Piotr Stalmasczyk (ed.)

Turning Points in the Philosophy of Language and Linguistics
1. Introduction

Philosophy of language and linguistic philosophy have, until recently, been confined to investigating problems of truth, meaning, interpretation and reference. A quick perusal of introductions and textbooks published within the last 15 years (e.g. Mackenzie 1997; Prechtl 1998; Taylor 1998; Lycan 2000; Miller 2007; Morris 2007; Soames 2010) confirms this observation. Very characteristically, The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Language (Devitt and Hanley, eds. 2006) is divided into two major parts, devoted to “meaning” and “reference”. The former investigates issues such as thought and meaning, meaning skepticism, formal semantics, speech acts and pragmatics, propositional attitudes, conditionals, vagueness, whereas the latter focuses on descriptions, indexicals, anaphora, and truth. On the other hand, The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Language (Lepore and Smith, eds. 2006) is divided into parts dealing with “the nature of language”, “the nature of meaning”, “the nature of reference”, “semantic theory”, “linguistic phenomena”, “varieties of speech act”, and “the epistemology and

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1 The relation between linguistics, philosophy of language, and linguistic philosophy has been described by Mackenzie (1997: ix) in the following way: “Linguistics is the empirical study of natural language. Philosophy of language is concerned with the underlying nature of the phenomena that linguists study. And linguistic philosophy is an approach to the philosophy of language”. However, philosophers differ considerably in their understanding of the discussed notions (and disciplines); compare the following descriptions provided by Vendler (1974: 5), who claims that philosophy of language is a catch-all phrase, whereas linguistic philosophy “would comprise conceptual investigations of any kind based upon the structure and functioning of natural or artificial languages”, and by Rorty (1967: 3), according to whom ‘linguistic philosophy’ is “the view that philosophical problems are problems which may be solved (or dissolved) either by reforming language, or by understanding more about the language we presently use”. Additionally, Vendler (1974: 5) distinguishes philosophy of linguistics, which “comprises philosophical reflections on such linguistic universals as meaning, synonymy, paraphrase, syntax, and translation, and a study of the logical status and verification of linguistic theories”. To these, by now classical, descriptions one may add a recent formulation by Soames (2010: 1): “philosophy of language is, above all else, the midwife of the scientific study of language, and language use”. 
metaphysics of language”. Also most of the canonical texts collected in four volumes of the Critical Concepts in Philosophy series (Martinich, ed. 2009) clearly show that problems of meaning and reference remain the core of philosophy of language, even if extended to different aspects of language communication and understanding. And finally, according to Soames (2010: 1), the foundational concepts of philosophy of language (and philosophy as a whole) are “truth, reference, meaning, possibility, propositions, assertion, and implicature”.

The above observations do not mean that philosophy of language is a homogeneous field; on the contrary, it is possible to distinguish different stages, or “turns”, in its historical and contemporary development. Early attempts at reforming natural language led to considerable development and application of formal tools in linguistic analysis, hence triggering the “formal turn” (strongly related to Analytic Philosophy), whereas elucidations concerning different aspects of speech act theory, communication, language use, and the role of presupposition, implicature, and context resulted in the “philosophical turn”.

The origin of the formal turn may be seen already in the writings of Gottlob Frege, with further developments associated with the work of Bertrand Russell, (early) Ludwig Wittgenstein, Rudolf Carnap, Jan Łukasiewicz, Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz, Alfred Tarski, W.O.V. Quine, Richard Montague, Donald Davidson, Saul Kripke, and also Noam Chomsky. The philosophical turn is associated with the later Wittgenstein, John Austin, Paul Grice, John Searle, and philosophers as diverse as Robert Brandom, Hans Georg Gadamer, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Hilary Putnam, W.V.O. Quine (again), and Richard Rorty.

Recent studies in philosophy of language, especially those concerned with the relation between language and thought, language and mind, problems of language normativity, the nature of linguistic understanding, often take advantage of developments in psychology, philosophy of mind, and new trends in metaphysics and epistemology.

Interest in Cognitive Science has lead to yet another, “cognitive”, turn in the philosophy of language, or rather, given the multidimensional nature of Cognitive Science, several different cognitive turns. These most recent turns in philosophy

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2 This usage of the word “turn” follows Rorty (1967) and his discussion of the “linguistic turn” in philosophy.

3 For some general background on the formal and philosophical turns in the philosophy of language, see the respective introductions in Stalmaszczyk (ed.) (2010a, b).

4 See Dummett (1993: 5) on the origins of the linguistic turn (and analytical philosophy in general) in Frege’s early work.

5 See, for example, Soames (2010), and the papers collected in Sawyer (ed.) (2010).
of language are also associated with the “cognitive revolution” (in the sense of Chomsky), and developments in Cognitive Linguistics. According to Chomsky:

The cognitive revolution is concerned with the states of the mind/brain and how they enter into behaviour, in particular, cognitive states: states of knowledge, understanding, interpretation, belief, and so on. (Chomsky 1991: 5)

and

The cognitive perspective regards behavior and its products not as the object of inquiry, but as data that may provide evidence about the inner mechanisms of mind and the ways these mechanisms operate in executing actions and interpreting experience. (Chomsky 2000: 5)

Such an approach, coupled with precise formal models of language description and analysis, inspired debates and controversies concerning not only the nature of language, but also issues of knowledge of language and first language acquisition, all of them of utmost philosophical importance.

Research within Cognitive Linguistics, carried out by, among others, Ronald Langacker, George Lakoff, Leonard Talmy, Mark Turner, Gilles Fauconnier, re-focused the study of language. As a result, several new topics emerged within contemporary philosophy of language. The methodological assumptions underlying cognitive linguistics have been characterized by Langacker in the following way:

A basic methodological principle of Cognitive Grammar (CG), and of cognitive linguistics in general, is reflected in the very rationale for choosing these names. They are “cognitive” in the sense that, insofar as possible, they see language as drawing on other, more basic systems and abilities (e.g. perception, attention, categorization) from which it cannot be dissociated. (Langacker 2002: 13)

The issues central to cognitive approaches to language, and hence one of the cognitive turns in philosophy of language, include, among others, the relation between language and cognition, the distinction between the literal and non-literal

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6 More precisely, this is the “second cognitive revolution”, as the first one should be associated with the Cartesian tradition, cf. Chomsky (2002: 69). Cognitive Linguistics might be thus considered as contributing to the third wave of the cognitive revolution.

7 For some debates and controversies, see the contributions in Kasher (ed.) (1991), and Antony and Hornstein (eds.) (2003). For philosophical implications of the Chomskyan approach, see the reviews of Chomsky (2000) by Bilgrami (2002), Moravcsik (2002), and Stone and Davies (2002).
in language and thought, metaphors in language and thought, identification of meaning with conceptualization, and non-formal approaches to meaning.  

2. Contents of the volume

Most of the contributions gathered in this volume were presented at the first International Conference on Philosophy of Language and Linguistics, PhiLang2009. The conference was held in Łódź in May 2009, and organized by the Chair of English and General Linguistics at the University of Łódź. Two volumes, dealing with the formal and philosophical turns, respectively, have already been published, cf. Stalmaszczyk (ed.) (2010a, b). The current volume contributes predominantly, but not exclusively, to the cognitive turns, inspired by the Chomskyan revolution in linguistics, as well as Langacker’s and Lakoff’s (to mention the most prominent names only) Cognitive Linguistics. Furthermore, the individual texts contribute to the development of theoretical frameworks for studying language, which constitutes one of the main ‘facets of the philosophy of language’ (in the sense of Soames 2010: 1).

The volume opens with the texts of two plenary lectures, delivered by Katarzyna Jaszczolt and Barbara Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, followed by the invited contribution by Francisco José Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez and Francisco Gonzálvez-García.

**Katarzyna Jaszczolt** addresses the question as to whether time is a primitive concept or it is rather composed out of conceptually more basic building blocks. After a brief analysis of tense-time mismatches with examples from English, Polish, Thai and Swahili, she presents a hypothesis that time is conceptualized in terms of degrees of epistemic modality. Expressions with future, present and past reference are ordered on scales of epistemic commitment. Jaszczolt demonstrates that her theory of Default Semantics has no difficulty with representing tense-time mismatches in that it reflects the fact that information about temporality is conveyed via a variety of processes, some of them pertaining

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8 This is not to claim that topics such as metaphor are completely absent from the publications mentioned in the opening lines of this introduction. However, the references are not only limited – only one chapter on metaphor in the Oxford Handbook, and two such texts in Martinich (ed.) (2001) – but also the discussion is confined to the non-literal, figurative aspect of language use – cf. the chapter on “The Dark Side” in Lycan (2000). Very characteristically, in their Handbook chapter, Reimer and Camp (2006: 851-858) mention only the following “four influential theories”: simile theories, interaction theories, Gricean theories, and non-cognitivist theories.

9 For the texts of the remaining plenary lectures delivered during the PhiLang2009 Conference, see Peregrin (2010), Corazza and Korta (2010), and Morris (2010).
not to the processing of the lexicon or grammar but even to pragmatic inference. The theory also gives support to the thesis of time as modal detachment.

Barbara Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk proposes to look at events as a phenomenon lying at the intersection of linguistics, cognitive psychology and philosophy. Events are treated as units of mental categorization, which can be either simple or complex. Simple events possess one or more focal roles and a number of accidental roles and a single temporal dimension for a change of a state of the art. Complex events are in a hyperonymic relation with reference to different types of actions, acts, activities and processes, combined in one act of perception. Events, in perception and linguistic expression, can be treated either as a fairly symmetric pair of entities, when two (or more) events or their parts are perceived as two (or more) parallel units or appear in a symmetric pattern, or else they can be perceived and linguistically expressed as what the author calls asymmetric events, covering the material, which refers to two (or more) events of unequal status in an utterance. In other words, asymmetric events cover ways in which a linguistic description of main events in a sentence is different (morphologically, syntactically, discursively) from a description of backgrounded events. The relationship between the more salient events expressed in main constructions and those whose profiles have been dominated by the more salient ones can be interpreted in terms of a continuum between constructions which possess autonomous profiles and those with profiles reduced in different ways. Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk examines parameters which contribute to forming the asymmetry both within one utterance and also in terms of system differences between fully elaborated event descriptions and those which are gradually more and more de-sententialized and lose or lack their assertive force.

Francisco José Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez and Francisco Gonzálvez-García examine the treatment of illocutionary meaning in the Lexical Constructional Model (LCM) against the background of representative work carried out in the functional camp (e.g. Dik’s Functional Grammar and the Systemic Functional Grammar approach proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen) as well as in Cognitive Linguistics. While acknowledging some important insights in these contributions, the LCM proposes a more comprehensive yet more fine-grained account of the dynamics of illocutionary meaning on both descriptive and explanatory grounds. The overarching claim substantiated in this contribution is that illocution should be best regarded as part of a dynamic meaning construction system whereby illocutionary meaning obtains from constructional subsumption, cued inferencing, or a combination of these two cognitive processes. This claim is illustrated with particular reference to the contrasts between a family of illocutionary constructions (e.g. “Can/Could you turn off the TV?”) with a specific family of argument structure constructions, namely, small clauses (SCs henceforth) with verbs of causation, volition, expectation (e.g. “I want him dead”) as well as liking and preference verbs (e.g. “I like it curly”). SCs within the latter group provide
Evidence for the claim that illocutionary meaning can be conveyed through constructional subsumption and cued inferencing. At a higher level of granularity, configurations of this type exhibit varying degrees of fixation, ranging from the superimposition of “would” to “would like to see” onto the SC. Utterances of this type are regarded as metonymically grounded inferential schemas and therefore as amenable to being explained in terms of metonymic constraints, or more exactly, the high-level potentiality for actuality metonymy. These constraints, in conjunction with the feasibility of expressing illocutionary meaning through utterances without fixed elements, are identified as unique properties of argument structure constructions.

Janusz Badio outlines the theory of perceptual symbol systems and a related proposal of simulation semantics according to which conceptualization involves mental imagery. The underlying hypothesis is that both conceptual and perceptual processes share the same neural architecture. Linguistic forms are used to instruct one to build appropriate simulations that are rich in detail; perceptual symbols represent various aspects of our bodily experience that has been dismantled and stored. It can be recreated and even practiced in a top-down fashion, which allows productivity, creativity, and inferences. The article also mentions the philosophical background of simulation semantics.

Tomasz Ciszewski concentrates on methodological and philosophical implications underlying contemporary phonological theory. According to the author, phonological theory has been recently experiencing a serious methodological crisis which, however, is most often more apparent to outsiders in the field rather than the advocates of a particular theoretical framework. The contribution discusses methodological problems within three modern mainstream approaches (Phonetically Grounded Phonology, Optimality Theory, and Government Phonology). All three models, albeit in slightly different ways, have been successfully “immunised against refutation” by means of various ad-hoc proposals aimed at defending their main assumptions despite negative empirical evidence. In particular, the theories in question rely on a misconceived idea of simplicity or “formal elegance”, confuse correlation with causality or postulate non-verifiable phonological representations and formal mechanisms. Apart from theory-internal methodological shortcomings, however, they all promote a vision of phonology as a completely autonomous field and disregard the latest advances made in cognitive sciences or neurobiology on the one hand and acoustics, aerodynamics, and articulatory phonetics on the other.

The contribution by Maria Jodłowiec is devoted to a relevance-theoretic approach to metarepresentation and language. Relevance theory is a model of human overt intentional communication rooted in some observations about human cognitive functioning. In this approach, the fundamental assumption about how interpreters recover the communicator’s meaning says that ostensive stimuli provide direct evidence of the communicative intentions of the individuals who pro-
duce them, and these stimuli come with a tacit guarantee that they have been intended to be optimally relevant. There are communicative situations though, in which recovering the communicator’s meaning involves taking into account information which is available to interpreters through metacommunicative insight. In such contexts, reading the speaker’s mind or metarepresentation strategies are called for. This happens when an utterance yields an accidentally optimally relevant interpretation, an accidentally irrelevant interpretation, or an interpretation that will merely seem optimally relevant even though it is genuinely not so. All three cases are briefly discussed and the question of which came first in the process of phylogenesis: language or metarepresentation is addressed.

Andrew Jorgensen focuses on understanding semantic scepticism. Semantic scepticism is essentially the thesis that no sentence expresses a proposition. This thesis is prima facie self-defeating. Jorgensen examines Boghossian’s attempt to show it entails a contradiction, and Soames’ challenge that it is evidence against itself. As he further argues, neither argument is successful. The key to the defence is the recognition that scepticism requires rejecting only one of two necessary conditions on representation. Properly considered, the intuition that one understands semantic scepticism is in no way inconsistent with the truth of semantic scepticism.

Henryk Kardela examines, through the prism of Ludwik Fleck’s theory of thought style (Denkstil), the development of some selected “facts” in linguistics, mainly in cognitive grammar as proposed and developed by Ronald Langacker. Assuming, as Fleck does, that facts are not objectively given but intellectually created and that any fact is possible if it fits the accepted thought style, the role of an individual researcher in the development of a linguistic fact must be seen to be considerably limited. “Individual exploits”, as Fleck calls them, can only be successful if the time is ripe for their acceptance or when, to use Michel Foucault’s wording, the discourse within which a scientific fact develops allows the “searching subject” to “become individuated” in the history of knowledge.

Krzysztof Kosecki discusses the concepts of Subject and Self in English personification metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson argue that being a whole, a person is metaphorically divided into two parts – THE SUBJECT and THE SELF (or SELVES). The same metaphor underlies many of the English self-compounds that describe mechanisms, e.g. “a self-propelled gun”, and various abstract ideas, e.g. “a self-explanatory theory.” Since, as claimed by Kövecses, the presence of “the bifurcated structure of subject and self” presupposes the existence of a person, it follows that the personification metaphor may be more common and may have a more complex structure that has hitherto been acknowledged.

Jakub Mácha investigates the issue of whether metaphors have a metaphorical or secondary meaning; he also relates this question to the borderline between philosophy and linguistics. Using examples from W. H. Auden and Virginia Woolf, he shows that metaphor accomplishes something more than its
literal meaning expresses and this “more” cannot be captured by any secondary meaning. What is essential in metaphor is not a secondary meaning but an internal relation between a metaphorical proposition and a description of its effects. In order to understand metaphors, we have to share an ability to construe metaphorical meanings at once. The aim of this ability is to uncover an internal relation that lies behind a particular metaphor. In an afterthought, Mácha considers the possibility of a lexicon or dictionary of metaphors.

Ratikanta Panda commences his contribution with the observation that the two disciplines of philosophy of language and linguistics can not be compartmentalized into theoretical or practical aspects of language study. Whereas philosophy of language concerns itself with the ultimate end of any language, i.e. the origin and meaning of its constituent words, linguistics concerns itself broadly with syntactic organization of those words, their semantic evolution. Thus, semantics comes out as the meeting ground between the two disciplines. On this meeting ground, the two sciences can profitably benefit from each other. The contribution focuses on the semantic aspect of a language as to how “Meaning” emerges within a given context. The context can be seen as a dynamic scenario which is influenced by the sociological reality of the speakers and the listeners most of all. How do people understand meanings amid this technology revolution? The issue is raised with reference to Wittgenstein’s use theory of meaning, and Panda argues that it is the social use that generates meanings of the terms.

Wiktor Pskit reflects on the development of basic concepts in the field of syntactic theory in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. He offers a discussion of the status of the notions of “category” and “construction” in three current approaches to syntax. The differences between the theories that are identified suggest that syntactic theory suffers from the lack of agreement on the kind of theoretical devices needed for the analysis of empirical data. However, as observed by Pskit, this state of affairs can be seen in a positive light since the competition of diverging ideas can be interpreted as evidence of dynamic development of this field of linguistic inquiry.

Monika Rymaszewska-Chwist presents an account of the nature of human mental activity and interaction with the external world from the perspective of the philosophy of embodied realism advocated by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. The principal aim is to discuss some philosophical assumptions which underpin contemporary cognitive science. In the context of a brief overview of these assumptions, the author attempts to demonstrate that the philosophy behind cognitive science is a fruit of multi-generational struggle to answer crucial ontological and epistemological queries, and that embodied realism is an eclectic and unifying approach to the body-mind problem that has emerged in its definite form mainly thanks to the advancement of neurosciences with their insight into the nature of human brain and processes governing cognition.
Sławomir Wacewicz focuses on concepts as correlates of lexical items. The content of his article amounts to a somewhat controversial terminological proposal: the term ‘concept’ is most fruitfully construed as “a mental representations having a lexical correlate”. Such a definition makes it possible to treat ‘concept’ as a technical term across cognitive sciences, while also preserving most intuitions from a looser use of this word in the literature. The central points consist in appreciating the qualitative difference between the mental representations correlated with lexical labels and other mental representations, and in accepting this difference as an effect of the causal influence of language on cognition. The argument is supported by a review of recent empirical results.

Lei Zhu studies the foundations of linguistic science from the perspective of phenomenology. Following the phenomenological method of suspending concepts as “representations”, he observes that all linguistic discourses are reducible as representations of the speech sound. Moreover, drawing on the phenomenological distinction between Leib (body) and Körper (corpse), he further claims that the first and most important step in the establishment of modern linguistic discourse is the Körper-ization of the speech sound – a process started in phonetics and phonology by means of their arithmetic (in phonetics) and algebraic (in phonology) processing. It is in this way that speech as the original Leib of language is gradually analysed into the duality of ‘sound’ and ‘concept’. This also explains the seemingly dubious position (to some) of phonetics in modern linguistics, as no difference in conceptualised meaning can be analysed in pure and decontextualised phonetic contrasts. Like phonetics and phonology, linguistic analyses at higher levels, as part of the Körper-ization process of the speech sound, unanimously follow the ‘sound/concept’ duality – though it takes different forms in different theories. This, to use Derrida’s language, is how speech sounds are ‘written’ in modern linguistics. In other words, linguistics by nature is one of many ways of ‘writing’ about speech sounds, and that explains the incongruence between modern linguistics and some scripts like Chinese characters; both are writings of speech sounds and neither conforms to the other so long as it attempts to preserve the way it writes.

Przemysław Żywiczyński provides a short introduction to Classical Indian philosophy of language which has, so far, received minimal attention from the Western academia. The aim of his contribution is to bring this ancient scholarly tradition closer to the Western recipient. Thus, the author presents the intellectual climate of inter-sectarian debates in which theories of language and meaning were forged. He also shows the historical continuity between the grammatical mode of language analysis inaugurated by Panini and the later, scholastic approaches to the study of language- and meaning-related problems. Finally, more technical aspects of Indian philosophy of language are also discussed.
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