It examines the lexical-semantic properties of verbs with implicit direct object arguments in Hungarian. The lexical-semantic representation of these verbs can be interpreted in two ways: either the actions or events denoted by the verbs are in the focus or the object as well. The author argues that not even this twofold interpretability explains the differences in the use of these verbs properly. Therefore, the author concludes that besides the lexical-semantic interpretation one also has to take grammatical and pragmatic elements into consideration. Németh T. also reflects on the methodological aspects of her research in that she discusses the views on functions and sources of data (e.g. Kertész & Rákosi 2008) and demonstrates what relationships and overlaps can be assumed between these functions and sources without any inconsistency. The author uses data from various direct sources in her research, which eliminates the disadvantages of the individual particular sources. She finally concludes that her particular practice in the research supports Kertész and Rákosi's (2008) approach to the relationship between the theory and data (see above). In his paper Michael Haugh (*Co-constructing what is said in interaction*) explores the way in which speaker intuitions about what is said can be used as data in the case of a particular interactional phenomenon, the co-construction of syntactic units by two or more speakers in conversation. First, the author demonstrates that co-construction in fact lies at the syntax-semantics-pragmatics intersection and should be analysed as such. Secondly, he argues that co-constructions actually constitute evidence of participants orienting to (speaker) meanings rather than just syntax in interaction. Third, it is also argued that while interactional data and analysis may seem primarily of interest to researchers in pragmatics, semantics is also informed by such research and methods. In his chapter Attila L. Nemesi (*Data-gathering methods in research on hyperbole production and interpretation*) emphasises the essential role of hyperbole in everyday communication. Relying on corpus data originating from conversations in classic Hungarian movies he attempts to answer the question of what aspects of hyperbole are semantically specified and which aspects come about through pragmatic processes. In the methodological part of his research, Nemesi also estimates the data collection methods of several scholars who investigated hyperboles. Preferring observable data taken from spoken corpora, Nemesi also accepts the usefulness of imagined and meta data in particular cases. The author finally considers the validity of data as depending on the aim of research.

All in all, on the basis of what has been said above, the results of the volume can be summed up as follows. All the contributions to the present volume are novel in both an object theoretical and a methodological respect. As regards object theory, the studies emphasise the interaction of semantics, grammar and pragmatics and besides synchronic analyses they also touch upon diachronic aspects. Concerning methodology, the authors apply metatheoretical tools to reflect consciously on data use in their object theoretical research. Finally, it can be concluded that on the one hand, object theoretical research at the semantics-pragmatics

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interface is more reliable, systematic and has more explanatory power if metatheoretical reflections are applied on data use. On the other hand, the questions concerning data and evidence can be answered only by considering the practice of particular object theoretical research.

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