

Intentions and conventions in linguistic communication.

A non-Gricean programme in the philosophy of language and cognitive science

1. Research Project Objectives

The **objective** of this project is twofold. First, we examine the adequacy of the *Gricean* programme in the philosophy of language and cognitive science by critically assessing the role that the notion of communicative intention plays in theorizing about (i) the varieties and constitution of linguistic meaning, (ii) the structure and content of communicative acts, (iii) the mechanisms and cognitive underpinnings of verbal communication, and (iv) the evolutionary and developmental emergence of linguistic and communicative skills. Second, we consider an alternative, non-Gricean programme, which is based on the idea of language use as a rule-governed and norm-guided activity; more specifically, we want to address the above mentioned issues by developing an *Austinian* approach to the study of language and communication. From the outset, it is important to stress that by using the terms “Gricean programme” and “Austinian approach” we refer to two long-standing research traditions that have their roots in, but ought to be distinguished from, the theories of language and communication originally developed by Paul H. Grice (1989) and John L. Austin (1975), respectively.

In particular, we focus on the following eight **questions**, which define the **range of problems** that the project is intended to solve:

- (Q₁) What is the scope and variety of linguistic meanings that the semantic conventions of a given natural language assign to its elements: words, phrases, sentences, constructions, and so on?
- (Q₂) What constitutes meaning facts, i.e., facts of the form “*e* means *E* in language *L*”, where *e* is an element of *L* and *E* is the linguistic meaning that the rules of *L* attribute to *e*?
- (Q₃) What is the structure of a communicative act?
- (Q₄) What determines the meaning of a communicative act?
- (Q₅) What is the mechanism of successful communication?
- (Q₆) What are the cognitive abilities that enable one to participate in verbal communication?
- (Q₇) How to conceptualize the task of explaining the evolution of language and meaningful speech?
- (Q₈) How to conceptualize the task of explaining the development of human linguistic and communicative skills?

It is instructive to stress that the above mentioned questions are **metatheoretical** in that they concern the nature, constitution and conceptualization of the phenomena studied in disciplines such as semantics, pragmatics, communication studies, language evolution studies and developmental studies. Questions (Q₁) and (Q₂) are metasemantic and can be called the *scope question* and the *foundational question*, respectively. Questions (Q₃) and (Q₄), in turn, are metapragmatic; the former can be called the *structure question*, whereas the latter — the *constitution question*; to answer them is to develop an adequate conceptual framework for describing and explaining the structure and meaning of speech acts studied by pragmatic theories. Questions (Q₅) and (Q₆) belong to the area of the philosophy of cognitive science and can be called the *mechanism question* and the *cognitive underpinnings question*, respectively; answering the mechanism question consists in determining the structure of communicative transactions and defining the criteria of successful communication; to approach the cognitive underpinnings question, in turn, one should start with surveying empirical data from linguistics, psychology and experimental pragmatics, and, next, come to integrating and explaining them with the help of a conceptually uniform model. Questions (Q₇) and (Q₈) can be called the *evolutionary question* and the *developmental question*, respectively; to answer them is to construct

a conceptual framework within which one may adequately express and operationalise questions about the evolution and development of uniquely human communicative skills.

A central **assumption** behind the project is that the questions under discussion are closely interrelated and, as the corollary of this, cannot be answered independently of one another. For example, considering the metapragmatic questions (Q₃) and (Q₄) we should take into account how wide and diversified is the domain of conventional meanings, that is, we should take into account our answer to question (Q₁). The way we settle the metapragmatic issues, in turn, affects our discussion of the mechanisms and skills underlying verbal communication, that is, our discussion of questions (Q₅) and (Q₆); what is more, it can suggest certain answers to the foundational question (Q₂), since the literal meaning of a linguistic element can be analysed in terms of what the element systematically or normally contributes to the performance of communicative acts. Finally, there is a strict relationship between how we answer questions (Q₅) and (Q₆) — that is, how we describe the mechanisms and cognitive underpinnings of verbal communication — and how we conceptualise the tasks of explaining the evolution and development of uniquely human communicative skills (see questions (Q₇) and (Q₈)). In sum, the questions under discussion correspond to a system of interrelated issues. It is reasonable to expect, therefore, that one should approach them in a systematic way or, more precisely, that they should be addressed and considered within a uniform conceptual framework of a theoretically well-founded research programme.

There are at least two alternative approaches that are good candidates for performing the aforementioned task: the Gricean approach, based on the idea of language use as a process coordinated by communicative intentions expressed by speakers and recognized by hearers, and the Austinian approach, whose main idea is that language use is best understood as a rule-governed and norm-guided form of social interaction. The Gricean approach is well defined and takes the form of a comprehensive and explicitly formulated programme, which shapes most of the mainstream research in the *philosophy of language* (Grice 1989; Strawson 1964, 1971; Schiffer 1975; García-Carpintero 2001; Devitt 2006), *pragmatics* (Bach and Harnish 1979; Bach 1994, 2001, 2012; Harnish 2005; Recanati 2004, 2010; Korta and Perry 2006, 2011; Jaszczolt 2010; Wilson and Sperber 2012; Carston 2002), and *cognitive science* (Baron-Cohen 1995; Tomasello 1999, 2008, 2014; Tomasello *et al.* 2005; Levinson 2006). The Austinian approach, by contrast, takes the form of a family of more or less implicitly held ideas that, as far as we know, has not yet been developed into an explicit and comprehensive research programme. Its elements can be found in *pragmatics* and the *theory of speech acts* (Austin 1975; Searle 1969, 2002; Williamson 1996; Alston 2000; Sbisà 2002, 2007, 2009; Sbisà and Turner 2013; Ball 2014a, 2014b), the *philosophy of language* (Gauker 1998; Millikan 2014, 2005; García-Carpintero 2004, 2012b; Lepore and Stone 2015), and *computational linguistics* (Asher and Lascarides 2001, 2003). One of the **challenges** that the project is intended to meet, then, is to collect and elaborate the Austinian ideas to be found in the literature and, next, develop them into a comprehensive research programme.

The **central hypothesis** of the project is that it is the Austinian programme, not the Gricean one, that may offer an adequate and comprehensive account of language and communication. More specifically, our hypothesis is that the Gricean programme, despite its many valuable insights, fails to provide an adequate basis for answering the above mentioned metatheoretical questions. In our view, the inadequacy of the Gricean approach stems from the fact that it attempts to reduce every aspect of communicated meaning to speaker meaning, that is, to account for it in terms of the speaker's communicative intentions. We also put forth a hypothesis according to which the eight topics under discussion can be adequately addressed within the framework of the Austinian programme. To justify our view, we offer a critical analysis of the existing Gricean accounts of (i) the variety and constitution of linguistic meaning, (ii) the structure and content of communicative acts, (iii) the mechanisms and cognitive underpinnings of verbal communication, and (iv) the evolutionary and developmental emergence of meaningful speech; what is more, drawing on some theoretical proposals within the non-Gricean traditions, we develop Austinian accounts of the phenomena under discussion and argue that they are free from the weaknesses of the Gricean models.

2. Significance of the project

2.1. State of the art

2.1.1. Gricean accounts

A central idea behind the Gricean programme (Grice 1989; Strawson 1964; Bach and Harnish 1979; Harnish 2005; Recanati 2004, 2010; Jaszczolt 2010; Korta and Perry 2011; Carston 2002a, 2002b; Wilson and Sperber 2012) is that making a verbal communicative act consists in uttering a linguistic expression with the intention to produce a certain response on the part of the hearer by means of getting him to recognize this intention (see Grice 1989: 219; Bach and Harnish 1979: 13); it is also held that the meaning of this act is determined by the intention with which it is made or, more precisely, depends on the response the speaker intends to produce in the hearer. Successful communication, then, consists in the speakers' expressing and the hearers' recognizing communicative intentions and plans (see Bach and Harnish 1979; Korta and Perry 2011; Wilson and Sperber 2012). It is acknowledged that some communicative acts are literal or conventional in that they are performed with the help of linguistic devices — sentences, words, structures, and so on — conventionally designed for expressing certain communicative intentions. The Griceans stress, however, that communicative acts form a *homogenous* class in that the content of *every* communicative act — no matter whether it is conventional or not — is determined or constituted by the intention with which it is made rather than by the linguistic or conventional meaning of the device used by the speaker; linguistic conventions, then, do not determine the contents of speech acts; their function, rather, is to facilitate communication by helping hearers recognize speakers' intentions and plans.

The above mentioned cluster of ideas has important implications for the way in which the proponents of the Gricean programme approach the metatheoretical questions from (Q₁) to (Q₈).

Let us start with discussing metapragmatic questions (Q₃) and (Q₄). According to the Gricean programme, the structure of a speech act involves a sentence uttered by the speaker, the context of its production, and the intention with which it is uttered (Harnish 2005); the meaning of the act is determined — in the sense of being *constituted* rather than in that of being *recognized* or *ascertained* — by the speaker's intention *in context* (see Bach 2001: 29-30). There is no consensus among the proponents of the Gricean programme as to the structure and content of the meaning-constituting intention (Strawson 1964; Bach and Harnish 1979; Carston 2002b; Sperber and Wilson 2012); for instance, Strawson (1964) assumes that it involves a series of iterated intentions that starts with the speaker's intention to produce a perlocutionary effect on the part of the hearer, whereas Bach and Harnish (1979) argue that it is a single *reflexive* intention — i.e., the *intention* whose fulfilment consists in *its* recognition — that has to be carefully distinguished from the speaker's perlocutionary goals. Despite these differences, however, the Griceans share the following idea: the meaning of the speaker's act — i.e., the *speaker-meaning* of her utterance — is constituted by her intention to *influence* the hearer by getting him to recognize *this* intention; in short, meaning-constituting intentions are *prospective* and *reflexive*. Following Lepore and Stone, let us call this approach to meaning *prospective intentionalism* (Lepore and Stone 2015: 204) or *prospective-reflexive intentionalism*.

Prospective-reflexive intentionalism plays a key role in the Gricean theorising about linguistic meaning, verbal comprehension, and the evolution and development of communicative and linguistic skills.

Consider the foundational question (Q₂). According to the Gricean programme, language elements — such as words, phrases, structures, sentences, and so on — are conventional devices for expressing communicative intentions (see Strawson 1971; Schiffer 1972; Devitt 2006); in other words, linguistic conventions do not constitute meanings of communicative acts, but facilitate communication by helping the interacting agents achieve a shared understanding of one another's prospective-reflexive intentions. Therefore, language element *e* means what it does in language *L* in virtue of conventional regularities governing its use in acts of speaker meaning. Following Lewis

(1975, 2002), the Griceans assume that what makes a given regularity conventional is the fact that it perpetuates in a given community in virtue of the mutual expectation of its members that they all conform to it (see Bach and Harnish 1979: 109, 121; García-Carpintero 2001: 93-94, 2012a: 405-407; Devitt 2006: 179n). In short, meaning facts of the form “*e* means *E* in language *L*”, where *e* is an element of *L* and *E* is the linguistic meaning that the rules of *L* attribute to it, are determined by facts about the conventional use of *e* in acts of speaker meaning; more specifically, *e* means *E* in *L* in virtue of the fact that the users of *L* regularly use *e* to communicate aspect *E* of their communicative intentions.

Viewed from the Gricean perspective, question (Q₁) concerns the role of linguistic conventions in interpreting communicative acts. The Griceans acknowledge that the linguistic meaning of the sentence uttered by the speaker plays a role in determining the meaning of her utterance. In saying this, however, they use “determining” to mean “ascertaining” rather than “constituting” (see Bach 2001: 29-30). More specifically, they take the linguistic meaning of the sentence to be an input to the interpretive process aimed at recognizing what the speaker communicates; assuming that the speaker uses expression *e* literally — some of the Griceans claim — the hearer jumps to the conclusion that the linguistic meaning of *e* is part of what the speaker says or primarily communicates (the primary/secondary distinction corresponds to Grice’s original contrast between *what the speaker say* and *what she conversationally implicates*; see Grice 1989: 22-40, 360-361; Recanati 2004: 23-37; García-Carpintero 2006: 45-47). To answer question (Q₁), then, is to identify the contribution of linguistic or semantic conventions to the interpretation of communicative acts. According to the Griceans, this contribution is computed by the lexical and compositional semantics of the language used by the speaker and comes down to determining aspects of literally communicated forces, contents, and the so-called conventional implicatures (see García-Carpintero 2001: 93). Following Lepore and Stone (2015: 3), we call this kind of answer the *bare-bones model of semantics* or the *model of narrow semantics*. There is no consensus among the Griceans as to what the linguistic or semantic interpretation of a sentence results in: a full proposition that determines the sentence’s truth-conditions (Cappelen and Lepore 2005; García-Carpintero 2001; Korta and Perry 2006, 2011), or a logical form or propositional skeleton that fails to determine the utterance’s truth-conditions and as such requires contextual enrichment (Bach 1994; Carston 2002a, 2002b; Recanati 2004, 2010; Wilson and Sperber 2012). Nevertheless, they all accept the bare-bones model of semantics that reduces the scope and variety of linguistic meanings to what can be computed by lexical and compositional semantics.

The bare-bones model of narrow semantics, together with prospective-reflexive intentionalism, puts constraints on how the Griceans approach questions (Q₅) and (Q₆), that is, the mechanism question and the cognitive underpinnings question. According to the Gricean programme, the mechanism of successful communication involves the speaker’s expressing and the hearer’s recognising a prospective-reflexive intention; the functioning of this mechanism can but do not have to be facilitated by the use of conventional communicative tools. Apart from the knowledge of linguistic conventions, then, the cognitive underpinnings of verbal communication involve speaker’s ability to form prospective-reflexive intentions that fit into her larger communicative plans, as well as her ability to express or reveal these intentions in such a way that the hearer will be able to recognize them with ease; on the hearer’s part, these underpinnings involve his ability to reason about the speaker’s intentions and communicative plans so as to infer the meaning that she communicates. In short, according to the Gricean approach, communication is metapsychological and inferential through and through (see Carston 2002; Wilson and Sperber 2012; one exception is Recanati’s model of local primary processes that are associative rather than inferential, see Recanati 2002 and 2004: 23-37); it is metapsychological in that it results in identifying the speaker’s intentional states; to call it inferential, in turn, is to assume that it infers the speaker’s communicative intention from the clues provided by her utterance and the context of its production. Some of the Griceans working within the field of cognitive science claim that verbal comprehension necessarily involves the operation of a domain-specific inferential module called *mindreading* (Carston 2002a; Wilson and Sperber 2012; Origg and Sperber 2000) or the *Theory of Mind Module* (Baron-Cohen 1995); others follow Levinson, who claims that the ability to reason about Gricean intentions constitutes a key component

of what he calls the *human interaction engine*: “a set of cognitive abilities and behavioural dispositions that synergistically work together to endow human face-to-face interaction with special qualities” (Levinson 2006: 44); according to Tomasello, in turn, the ability to form, express and reason about communicative intentions is a cognitive prerequisite for interacting within what he calls *joint attention frames* (Tomasello 1999).

Finally, the Gricean programme offers a conceptualization of the task of explaining the evolutionary origins and developmental emergence of human communicative and linguistic skills. The Griceans working within the fields of language evolution studies (Sperber and Origgi 2000; Tomasello 2008; Fitch 2010) and language development studies (Baron-Cohen 1995; Tomasello 1999, 2014) claim that a key precursor of and prerequisite for human rich communicative skills — on both the phylogenetic and ontogenetic scales — is the ability to reason about communicative intentions and plans.

2.1.2. Non-Gricean accounts

A problem with the Austinian approach — so far as it is considered as an alternative to the Gricean programme — is that it has not yet been developed into a comprehensive and broad research programme. Its elements are dispersed in the literature and function without reference to one another. One of the **goals** of this project is to integrate them into a coherent system of interrelated ideas.

A central idea of the Austinian approach is that language use is a rule-governed and norm-guided form of social interaction (Austin 1975; Searle 1969, 2002; Lewis 1979; Williamson 1996; Alston 2000; Sbisà 2002, 2007, 2009; Sbisà and Turner 2013; Lepore and Stone 2015). Consistently, it is held that utterances are to be studied as contributions to conversations, discourses, language games, or other types of social interaction constituted by systems of rules and norms; the meaning and function of an utterance, then, is determined by the rule or norm followed by the speaker. In a nutshell, the Austinian and Gricean approaches differ in at least two key respects. First, the Austinians reject the model of narrow semantics; more specifically, they extend the domain of conventional meanings by positing rules and procedures that interact with lexical and compositional semantics in determining the function and meaning of conversational contributions. Second, they use the term “determining” occurring in the previous sentence to mean “constituting” rather than “ascertaining”; in other words, they maintain that normally the meaning of a conversational contribution is constituted by the rules followed by the speaker rather than by her prospective-reflexive intention.

According to the Austinian answer to question (Q₁), the scope of conventionally or linguistically determined meanings is much broader and more diversified than the Griceans assume. The Austinians argue that a key component of our linguistic competence is our ability to act in accordance with certain normative rules: constitutive rules (Searle 1969), illocutionary rules (Alston 2000), the knowledge rule (Williamson 1996), or the knowledge transfer rule (García-Carpintero 2004). We assume, however, that some non-Austinian proposal that argue “for an extension in the domain of grammar” (Wilson and Sperber 2012: 263) can be adopted by the Austinian programme. One such proposal is the Segmented Discourse Representation Theory (SDRT) developed by Asher and Lascarides (2001, 2003). According to the SDRT, part of our linguistic or semantic competence is our ability to use the so-called rhetorical structure rules whose function is to organize utterances into coherent discourses; it is also claimed that the rules interact with compositional and lexical semantics in determining communicated meaning. Consider, for example, the following discourse:

- (1) a. Max fell. b. John pushed him. (Asher and Lascarides 2001: 189)

In uttering (1), the speaker communicates not only that (i) Max fell and (ii) John pushed him, but also that (iii) the pushing caused the falling. According to a standard Gricean reading of this example, content (iii) is communicated at the level of what is conversationally implicated and as such goes beyond the linguistic or conventional interpretation of discourse (1), i.e., beyond what can be computed by the rules of lexical and compositional semantics of the English language. According to the SDRT, by contrast, content (iii) is determined through the interaction between two components of our semantic competence: bare-bones or narrow semantics of the English language *and* rhetorical

structure rules. Asher and Lascarides argue that to maintain the assumption that discourse (1) is coherent we have to assume that the utterance of (1b) stands in a rhetorical relation to the utterance of (1a). Given the lexical properties of contributions (1a) and (1b), it is natural to assume that the latter explains the former or, in other words, that (1b) stands in an *Explanation* relation to (1a); this assumption, in turn, allows one to enrich the truth conditional content communicated by (1) with content (iii). What is crucial here is that the *Explanation* relation is not established by a Gricean reasoning from the speaker's intentions, but is computed with the help of an appropriate DICE axiom that links lexical and syntactic properties of (1a) and (1b) with a default rhetorical relation that holds between them (see Asher and Lascarides 2001: 204n).

Another proposal that extends the scope of conventional meanings comes from Millikan (2004, 2005), who holds that language conventions consist of reproduced patterns of activity. She claims, namely, that a conventional pattern of linguistic interaction involves two complementary components — the speaker's utterance and the hearer's cooperative response to it — whose reproduction helps the interacting agents achieve coordination. For example, to perform a conventional assertion is to initiate the reproduction of a speaker-hearer pattern that involves the speaker's uttering an indicative sentence and the hearer's coming to believe what he is told; to perform a conventional directive act, in turn, is to initiate the reproduction of a pattern that involves the speaker's uttering an imperative sentence and the hearer's complying with what he is told.

It should be stressed that conventional patterns of verbal interaction patterns and rhetorical structure rules as such have no normative force. In this respect, they differ from speech act norms posited by explicitly Austinian proposals (Alston 2000; Williamson 1996; García-Carpintero 2004). It can be argued, however, that Millikan's patterns, together with Asher and Lascarides' rhetorical relations, represent a key aspect of Austin's (1975) *conventional procedures* for performing speech acts (see Witek 2015a and 2015b).

Elements of the Austinian approach — or, more adequately, ideas that can be interpreted along the Austinian lines — can be found in theories traditionally counted as Gricean. For example, Levinson develops a theory of presumptive meanings that are determined by three heuristics: “What is not said, is not”, “What is expressed simply is stereotypically exemplified”, and “What is said in an abnormal way is not normal” (Levinson 2000; cf. Jaszczolt 2014; Lepore and Stone 2015: 50). Even though Levinson regards presumptive meanings as Gricean implicatures, they can be reinterpreted along the Austinian lines. One can argue, namely, that the three heuristics in question have the status of conventional rules that are triggered by lexical and syntactic properties of utterances. By analogy, one can develop an Austinian account of pragmatic presuppositions (Stalnaker 2002) by arguing that they are determined by appropriateness rules of the form “it is appropriate to perform speech act *A* in uttering sentence *s* only in context where *Q* is presupposed by the speaker”; that is to say, one can argue that such rules constitute a key component of our linguistic competence.

In short, the Austinians reject the bare-bones model of semantics and replace it with an extended model. The extended model — or, more accurately, the model of extended semantics — affects the way they approach the metatheoretical questions from (Q₂) to (Q₈). Let us start with considering questions (Q₃) and (Q₄). According to the Austinian approach, the structure of a speech act involves a sentence uttered by the speaker, the context of its production, and the rules followed by the speaker and/or norms to which she subjects her utterance (Austin 1975; Searle 1969; Alston 2000; cf. Harnish 2005); these rules and norms, in turn, are assumed to play a key role in determining the meaning of the act or, more precisely, to contribute to constituting its force and content. It is instructive to note, however, that in saying this the Austinians do not reject the idea of speech acts as intentional actions; rather, they claim that the basic intention underlying the performance of a speech act is neither prospective nor reflexive, but is to be identified with the intention to represent (Searle 2002) or with the intention to behave in accordance with a system of linguistic rules and norms (see Lepore and Stone 2015: 204n). Considering question (Q₂), in turn, the Austinians claim that meaning facts of the form “*e* means *E* in language *L*” are constituted by the normative attitudes of the users of *L*; that is to say, they assume that the linguistic meaning of an expression is to be analysed in terms of its potential use in the performance of speech acts (Alston 2000; cf. García-Carpintero 2012b:

414n). Therefore, “foundational semantics consists primarily in the specification of norms to which speakers subject their acts” (García-Carpintero 2012b: 415). Let us come to questions (Q₅) and (Q₆). From the Austinian point of view, the mechanism of successful communication involves a system of rules, norms and patterns of interaction that are shared and followed by communicating agents. A natural option for the proponents of the Austinian approach, then, is to assume that the participation in discursive practices requires having internalized in Vygotsky’s sense (see Tomasello 1999) a considerable portion of such a system; in other words, such an internalized system can be regarded as a key component of our linguistic competence. Finally, let us consider questions (Q₇) and (Q₈). There are at least four non-Gricean accounts of the evolution of meaningful speech that can be considered as potential components of the Austinian programme: first, Millikan’s biological model of language, according to which there is a threefold continuity between (i) locally recurrent natural signs and complete linguistic signs, (ii) animal signals and human speech acts, and (iii) the capacity to read natural signs and the capacity to interpret conventional signs (Millikan 2004: 148n; Millikan 2005; cf. Origgi and Sperber 2000); second, Ball’s (2014a, 2014b) naturalistic explanation of the normativity of speech acts; third, Green’s (2009) account of speech acts as handicaps, that provides an evolutionary explanation of the so-called sincerity norms governing the performance of speech acts; and, four, Bar-On’s (2013) theory of expressive communication as a key evolutionary precursor of verbal communication. The Austinians can also speculate that a key developmental precursor of our rich communicative abilities is the ability of human infants to participate in what Tomasello (1999) calls *joint attention frames* that involves their ability for shared intentionality (Rakoczy and Tomasello 2010; Tomasello 2014; Tomasello *et al.* 2005).

2.2. Justification for tackling specific scientific problems by the proposed project. The impact of the project results on the development of the research field and scientific discipline, economic and societal impact

In this project, we address the eight metatheoretical problems listed in section 1. We believe that considering and solving them can help us better understand the nature, constitution and conceptualization of the phenomena studied in such disciplines as semantics, pragmatics, communication studies, language evolution studies and developmental studies. What is more, we are convinced that the innovative project of developing Austinian ideas into a comprehensive and coherent research programme can balance the impact of the Gricean programme and, as a result, enhance the critical potential of the dispute over the foundations of cognitive science and communication studies. The project results can also have societal impact by contributing to building a reflective society more aware of how conventional and normative rules of interaction affect its communicative practices.

3. Work plan

3.1. Outline of the work plan

Our general **goal** throughout this project is to critically examine the existing Gricean accounts of linguistic communication and, at the same time, provide a basis for an Austinian research programme in the philosophy of language and the philosophy of cognitive science. Our **hypothesis** is that it is the Austinian programme, not the Gricean one, that may provide an adequate and comprehensive account of linguistic communication.

According to the Gricean programme, the meaning of *every* communicative act is determined by the prospective-reflexive intention with which it is made; one can say, therefore, that Gricean communicative acts form a natural kind. By contrast, a central **assumption** underlying our approach is that the class of communicative acts is heterogeneous and as such does not constitute a natural kind. More specifically, we assume that what plays the key role in determining the meaning of a speech act can vary from one case to another: in some cases, the force and content of a conversational

contribution are constituted by the intention with which it is made — or, more generally, by what the speaker has in mind — whereas in other cases they depend on the rules or conventions followed or reproduced by the interacting agents. The assumption of heterogeneity supports a **methodological principle** that we call *methodological pluralism*: examining communicative phenomena, we should take their irreducible diversity for granted and, consistently, adapt the methods we use to the specific nature of the currently studied phenomena.

The idea that that speech acts form a heterogeneous class is not new. It is implicit in Levinson's (1979) distinction between pre-packaged and unscripted activity types. It can also be found in Millikan's (2005) biological model of language, according to which, first, speech acts are to be typed by reference to their purposes and, second, the purpose of an act can be determined either by the speaker's intention or by the conventional purpose of the linguistic form she utters. In a similar vein, Asher and Lascares (2001) distinguish between *conventionalised* indirect speech acts, e.g., indirect requests, answers, corrections, and so on, whose indirect forces are determined by the extended grammar that associates some linguistics forms with complex semantics types, and *unconventionalised* indirect speech acts, whose nonliteral forces are determined by Gricean reasoning about speakers' intentions. Recently, an interesting variant of the heterogeneity assumption has been proposed by Lepore and Stone (2015), who in *Imagination and Convention* argue that the class of interpretive processes is not homogenous: some communicated meanings are determined conventionally, whereas others are one-off products of rich imaginative powers of human minds. In our view, the idea of heterogeneity of communicative acts may play a key role in constructing the Austinian programme. With this idea in hand, namely, we can allow for the variety of interpretive processes and effects; more specifically, we can take the diversity of communicative acts to be a genuine phenomenon and, as a result, avoid the risk — which is inherent in the Gricean reductionist approach — of accounting for all communicated meanings in terms of one universal interpretative principle, e.g., in terms of cooperation and rationality (Grice 1989) or in terms of the speaker's plan (Korta and Perry 2011). In short, we assume that the heterogeneity assumption is a key component of any adequate and comprehensive account of linguistic practice; the weaknesses of the Gricean approach, then, stem from the fact that it regards all communicative phenomena as forming a natural kind whose members are subject to a uniform explanation.

3.2. Critical paths

In particular, we want to focus on the following eight **individual project tasks** that correspond to the eight metatheoretical questions listed in section 1.

The **first** individual project task is to **critically examine the Gricean model of narrow semantics and develop an Austinian model of extended semantics**. More specifically, after a critical discussion of the existing Gricean bare-bones accounts of semantics (Bach and Harnish 1979; Bach 2001, 2012; Korta and Perry 2006, 2011), we examine a few possible extensions of the domain of conventional meanings (see Lewis 1979; Millikan 2004, 2005; Levinson 2000; Stalnaker 2002, Asher and Lascares 2001, 2003; and the discussion in section 2.1.2 above). In particular, we address several puzzles concerning interpretive effects such as scalar implicatures, presuppositions, conventionalized indirect speech acts, and check whether they can be accounted for in terms of rules and conventions constituting our extended linguistic competence rather than in terms of Gricean inferences guided by general interpretative principles. It is worth stressing that we want to approach these issues both theoretically and empirically, that is, by constructing theoretical models of convention-guided interpretive processes and, next, testing them against empirical data about speakers intuitions. One of our working hypotheses is that the class of interpretive processes responsible for presupposition processing is not homogenous. For example, we suppose that presuppositions triggered by implicative verbs are interpreted inferentially, whereas presuppositions triggered by factive verbs are coded by default rules; this conjecture leads to the empirical prediction that presuppositions triggered by implicative verbs, unlike presuppositions triggered by factive verbs, can be reinforced — that is, said explicitly in subsequent discourse — without producing an effect of redundancy.

The **second** individual project task that we want to address is to **account for the nature of linguistic conventions by critically examining the Gricean-Lewisian approach to foundational semantics and developing an Austinian account of meaning-constituting rules and norms**. According to the Austinian approach, meaning facts of a given natural language are determined by the normative attitudes of its users, that is, by their regular practice of subjecting their utterances to the norms of the language they speak (Alston 2000; cf. García-Carpintero 2012b); in other words, meaning facts are determined by what Amedeo G. Conte and Paolo Di Lucia call *nomotropism*: our tendency to act with reference to rules (see De Vecchi 2012: 18). A question arises, however, as to what mechanism, if any, constitutes and maintains the meaning-determining rules and norms. A classical answer to this question is provided by Lewis's (2002) rationalistic model of conventions, according to which a conventional rule perpetuates in a given community in virtue of mutual expectations that others will conform to it (it is instructive to add that the idea of mutually shared rational expectations plays a key role in Grice's (1989) definition of meaning in terms of reflexive intentions). According to Millikan (2005), by contrast, the mechanism responsible for maintaining and reproducing conventional patterns has nothing to do with mutual expectations and requires no rational underpinnings; what it involves, rather, is our innate tendency to adapt to regularities we discover in our social and physical environment. Our working hypothesis is that it is the Millikanian perspective, not the Lewisian one, that may provide us with the adequate account of the constitution of linguistic rules and norms. More specifically, we want to develop a model of nomotropism that will account for social practices of following shared rules without reference to the Gricean ideas of mutual expectations and reflexive intentions.

The **third** individual project task is to **account for the intentionality of speech acts by critically examining the Gricean theory of prospective-reflexive intentions and constructing an Austinian account of intentions underlying communicative acts**. It is instructive to stress that in adopting the Austinian perspective we do not reject the idea of speech acts as intentional actions. What we reject, rather, is the prospective-reflexive intentionalism (see Lepore and Stone 2015: 200n, and the discussion in section 2.1.1. above), whose central idea is that the structure of *every* communicative act involves the speaker's prospective-reflexive intention. Our working hypothesis is that normally the structure of a conversational contribution involves the speaker's intention to act in accordance with a certain system of rules or, in other words, her intention to play a certain language game. Following Lepore and Stone (2015: 208), we call this intention a *basic intention*. We also assume that the notion of basic intention — together with the notions of *semantic intention* (Bach 2001: 28, 2012: 50), *non-communicative referential intention* (Harnish 1984: 23), and *intention to represent* (Searle 2002: 143), which are neither prospective nor reflexive — plays a key role in the Austinian account of the intentionality of communicative acts. What is more, we believe that it can be used to elaborate on the idea of nomotropism — that is, our tendency to act with reference to rules (see De Vecchi 2012: 18, and the discussion of the second goal above) — construed as an intentional attitude. In short, our goal is to develop a non-Gricean model of linguistic action.

The **fourth** individual project task is to **account for the constitution of communicated meaning by critically discussing the Gricean reduction of communicated meaning to speaker meaning and constructing Austinian concepts of official meaning and interactional negotiation**. Our hypothesis is that at least in some cases the actual meaning of an utterance — that is, its *official* force and content — depends on the hearer's uptake rather than on what the speaker has in mind; more precisely, following Sbisà (2013) we assume that the *public* or *official meaning* of an utterance is determined by a discursive mechanism of *interactional negotiation* that involves the interaction of the speaker's intentions and the hearer's uptake. We also put forth a hypothesis that the *public* or *official meaning* of a conversational contribution is to be analysed in terms of how it affects the normative relationship between the speaker and the hearer, that is, in terms of what the speaker is *responsible* for and what the hearer is *entitled* to think or do. In this respect, we follow the Austinian tradition (Austin 1975) developed by Searle (1969, 2002), Alston (2000), and Sbisà (2002, 2007, 2009; cf. Sbisà and Turner 2013). In particular, we want to critically examine the Gricean accounts of two discursive phenomena: *informative presuppositions* (Stalnaker 2002) and *demonstrative reference* (Korta and Perry 2011). Our working hypothesis is that it is better to analyse informative

presuppositions and demonstrative reference in terms of what the audience is entitled to believe rather than in terms of what the speaker intends and believes. We assume, namely, that at least in some cases the content transmitted at the level of what is presupposed cannot be regarded as intentionally communicated by the speaker; we also argue that what Korta and Perry (2011: 48n) call the forensic aspect of what is said plays a key role in meaning-constituting mechanisms in general, and in reference-fixing mechanisms in particular. In short, we believe that the concept of *official meaning* — that is, the notion of *uptake-sensitive* or *negotiated meaning* — is to be analysed by reference to how her utterance changes, in virtue of the rules she follows, the normative situation of the participants in the discourse.

The **fifth** individual project task is to **account for the variety of communicative mechanisms by critically discussing the Gricean idea of communication as expressing and recognising prospective-reflexive intentions, and developing an Austinian model of heterogeneous communicative mechanisms**. More specifically, we want to elaborate on the distinction between what Millikan (1984: 69; cf. Recanati 2002: 114) calls *normal language flow* and *cases of tinkering with the mechanisms of normal language flow*. In other words, our plan is to develop a model of interpretive mechanisms that, first, will do justice to the heterogeneity assumption discussed at the begging of this section and, second will allow us to account for different mechanisms underlying the transmission of standard and conventional meanings on the one hand, and mechanism responsible for the transmission of improvised and one-off meanings on the other. Our hypothesis is that only some of the mechanisms of the latter kind can be adequately described as involving the expression and recognition of prospective-reflexive intentions; mechanisms of the former kind, by contrast, are to be accounted for in terms of nomotropism (see the second research goal described above). In short, we believe that only some communicative phenomena — that is, those involving improvised and one-off meanings — can be adequately accounted for along the Gricean lines. In particular, we want to focus on the conversational phenomena grouped under the label of ‘indirect speech’ and argue that they do not make up a homogenous family: some of them are conventionalised indirect speech acts and as such should be accounted for in terms of rules and conventions followed by the participants in a dialogue (see Asher and Lascarides 2001), whereas others are improvised and one-off indirect speech acts that, depending on cases, should be explained *either* by reference to the speaker’s prospective-reflexive intentions *or* by reference to some other cognitive or imaginative mechanisms (see Lepore and Stone 2015) exploited by the speaker and the hearer. It is worth stressing that we want to approach these issues both theoretically and empirically, that is, by constructing theoretical models of communicative mechanism and testing them against empirical data about the intuitions of language users.

The **sixth** individual project task is to **account for the cognitive skills underlying communication by critically examining the Gricean metapsychological and inferential model of verbal comprehension and developing an alternative model based on the ideas of *nomotropism* and *collective intentions***. To achieve this aim, we start with a critical discussion of the psychological adequacy of the notion of prospective-reflexive intentions (for a discussion of this topic, see Siebel 2003). Our working hypothesis is that although it is possible to build a theoretically reliable model of a cognitive mechanism responsible for generating and reasoning about prospective-reflexive intentions (see Witek 2009), the emergence of such a mechanism seems to be a relatively late and sophisticated developmental achievement (see the eight goal of this project described below). Next, we consider the possibility of accounting for the functioning of Austinian communication — whose central part is to be described in terms of nomotropism (see the second and fifth research goals described above) — in terms of the ability for shared and collective intentionality (see Tomasello 2014; Tomasello *et al.* 2005; Rakoczy and Tomasello 2010). More specifically, we want to check — taking into account the relevant empirical findings reported in the literature — whether it is possible to think of language users as Austinian or Searlean agents — that is, as creatures capable of *(i)* having and understanding collective intentions (see Gilbert 2010) and *(ii)* intentionally acting with reference to rules — without assuming that they are Gricean agents capable of expressing and recognizing prospective-reflexive intentions.

The **seventh** individual project task is to **construct a non-Gricean conceptual framework for theorising about the *evolution* of language and speech**. The **eight** task, in turn, is to **construct a non-Gricean conceptual framework for theorising about the *development* of linguistic and communicative skills**. We believe that these two issues are interrelated and as such should be addressed in parallel. Our hypothesis is that the critical point in both the *evolution* and *development* of distinctively human, rich communicative skills is the emergence of the capacity for shared intentionality that, together with the propensity for acting with reference to rules (that is, nomotropism), leads to the development of structured and collaborative forms of social interaction akin to what Tomasello (1999) calls *joint attention frames*; we assume that the turn-taking structure of such interaction types is constituted by speaker-hearer patterns in Millikan's (2005) sense, whose function is to help achieve coordination between interacting agents. Our next hypothesis is that uniquely human, rich cognitive and communicative skills — including the capacity for *forming* and *reasoning about* prospective-reflexive intentions — result from having internalised (in Vygotsky's sense; see Tomasello 1999) patterns of interaction used by agents engaged in collective actions. Adopting this perspective, we can think of the development of mature communicative and cognitive skills as a complex process involving the interaction between Austinian and Gricean mechanisms; in particular, we can speculate — drawing on empirical data to be found in the literature — whether a given symptom caused by Autism Spectrum Disorder should be accounted in terms of the malfunctioning of Austinian or Gricean mechanisms.

The **results of the project** will be presented in **12 research papers** (in English) submitted for publication to peer-reviewed journal (6 papers authored by Principle Investigator, 3 papers authored by Co-Investigator 1, 1 paper authored by Co-Investigator 2, 1 paper authored by Co-Investigator 3, and 1 paper authored by Co-Investigator 4; for details, see section “Investigators: nature of their contribution in the project and a justification of investigator costs” of this application.

3.3. State of preliminary and initial research indicating feasibility of research objectives

The project draws on the results of preliminary research presented in Witek 2015a, 2015b, and 2015c. In these works we develop an interactional model of illocutionary practice, that results from integrating elements of Millikan's biological model of language and Asher and Lascarides's model of rhetorical structure rules within the framework of Austin's theory of speech acts. It should be stressed, however, that the current project goes beyond these results and attempts to apply the Austinian framework to a broader range of issues. The interactional model can be used as a starting point for considering metasemantic questions (Q₁) and (Q₂), whereas the objective of the proposed research is to address problems belonging to metapragmatics, the philosophy of cognitive science, and the philosophy of developmental and evolutionary studies.

4. Research methodology

The individual research questions and tasks that we want to address in this project are metatheoretical in that they concern the nature, constitution and conceptualization of the phenomena studied in such sciences as semantics, pragmatics, communication studies, developmental psychology, and language evolution studies. For this reason, in this project we want to use the philosophical method of conceptual analysis or, more accurately, the **concept construction method** (see Millikan 2004) that consists in developing new conceptual frameworks and testing them by checking whether they can be used to integrate and explain available empirical data. It is instructive to stress that in explaining communicative phenomena we want to act in accordance with the principle of methodological pluralism described in subsection 3.1 above. We also want to **review the literature** to collect the empirical data relevant for answering the research questions of the project, and **design and carry out our own empirical research** to gather data for testing the hypotheses of the project. In particular, we want to use the methods of **experimental philosophy** and **experimental pragmatics** — e.g., surveys by questionnaire, lexical decision tasks, and so on — to obtain the data about the intuitions of language users.

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