Tim Wharton and Louis de Saussure

32 The pragmatics of emotion, argument and conflict

Abstract: This chapter synthesizes an account of emotions and emotion-reading that fits with work on emotions in cognitive science (Cosmides and Tooby 2000; Deonna and Teroni 2012) and cognitive models of pragmatics (Blakemore 2002; Carston 2001; Sperber and Wilson [1986] 1995, 2015; Wilson 2015). From cognitive science, we adopt two ideas: firstly, that an emotion is a kind of superordinate cognitive mechanism, the function of which is to mobilize cognitive processes responsible for perception and attention, physiological changes, etc.; secondly, that emotions are viewed as attitudes bearing on evaluations. Our account builds on these observations using relevance-theoretic pragmatics. The kind of information conveyed during emotional communication puts the user into a state in which emotional procedures are highly activated, and are therefore much more likely to be recognized and selected by an audience (Wharton 2009, 2015). Central to this thinking is the idea that the notion of cognitive effect needs to be complemented by a new notion of ***affective*** *effect*, typically activated by emotion-reading procedures. Our account can be extended to all emotional states, but we concentrate here on positive and negative states, with particular attention paid to their role in argumentation, epistemic attitudes and poetic artefacts (de Saussure 2013, forthcoming).

1 Introduction

1.1 Beyond propositional meaning

Since the communication of information about emotional states clearly plays a central role in human interaction, it might be presumed that pragmatic accounts of linguistic communication would include well-developed views on how these states are communicated. However, for a range of reasons, those aspects of linguistic communication which feel as if they go beyond the strictly propositional dimension have long been dismissed by scholars

Tim Wharton, Brighton, UK
Louis de Saussure, Neuchâtel, Switzerland

interested in meaning: as a result, the emotional dimension is nowhere. Although speech-act philosophers found ways to incorporate aspects of non-truth conditional meaning in terms of propositional attitudes, the direct expression of emotional states, as opposed to the description of such states, is largely ignored. As we see in Section 3, for some the domain of a theory of communication is even smaller. Consider the following quote from Steven Levinson: "[A] theory of communication has as its target the full scope of Grice's (1957) non-natural meaning [...] Meaning$_{NN}$ (or something of the sort) draws an outer boundary on the communicational effects that a theory of communication is responsible for" (Levinson 2000: 12–13).

In this chapter, we suggest directions through which the study of pragmatics might be extended beyond the domain of 'propositional meaning' and address the communication of emotions. In order to do this, we explore how a pragmatic theory can account for the communication of impressions, expressives and other affect-related, 'ineffable' dimensions of human communication. Our aim is to synthesize an account of the pragmatics of emotional communication that interacts in useful ways with work on emotions in cognitive science (Cosmides and Tooby 2000), philosophy (Deonna and Teroni 2012) and cognitive models of pragmatics (Blakemore 2002; Carston 2001; Sperber and Wilson 1995, 2015; Wilson 2015). With that in mind, in the next section we present a short history of the development of modern cognitive pragmatics, offer an overview of how the expressive dimension of linguistics communication is generally treated (or overlooked) and introduce the cognitive pragmatic theory we adopt in what follows. Central to this thinking is the idea that current relevance-theoretic notions need to be complemented by a new one: the notion of *affective effect* (Wharton and Strey forthcoming). In Section 3 we introduce those aspects of cognitive pragmatics which are central to the account we offer and in Section 4 we explore love, argument and conflict.

1.2 Affective effects

On 10 November 1988, Philipp Jenninger, then Head of the West German parliament in Bonn, rose to speak on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of *Kristallnacht*. He began by attempting to outline some of the reasons he felt National Socialism had captured the imagination of so many Germans at that time. The rhetorical style he chose was to represent as closely as possible the perspective of an ordinary German of the 1930s who was favourable to the Nazi movement. He would, of course, clearly dissociate himself from the views he was reporting.

And so, mimicking the tone and stance of early Nazi partisans, Jenninger wondered out loud what it was they had found so "fascinating" (his word) about Naziism. Adopting free indirect speech, he continued:

> From mass unemployment had come full employment, from mass misery, something like prosperity for the broadest layers of the population. Rather than despair and hopelessness, optimism and self-confidence now ruled. Didn't Hitler make true what Kaiser Wilhelm II had only promised, namely, to lead the Germans toward glorious times? Had he not truly been selected by Providence, a Führer, as Providence grants to a people only once in a thousand years?

> And as for the Jews, had they not, in the past, presumptuously assumed a role which they did not deserve? Shouldn't they finally, for once, have to put up with some restrictions? Didn't they perhaps deserve to be put back in their place? (quote from *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 11 November 1988, our translation; see also de Saussure 2012)

The response his performance elicited was not what Jenninger had hoped for. More than 50 members of the Bundestag promptly walked out. The next day Jenninger was looking for a new job.

Even though there can be little doubt about his intentions – Jenninger had been trying to communicate his abhorrence of Naziism and its crimes – the sensitivity of the members of the Bundestag to anyone who, even apparently, was attempting to legitimise the pro-Nazi vote is hardly surprising. Jenninger himself clearly believed it was *obvious* that he was dissociating himself from the words he had uttered. But his performance was mismanaged and ill-judged. His intention to dissociate himself from the content of what he said *wasn't obvious enough*.

Our purpose in presenting this anecdote is to illustrate the impact that emotion can have. No one present that evening believed Jenninger was a Nazi, or a Nazi sympathiser. They *knew* he wasn't. However, the shock, disgust and revulsion his performance generated was simply impossible to ignore. (One year later, Ignatz Bubis, a prominent member of the Jewish community, used several passages verbatim from Jenninger's speech and offended no-one. [Admittedly, he didn't use the word "fascinating".] This corroborates the claim that it had not been the words Jenninger used that caused the response; rather, his whole performance.)

This kind of event is just one case – though admittedly an extreme one – of those usually known as 'misunderstandings'. But this was not a misunderstanding in the traditional sense. Typically, the spark for misunderstandings is a mismatch between the proposition expressed by the speaker and the one retrieved by the hearer, such as in (1):

(1) A: *My son has grown another foot.*
 B: *He's grown WHAT???*
 A: *No! Another foot in height!*
 (Example from Smith [2001])

'Misunderstandings' such as the one in our introduction occur for very different reasons. The propositional content is immaterial. They rest entirely on emotional responses.

Jenninger's case raises a range of questions, a number of which we will leave aside here (about the role of the institutional setting, the hierarchical position of Jenninger, the background, etc.). In this chapter, we intend to explore the pragmatic processes at play when the expressive dimension of an interaction plays the predominant role in the interpretation of meaning. In our anecdote, the propositional meanings are all but irrelevant: the emotional dimension took over, rendering the content – the propositional dimension – redundant.

2 Emotion and cognitive pragmatics

2.1 The expressive dimension

When we speak of the 'expressive dimension', we have in mind examples such as those in (2) and (4). Both of these utterances contain something 'ineffable', which is impossible to capture in either words, truth conditions (or indeed non-natural meaning). Indeed, the truth-conditional content of (2) and (3) are actually identical to the truth conditions of (4) and (5).

(2) A: *(Disgusted tone of voice) That total prick Thompson has offended an entire nation yet again.*

(3) *Horace Thompson has offended an entire nation yet again.*

(4) A: *(Angrily) Those damn students have asked for an extra bloody class!*

(5) *Those students have asked for an extra class.*

The phrase 'total prick' and the expletives 'damn' and 'bloody' do not contribute to the truth-conditions of the proposition expressed and, indeed, since they involve natural expressions of emotion, do not contribute to non-natural meaning in Grice's sense. A possible objection here is that the role played by what are, after all, specifically English linguistic items precludes these examples from being entirely *natural* expressions of emotion. We maintain nonetheless that the kind of tone of voice, facial expressions that would accompany these utterances would be natural, despite superficial variations. We also claim that even linguistic expressives have a flavour of the non-verbal about them (see de Saussure and Wharton 2020). Moreover, whatever their contribution to the utterance is, it is very hard to pin down. They are 'descriptively ineffable'. To *express* your emotions about someone by using an NP epithet such as 'that total prick' is not the same as describing someone as a total prick. That can easily be done by uttering the sentence in (6):

(6) *Horace Thompson is a total prick.*

While the linguistic status of interjections is much debated (see Wharton 2003, 2009), such expressions also contribute to the expressive dimension of linguistic communication. The utterances in (8) and (10) *describe* emotional states, and indeed are truth-evaluable statements; (7) and (9), by contrast, *express* those states directly.

(7) *Ouch!*

(8) *That hurt a lot!*

(9) *Aha!*

(10) *I'm surprised!*

When, thanks largely to the work of H. Paul Grice, pragmatics was born in the 1950s and 1960s, non-propositional elements such as those above were still disregarded. This is probably the reason why most semanticists conceived (conceive) of 'pragmatics' as a sort of add-on to truth-conditional meaning, which functions simply to resolve the problem of implicatures with conversational maxims (or other mechanisms). David Kaplan (1999) famously refers to pragmatics as a "netherworld". Those scholars of communication who have tried to better understand the emotional dimension have done so via the range of expressions in language that seem to be irreducible to purely conceptual or propositional meanings and serve another purpose. This purpose is usually named 'expressivity'. Notable among the early work in this area are the seminal pre-pragmatics works by Charles Bally at the beginning of the 20th century (Bally 1905, 1910, 1923). Bally differentiated between what is said (the *dictum*) and the way it is said (the *modus*), which he assumed contained expressive components. Other linguists of around the same time (Erdman 1900; van Ginneken 1907; Sperber 1914) criticised the 'ideational orientation' of the semantics that dominated at the time, suggesting that the study of the expressive dimension to linguistic meaning was at least as important as the cognitive one. But from then onwards, the formal study of language has focused on propositional meaning. Nowadays, emotion is a central topic of cognitive science and philosophy, and yet many contemporary frameworks of cognitive science dealing with pragmatics rarely address the issue of emotions conveyed *directly by language*.

2.2 Cognitive pragmatics

Work that has built on the foundations Grice laid has tended to move in one of two directions, each of which was, arguably, inherent in his approach: conventional or cognitive. Firstly, although Grice rarely used the word 'conventional', it is often assumed that within his framework sentence meanings are recovered through semantic conventions (the semantic meanings of words and sentences, or 'what is said', although most people now agree that propositional content is underdetermined by semantic meaning) and speaker meaning through conventions of language *use*, namely Grice's 'Maxims of Conversation' (in turn underpinned by an overarching 'Cooperative Principle'). Secondly, and relatedly – and perhaps one of the reasons Grice avoided the word 'convention' – in his picture both semantic and pragmatic meanings are viewed as involving complex assumptions about speakers' mental states. In Grice's approach, the cognitive processes involved in recovering implicatures are schemes of abductive reasonings. Grice therefore laid the foundations not only of modern pragmatics, but also of a new, *inferential* model of communication.

Contemporary pragmatic theories tend to focus on one of these two directions. On the one hand, the so-called *neo*-Griceans develop the more conventional elements of Grice's approach and assume as fundamental some kind of recourse to conventional rules of language use (Bach 2006; Horn 2007; Levinson 2000). On the other, *post*-Griceans tend to focus not on conventions of language use (whatever they may be) but instead on the cognitive processes which underlie a hearer's recovery of the speaker's intentions. Arguably, the most prominent approach in post-Gricean cognitive pragmatics is Sperber and Wilson's *relevance theory* (1995).

Relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995; Blakemore 2002; Carston 2001; Wilson and Sperber 2002) is built around two principles. According to The Cognitive Principle of Relevance, the human cognitive system is geared to look out for relevant information, which will interact with information that is already mentally represented and lead to *positive cognitive effects* (in the form of true implications, warranted strengthenings or contradictions of existing assumptions).

The disposition to search for relevance is one that is routinely exploited in human communication. Speakers know that listeners will pay attention only to stimuli that are relevant enough, and so in order to attract and hold an audience's attention, they should make their communicative stimuli appear at least relevant enough to be worth processing. More precisely, The Communicative Principle of Relevance claims that by *overtly* displaying an intention to inform – producing an utterance or other ostensive *stimulus* – a communicator creates a presumption that the stimulus is at least relevant enough to be worth processing, and moreover, the most relevant one compatible with her own abilities and preferences. Utterances are relevant because they give rise to cognitive effects.

Imagine you are on holiday. You are staying on a hill above a beach and wake early in the morning in your room. The following thoughts come to mind. (These thoughts represent the context in which new information will be processed.)

(11) *I'll (probably) go snorkelling today.*

(12) *If it's not too windy at the beach, I'll go snorkelling.*

(13) *If it's too windy at the beach, I won't go snorkelling.*

As you walk down to the beach, you might notice a whole range of things: a dog barking, the sound of a motorboat in the distance, small children playing at the water's edge. But none of these things are relevant to you in the context of the thoughts you are entertaining. Some things are available to your consciousness and you know you are aware of them, while others, such as the dog barking in this example, still accessible among the things you know, are not strongly activated in your consciousness and you may even not be aware that you know them. For example, it's likely that there is a radiator in the room in which you are currently reading this, and you know it, but you may well be unaware of that thing at the moment. Elements of knowledge that are highly accessible to consciousness are *more manifest* and things that are not, are *less manifest*. Cognitive effects are all about giving manifestness to pieces of information that were not manifest to the interlocutor, or giving more manifestness to those which are less manifest than the speaker wishes.

In the example above, what you *do* attend to is the fact that the water is flat calm and the flags on the beach are hanging limply. This new information is highly manifest; it strengthens the assumption in (11) and interacts with assumption (12) in order to yield the implication 'I'll (definitely) go snorkelling'. If, by contrast, you had noticed it was really windy as you were walking down to the beach, this information would interact with the assumption in (13) and yield the implication 'I won't go snorkelling'. Notice, also, that assumption (11) is therefore contradicted. Relevance, then, is a property of inputs to cognitive processes, and is defined in terms of cognitive effects gained and processing effort

expended: other things being equal, the more positive cognitive effects gained, and the less processing effort expended in gaining those effects, the greater the relevance of the input to the individual who processes it. We argue that in order to properly accommodate the emotional dimension, current relevance-theoretic notions need to be complemented by a new one: the notion of *affective effect* (Wharton and Strey forthcoming).

2.3 Emotions and affective effects

Before saying more about the notion of *affective effect,* we present what we mean by 'emotion'. Our view is that an emotional state involves the presence of three separate elements. In this we follow Rey (1980), for whom 'emotions' can be distinguished from 'sensations' or 'feelings' by the fact that they involve an interaction between the *cognitive* element necessary for an emotion proper, as well as the *physiological* and *qualitative* elements involved in sensations and feelings. Let's take 'fear' as an example. This emotion is characterised as involving an interaction between a *sensation*, the physiological element – among which are the secretion of epinephrine, a neurotransmitter associated with changes in heart rate and respiration rate, and cortisol, which heightens awareness and short term memory (and impacts negatively on information processing and rational analysis); a *feeling*, the qualitative element – the physical feeling of being afraid, which is typically accompanied by behaviours consistent with feeling this way; and a *cognitive* element – a belief that you are in danger, knowledge that you are in a situation you would prefer not to be in. Whilst emotional states crucially involve cognitive as well as qualitative and physiological elements, 'feelings' or 'sensations' need not.[1] On our construal, 'feeling' an emotion does not involve the cognitive processes which manage epistemic states and other representational outcomes.

Feelings, after all, need not be conscious at all. Having a 'feeling' that the weather is worsening, or that you performed poorly in an exam, differs, we argue, from 'believing' or 'thinking' either of those things. Having a 'feeling' that someone is attracted to you, or that two people are talking about you in a conspiratorial manner, is not the same as believing or thinking those things. While we believe that, ultimately, a theory of cognition should take account of feelings, we do not believe that cognition as it is traditionally construed does.

While the terminology differs, elements of our view make it consistent with the fundamental assumptions of appraisal theory: that emotions consist of several, different components and that they involve an evaluation or appraisal that has caused the reaction (though as we will say below, for us affective effects play a causal role). It also, we claim, fits with the view of emotion presented in Cosmides and Tooby (2000, 2008). They assume that the human mind possesses a species-specific neural architecture which evolved in response to adaptive problems faced by our ancestors. They define emotion as a superordinate cognitive programme, which functions to regulate or mobilise cognitive sub-programmes respon-

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1 Notice, therefore, that our view of 'feeling' is different to those found in Damasio (2006) and appraisal theory (Ellsworth 2013; Frijda 2007; Lazarus 1991; nor in the version by Deonna and Teroni 2012).

sible for perception and attention, goal choice, information-gathering, physiological changes and specialised types of inference.

Roughly since the work of David Hume it has been assumed that rationality alone does not suffice to motivate an individual to engage in an act of reasoning. According to Hume (see Radcliffe 1999), that motivation comes only from the 'passions'. Cognition and affect, so often regarded as two opposing forces, work together in complex ways. As Greenspan puts it: "[E]motions can function as 'enabling' causes of rational decision-making [...] insofar as they direct attention toward certain objects of thought and away from others. They serve to heighten memory and to limit the set of salient practical options to a manageable set, suitable for 'quick-and-dirty' decision-making" (Greenspan 2002: 206).

Emotions generate cognitive processing by constraining the construction of the context in which the informative, propositional underpinnings of the emotional state, for example that the speaker is anxious, afraid, angry, excited, etc., derived by a hearer faced with such stimuli, have to be interpreted. It is in that sense that we understand Greenspan's idea of emotions "limiting the set of salient practical options". Emotions impact on the manifestness of these options and they do this below the level of consciousness.

The domain of relevance theory has traditionally been that of ostensive inferential communication. Wharton (2009) is an extended defence of the claim that spontaneous, natural behaviours (smiles, shivers) can be deliberately and openly shown (to a greater or lesser extent), which brings such behaviours within the realm of intentional communication. However, we hold that just as utterances are complexes of non-natural and natural behaviours, so much of human interaction typically goes on below the level of intentionality. This claim is not a new one: "At all times, we are communicating information about our emotional state, attitudes, and evaluations of whatever we are currently confronting [...] We produce most of our nonverbal cues intuitively, without phenomenological awareness" (Lieberman 2000: 111).

Emotional communication works on a number of different levels. Interjections, facial expression and affective tone of voice lead to the construction of higher-level explicatures and these (together with the proposition expressed by an utterance) lead to strong and weak implicatures (see Sperber and Wilson [1995] on strong and weak communication and strongly and weakly manifest assumptions) by either providing strong support for a single, determinate conclusion or marginally altering the manifestness of a wide array of conclusions. But these positive cognitive effects, we argue, need to be supplemented by a new type of effect: *positive affective effects*.

A person who is experiencing the kind of sensations and feelings summarised above, and typically associated with fear, automatically becomes hyper-alert. In this state, they will perhaps pay a high degree of attention to perceptual inputs they may not normally even notice. Once cognition becomes involved, they will be equipped with an entirely newly defined set of goals, and directed to prioritised inferential processes. Wharton and Strey (forthcoming) argue that these processes are activated by emotional procedures, which play out below the level of consciousness.

The processing of effects involves a notion of personal, intimate experiencing rather than representation and management of conceptual information. This experience is better described in terms of what Sperber and Wilson call "patterns of activation, none of which

might be properly described as the fixation of a belief" (Sperber and Wilson 2015: 139). It does not involve a search for relevance proper but typically arises as the precursor for such a search if necessary. In some cases, such as the Jenninger case discussed above, the affective effects retrieved exhaust what there is to get out of the utterance. In others, they serve as a starting point for a further processing and search for cognitive effects. Thus, it is not that the recovery of affective effects has nothing to do with the derivation of cognitive effects, but rather that the two dimensions may interact. This happens in particular when the hearer infers that the emotion was deliberately displayed by the speaker. However, this is in no way necessary: an utterance may achieve its communicative affective effects without any further need for relevance.

Let's consider a case of non-ostensive behaviour. If John blushes when he comes into contact with Mary, some kind of emotion is likely to be quite straightforwardly attributed to him by a witness of the scene. The witness might assume from John's blushing that he is attracted to her. Depending on the context, this might have a range of possible consequences. But when the display of an emotional state is perceived as ostensive, things are slightly different, since the hearer has to search the reasons for which the emotional state was at all made ostensive; the answer is to be searched in terms of new inferences, new cognitive effects, in which the emotional state serves to constrain the interpretive context, or, rather, the emotional state allows for raising assumptions that will serve in the interpretive context.

In a famous scene from Michael Cacoyannis' 1965 film *Zorba the Greek*, the hero Zorba is working inside the tunnel of a lignite mine when a part of the roof collapses: the mine has lain dormant for years and working inside, where the network of tunnels is only held up by flimsy wooden supports, is a highly risky business. There is a deafening noise and the mouth of the tunnel is obscured by a cloud of dust. Zorba's friend is mortified, and shouts in anguish: 'Zorba!'. All the workers outside the tunnel are immediately alerted to the fact that there is a problem. They wait, prepared for action.

From his friend's tone of voice, Zorba immediately interprets his emotional state. Yet this emotional state is ostensively presented so the easily accessible epistemic proposition – his friend is terrified that he might be hurt – occurs to him together with the fact that this was intended by the speaker to be manifest to him. In turn, this proposition may have a number of consequences as a premise entering in an inference; in the film, it has in particular one consequence, which is that his friend thinks that Zorba has been acting without prudence in testing the mine's roof. This is an inference which can only be derived inasmuch as an assumption, derived on the basis of an affective effect in the first place, could be taken as a premise. Zorba exits safely and responds in a slightly angry tone of voice:

(14) *What?*

This answer communicates that Zorba pretends not to have grasped the affective effect, because otherwise he has to object explicitly to the idea that he was not prudent enough. On the contrary, sticking to the non-emotional content in his response communicates that his friend had no call to be afraid and that his emotional state was, according to him, inappropriate to the situation. Affective effects, as this example shows, orient the context of interpretation and expectations of relevance.

3 Meaning and showing

There are two main ways in which the relevance theory account of utterance interpretation diverges from both traditional Gricean and neo-Gricean ones. These two divergences underpin our ultimate claim: that relevance theory is capable of rising to the challenges we raise in this chapter. The first of these is that within relevance theory the informative intention need not always be described as an intention to communicate a single proposition and propositional attitude. Indeed, Sperber and Wilson suggest that, sometimes, whatever that intention is "cannot be rendered as a proposition at all" (Sperber and Wilson 2015: 125). In relevance theory the informative intention is construed more broadly than merely an intention to communicate a proposition *p:* as an intention "to make manifest *or more manifest* to the audience *a set of assumptions I*" (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 58, our italics). When what is communicated is quite vague, it typically involves a marginal increase in the manifestness of a very wide range of weakly manifest assumptions, resulting in an increased similarity between the cognitive environments of communicator and audience. We will argue later that further finessing is needed to describe and explain the direct communication of emotion, but the above change at least goes some way to laying the ghost of propositionality to rest.

The second difference concerns the line Grice (1957) famously drew between showing and non-natural meaning (meaning$_{NN}$). It has often been remarked that this line has had a huge influence on the development of pragmatics. Many pragmatists continue to focus on the notion of meaning$_{NN}$ and abstract away from cases of showing. So where, in fact, should the line be drawn? According to relevance theory, it should not be drawn at all. Cases of both showing and meaning$_{NN}$ qualify as instances of *ostensive-inferential communication* and instead of there being a cut-off between the two notions, there is a continuum of cases in between.

Sperber and Wilson (2015: 123) amend the original figure of the continuum-as-a-straight-line with a second, separate dimension, which effectively turns the straight line into a square (see Figure 32.1).

The showing-meaning$_{NN}$ continuum (now on the vertical axis) reflects the directness of the evidence presented for the basic layer of information being communicated. Evidence is shown when the ostensive behaviour that demonstrates it is fairly direct: pointing at something is a good example. In a coded response, such as a linguistic utterance, the evidence provided is indirect, and an example of meaning$_{NN}$. Why indirect? Because in order to interpret an utterance the hearer needs to know the code, as well as infer the speaker's intentions.

The new dimension of the continuum, the one between determinate and indeterminate import (on the horizontal axis), reflects the nature of the information that is being pointed out ostensively, whether that information is being shown or meant$_{NN}$. When someone points to a particularly salient object in the environment, or utters the name of that object, what is being shown or meant$_{NN}$ is highly determinate. Whether shown or meant$_{NN}$, the intended import in cases such as this are easily paraphrased in propositional terms. By contrast, poetic metaphors, for example, are cases where what is meant is highly indeterminate: it is 'descriptively ineffable', too nebulous to be paraphrased at all. Some cases of
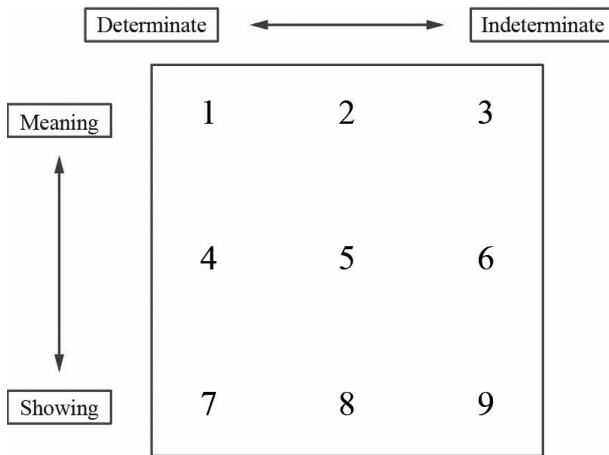
Fig. 32.1: Showing-meaning continuum (Sperber and Wilson 2015: 123).

showing are also indeterminate, too. For example, during the course of a hike, one party stops and takes a deep breath of the fresh air, smiles and sighs ostensively. The sights, sounds and smells (indeed, everything) perceivable in her companion's environment will alter the thoughts he is entertaining, making it possible for him to infer thoughts, memories and feelings similar to her own. What she intended to convey was merely an impression. She did not *mean* any one thing. In contrast to the examples above, the intended import is not paraphrasable at all.

When it comes to the study of expressive meaning, it's hardly surprising that less progress has been made than might be hoped. To ask of an expressive what it *means*, is – in a way – the wrong question.

4 Emotion in language use: further observations

4.1 Affective effects as a means to overcome the limitations of propositional meaning

Emotions play such an important role in human interaction that we take it as an obvious fact that affective effects are as commonplace in linguistic communication as cognitive ones. Affective effects are central to human communication and may even have played a central role in the evolution of linguistic communication (see the 'myth' presented by Grice 1989: 293–297).

In many instances of communication, affective effects allow communicators to overcome the limitations of propositional meaning. The most obvious linguistic cases that involve affective effects are linguistic expressives (see earlier examples), but other cases include the use of what are traditionally called 'figures of speech'; irony is a case of particular interest as it links directly ineffable attitudes, emotional contents, and aspects of interac-

tion involving a face-threatening dimension. Irony is viewed by relevance theory as a case of 'mention', and the same can be said – obviously – of the Jenninger case where free indirect speech is used. What makes utterances ironical, though, is that the 'mention' is echoic, that is, it involves a propositional attitude which, in the case of irony, is implicitly but clearly dissociative. For example: John suggests to Mary that they meet later for a walk, assuring her that it will be sunny. When they meet, however, it is raining. Mary utters the sentence in (15) ironically:

(15) *Yes, lovely weather for a walk!*

Here, she represents John's earlier utterance with an implicit dissociative attitude. As pointed out by de Saussure and Schulz (2009), the ironical component of these utterances cannot be paraphrased; it is thus descriptively ineffable in a manner analogous to expressive meaning.

Not all descriptively ineffable meanings are necessarily connected to affective effects proper, and, therefore, not all instances of irony may bear affective effects. However, it occurs to us that many instances of irony do, in particular those that target an identifiable individual as the bearer of the thought/utterance being represented, which gives rise to feelings of being dismissed or mocked. We now return to the Jenninger case, suggesting that because of an array of mismanaged aspects of communication, anger as an affective effect was created through ineffability without intention. Then, we take a closer look at Zorba's case, where, we think, through emotion, a certain type of (friendly) love is palpable. We conclude this section by looking at the notion of *argument* and its connection with affective effects.

4.2 Revisiting the Jenninger case: conflict

In irony, a speaker uses an array of (tacit) cues which indicate to the speaker that it is implausible that the speaker would utter the sentence *without* distancing herself from it. By contrast, in free indirect speech it is as common for the speaker to actually exhibit her endorsement of the propositional contents as it is not. It is a classical issue in all sorts of reported speech and thought: if a speaker mentions that some other person S has the thought t, it may be that the speaker aims at communicating his endorsement of thought t, or not. This possibility is clearly left open in reported speech, where the pragmatic processing may or may not lead to assume the commitment of the speaker to the propositions reported (see Morency, Oswald, and de Saussure [2008] about commitment with expressives in reported speech).

In the Jenninger case, it occurs to us that for the audience, a few assumptions are salient which not only prevent a mere ironical interpretation (which might have nonetheless created a similar affective effect, as we venture to suggest below) but also are open to an interpretation where the speaker is sympathetic towards the person whose thoughts he is reporting. Because of that, the audience is unable to infer with any degree of conviction that Jenninger is dissociating himself from the thoughts he is presenting as reported. These

assumptions are (possibly among others): (i) the President of the Bundestag cannot plausibly mock the most obvious representative of the nation, i.e. the 'ordinary' German (therefore he can't really be ironic); (ii) he is delivering a fake pro-Nazi speech (which is shocking under any circumstances but even more so in those); (iii) in doing so he is portraying the ordinary German of the 1930s as drastically antisemitic and obviously pro-Nazi (which is only one among other possible conceptions of the then public opinion). Combined together, these assumptions lead the audience to view the speaker, Jenninger, as either pragmatically incompetent, which he obviously was that day, but which is unexpected from a high-ranking politician, or as sympathetic to some degree with the 'ordinary' Nazi German he portrays, which is unacceptable for obvious reasons.

Affective effects arise not because the speaker intends to make his own emotions ostensively manifest to the audience, but because he fails to predict that these affective effects might arise on their own on the basis of his linguistic behaviour. In a sense, this case is parallel to what happens with propositional misunderstandings such as the one in (1). But interestingly in this case, the affective effects have (quite understandably) led to a complete arrest of anything resembling the processing of propositions, or working out of cognitive effects the speaker actually intended to convey as a message. The audience simply opted out from any kind of interaction and couldn't even carry on listening and processing. Affective effects were overwhelming: the affective effect of Jenninger's sympathy towards the ordinary German of whom he was taking the voice triggered a form of anger on the part of the audience.

The Jenninger case rests on a mismanagement of pragmatic communication, on wrongly predicted inferences and reactions – this happened because of very complex effects in communication in the realm of the ineffable. Of course, other emotional expressions such as insults, and emotional speech acts such as threats, do trigger the related emotions: anger, fear, etc.

4.3 Argument

In many other instances of human linguistic communication, affective effects obfuscate the processing of cognitive ones. It is mostly obvious when emotions are related to conflict in the sense of anger or anxiety. This occurs, of course, not only when affective effects arise as a result of misunderstandings or mismanagement, but also in circumstances where arguments take place. When an otherwise calm argument grows tense, the more the affective effects conveyed become pervasive and interfere with the analytic thought processes required. This is, we suppose, because emotions related to anger, which inevitably arise when people engage in argument, monopolize mental resources. This is in line with neuro-cognitive research on cognitive biases: the closely related emotional states of anger, anxiety and fear raise cortisol levels and this has the effect of prompting *action* rather than *reflection*. Suppose a speaker insults someone forcefully with two or three taboo expletives. It is unlikely, from what we know about human interaction, that the addressee will pause, consider the comment seriously and begin a counter-argument asking their interlocutor to supply reasons in support of his view. Insults do not function to exchange ideas and argu-

ments but, rather, to assault the hearer with affective effects. As a result, the interaction will switch to the level of pure (adversative) expressivity, where one ***affective*** effect prompts another, countering one, in return (until someone leaves or begins a physical fight). This is, we assume, because the non-propositional nature of expressives, and insults in particular, creates other types of effects – affective ones – which orient the attention of speakers to another type of interaction.

Yet even argument in the sense of a 'rhetorical device aiming at convincing or persuading' can involve elements that use peripheral routes or 'cognitive biases'. This is particularly true of fallacies, which often tend to persuade an audience through false reasons. Fallacies as they are classified by rhetoric are not always a problem in actual human communication: they can provide perfectly good results in situations of competent and benevolent communication. For example, an appeal to authority may be perfectly justified; an *ad populum* argument can prove a good reason to make use of the accumulated knowledge of a large number of people, etc. But fallacies can also very much distort a debate when Machiavellian intentions are at stake or, possibly, mere incompetence (see for example de Saussure [2018] on the strawman fallacy in this perspective). Some kinds of argumentative moves have been linked to what we call here affective effects such as appeal to fear, which in turn triggers attitudes such as, for example, increase of confidence towards the speaker and lowering of epistemic vigilance (on that notion, see Sperber et al. [2010]).

4.4 Love and the expressive metaphor

Returning to figures of speech, we argue that creative metaphors can also be privileged agents for affective effects. A metaphor such as (the much discussed) *Juliet is the sun* is simply not paraphrasable without the loss of whatever dimension makes it meaningful and powerful. Sperber and Wilson (2015: 22) argue that creative metaphors of this kind convey what they call 'impressions' which cannot be captured by a proposition but rather by what they call an 'array of propositions'. We would like to go further and suggest that whether or not they convey such arrays of propositions, there is even more to these metaphors: they activate a range of personal memories, intimate experiences, imaginary feelings that match both those triggered by love in an *ad hoc* sense that depends on contextual assumptions (the kind of passionate and exclusive love felt by Romeo) and those that arise in relation with the sun. Besides purely conceptual features such as warmth, light, uniqueness, etc., they prompt feelings of being lit by the sun, of the sun actually shedding bright light on the world around, of being high in the sky, etc.: in other words, not the array of propositions themselves, but the feelings that lie behind these propositions and which actually motivate such a metaphor. It's about sharing emotion by making them manifest, and expressing feelings rather than merely describing them. It is in this sense that we suggest such metaphors are not only ineffable but also agents of affective effects. Metaphors are certainly descriptions in a sense, but which can, as in this case, trigger affective effects that resonate with one's intimate emotions, either through memory of personal experience or imagination. Many metaphors can certainly be properly interpreted without any affective effect; for example, when Flaubert says about Leconte de Lisle that 'his ink is pale' (in

another much-discussed example), it is unclear that there is anything resembling affective effects at all. It depends how one classifies the derogatory touch of this judgement. But when feelings and affects *are* involved, the hearer finds in his own experience of love elements that do direct him to affective effects. We'd like to suggest that metaphors are not exceptional in terms of how they deal with affective effects: ***affective*** effects in general have to do with how feelings and emotions ostensively manifested by an individual trigger a response which involves an experiential dimension, that is, either access to memories that echo the feeling manifested, or imaginings that are plausible simulations of them.

Metaphors and non-literal meanings in general are particularly common in literature and poetry, where there is much more to the interpretative process than cognitive effects. Kolaiti (2015) proposes that the notion be supplemented with a new notion of *positive perceptual effect*. We find this idea appealing, but since perception is a sensory phenomenon and – as we saw earlier – emotional states involve the interplay between perception and cognition, we maintain that affective effects are a separate category (see also Kolaiti in press).

For example, we assume that affective effects prompt some kind of experiential response. Successfully understanding, say, a poem relies on the matching between what the utterance makes manifest and some equivalent in the hearer's own experience of his emotional life. The interpretation of poetry, which is very much about making sense of our memories, about the feeling that similar mental states are shared, about the imaginings we can have about human emotional life, fits better within an account that incorporates affective effects.

5 Conclusion

The feeling of anger or of being moved, or of being passionately in love is foreign to anyone who has not experienced these kinds of mental states before. Young children, who are yet to experience romantic love, understand love stories rationally but are often relatively insensitive to them. They find it strange if an adult tries to communicate the sophistication of such feelings to them. Only when we have experienced such an emotional state, or when they are capable of imaginings by drawing upon similar or related experiences in their life, can this kind of mental state be passed on. In that sense, affective effects are not *relevant* – in the technical sense defined above – but are somehow relevant nonetheless in that they are virtually effortless ways of activating experiential memories, deliver powerful effects, at virtually no cost. Kolaiti cites Ramachandran and Hirstein's (1999) work on the neurology of aesthetic pleasure. They claim that engaging with certain types of images in certain types of ways is actually reinforcing and rewarding for the individual. It is good for us. What makes her perceptual effects positive is that they improve aspects of cognition. Affective effects, we argue, fulfil a similar function.

Often, affective and cognitive effects will form part of what is ostensively communicated (unless the emotion is only incidentally made manifest to some witnesses). However, since emotional states can't be *meant* proper (unless it is a description of that state, but this is not 'meaning an emotional state' either), we argue that they belong to the realm of

showing as discussed in Section 3. But the question remains whether all aspects of emotional communication even belong on Sperber and Wilson's square.

Emotional communication works on a number of different levels. Yes, interjections, facial expression and affective tone of voice lead to the construction of higher-level explicatures and these (together with the proposition expressed by an utterance) lead to strong and weak implicatures by either providing strong support for a single, determinate conclusion or marginally altering the strength or salience of a wide array of conclusions. But these positive cognitive effects, we argue, need to be supplemented by something else.

Co-evolving with the emotional procedures we introduce in Section 2.3 would have been emotion-*reading* procedures. A person in whom emotional procedures are highly activated, then, is much more likely to have her emotional state recognised and selected by an audience (Wharton 2009, 2015). These procedures are sub-attentive and unintentional and help us read emotional states, irrespective of whether those states are conveyed ostensively or non-ostensively. It should be clear from the above discussion that they do not arise in a hearer's mind through 'inferences' in the usual sense or reasoning.

Feeling the emotional state of another does not involve an inference that can be rendered with schemas, chains of deduction or any other logical derivations. Our claim is that there is a much more direct, immediate way of processing information that leads a hearer to somehow 'catch' an emotional state made manifest by a speaker using expressives or other forms of language loaded with ***affective*** effects. Affective *effects* are passed on to a hearer by this kind of immediate process. The idea is not in itself new. There is a large literature on the phenomenon psychologists call emotional contagion (Hatfield et al. 1994), in which not only is information about emotional states conveyed, but the states themselves. Indeed, perhaps in the Jenninger case that begins this chapter, this is precisely what happened once the shock and disgust had begun to register with the first one or two members of the audience.

6 References

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