

Semantic creativity in multi-agent political discourse: bringing together intersubjectivity and discourse dynamics

Context – Models of intersubjective meaning coordination as well as of discourse dynamics have recently received increasing attention in cognitive-functional linguistics. On the one hand, the concept of intersubjectivity states that speakers who engage in interactional language use, model their interlocutors' subjective viewpoints (Verhagen 2004, 2007) and construe their discourse contributions on the basis of what they assume to be common ground between discourse participants (Clark 1996). On the other hand, models of discourse dynamics and more specifically Langacker's Current Discourse Space (CDS) model (2001, 2008) deal with discourse coherence as a matter of conceptual updating in a series of interdependent usage events.

Objectives - In this contribution, we aim at providing a combined approach to discursive sense-making: we bring together models of intersubjective meaning coordination and the CDS model. We shed a closer light on how interlocutors express and share *perspective* via the construal operations of viewpoint, subjectification, objectification and deixis. We are particularly interested in how speakers in adversarial discourse constellations like parliamentary discourse echo and *creatively exploit* the construal configuration set up by their interlocutors.

Data and method - Political discourse and more specifically interruptive comments have recently proven to be a rich repository for the study of semantic creativity (Carbó 1992, Chilton 2004, Author et al. 2008). This contribution focuses on one particular form of synchronic, online creativity: opportunistic, inter-turn semantic shifts that entail a shift of perspective. Our approach is essentially corpus-based. The empirical evidence that we provide stems from a self-composed corpus of audiovisual data and transcriptions of 500 dialogic sequences that unfold around creative interruptive comments in Austrian and French parliamentary debates. We provide a close-reading for selected sequences, in which we focus on the intersubjective construal configuration as shifting between, building on, and echoing prior usage events.

Expected results – The approach we propose has theoretical implications on at least two levels.

First, on the basis of the presented data evidence, we illustrate that meaning constitution in multi-agent discourse challenges traditional lexical-semantic accounts on the nature of meaning units. We make the case that during discourse processing, rather than mapping words as suggested by the radial network model (Lakoff 1987), speakers model and exploit specific construal configurations expressed through linguistic entities. This supports an approach towards meaning as grounded and emergent in interaction in terms of the (inter)subjectively construed *profile-base alignment* (Langacker 1987, 1990), *construal operations* (Langacker 1987; Talmy 2000; Croft & Cruse 2004), aspects of *grounding* (Clark 1996; Verhagen 2004, 2008), as well as discursive *layering* (Clark 1996).

Second, we provide an integrated account of the dynamic relation between construal operations expressing viewpoints on the one hand and mechanisms of objectification and subjectification on the other. By paying special attention to the management and negotiation of perspectives between different conceptualizers, we enrich existing discourse models by integrating aspects of intersubjective, cognitive coordination as well as develop further the concept of intersubjectivity by bringing in a dynamic discourse dimension.