A r t i c l e

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THE PRAGMATIC THEORY OF MEANING[1]

S U M M A R Y : The paper addresses the proto-pragmatic theory of meaning formulated by Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz (1890-1963), one of the most prominent inter-war Polish analytic philosophers from a philosophical school called the Lvov-Warsaw School. The paper finds a point of intersection between analytic philosophy and pragmatism on the basis of this particular case study and places Ajdukiewicz's theory in close proximity to the so-called semantic pragmatism of Robert B. Brandom (1950-). The paper argues that there are three particular spheres where we can detect a striking similarity between the two standpoints, which could both be described as exemplifications of analytic pragmatism. The first sphere of similarity is their description of the dominance of pragmatics over semantics. The second sphere of similarity concerns the so-called pragmatic mediation of semantic relations (using a phrase coined by Brandom). And the third similarity regards the concept of the rules of assertions.

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1. Introduction

The paper addresses the proto-pragmatic theory of meaning formulated by Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz (1890-1963), one of the most prominent inter-war Polish analytic philosophers from a philosophical school called the Lvov-Warsaw School. The paper finds a point of intersection between analytic philosophy and pragmatism on the basis of this particular case study and places Ajdukiewicz's theory in close proximity to the so-called semantic pragmatism of Robert B. Brandom (b. 1950). The paper argues that there are three particular spheres where we can detect a striking similarity between the two standpoints, which could both be described as exemplifications of analytic pragmatism.

The first sphere of similarity is their description of the dominance of pragmatics over semantics. The dominance of pragmatics over semantics does not necessarily reduce the latter wholly to the former, but pragmatics does totally subordinate semantics in explanatory terms. There is no possible explanation of the ties between meanings and expressions without the usage of pragmatics, i.e. without the practice or some dispositions for giving the particular meaning to vocabularies in question. Linguistic usage consists in both the practice and the dispositions. They could be understood in social or individual terms in virtue of which particular expressions can become vocabulary with particular meanings. Essential to this view is only that there be some practice or disposition which is enough for applying the particular meaning to the particular vocabulary. To identify the practice or disposition is to establish what one should do in order to be a competent user of the language, that is, to say what a given vocabulary enables one to express in a given language.

The second sphere of similarity between proposals of Ajdukiewicz and Brandom concerns the so-called pragmatic mediation of semantic relations (using a phrase coined by Brandom). The pragmatic mediation of all semantic relations implies, in fact, a trivial observation that can be made in any domain of language. Language is a condition of our thinking about the world, i.e. we can express our thoughts about the world only through language. This assumption reveals that solely language can give us a referential (semantic) relation to the world. What is more, this referential (semantic) relation can be approached only from the pragmatic perspective, that is, from the perspective of a language user, as we do not have any other access to language and, through language, to the world.

And the third similarity regards the concept of rules of assertions. Considering the pragmatic mediation of semantic relations, we can distinguish three rules of assertions: (i) axiomatic, (ii) deductive, and (iii) empirical. The first rule holds when the language user is obliged to accept an expression in every condition and

circumstance. This is the case for mathematical truths such as *2+2=4*. The deductive rule forces the language user to accept some expressions in virtue of the prior acceptance of some other expressions. If the user asserts the sentence 'If *A* then *B*' and the sentence *A*, then the rule forces him to assert the sentence *B*. The third, empirical rule forces the language user to assert some sentences on the grounds of empirical data. The rules of assertions are intrinsically pragmatic categories, and they are cashed out in terms of acceptances and rejections. Acceptances and rejections are obtained in virtue of the motives of language users. These motives, expressed in certain beliefs, may be other beliefs (in axiomatic and deductive rules) or empirical data (in the empirical rule). We have access to these rules and the acceptances and rejections of—expressions only through the linguistic behaviour of language users. To learn how to use the language is to gain a disposition to assert some sentences on the grounds of other sentences or experience.

2. Semantic Pragmatism

To emphasise the pragmatic character of Ajdukiewicz's analytic philosophy, let's turn first to the most paradigmatic pragmatic theory of meaning proposed recently by Brandom (see Wanderer, 2008, pp. 96–97; Dummett, 2010, pp. 213–226; Macbeth, 2010, pp. 197–201; Maher, 2012, pp. 67–75). His semantic or analytic pragmatism, as he labels his position, maintains that pragmatics, i.e. analysis of the usage of linguistic expressions, is prior to semantics, i.e. analysis of meanings and references of linguistic expressions (see Brandom, 2000, p. 4; 2008a, pp. 9, 31, 40; 2008b, p. 8). In other words, the pragmatic level — the way we use linguistic expressions — is factually and logically prior to semantics — the meanings and references of language items. According to Brandom, this approach should be distinguished from the Quinean so-called methodological pragmatism (see Quine, 1953; cf. Brandom, 2002, p. 43), where pragmatism is not considered in terms of its priority over semantics, but rather as a useful tool for differentiating between actual semantic theories and solely formal constructions (see Brandom, 2008a, p. 4). "[P]ragmatic theory supplies the explanatory target of semantic theory" and is used "as a criterion of demarcation distinguishing genuinely *semantic* theories from others" (Brandom, 2002, p. 42). On this view, the pragmatic level is not prior to the semantic level. Semantics can be built and explained autonomously, and subsequently, that semantics can be compared to the language users' practice in order to test if it is the semantics of real language or only of a formal construction (see Brandom, 2002, pp. 42–43). On Brandom's view, this autonomy is impossible as there is no way of building semantics without pragmatics. Following Szubka (2012, p. 169), we note that the following two assumptions seem essential for Brandom's pragmatism. Firstly, although he does not directly say that meaning is identified with its usage, he seems to imply that the usage is somehow explanatorily prior to the meaning (and its content) (see Brandom, 2002, pp. 41–42). In other words, the use of

expressions determines their meanings. Secondly, the usage of expressions may be characterized in broad functional terms: as the roles played by expressions in linguistic practice (see Brandom, 2002, p. 45; Brandom, 2008a, p. 8; MacFarlane, 2010, pp. 88–89; Szubka, 2012, pp. 169–170).

Brandom in one of his recent works, namely in the 2008 book *Between Saying and Doing* (the outcome of his John Locke Lectures at Oxford in 2006), considers also a more moderate version of his original semantic pragmatism. On this view, the dominance of pragmatics over semantics does not necessarily reduce semantics wholly to pragmatics, but the latter totally subordinates semantics in explanatory terms. There is no possible explanation of ties between meanings and expressions without the application of pragmatics, i.e. without the practice or some ability for giving particular meanings to the vocabularies in question. Linguistic usage consists in both the practice and the abilities (dispositions). They could be understood in social or individual terms in virtue of which particular expressions can become vocabulary with particular meanings. Essential to this view is only that there be some practice or ability which is enough for applying the particular meaning to the particular vocabulary. To identify the practice or ability is to establish what one should do in order to be a competent user of the language, that is, to say what a given vocabulary enables one to express correctly in the given language (see Brandom, 2008a, p. 9).

The above position Brandom labels as analytic pragmatism. Its analytic character consists in its theoretical and systematic approach to language by using formal or logical tools to explain it. Semantic pragmatism would be the core of such an analytic pragmatism, and would be the view that "the only explanation there could be for how a given *meaning* gets associated with a vocabulary is to be found in *the use* of that vocabulary: the practices by which that meaning is conferred or the abilities whose exercise constitutes deploying a vocabulary with that meaning" (ibidem). The use of that vocabulary consists then in the exercise of practices and abilities (dispositions), and these practices could be both of a social nature, such as social practices of holding or asserting some meanings by a given community, and of an individual character, such as individual abilities or dispositions that enable us to ascribe a particular meaning to given sounds or written signs (that is, to a given vocabulary). What is essential here is that there is a complex of practices or dispositions that enables us to apply the meaning to a particular vocabulary. To identify such practices or abilities (dispositions) is to establish "what one must do in order to count as *saying* what the vocabulary lets practitioners express" (ibidem). (This relation of practices and abilities (dispositions) to the vocabulary Brandom calls 'practice-vocabulary sufficiency' (PV-sufficiency), while the relation of the (meta-)vocabulary in which the practices were described he calls 'vocabulary—practice sufficiency' (VP-sufficiency) (see Brandom, 2008a, pp. 9–10).

The essential element of Brandom's view is then the pragmatic mediation of any semantic relation (see Brandom, 2008a, p. 11). This pragmatic mediation is revealed in the fact that we can have access to semantic relations only through

the practice of language users, and that this practice is exhibited in their assertions, i.e. in their acceptance or rejection of the particular vocabulary (see Brandom, 2008a, pp. 11–12).

3. The Directival Theory of Meaning

Having presented an outline of Brandomian theory, let's turn now to Ajdukiewicz's theory of meaning, which he called the directival theory of meaning (understood as constituted by directives in terms of rules of assertions).[2] The pragmatic character of Ajdukiewicz's theory of meaning is strictly connected to his theory of language as an important cognitive tool. Ajdukiewicz writes:

> We believe that language plays a very important role in the cognitive process. Different theories of meaning imply the different views concerning cognitive role of language. According to some, that role is a minor one. Cognition could exist without language; language is only a means to record and communicate our cognitions to others. According to others the role of language is essential; linguistic expressions present objects to us, just as do the data of our sense perceptions and memories and there are objects which cannot be presented at all except by linguistic expressions. One's view about the nature of the meaning of expressions is related more or less closely to one's position with respect to the cognitive role of language. By investigating the concept of meaning we hope to shed some light on this role. (Ajdukiewicz, 1931/1978, p. 4)

I think that the above quotation expresses what could be understood in Brandomian terms as a 'pragmatic mediation of the semantic relations'. It seems that according to Ajdukiewicz language is a condition of our thinking about the world, i.e. we can express our thoughts about the world only through language. The pragmatic mediation of all semantic relations implies, in fact, that trivial observation that language is a condition of our thinking. Only language can give us a referential (semantic) relation to the world. However, this referential (semantic) relation can be approached solely from the pragmatic perspective, that is, from the perspective of a language user: we have no other access to language and, through language, to the world (see Ajdukiewicz, 1934b/1978, p. 40).

It seems that Ajdukiewicz thought that we can have access to these semantic or referential relations only through the pragmatic level due to the particular stage of development of semantics at that time. When he was formulating his theory of meaning in 1931, there was no easy way to deal with the so-called semantic antinomies (like, for instance, the Liar Paradox). From that perspective,

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[2] For the most comprehensive introduction to Ajdukiewicz's directival theory of meaning and the recent interesting development of his theory in a form of the new directival theory of meaning see the works of Paweł Grabarczyk, Tadeusz Ciecierski and Krzysztof Posłajko (see Grabarczyk 2017 and 2019, Ciecierski and Grabarczyk 2022, and Posłajko and Grabarczyk 2018).

any definition of semantic notions seemed impossible, as it was impossible to speak meaningfully at the same time about language and about the world expressed in this language. (After Tarski's semantic definition of truth, Ajdukiewicz abandoned his idea of a pragmatic theory of meaning, and only returned to this project just a year before his death, in 1962. Another reason for suspending his work on the pragmatic theory of meaning was Tarski's critique of a part of the 1931's paper that contained that theory; Tarski demonstrated to Ajdukiewicz that his supplementary definition of meaning in terms of synonymity leads to a contradiction (see Giedymin, 1978, p. XLVII; Ajdukiewicz, 1936/1978, p. 118; see also Grabarczyk 2017, p. 34)).

This pragmatic mediation of semantic relations is present in Ajdukiewicz's programme of what he called semantic epistemology (see Ajdukiewicz,, 1937/1978, p. 146; Ajdukiewicz, 1931/1978). This programme proposed to formulate epistemological observations/statements from linguistic analysis, i.e. from the analysis of the language we use to express our knowledge. Although Ajdukiewicz uses here the label 'semantic', he proposes a strictly syntactic and pragmatic analysis. On the syntactic level, he defines the meaning of expressions as equivalent to establishing the inferential relations that hold between them. And on the pragmatic level, he considers how an assertion of one sentence by a language user implies a rejection or an assertion of other sentences in this language. We can learn about linguistic properties and rules just from our linguistic practice. In other words, we can reveal the meaning of expressions through their usage, but we can also reveal that an assertion of one expression leads to the acceptance of some other expression, as well as the rejection of another one. If somebody is asserting that "John is older than Peter" and rejecting at the same time that "Peter is younger than John," it means that he uses expressions in some manner that is not used normally in the standard English language (see Ajdukiewicz, 1937/1978, p. 145).

4. The Rules of Assertions

Considering the pragmatic mediation of semantic relations, Ajdukiewicz distinguished three rules of assertions: (i) axiomatic, (ii) deductive, and (iii) empirical. The first rule holds when the language user is obliged to accept an expression in every condition and circumstance. This is the case for mathematical truths such as *2+2=4*. In other words, the axiomatic rule determines expressions (sentences) which are to be accepted unconditionally: the rejection of any sentence that follows the axiomatic rule is equivalent to violating "the meaning-specification of the language" (see Ajdukiewicz, 1934b/1978, p. 46; Ajdukiewicz, 1935/1978, p. 111, Ciecierski and Grabarczyk 2022, p. 36).

The deductive rule forces the language user to accept some expressions in virtue of the prior acceptance of some other expressions. If the user asserts the sentence 'If *A* then *B*' and the sentence *A*, then the rule forces him to assert the sentence *B* (see Ajdukiewicz, 1934b/1978, p. 45). The deductive rule determines

ordered pairs of expressions (sentences) such that if we accept the first of them, we are thereby committed to accepting the second "on pain of violating the meaning attached to them in the given language" (Ajdukiewicz, 1949/1978, p. 220; see Ajdukiewicz, 1934b/1978, p. 46; Ajdukiewicz, 1934c/1978, p. 68).

The third, empirical rule forces the language user to assert some sentences on the grounds of empirical data. The empirical rules would reflect empirical attitudes of the language users, and these attitudes would be expressed by occasional beliefs such as: "This is green," "This is a table," etc. The empirical rule correlates experiential elements (data) or empirically grounded expressions (sentences) with other expressions (sentences) in such a way that in the presence of these empirical elements (data) or expressions we are obliged to accept the correlated expressions "on pain of violating the meaning-specification of the language" (see Ajdukiewicz, 1934b/1978, pp. 46, 62).

The rules of assertions are intrinsically pragmatic categories, and they are cashed out in terms of acceptances and rejections. These are obtained in virtue of some motives of the language users (see Ajdukiewicz, 1931/1978, pp. 25–26, 31). These motives, expressed in certain beliefs, may be other beliefs (in axiomatic and deductive rules) or empirical data (in the empirical rule). We have access to these rules and the acceptances and rejections of expressions only through the linguistic behaviour of the language users. To learn how to use the language is to gain a disposition to assert some sentences on the grounds of other sentences or experience. Ajdukiewicz observes that learning a language consist in forming dispositions to accept some sentences on the basis of certain motives. He writes in his 1931 paper "On the Meaning of Expressions":

> A baby gradually acquires the ability to use the language of adults but at first speaks its own language. Expressions of that language often sound like terms of the adults' language though they function in the baby's language as sentences. They are not used by the baby in a parrot-like fashion but in a meaningful way. The difference (between a baby and a parrot in this respect) consists, firstly, in that certain sense-perceptions motivate the acceptance of some sentences. For example, seeing certain faces motivates the baby not only to utter 'mama!' but also to believe in the sentence whose translation into the adults' language might perhaps be 'mother is here' or 'mother is here now'. Babies learn to use their language by acquiring dispositions to accept sentences on the basis of experiences motivating them. (ibidem, p. 24)

Natural language is then a part of our biological and social life, which is made manifest in the process of first language acquisition by a child through its "adaptive behaviour, goal-directed and rule-governed activity." "The language of a community is governed by the rules of assertion which express the speaker's dispositions or abilities to definite motivational relationships whereby experiences of certain types motivate the acceptance of definite sentences of the language" (cf. Giedymin, 1978, p. XXXVI; see Ajdukiewicz, 1934b/1978, pp. 40, 62–63; Ajdukiewicz, 1931/1978, p. 26; Grabarczyk 2019, p. 8). This approach to natural

language seems to imply a kind of pragmatic notion of inference (strikingly echoing, to some extent, the inferentialism of Robert Brandom; see Posłajko and Grabarczyk 2018, p. 175).

5. Pure Pragmatics

Having described the similarities between Ajdukiewicz's and Brandom's theories of meaning, it is worth noticing an interesting historical link between these two philosophers and their theories. This link takes the form of Wilfried Sellars, who is a great philosophical inspiration for Brandom (see Brandom, 2011, pp. 83–106; Brandom, 2015, pp. 120–144, 236–272), and who was also instrumental in transmitting the ideas of Ajdukiewicz into anglophone analytic philosophy by translating one of his programmatic papers from German into English. This 1935 paper, published originally in *Erkenntnis* with the title "Die wissenshaftliche Weltperspektive" (see Ajdukiewicz, 1935),[3] was published in Sellars' translation with the English title "The Scientific World-Perspective" in the Sellars and Feigl 1949 anthology *Readings in Philosophical Analysis* (see Ajdukiewicz, 1949).

As rightly noted by Peter Olen, "Ajdukiewicz's article contains the notion of a 'world' and a 'world perspective', both of which play the same role as Sellars' use of 'world' and 'world story'" (Olen, 2016, p. 46, footnote 13). In my opinion, the inspiration seems to be even more substantial if we realize that the category of 'world story' played an important role in Sellars' understanding of the pragmatic dimension of meaning-formation and his notion of the inferential rules in linguistic practice.

The meaning of expressions was formed neither wholly empirically nor purely logically. It was a combination of these two elements, and the category of 'world story' signalised the perspective of the language user who is interacting with the empirical 'world' by the means of the rules of the linguistic community to which the user belongs ('world story'). It directly echoes Ajdukiewicz's ideas on the theory of meaning and the rules of assertion, with all the pragmatic flavour present in them. In fact, the paper translated by Sellars was a sort of summary of these particular ideas, and it seems sensible not to exclude the possibility that it might have played a role in inspiring Sellars as regards some of his own pragmatic concepts on language.

Let's look, then, at the alleged points of similarity between Ajdukiewicz and Sellars with respect to their pragmatic treatment of linguistic meaning. Like Ajdukiewicz (and later Brandom), Sellars was deeply interested in building a systematic philosophical pragmatics. In the early stage of his philosophy, he even called this project 'pure pragmatics' in order to differentiate it from the various proposals of semantical or syntactical character (see Sellars, 1947, p. 181; Olen, 2016, pp. 37–39). Like Ajdukiewicz, Sellars treats philosophy of language as a

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[3] The paper was simultaneously published by Ajdukiewicz also in Polish (see Ajdukiewicz, 1934a, pp. 409–416).

crucial tool for metaphysics and epistemology, and the extent to which he aims to apply it to epistemology is reminiscent of Ajdukiewicz's project of semantic epistemology (which was, in spite of the terminology, a pragmatic and syntactic project in nature) (see Sellars, 1947, pp. 181–184). What is interesting, in both cases pragmatics was chosen to play a special role in virtue of its covering the most comprehensively the relation between language, the language user, and the world. Semantics was considered here as methodologically or explanatorily secondary, due to its covering a more limited scope: only the relationship between the language and the world (see ibidem, p. 26).

Such an understanding of philosophical pragmatics sounds very much like the dominance of pragmatics over semantics that we have seen above in the characterisation of the similarities between the theories of meaning proposed by Ajdukiewicz and Brandom. In the early period of his thought, Sellars considered pure pragmatics as "the attempt to give a formal reconstruction of the common sense notion that an empirically meaningful language is one that is about the world in which it is used" (Sellars, 1947, p. 187; cf. DeVries, 2005, p. 26). In that way, pragmatics is the proper branch of philosophical linguistics in which to discuss the real or factual relation between language and the world, as language here obtains the status of a fact in the world, and that in virtue of considering the language user, who is, *ipso facto*, a part of the world.

In considering the language users' practice, Sellars is echoing also the second point of our comparison between Ajdukiewicz and Brandom regarding the pragmatic theory of meaning: the pragmatic mediation of semantic relations. In "Some Reflections on Language Games," Sellars writes:

> [A]n account in which learning a game involves learning to do what one does because doing these things is making moves in the game (let us abbreviate this to 'because of the moves [of the game]') where doing what one does because of the moves need not involve using language about the moves. Where he went astray was in holding that while doing what one does because of the moves need not involve using language about the moves it does involve being aware of the moves demanded and permitted by the game, for it was this which led to the regress". (Sellars, 1954/1963, p. 325; cf. DeVries, 2005, p. 42)

As observed in a commentary to this quote by Willem A. DeVries, "Sellars sketches a form of rule-governed behaviour that is not rule-obeying behaviour, a form of rule-governed behaviour in which things are done *because of the rules*, but not because of an *awareness of the rules*" (DeVries, 2005, p. 42). In other words, a language user can learn how to use language by practising the language, not by learning the rules of language first and then by practising them; in fact, it is the opposite, by practising language we are learning *implicitly* its rules even if never becoming *explicitly* aware of them (see, for comparison, Ajdukiewicz, 1931, p. 24). In that way, the pragmatic level mediates the semantic level of language, because we learn how to name things, i.e. what the referents to our

words are, by using the language in the world as a fact we are confronted with and by following the practice of the language community we belong to.

6. The Inferential Rules

The pragmatic mediation of semantic relations is possible due to the rules of language usage. This element is crucial for Sellars and it is reminiscent of the last, third point of comparison between Ajdukiewicz and Brandom's theories: the similarity as regards the rules of assertion. For Sellars, like for Ajdukiewicz and Brandom, language is primarily a rule-governed practice. He writes:

> The key to the concept of a linguistic rule is its complex relation to pattern-governed linguistic behavior. The general concept of pattern governed behavior is a familiar one. Roughly it is the concept of behavior which exhibits a pattern, not because it is brought about by the intention that it exhibit this pattern, but because the propensity to emit behavior of the pattern has been selectively reinforced, and the propensity to emit behavior which does not conform to this pattern selectively extinguished. (Sellars, 1974, p. 423)

Language is a rule-governed practice and could be explained in terms of human behaviour. This explanation needs to be intrinsically pragmatic as regards the observable phenomena of human actions exhibited in how linguistic expressions are formed. Sellars distinguishes between three observable functions of linguistic behaviour: (i) language-entry transitions, (ii) intralinguistic moves, and (iii) language-exit transitions. As regards language-entry transitions, the language user responds with the linguistic practice to the experienced world. With the intralinguistic moves, the language user makes inferences within the language (the inferential rules of assertions). And with the language-exit transitions, the language user behaves in an appropriate way to respond both to the language-entry transitions and the intralinguistic moves (see Sellars, 1949, p. 310; Sellars, 1954/1963, pp. 327-329; DeVries, 2005, pp. 30–31).

Two elements are crucial here from the perspective of the pragmatic theory of meaning. For Sellars, linguistic expressions obtain their meanings only through or within the entire language as a set of functions and rules. Moreover, the intralinguistic moves in the form of inferential rules play the most important role for Sellars' pragmatic description of language. Considering these two elements, Sellars maintains that the meaning of linguistic expressions is "infused with material inferences that reflect the place of the object or characteristic in nature as grasped by the framework the language embodies. Every meaningful empirical language is effectively an outline of a complete *world-story*" (DeVries, 2005, p. 32). In other words, the world-story is a framework or perspective within which language users' connection to the empirical world could be explained in terms of the material rules of inference. To become linguistically competent, the language user must be introduced to the world-story through the *implicit* language practice, not through the *explicit* knowledge of the rules. As we noted,

following Peter Olen, the category of 'world-story' directly echoes Ajdukie-wicz's concept of the 'world-perspective', and, what is even more significant, this world-story holistic and inferentialist aspect of Sellars' thought is elaborated by Brandom in his works, most notably in the *Making It Explicit* (1994).

7. Conclusion

To conclude: I hope that the paper plausibly traced an intersection between analytic philosophy and pragmatism on the basis of a case study of Ajdukie-wicz's theory of meaning, by showing how closely related it is to the semantic pragmatism of Robert B. Brandom. The paper argued that there are three particu-lar spheres where we can detect a striking similarity between the two standpoints, which could be described as exemplifications of analytic pragmatism in general.

The first sphere of similarity was the claim of dominance of pragmatics over semantics. This primacy does not necessarily reduce semantics to pragmatics, but the latter totally subordinates the first in explanatory terms. There is no possible explanation of the ties between meanings and expressions without applying pragmatics, i.e. without considering the practices or dispositions for giving the particular meaning to vocabularies in question.

The second sphere of similarity between the proposals of Ajdukiewicz and Brandom concerned the so-called pragmatic mediation of semantic relations (using a phrase coined by Brandom). The pragmatic mediation of all semantic relations substantiates the claim that only language can give us a referential (se-mantic) relation to the world, as this referential (semantic) relation can be ap-proached only from the pragmatic perspective, that is, from the perspective of a language user — as we do not have any other access to language and, through language, to the world.

And the third similarity regarded the concept of rules of assertions. Consider-ing the pragmatic mediation of semantic relations, we can distinguish three rules of assertions: (i) axiomatic, (ii) deductive, and (iii) empirical. The first rule holds when the language user is obliged to accept an expression in every condition and circumstance. The deductive rule forces the language user to accept some ex-pressions in virtue of the prior acceptance of some other expressions. The third, empirical rule forces the language user to assert some sentences on the grounds of some empirical data. The rules of assertions are intrinsically pragmatic catego-ries, and they are cashed out in terms of acceptances and rejections. Acceptances and rejections are obtained in virtue of some motivations of the language users for these particular acceptances or rejections.

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