

**Review of *Philosophy and Linguistics* , K. Murasugi and R. Stainton (eds.)**  
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In the past couple of decades, interest in the philosophy of language has, according to the introduction written by Zoltan Szabó for this volume, cooled somewhat. This is because pursuit of many of the philosophical issues that the study of language had set out to solve in the first place has developed into not so much the study of language but rather of mind, and adjacent areas of philosophy. As Tyler Burge has put it, "Many philosophers felt that the philosophy of language had done its job..." This volume attempts, however, to illuminate the positive side of these developments for the philosophical study of language. Szabó puts it: "The scientific results are interesting on their own, their relevance to the philosophical questions remains clear..." (p. 1) This, then, puts philosophy of language on a new footing, where "Freed from the responsibility of ultimately answering all philosophical questions, philosophers of language were free to confess an interest in language *per se*." (p. 3). The stated purpose of the volume is then to present the reader with a variety of representative papers which "...exemplify the current reorientation of philosophy of language," which Szabó characterizes as a joint linguistic and philosophical investigation into "...the syntax and semantics of various natural language constructions."

This volume is a collection of eleven recent papers that center on issues in the philosophy of language. After the brief and historically informative scene-setting remarks by Szabó, the volume is divided into four sections. Part 1 consists of two papers, "Perceptual reports revisited," by James Higginbotham, and "Coloring and composition," by Stephen Neale. The paper by Higginbotham is primarily a discussion of his (1983) paper on the analysis of perception reports. In this paper he mounts an updated defense of his view that perception reports are relations between a perceiver and an event, in contrast (in particular) to the view expressed by Barwise (1981) according to which they are relations between perceivers and scenes, analyzed as situations. The other paper in the section is by Stephen Neale "Coloring and composition". Here, "coloring" is a reference to Frege's notion of *Farbung*, his expression for those aspects of meaning which apparently do not make a truth-conditional difference (e.g. 'and' vs. 'but'). Such notions have been subsequently analysed as matters of implicature or presupposition. Neale takes a different turn, arguing in a very detailed manner instead that even simple sentences may express more than one proposition, and that this notion can account for at least the examples of *Farbung* that Frege discusses in various of his works.

Part 2, "Philosophy, semantics, and pragmatics" likewise consists of two papers. The first, by Adèle Mercier ("On communication-based *de re* thought, commitments *de dicto* and word individuation"), is a very clear and refreshing reconsideration of the causal theory of names (especially by Kripke), focusing on questions about those instances where the name has, through various processes, come to stand for something other than that first fixed by some indexically-grounded "baptism". The second paper is by François Recanati, "Situations and the structure of content". Here, Recanati proposes within a situation semantics framework to elaborate on the Barwise-Etchemendy (1987) view of propositional content, focusing on the feature of these interpretations where propositions have not one but two levels of truth-evaluable content. Roughly, one level is similar to a traditional proposition that can be evaluated for truth or falsity, and the other level is a proposition of the sort discussed in Austin (1971) invoking something about "the situation talked about" and asserting that it supports the contents of the traditional proposition. The paper represents an extended analysis of "what is said" in asserting a sentence of natural language.

Part 3, "Linguistics and Philosophy of Science" also has two papers in it. Susan Dwyer's "Moral competence" uses a Chomskyan view of the development of, and variation in, natural language

competence as a springboard to trying to explain the development and variation of moral competence. The general idea, according to this view, is that humans have a "single competence" but that it can be manifested differently in different people because different "parameters" have been activated by the environment in which these people are raised. The second paper is "Simplicity and generative linguistics" by Peter Ludlow. In this paper, Ludlow considers the role of cross-theory evaluation on grounds of simplicity, in a reaction to a paper published by Paul Postal in 1972. Ludlow's overall point is no doubt correct--that there is no well-defined means of comparing different theories on grounds of simplicity, and that linguists should just go about their work without trying to make the sorts of comparisons that Postal was then attempting.

Part 4 is called "A case study in philosophy and linguistics: mixed quotation", and it consists of a target article by H. Cappelen & E. LePore ("Semantics for Quotation") followed by three commentaries on this article (by R. Elugardo, P. Pietroski, and R. Stainton) and a brief response to these commentaries by Cappelen and LePore. The notion of mixed quotation is introduced by example so as not to beg any questions concerning whether it is best analyzed as an offshoot of indirect quotation, or of direct quotation, or of pure quotation; but informally we can say that mixed quotations appear on the surface to involve reports of indirect quotation but where a portion of the indirectly quoted proposition occurs directly quoted. Their leading example is:

Clinton said that he would "cut taxes".

Cappelen & LePore present their analysis in terms of a Davidsonian paratactic approach to indirect quotation, although they are insistent that their analysis is strictly independent of the truth of such an approach. Instead, they say, their analysis derives from Davidson's theory of pure quotation in which there is a fundamental theoretical primitive, "same-tokens", which is used to say that an item within quotation marks bears the "same-token" relation to an item that is being demonstrated. As it comes out in the dialectic between Cappelen & LePore and their commentators, it seems that there is no set of necessary and sufficient conditions one can use to determine whether two items are or are not in the "same-token" (or for that matter, in the "same-saying") relation to one another. In response to any counterexample presented by the commentators, Cappelen & LePore respond that these technical terms are to be understood as having in their extensions whatever pairs of expressions that one might intuitively wish to assign to it. A less charitable interpretation might be that there is no theory here at all, but instead merely a collection of examples.

Our attention in evaluating this volume did not so much turn to the individual contributions of the authors, but rather how they all fit together in some coherent way to fulfill the volume's stated purpose. We found the individual contributions of varying levels of current relevance and interest, each of appropriate quality for publication in a volume such as this. In fact, a couple of these papers have been recently published in journals (the Cappelen & LePore paper has appeared in *Mind*, 1997). We asked, however, the extent to which the papers collectively and individually exemplified not just the investigation of syntax and semantics, as stated, but *any* new "reorientation" in the philosophy of language. Evaluated thusly, the volume is puzzling. Many of the papers present philosophy of language as it has been practiced for at least the last quarter of this century, and we were unable to locate any real discontinuities that distinguished it in method or purpose from this line of work. The papers by Neale and Recanati, for instance, squarely represent continuing discussions regarding Frege, Austin, Searle, and so forth that have been ongoing for some time in the philosophy of language. The paper by Ludlow addresses an issue that has waned badly in relevance to practicing linguists, and would have been better placed in a volume produced somewhere in the mid 1970's. The Mercier article is a reconsideration of the theory of direct reference of names as developed largely by Kripke, and has been the topic of numerous commentaries (of which this is a very worthy member) for a couple of decades. Higginbotham's article is, as pointed out above, an updated defense of a point of view developed in the early 1980's, and represents no significant break there.

With "Linguistics" as a prominent part of the title, one might also have expected more contact with linguistics proper. Few of the papers make reference to any recent or current developments in

linguistics (though the Dwyer paper takes its inspiration from the currently received view in Chomskyan syntax), and in general--the Higginbotham paper aside--the level of detail and currency of linguistic analyses made use of might also have been invoked a roughly quarter century ago. So the volume does not offer anything particularly new and original concerning the relationship between linguistics and philosophy of language, either. We are left then speculating as to what the real purpose of the volume was, given how wide of the mark the collection is from the stated purpose.

It is furthermore difficult to discern clearly *any* conceptual similarity among the articles which might make this volume suitable, for instance, in a seminar devoted to some single topic. What possible course, one might ask, would cover Frege's views on *Farbung*, the issue of how moral competence might be acquired, what 'simplicity of theories' might mean, situation-semantic theories of truth, and accounts of mixed quotation?

It is not clear why the editors themselves did not state their own intentions and purposes in the introduction, or a foreword, or in some other way in the pages of this volume, given these questions. An index would have been very useful, but there is none. There is one major typographical glitch: significant portions of a tree diagram appearing in the Cappelen and Lepore contribution (p. 211) are gratuitously inserted at points in two other articles (Pietroski, p. 251; Ludlow p. 193), and at least momentarily cause serious confusion. Even a casual proofreading would have rectified this. (There are other, lesser, infelicities also, including a misstatement of the topic of Neale's paper in the introduction.)

Readers with a special interest in having copies of some of the articles, and especially those with a strong interest in properties of mixed quotation or those with a historical interest in Frege, may find the volume of strong interest. Beyond this market, however, it is not clear that this volume makes a special or necessary contribution.

### **References:**

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