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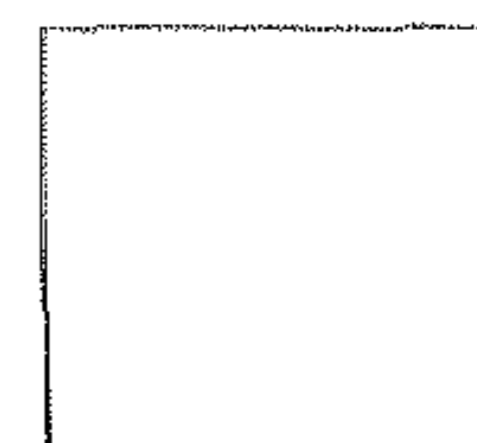
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Argumentation and Speech Act Theory

Editors' Introduction

After the notion of 'speech act' had been introduced by the ordinary language philosopher J. L. Austin, John Searle developed a more systematic theoretical framework for dealing with speech acts that is known nowadays as the *standard theory of speech acts*. This standard theory has been a major factor in promoting the new discipline of linguistic pragmatics in the seventies. Meanwhile, many authors have contributed to the elaboration and refinement of speech act theory, thus accounting for some of the criticisms they themselves and others had put forward. No exaggeration is involved in saying that speech act theory is flourishing, though, just like any important theory, it also has its repudiators.

Although this is so far not recognized by everybody, speech act theory also proves to be quite useful for the study of argumentation. It can be helpful in carrying out the various tasks involved in the comprehensive research programme of this discipline. In this issue on 'Argumentation and speech act theory', the authors try to elucidate, in various ways, the connections between argumentation and speech act theory. In doing this, they concentrate on the role of speech acts when analysing argumentative discourse.

All the authors agree that speech act theory can contribute substantially to making adequate analyses of argumentative discourse, but each of them also sees certain shortcomings in the standard theory as it is. In their articles they explain what speech act theory has to offer for the resolution of some important problems in the theory of argumentation, what its shortcomings are, and how these could be remedied.

In 'Speech acts and arguments', Scott Jacobs acknowledges that speech act theory provides useful tools for the analysis of argumentative discourse, but in his view arguments are not a homogeneous class of speech act. Speech act theorists who claim that they *are* confuse the meaning of speech act verbs with the pragmatic structure of actual language use and overlook the role played by the context of activity and the form of expression. According to Jacobs, folk terminology should be used as a heuristic tool for the analysis.

According to Frans van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst, the analysis of argumentative discourse as a critical discussion requires a normative reconstruction which encompasses four kinds of pragma-dialectical transformations. In 'Speech act conditions as tools for reconstructing argumentative discourse', they explain how speech act conditions can play a part in carrying out such a reconstruction. They argue that integrating Searlean

insights concerning speech acts with Gricean insights concerning conversational maxims can provide us with the necessary tools if the standard theory of speech acts is adequately amended and the conversational maxims are translated into speech act conditions. Using indirect speech acts as an example, they then demonstrate how argumentative discourse can be reconstructed.

In 'Conversation, relevance, and argumentation', Agnes Haft-van Rees sketches relevant connections between speech acts and between various levels of speech acts in argumentative discourse. She specifically pays attention to the explanation provided by the maxim of relevance for the way utterances in argumentative discourse follow each other in an orderly and coherent fashion. According to Haft-van Rees, an utterance can be considered relevant as an interactional act, as an illocutionary act, as a propositional act, and as an elocutionary act: these four kinds of relevance manifest the rational organization of discourse.

In order to account for a reconstruction of argumentative discourse, normative as well as descriptive insights are needed. In 'Confrontation in conversations', Agnes Verbiest concentrates on the systematic description of the confrontation stage of an argumentative conversation by discussing adjacency pairs of speech acts which are performed in that stage. She shows that the description of confrontation in conversation largely agrees with Jackson and Jacobs's model of conversational coherence. Where the concept of adjacency pair is unsatisfactory, she recommends using notions from Edmondson's model of interactional analysis.

In 'Suppositions in argumentation', Alec Fisher draws our attention to a much neglected type of speech act which is very important in argumentation. He criticizes Searle for omitting suppositions entirely from his taxonomy which omission appears to lead to a similar omission in the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation. He argues that suppositional argument can be understood properly with the help of Frege's distinction between 'asserted' and 'unasserted' propositions; according to Fisher, suppositions are neither assertions nor assertives.

In 'Indirect directives in monological argumentation', Antoinette Primatarova-Miltscheva discusses adverbials and clauses as illocutionary indicators of indirect directives aimed at influencing the reader's behaviour. If such an attempt to influence the reader's behaviour anticipates his objections, it can be fair, but if it serves to suppress them, it can also be manipulative. She gives some guidelines for distinguishing between these discourse-organising and manipulative functions of indirect directives.

Finally, Pam Benoit aims for an extension of speech act theory that makes it fit to deal with verbal interaction. In 'Relationship arguments', she argues that speech act theories were not developed to explain interaction. For understanding relationship arguments, an extension of speech act theory is needed that takes the function of relational goals into con-

sideration and makes clear which resources are available when making inferences.

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