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PREFACE

The common theme of the papers collected in this volume is their contribution to pragmatics and, by extension, to the inferentialist accounts of language. In some cases, it is a direct contribution to inferentialism or its historical roots. In other cases, it is a contribution to the larger category of pragmatic theories of language. What follows is a short description of particular entries in the volume.

The first paper, entitled “A Comparison of Tichý and Prior’s Approach to Definite Descriptions and the Possibilities of Enrichment of Tichý’s Treatment”, develops Pavel Tichý’s account of individual descriptions by combining it with Arthur Prior’s temporal logic—specifically with his distinction between the “weak” and the “strong” usage of the definite article “the”. According to Tichý, definite descriptions refer to roles or “offices”, as he calls them, instead of individuals who can occupy these roles in different periods. As such, Tichý’s position is firmly anti-contextual—the meaning of an expression such as “The president of the Czech Republic” is fixed and does not change depending on the circumstances of use. It is fixed because it refers to the abstract administrative role that is filled by different individuals over time. Prior’s theory contains a temporal element that is very useful to tackle this aspect. His “weak” usage of “the” addresses situations when the reference changes over time. The strong interpretation of “the” can then be used to cover cases in which we wish to refer to unique individuals while still using definite descriptions. To do this, the authors suggest adding modifiers, such as “first” in compound descriptions like “The first president of the Czech Republic”. The authors differentiate between three cases where

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Prior's distinction is helpful: unique position in a sequence, unique properties of individuals, and unique creations or achievements of a given individual.

The next paper, "An Inferentialist Account of Proper Names", addresses the titular problem by contrasting it with traditional accounts of Frege, Russell, and Mill and utilizing Robert Brandom's approach. Brandom's inferentialism is easier to grasp when it comes to general names, as the argument that they attain their meaning through the roles they play in inferences is relatively convincing. The issue with proper names is that it is much less convincing that (a) they have meanings akin to general terms and (b) that their meaning can somehow be obtained through how they figure in inferential patterns. The trouble with proper names is especially evident once we realize that part of the meaning-making mechanism Brandom proposes originates from material inferences. This idea can be contentious even in the case of general names, but it becomes rather risky once we decide to extend the theory to proper names, as, at least at first glance, they do not seem to generate inferences of this type. It may seem that suggesting otherwise turns Brandom's account into Russellian descriptivism—the idea that proper names are descriptions in disguise. The reply to this challenge suggested by the author is based on the empirical fact that proper names are used in inferences. If we treat inferential patterns as basic and constitutive of meaning, we must accept that some social-linguistic interactions simply are inferences with proper names. In other words, proper names get their meaning through inferences, not because of some hidden prior meaning that generates them, but through the sheer existence of actual inferential patterns in the speaking community. Since the meaning of proper names depends on the norms of the collective, they can evolve over time. This means that some of the substitutions we take for granted at a given moment, such as the classic "Scott is the author of *Waverley*", may become invalid. The paper suggests that further research is needed to explain the mechanism by which new, stable patterns of usage and social norms are formed within the community of speakers.

In "The Subjective Probability of Conditionals and Its Formalizations", Anna and Krzysztof Wójtowicz present a new, pragmatically oriented take on conditionals. The problem with conditional statements of the form "If A, then B" is that whenever we do not treat them simply as material implications, evaluating the level of belief the user has in them becomes difficult. To address this, the authors suggest looking at the problem from the perspective of two approaches to establishing the degree of belief a rational agent has towards conditionals. The first one is a "credence-based" approach. The credence function assigns a value between 0 and 1 directly to a given conditional. The simplicity of this approach is both its advantage and its flaw. On the one hand, it allows us to precisely represent a degree of belief for a single conditional. On the other hand, it ignores the fact that they can be a part of larger structures of probability. It is also challenging to use in cases of more complex conditionals. As the authors show, the credence-based approach struggles with correctly modeling some of the logical rules for conditionals. To model more complex conditionals (that can sometimes

be nested), the authors turn to the probability-space approach, which represents conditionals as events in a probability space. The authors clearly favor the second approach, pointing out its advantages, such as compliance with probability theory and better effectiveness in computations for complex conditionals.

In “Struktura...”, Wojciech Krysztofiak presents a model of communicative reference understood as addressing another person through speaking or writing. Krysztofiak contrasts this notion with the standard semantic reference—addressing the objects denoted by the terms used in speaking or writing. According to Krysztofiak, both types of reference differ in significant ways. The communicative reference is directly directed at the recipient, which means that it lacks the indeterminacy that plagues regular reference. Communicative reference is also based on the self-reflective awareness of the speaker, who evaluates the effectiveness of their speech acts and may correct misunderstandings. Krysztofiak points out that communicative reference requires both parties to establish communicative paths that can position both the speaker and the recipient in various ways. One example of this additional dimension is that the communication act can be friendly or hostile. Even though typical cases of communicative reference remain within the same conceptual and experiential framework, the theory enables us to talk about situations where both of them are different. An example the author gives is the case of reading fictional works where the concepts and experiences of the reader can be vastly different from the experiences of the fictional speaker.