Relevance Theory: Recent Developments, Current Challenges and Future Directions Padilla Cruz, Manuel (ed.), John Benjamins, Amsterdam, 2016, 327 pp. ISBN 978-9027256737 EUR 95,00 (hardback)

"Relevance Theory: Recent Developments, Current Challenges and Future Directions" is published in the "Pragmatics and Beyond New Series" by John Benjamins. It celebrates the 30th anniversary of the publication of Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson's influential volume "Relevance: Communication and Cognition" (1986), and it brings together a collection of papers which explore topics and themes from across a range of work within the relevance-theoretic pragmatic framework. An introductory chapter by the editor, Manuel Padilla Cruz, provides a useful background to relevance theory, and his summary of the key notions and assumptions which underlie the framework helps to make the volume accessible to those readers who might not already be familiar with the key ideas of relevance theory. The volume comprises ten original research papers spanning a range of topics and approaches, and is divided into four broadly themed sections. As the discussion in the introduction outlines, research within relevance-theoretic pragmatics has had a broad influence on how communication is understood, and the ideas from the theory have inspired a range of projects and publications. This volume provides a taster of current and ongoing work from a cross-section of researchers in the field, and it touches on various theoretical and practical applications of the ideas.

Part 1 ("Issues on procedural meaning and procedural analyses") brings together four papers which focus on the notion of procedural meaning. As recent publications in this area demonstrate (Escandell-Vidal, Leonetti, and Ahern, 2011; Sasamoto and Wilson, 2016), procedural meaning is a central topic in relevance-theoretic pragmatics. Furthermore, the idea that some expressions encode not concepts, but procedures, is not inherently tied to the relevance-theoretic framework. Therefore these chapters are likely to be of interest to those working with other semantic and pragmatic theories and approaches, as well as those using ideas from relevance theory.

In the opening chapter, Thorstein Fretheim develops the idea, first discussed by Powell (2010), that speakers may have a derivational intention when they produce an utterance. That is, a speaker may intend for a hearer to follow a certain inferential route when deriving the content of their informative intention. Fretheim offers us an intriguing hypothesis that an encoded procedure might be at odds with the speaker's derivation intention, and he discusses two cases from Norwegian where he claims this to be the case. Overall this is an interesting topic which certainly deserves proper attention and discussion, and this chapter should be a starting pointing for more work in this area. For example, what are the consequences of having a particular derivational intention if it is assumed that a hearer is following a path of least effort? Presumably, if the derivational intention diverts the hearer from this path, then they can expect to be compensated with extra effects. This may have important applications and implications for work in areas such as stylistics and rhetoric.

In the second chapter, Lee and Kim take on the often slippery particle *lah* in Colloquial Singaporen English and offer a procedural analysis. This is an interesting and convincing chapter which outlines an account combining a weak procedural analysis of *lah* with a general analysis of prosodic tones, and in doing so creates links to existing procedural work

on intonation and meaning. The third chapter by Helga Schröder presents a procedural analysis of reference assignment in pronominal argument languages, and Part I then closes with a chapter by Grisot, Cartoni and Moeschler in which they outline a very practical application of procedural meaning: improving the output of machine translation systems. In sum, the range of topics explored in Part 1 nicely reflects the wealth of work that is ongoing in the field of procedural semantics, and perhaps more significantly, the chapters reflect the broad and ever growing uses to which the notion of procedural meaning is being put.

In Part II of the volume ("Discourse issues"), we find two papers which focus on the relevance-theoretic approach to irony. According to the relevance-based echoic account of irony (Wilson 2006), ironical utterances are cases of interpretive uses of language where the speaker expresses a dissociative attitude towards the thought or utterance that she is interpreting. Thierry Raeber presents a relevance-theoretic account of ironic questions, such as (1), contrasting them with rhetorical questions, such as (2).

(1) To someone who obviously ate too much: Will you want another slice of cake?
(2) Since when is an opinion a crime?

The examples he discusses clearly establish that ironic questions and rhetorical questions are fundamentally different. Several of the claims in this chapter raise interesting questions and warrant further discussion. For example, Raeber claims that ironic questions such as (1) are "echoing a doubt" (177) and that they communicate something like "You are being ridiculous by eating so much" (174). I suggest that in these cases the speaker is, in fact, echoing and dissociating herself from the question, rather than from a doubt, and that she thereby communicates that it would be ridiculous to ask such a question. Similarly, in the discussion of the rhetorical question in (2), Raeber claims that "the fact that 'expressing an opinion never constituted a crime (and therefore cannot constitute a crime') is the key element of communication in this particular context" (182). It is worth further considering whether the relevance of the utterance in (2) comes, at least in part, from the implication that the addressee's previous behaviour or utterances could be interpreted as consistent with the (hyperbolic) view that opinion could be considered a crime. I do not think that the speaker of (2) genuinely believes the addressee actually thought opinion was, or could be, a crime, but is rather making the addressee aware of a possible interpretation of her previous utterance. The discussion in this chapter perhaps reflects the subtlety and complexity of the relevance-based, echoic account of irony, and will, I am sure, feed into the ongoing debates on the topic.

In a chapter focusing on irony comprehension, Francisco Yus discusses seven contextual sources which he claims can trigger a hearer to derive an ironic, rather than literal interpretation. Again, this chapter reflects the complexity of the echoic account of irony, and in particular the problem of what drives a hearer to derive an ironic rather than literal interpretation. According to Yus, relevant contextual sources include the hearer's general and specific knowledge, clues from previous utterances and the physical environment, non-verbal cues and the speaker's lexical and grammatical choices. The use and interpretation of ironic utterances is a much discussed and debated topic within pragmatics. Much like the notion of procedural meaning discussed in Part I, Wilson and Sperber's echoic account of irony, while presented within the relevance-theoretic framework, does not inherently depend on it. Yus'

taxonomy of contextual sources identifies various ways in which an ironic interpretation might be made more accessible. While this formalises the work done by the principles of relevance, it should also be a useful tool for those not necessarily wishing to adopt the full relevance-theoretic framework. As such the chapters in Part II have the potential to broaden the appeal of the book beyond those already working within relevance theory.

Understanding interpretative processes relating to irony is most certainly one of the "current challenges" as referenced in the subtitle of the book. However, given that this is a volume explicitly dedicated to the influence of relevance theory, it is slightly disappointing that neither paper on irony considers the most recent work on the topic by Deirdre Wilson (2014, since republished as Wilson 2017). Wilson's discussion of how to distinguish irony from 'jokes and banter' could be particularly relevant for Raeber's brief discussion on developmental issues relating to irony, and it would interesting to consider how Yus' contextual sources interact with the notion of "normative bias", as discussed by Wilson (2012; 2013).

Part III ("Interpretive issues") contains two papers which address issues relating to epistemic vigilance in language use. In her chapter, Elly Ifantidou reports on experimental work carried out in the EFL classroom to explore the role that explicit pragmatic instruction can play in developing learners' language proficiency and metapragmatic awareness. This chapter is an excellent example of how the ongoing theoretical work within relevance theory can be used in applied work and can have a real impact on how practitioners, such as language teachers, work.

The chapter "Evidentials, genre and epistemic vigilance" by Christoph Unger brings together themes that run throughout many of the other chapters in the volume: procedural meaning and epistemic vigilance. He argues that evidentials can be used as an indicator of the traditional narrative genre in languages that grammaticalize them because both the genre and the evidentials have an "inherent argumentation function" (255). Again, this discussion reflects the broad influence of Sperber and Wilson's work on relevance. It brings together ideas on procedural indicators as triggers, not only of comprehension mechanisms, but also of other cognitive mechanisms including social cognition, emotion reading and argumentation, as discussed by Wilson (2011), with Sperber and associates' work on culture (Sperber, 1996) and epistemic vigilance (Sperber, et al., 2010).

The theme of epistemic vigilance is continued into Part IV ("Rhetorical and perlocutionary effects of communication"). Steve Oswald makes a convincing argument that the principles of relevance theory can be used not only to explore language comprehension but also to develop a "cognitive account of rhetoric" (283). He illustrates this with an analysis of an example from naturally-occurring political discourse, and it is easy to see how this work could be extended both in this domain and others. As Oswald explains, "the wealth of research on persuasive strategies in argumentation theory is readily available for a cognitive assessment in terms of epistemic vigilance" (274).

Part IV closes with Agnieszka Piskorska's chapter on how perlocutionary effects might be allowed for within the relevance-theoretic framework. Two important and related points for further work arise from this chapter. First that "not all communicated meaning is necessarily analysable in terms of explicated or implicated assumptions" (300), and second that "emotions evoked by a stimulus may influence the processing of that very stimulus"

(299). Again, this is an important and forward-looking topic, and the ideas discussed here will prove useful for those working in pragmatic stylistics (see, for example the chapters in Chapman and Clark, 2014) and on meaning and emotion more generally (see, for example, forthcoming work by Wharton and Strey).

A challenge of such a volume was always going to be whether it could reflect the breadth of influence that relevance theory has had on pragmatics and beyond, while also remaining a coherent work in its own right. Perhaps with the exception of the clearly themed Part I ("Issues on procedural meaning and procedural analyses"), the section divisions are fairly arbitrary, and readers should be encouraged to explore beyond the areas which originally attract them to the volume. I found much to consider and return to in chapters that I initially thought would not be of direct relevance to my own research interests. Furthermore, Padilla Cruz uses his discussion in the concluding chapter to draw out common themes and to identify other related areas to be explored in the future.

A particular strength of this volume is the links that several chapters make to practical applications of relevance-theoretic ideas (for example, machine translation, second language acquisition) and the links that are also made to other pragmatic and cognitive theories (for example argumentation theory and speech act theory). This should broaden the appeal of the volume considerably. Applications of relevance theory, along with the move to forge links with other disciplines and approaches are surely important factors in the "future directions" referenced in the volume's sub-title. Overall, there is much to stimulate further debate and discussion in the chapters of this publication, and I congratulate Padilla Cruz and the chapter authors on an open and forward-looking volume that helps set the agenda for ongoing research in several relevance-related areas and domains.

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