An Austinian alternative to the Gricean perspective on meaning and communication

Maciej Witek

Institute of Philosophy and Cognitive Science, University of Szczecin, Ul. Krakowska 71-79, 71-017 Szczecin, Poland

A B S T R A C T

My aim in this paper is to contribute to the debate on the foundations of semantics and pragmatics by developing an Austinian alternative to the Gricean programme. The Gricean approach has been criticised by Ernie Lepore and Matthew Stone who claim that most of the interpretive effects that are usually accounted for as inferentially recognized aspects of meaning are in fact determined by grammar. I argue, however, that it is the Austinian perspective rather than the extended-grammar outlook, that constitutes a genuine alternative to the Gricean programme. Viewed from the Austinian perspective, using language is a social practice that consists of performing conventional speech acts: acts done conforming to a convention. Unlike the Griceans and the proponents of the extended-grammar outlook, however, the Austinians assume that following a convention is not an algorithmic procedure, but a socially controlled process that involves interactional negotiation. They claim, namely, that each language convention — phatic, rhetic, illocutionary, rhetorical, procedural, etc. — is a lineage of reproduced precedents that put some constraints on what can be regarded as saying and doing the same, but underdetermine the exact properties of its new members.

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1. Introduction

In this paper, I present an Austinian alternative to the Gricean perspective on meaning and communication. A key idea behind the Gricean approach (Bach and Harnish, 1979; Bach, 2001, 2012; Carston, 2002a, 2002b, 2004; Korta and Perry, 2011; Grice, 1989; Harnish, 2005; Jaszczolt, 2016a, 2019, 2021a; Recanati, 2002, 2004, 2010; Scott et al., 2019; Strawson, 1964; Wilson and Sperber, 2012) is that communicative transactions consist in performing and inferentially recognizing acts of speaker-meaning. According to the Austinian perspective, in turn, discursive practices involve speech acts construed as "context-changing social actions" (Sbisà, 2002: 421) which are done conforming to and *as* conforming to conventions (Austin, 1975). Recently, the Gricean approach has been criticised by Ernie Lepore and Matthew Stone (2015) who, in *Imagination and Convention. Distinguishing Grammar and Inference in Language* argue for an extension in the domain of grammar and claim that most of the interpretive effects that are usually accounted for as inferentially recognized aspects of meaning are in fact determined by grammatical rules and conventions. In my view, however, it is the Austinian perspective rather than the extended-grammar outlook that constitutes a genuine alternative to the Gricean programme.

The Gricean approach, the extended-grammar outlook, and the Austinian perspective are metatheoretical stances which constrain our theorising about discursive phenomena and can be represented as collections of mutually supporting claims

E-mail address: maciej.witek@usz.edu.pl.

about the scope and nature of language conventions, the structure and content of communicative acts, and the mechanisms and cognitive underpinnings of verbal communication. More specifically, they address and answer the following six questions.

Q_1 What is the scope and variety of linguistic meanings that the semantic rules of a given language ascribe to its elements?
Q_2 What constitutes meaning facts of the form '*e* means *E* in language *L*', where *e* is an element of *L* and *E* is the meaning that the rules of *L* attribute to *e*?
Q_3 What is the structure of a communicative act?
Q_4 What determines the meaning of a communicative act?
Q_5 What are the mechanisms of successful communication?
Q_6 What are the cognitive abilities that enable one to participate in verbal communication?

Questions Q_1 and Q_2 belong to the area of metasemantics (Kaplan, 1989): the former can be dubbed the *scope question* (Lepore and Stone, 2015), whereas the latter is called the *foundational question* (Stalnaker, 2003: 166—167; García-Carpintero, 2012a, 2012b; Jaszczolt, 2021a, 2021b). Questions Q_3 and Q_4 are metapragmatic and can be called the *structure question* and the *determination question*, respectively. Questions Q_5 and Q_6, which can be called the *mechanism question* and the *cognitive underpinnings question*, are considered by the metatheory of cognitive science.

A common assumption behind the Gricean paradigm and the extended-grammar outlook is that using language conventions is an algorithmic and automatic procedure which results in assigning meanings to complex expressions. According to the Austinian perspective, by contrast, following a convention is a socially controlled process (Sbisà, 2009, 2013b) that consists in reproducing (Millikan, 1998, 2005) patterns to be found at different levels of linguistic organization: phatic, rhetic, illocutionary, rhetorical, procedural, etc. (2015a: 48, 2015b: 25-26, 2019: 78). It is also assumed that the patterns exist in the form of past uses (Recanati, 2004) and, as a result, underdetermine what may count as their reproduction: even though precedents which constitute a certain conventional family put constraints on what can be regarded as saying or doing the same, they fail to determine the exact properties of its new members. Therefore, following conventional patterns is never automatic, but involves what Marina Sbisà (2009: 50) calls a "tacit agreement" among the relevant social partners and an "interactional negotiation" (Sbisà, 2013b: 236) between them.

The idea of algorithmically computed conventional meanings plays a key role in the formulation of the so-called linguistic underdeterminacy thesis according to which the grammatically specified meaning of the linguistic form uttered by the speaker fails to determine the truth-conditional content and function of her speech act; in short, there is a gap between what her words conventionally mean and what she intends to convey. According to the Griceans (Carston, 2002a, 2002b, 2004; Wilson and Sperber, 2012), what bridges the gap is a pragmatic inference aimed at recognizing the speaker's communicative intentions. Viewed from the perspective of the extended-grammar outlook, by contrast, linguistic underdeterminacy is a theoretical illusion that results from adopting a narrow or bare-bones notion of semantics; Lepore and Stone argue, namely, that language conventions suffice to determine rich discourse meanings and the task of pragmatics is to disambiguate rather than enrich grammatically specified contents. According to the Austinian perspective, in turn, resolving underdeterminacies is an inherent aspect of acting in accordance with a convention; as Sbisà (2013b: 240) puts it, "[u]nderdetermination invites interactional negotiation", which is necessarily involved in every act of following a conventional pattern.

Further on in this paper, I offer a brief survey of how scholars working within three different paradigms — the Gricean programme (Section 2), the extended-grammar outlook (Section 3), and the Austinian perspective (Section 4) — address and answer the six metatheoretical questions listed above. In the concluding part (Section 5), I suggest that the Austinian approach can be used to shed new light on discursive phenomena that have been traditionally studied from the Gricean perspective.

It is instructive to stress that the proposed Austinian approach should be distinguished from Austin's theory of speech acts: the former is a research programme that results from integrating a few contextualist ideas discussed in Section 4 within the framework of the latter.[1] It is also worth emphasizing that the main contribution of this paper is to metasemantics, meta-pragmatics, and the metatheory of cognitive science, i.e., three disciplines that address the metatheoretical questions from Q_1 and Q_6.[2] The proposed Austinian approach, then, should be viewed as a metatheoretical perspective that organizes our thinking about meaning and communication rather than as a detailed model with testable predictions. To demonstrate its descriptive efficiency, in Section 4 I use its framework to discuss a few constructed examples that are commonly considered in the debate on the foundations of semantics and pragmatics as well as three examples that come from a television drama series.

2. The Gricean paradigm

A central idea behind the Gricean approach holds that communicative transactions consist in expressing and recognizing communicative intentions or, in other words, in performing and interpreting acts of speaker-meaning (Bach and Harnish, 1979; Grice, 1989; Wilson and Sperber, 2012). According to Grice (1989: 220), agent *A* speaker-means something by uttering sentence *x* if, and only if, *A* utters this sentence with the following intention:

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[1] For a discussion of Austin's original contribution to philosophy and pragmatics, see Sbisà, 2013a and essays gathered in Garvey, 2014 and Tsohatzidis, 2017.

[2] For a more extensive presentation and discussion of metasemantic and metapragmatic issues, see Burgess and Sherman, 2014, and Jaszczolt, 2019, 2021a, and 2021b.

(I_1)   *A intends the utterance of x to (i) produce some effect in an audience (ii) by means of the recognition of this intention.*

Clause (*i*) reflects what Lepore and Stone (2015: 204) call the *prospective* nature of communicative intentions: intention (I_1) is *prospective* or *audience-directed* in that it commits the speakers to produce an arbitrary response — cognitive or practical — of the hearer. Clause (*ii*), in turn, introduces a *reflexive* element to the content of intention (I_1). In general, an intention is reflexive if it refers to itself. In particular, intention (I_1) is *strongly* reflexive, because its fulfilment requires (Grice, 1989; Strawson, 1964) or, provided the effect mentioned in clause (*i*) comes down to producing the hearer's understanding of the force and meaning of the speaker's act, even "consists in its recognition" (Bach and Harnish, 1979: 13; cf. Witek, 2009). In sum, what makes the speaker's intention reflexive is the fact that she intends it to be recognized by the hearer; what makes it strongly reflexive, in turn, is that the speaker intends this recognition to play a key role in the mechanism underlying its fulfilment.

Some of the Griceans, however, argue for constraining or even discarding the prospective element of meaning-determining intentions. For instance, Kent Bach and Robert M. Harnish (1979) claim that the communicative effect intended by the speaker comes down to getting the hearer to recognize the force and meaning of her utterance.[3] Mitchell S. Green (2007: 67) goes even further and rejects the idea that communicative intentions are audience-directed; he stipulates, namely, that to speaker-mean a certain fact is to intend to make it *manifest* — i.e., *knowable* to an appropriately endowed and situated hearer — and intend to make it manifest that one has *this* intention.[4] Other scholars (Neal, 1989; Wharton, 2009; Green, 2007; Wilson and Sperber, 2012; Moore, 2017), in turn, argue for weakening the reflexive element occurring in the content of a communicative intention; they claim that even though a speaker who means something has to *intend* to get the hearer to recognize *this* intention (Neal, 1989) — or, as Green (2007) would put it, at least to make *it* manifest — she does not have to intend that the recognition or manifestness of her communicative intention plays a role in the mechanism underlying its fulfilment; in other words, even though each communicative intention is supposed to be *overt*, its content does not have to involve the strong requirement that it should be fulfilled 'by means of' its recognition.

It is not my plan in this paper to reconstruct arguments and theories that have been put forward in the debate on the content and structure of communicative intentions. Rather, in the remaining part of this section I will consider how the Griceans answer the metatheoretical questions from Q_1 to Q_6.

Let us begin with considering metapragmatic questions Q_3 and Q_4. Viewed from the Gricean perspective (Harnish, 2005), the structure of a speech act involves three elements: (e_1) the lexical form uttered by the speaker, (e_2) the context of its production, and (e_3) the communicative intention with which it is uttered; the meaning of the act is determined — in the sense of being *constituted* rather than being *recognized* or *ascertained* — *by* the speaker's communicative intention *in* context (see Bach, 2001: 29–30). Therefore, to understand what the speaker means when making a certain utterance is to recognize the intention with which it is being made. In short, element (e_3) determines the meaning of a speech act, whereas the function of elements (e_1) and (e_2) is to provide information to be used by the hearer to infer the speaker's communicative intention.

The idea of inferential intention-recognition presented above plays a key role in how the Griceans answer question Q_5. They claim that verbal comprehension is metapsychological and inferential. It is metapsychological, because to understand what the speaker means in making an utterance is to recognize and *represent* her communicative intention or, more specifically, her communicative plan that involves a combination of her intentions, beliefs, and other propositional attitudes (Korta and Perry, 2011: 40n; Thomason et al., 2006). Verbal comprehension is inferential, because to recognize the speaker's communicative intention and other elements of her communicative plan the hearer has to perform a pragmatic inference which is guided by his expectation that the speaker is cooperative (Grice, 1989; Korta and Perry, 2006, 2011) or produces a relevant ostensive stimulus (Wilson and Sperber, 2012; Carston, 2002a, 2002b; Wharton, 2009).[5] In making this inference, the hearer uses the information provided by elements (e_1) and (e_2): he relies on the lexical-grammatical (Wilson and Sperber, 2012; Carston, 2002a, 2002b) and prosodic information (Wilson and Wharton, 2006; Wharton, 2009; cf. Witek et al., 2022) provided or coded by the speaker's utterance as well as on the contextual information that can be represented as a set of beliefs mutually held by the speaker and the hearer (Bach and Harnish, 1979) or the common ground of their conversation (Stalnaker, 2002, 2014).

In short, verbal comprehension construed along the Gricean lines "involves a mixture of coding and inference" (Wilson and Sperber, 2012: 263). When it comes to considering question Q_6, then, the Griceans claim that the cognitive underpinnings of linguistic communication involve not only the speakers' semantic knowledge, but also their ability to form, express, and inferentially recognize prospective-reflexive intentions; they also maintain that verbal comprehension necessarily involves the operation of a domain-specific inferential module called *mindreading* (Carston, 2002a; Wilson and Sperber, 2012; Matsui, 2019).

Let us move to the metasemantic issues. To answer question Q_1 is to identify the contribution of semantic information to the interpretation of communicative acts (Bach, 2004). According to the Griceans, this contribution is delivered by the lexical and compositional semantics of the language used by the speaker. Lepore and Stone (2015: 3) call the position under

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[3] According to Bach and Harnish (1979), a communicative speech act is successful if the hearer recognizes the propositional attitude expressed by the speaker, where the verb 'express' is used in its non-achievement sense; for a discussion of this issue, see Harnish, 2005.

[4] As Mitchell S. Green (2007: 68) notes, "one can intend that P be manifest without intending to produce effects on others."

[5] One exception is Francois Recanati's (2002 and 2004: 23–37) neo-Gricean model of local primary processes that are associative rather than inferential; for a discussion, see Carston, 2007.

discussion the *bare-bones model of semantics*. Some Griceans (Borg, 2012; Cappelen and Lepore, 2005; García-Carpintero, 2001; Korta and Perry, 2006, 2011) adopt the minimalist position and claim that even though the linguistically-determined input to pragmatic processes underdetermines what the speaker means, it is sufficiently robust to compute the truth-conditional content of the sentence she utters. Others (Bach, 1994; Carston, 2002a, 2002b; Recanati, 2004, 2010; Wilson and Sperber, 2012) adopt the contextualist stance and argue that what semantic interpretation delivers is a logical form or propositional skeleton which is not truth-evaluable and, as a result, requires contextual enrichment, modulation, or fixing (for a discussion, see Jaszczolt, 2016a: 9—10). Nevertheless, they all reduce the scope and variety of linguistically-determined meanings to what can be computed by lexical and compositional semantics.

In short, the bare-bones model of semantics and the idea of algorithmically computed conventional meanings play a key role in the formulation of the underdeterminacy thesis, which has triggered the dispute between minimalism and contextualism. According to the underdeterminacy view, the linguistically-specified input to the hearer's inference aimed at the recognition of what the speaker means *either* underdetermines the intuitive truth-conditional content of her speech act *or* even fails to determine any truth-evaluable content at all (Carston, 2002a, 2002b, 2004; Wilson and Sperber, 2012; Recanati, 2004, 2010).

Finally, let us focus on question Q_2. According to the Griceans (Schiffer, 1972; Bach and Harnish, 1979; Devitt, 2006; for a discussion, see García-Carpintero, 2012a), language elements are conventional devices for expressing communicative intentions, where the term 'conventional' is to be read along the Lewisian lines (Lewis, 2002; cf. Geurts, 2018). In other words, linguistic conventions do not predetermine what the speaker means, but facilitate communication by helping the hearer to recognize her prospective-reflexive intentions. Therefore, language element *e* means what it does in language *L* by virtue of conventional regularities governing its use in acts of speaker-meaning. Following Lewis (2002), the Griceans assume that what makes a given regularity conventional is the fact that it perpetuates in a given community by virtue of the *mutual expectation* of its members — which is part of their common ground — that they all conform to it (see Bach and Harnish, 1979: 109, 121; García-Carpintero, 2001: 93—94, 2012a: 405—407; Devitt, 2006: 179n; Geurts, 2018: 117); the function of the regularity, in turn, is to help the conversing agents to coordinate their readings of their discursive contributions.

According to the Griceans, an utterance that takes effect as an act of successful communication results in the mutual recognition of the communicative intention with which it is made and as such is registered by the common ground construed as "the mutually recognized shared information in a situation in which [the] act of trying to communicate takes place" (Stalnaker, 2002, p. 704); if the hearer has no reason to distrust the speaker, this also contributes the speaker-meaning to the set of propositions mutually accepted by the speaker and the hearer. Viewed from the Gricean perspective, then, the function of language conventions is to help the conversing agents to coordinate their readings of the meaning-determining intentions and thereby keep their representations of the common ground sufficiently aligned (Geurts, 2018). In short, meaning facts of the form "*e* means *E* in language *L*", where *e* is an element of *L* and *E* is its *Mentalese* translation (Carston, 2002b: 56n) or the concept or procedure *e* encodes (Wilson and Sperber, 2012: 23—26), are constituted by facts about literal or conventional uses of *e* in acts of speaker-meaning.

It is instructive to stress that the common ground plays a triple role in the Gricean models of communication. Besides (*i*) providing contextual assumptions to be used when inferring what the speaker means (Bach and Harnish, 1979), it (*ii*) tracks how her speech acts affect the state of conversation (Stalnaker, 2002, 2014; Green, 2017a) and (*iii*) provides a background of mutually shared expectations, beliefs and other propositional attitudes against which language conventions can work (Geurts, 2018).

Let us take stock of the discussion so far. The idea of metapsychological and inferential communication has certain implications for how the Griceans approach metasemantic issues. They assume, namely, that linguistic conventions play a facilitating rather than constitutive role in the communicative practice of meaning-making: the meaning of an utterance is determined by the communicative intention with which it is made, and the function of linguistic conventions is to help the conversing agents to mutually recognize their intentions. What is more, the Gricean bare-bones model of semantics gives rise to the linguistic underdeterminacy problem: it reduces the scope of linguistically-determined meanings to what can be computed by the rules of narrow semantics and thereby sets the stage for the dispute between minimalism and contextualism on the role of linguistic conventions in determining the truth-conditional (Recanati, 2004, 2010) or primary (Jaszczolt, 2016a) content of an utterance.

3. The extended-grammar outlook

Lepore and Stone (2015) reject the bare-bones model of semantics and the idea of meanings determined by prospective-reflexive intentions. They argue that the conventional rules of the language used by the speaker are capable of determining multiple discourse meanings that can be ascribed to her utterance, and the hearer resorts to pragmatic considerations to find out which one is operative. After discussing a few cases that are commonly regarded as giving rise to Gricean conversational implicatures, Lepore and Stone (2015: 94) claim:

> the specific interpretations we find in these cases are always a matter of linguistic knowledge that associates forms with interpretive constraints which completely determine the content of interpretation. Pragmatics merely disambiguates.

For instance, they argue that the grammar of English ascribes to an utterance of sentence (1):

(1) Can I have the French Toast?

two alternative functions — a *question* and a *request* — and the only task of pragmatic reasoning is to determine which is being meant.[6]

Lepore and Stone claim that what makes the speaker's utterance an intentional act is not her prospective intention, if there is any, but her *basic intention* to perform "an utterance of a specified linguistic structure [and contribute] its grammatically specified meaning to an ongoing conversation" (Lepore and Stone, 2015, p. 208). For this reason, they call their model of meaning-making *direct intentionalism* and present it as an alternative to the Gricean *prospective intentionalism*. For the purposes of the present paper, however, I refer to their proposal as the 'extended-grammar outlook': they argue, namely, that multiple rules posited by formal models of discourse are grammatical conventions which, together with the rules of lexical and compositional semantics, suffice to determine rich discourse meanings. Basic intentions can function only against a shared background of rules, norms, and standards that constitute the extended grammar. The meanings they determine are registered not by the common ground, but by what Lepore and Stone call the 'conversational record': an abstract data structure that tracks and represents publicly recognizable contributions to the state of conversation.

Like the Gricean programme, the extended-grammar outlook offers a coherent metatheoretical perspective on meaning and communication. Nevertheless, it is based on a different set of ideas. It downplays the role of intentions in determining discourse meanings and rejects the Gricean idea of verbal comprehension as intention-recognition (for a discussion, see Jaszczolt, 2016b and 2019).

Let us focus on metapragmatic issues first. According to Lepore and Stone, the structure of a communicative act involves the linguistic form uttered by the speaker, the context of its production, and the basic intention with which it is uttered. What the utterance means, therefore, is constituted by two factors: the speaker's basic intention and the grammatical conventions of the language she speaks. However, it is the latter, not the former, that plays a key role in determining the discursive meaning of her utterance; the speaker's basic intention adds nothing substantial to the content of her speech act, but merely commits the speaker to what her words conventionally mean. What is more, the extended-grammar outlook envisages that the actual content of the speaker utterance can diverge from what she intends to communicate herself. For instance, the speaker who utters sentence (2):

(2)   I jeopardize you to handle my duties.

and wrongly believes that 'jeopardize' means 'deputize' (Lepore and Stone, 2015: 218) commits herself to meaning that she puts her interlocutor in danger even though she wants to convey that she empowers the hearer to act in her place. According to the Gricean perspective, by contrast, speakers always mean what they intend to communicate and situations involving malapropism — one example of which is the utterance under discussion — should be described as cases of miscommunication (Jaszczolt, 2016b: 95). In short, the extended-grammar outlook offers an externalist alternative to the Gricean internalist model of meaning-determination; it envisages, namely, that the actual content of one's utterance can depart from the thought one wants to convey.

Let us move to metasemantic question Q_1. According to Lepore and Stone, the scope of linguistic meanings includes interpretive effects determined by the grammar of speech acts, the rules of appropriateness that govern the use of presupposition triggers and anaphoric expressions, and the grammar of information structure which, as Lepore and Stone argue, is capable of determining weaker and stronger readings and thereby accounts for scalar implicatures.

Let us focus on rhetorical structure rules which, according to Lepore and Stone, are part of the grammar of speech acts. As Asher and Lascarides (2003: 7) argue, we can speak of the *semantics* of rhetorical structure, since rhetorical relations between discourse segments have systematic "truth conditional effects that lie outside the purview of compositional semantics". For the sake of illustration, let us consider Grice's (1989: 32) 'garage' scenario:

(3)   A: a.   I am out of petrol.
       B: b.   There is a garage round the corner.

According to the standard Gricean reading of this example (Korta and Perry, 2006: 169–170), B says that (p_1) there is a garage round the corner, and thereby conversationally implicates that (p_2) the garage is open and has petrol to sell. Propositions (p_1) and (p_2) are aspects of the speaker-meaning of B's utterance and as such are determined by her communicative intentions. Viewed from the hearer's perspective, however, proposition (p_1) is encoded, whereas proposition (p_2) is inferred: to recognize the former, A uses his semantic knowledge; to ascertain the latter, he has to perform a pragmatic maxim-guided inference. Robyn Carston (2002a: 144) and Françoise Recanati (2004: 45–46) suggest that proposition (p_2), rather than being conversationally implicated, is part of the intuitive truth conditions of B's utterance (Recanati, 2004, 2010) or plays a key role in constructing the *ad hoc* concept GARAGE* that occurs in its explicature (Carston, 2002a, 2002b; Wilson and Sperber, 2012). Nevertheless, they maintain the Gricean idea according to which proposition (p_2) is a pragmatically determined aspect of the meaning B communicates.

Viewed from the perspective of the semantics of rhetorical structure, proposition (p_2) contributes to the truth-conditional content of B's utterance; however, rather than being constructed pragmatically, it is part of the linguistically specified

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[6]   According to Nicholas Asher and Alex Lascarides (2001), however, forms "Can I do *A*?" and "Can you do *A*?" are not ambiguous, but encode — by virtue of what they call the 'extended notion of grammar' — complex illocutionary types which are exploited rather than disambiguated by subsequent dialogical moves. For instance, an utterance of (1) encodes dot type *question•request* and, as a result, simultaneously invites two responses — "Yes, you can" rhetorically connected to the *question* and "Here you are" linked to the *request* — which contribute to a coherent discourse.

meaning of her speech act: it is determined by the semantics of a rhetorical relation which holds between the propositions expressed in dialogue (3). One way to maintain the default assumption that (3) constitutes a coherent discourse is to posit that the proposition expressed by B stands in the relation of *Plan-Elaboration* to the proposition expressed by A. It is natural to assume, namely, that by uttering (3a) A signals that he needs some fuel and, next, that by uttering (3b) B provides information from which A can elaborate a plan to get fuel (Asher and Lascarides, 2003: 326 and 410; cf. Witek, 2015a: 50–51). The crucial point is that the relation of *Plan-Elaboration*, which holds between the segments of dialogue (3), affects, by virtue of its semantics, their truth conditional contents; in particular, it contributes proposition (p_2) to the discursive meaning of B's utterance. Proposition (p_2), then, is semantically constructed rather than pragmatically inferred.

According to Asher and Lascarides (2003), the rules of compositional semantics and the rules of rhetorical relations constitute two distinct computational modules which interact in determining the meaning of discursive contributions. For Lepore and Stone (2015), they are also part of the grammar and as such contribute to constructing multiple discourse meanings. Viewed from the perspective of their non-Gricean outlook, then, B's utterance of (3b) has two grammatically specified meanings that trigger the pragmatic process of disambiguation: proposition (p_1), which is computed by the rules of compositional semantics, and its enriched variant, which includes rhetorically determined proposition (p_2) as its component.

It is possible to argue, then, that *at least* some meanings that are commonly accounted for along the Gricean lines are in fact determined by the rules of extended grammar. More has to be done, however, to justify the general claim that grammar is capable of generating a wide array of allegedly inferred meanings. It is not clear, namely, whether the pattern used to discuss example (3) — as well as the strategy of positing multiple ambiguities — can be applied to other discursive phenomena grouped under the label of 'linguistic underdeterminacy' (Carston, 2004: 67n; Wilson and Sperber, 2012: 261n) or 'richness of communicated meaning' (Origgi and Sperber, 2000: 151–152).

In my view, the extended grammar outlook interprets and integrates the findings of a number of research projects in the field of pragmatics and philosophy of language that have studied rules, heuristics and interpretative strategies which are neither narrowly construed meaning conventions nor conventional procedures for performing speech acts (Jaszczolt, 2016b: 90). The in-between cases form a heterogeneous set of 'conventions of use' (Odrowąż-Sypniewska, 2016). For instance, there are *standardized uses* facilitating inferential communication (Bach and Harnish, 1979: 173n), *heuristics* underlying generalized implicatures (Levinson, 2000) or scalar inferences (Gazdar, 1979), *rhetorical structure rules* (Asher and Lascarides, 2001, 2003), *appropriateness rules* governing the use of presupposition triggers (Karttunen, 1974; cf. Witek, 2016; Kasjanowicz, 2022) and anaphoric expressions (van der Sandt, 1992; Geurts et al., 2020), and so on. As Kasia M. Jaszczolt (2019: 21) notes, however, Lepore and Stone allocate them "to grammar, so to speak, by *fiat*". What the various 'conventions of use' have in common is that they pertain to certain linguistic forms — expressions, phrases, and constructions — and put constraints on their discursive behaviour. For this reason, they can be represented in computational models of discourse and regarded as rules of 'grammar'. Considered as part of the computational programme, then, the extended-grammar outlook is "in pursuit of different goals and as such [is] not in competition with [the Gricean approach]" (Jaszczolt, 2019: 17). Construed as a programme in metasemantics and metapragmatics, however, it requires a more thorough justification.

One way to verify the extended-grammar outlook understood as an alternative to the Gricean approach would be to test its explanatory potential, i.e., to check whether it allows to develop more parsimonious, although equally comprehensive and empirically adequate, theories of a wide array of phenomena commonly described as cases of linguistic underdeterminacy and accounted for along the lines of the inferential model of communication. One step in this direction is Sileo and Jaszczolt's (2021) pilot study which falsifies Lepore and Stone's predictions about the behaviour of cross-sentential anaphora. It is instructive to note, however, that the extended-grammar outlook is in a sense non-refutable: it is protected by its negative heuristics according to which interpretive effects that cannot be adequately accounted for by reference to the rules of extended grammar should be explained away in terms of 'imaginative engagement' (for a discussion, see Jaszczolt, 2016b).[7]

Let us now focus on question Q_2. Like the Griceans, Lepore and Stone embrace the Lewisian model of conventions: they take conventions to be self-perpetuating regularities of behaviour whose function is to help the interacting agents to coordinate their actions. Unlike the Griceans, however, Lepore and Stone do not use the Lewisian framework to elaborate on the idea of linguistic expressions as conventional means for performing acts of speaker-meaning; rather, they claim that the function of grammatical conventions is to help the conversing agents to achieve and maintain coordination between their representations of the conversational record.

The conversational record is an abstract data structure that tracks publicly recognizable effects of conversational moves (Camp, 2018), where 'publicly recognizable' means 'recognizable to any agent who shares our standards of meaning-making' or, as Michael Tomasello (2014: 64) would put it, to "anyone who would be one of us". Even though it is akin to the common ground and what it registers can overlap with what the conversing agents mutually belief or accept, the conversational record is to be

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[7] Lepore and Stone (2015: 153) use the notion of imaginative engagement to account for metaphor, sarcasm, irony, humour, hinting, and other cases of figurative and evocative language use. They argue that the phenomena in question involve heterogenous faculties of imagination that are not part of our grammatical competence. They claim, for example, that metaphorical discourse "offers an open-ended invitation to find insights from seeing one domain, analogically, as another. Sarcasm, meanwhile, is an open-ended invitation to explore some aspect of the ordinary meaning of a discourse as an inversion of an appropriate contribution to the conversation. Irony is an open-ended invitation to engage with an imagined speaker, who would sincerely use a discourse that has been exhibited by the actual speaker merely in pretense." (Lepore and Stone, 2015: 5) In a similar vein, Green (2017b) distinguishes between image-permitting metaphors and image-demanding ones and claims that the understanding of the latter necessarily involves the construction of mental images. I am grateful to one of the reviewers for suggesting that I clarify this point.

carefully distinguished from its Gricean counterpart. The common ground registers what rational and cooperative speakers come to believe in response to *manifest events* (Stalnaker, 2002: 708–710, and 2014: 58); therefore, its dynamics is *autonomous* in that it is shaped by the general pragmatic principles governing discursive practice and, as a corollary to this, can be explained "independently of any language or any institutional practice of using language." (Stalnaker, 2014: 35) The conversational record, by contrast, registers what members of a given community are committed to believe in the light of their shared discursive norms, rules, and standards; its dynamics, then, should be accounted for by reference to the rules of grammar. For the sake of illustration, let us consider the case of malapropism discussed above. Taking into account available contextual information, an enlightened and cooperative hearer can recognize that what the speaker of (2) has in mind and wants to convey is that she empowers her interlocutor to act on her behalf; in short, the proposition "the speaker of (2) deputizes her interlocutor to handle her duties" can become a common-ground component. Nevertheless, the publicly recognizable contribution of her speech act, which is registered by the conversational record, is the proposition "the speaker of (2) puts her interlocutor in danger".

One may ask what the *actual* force of the speech act performed in uttering (2) is: that of delegating, which is registered by the common ground, or the assertive force registered by the conversational record.[8] In my view, it depends on the type of discourse that the utterance forms part of. If the situation is not very formal, the utterance of (2) may take effect as the act of delegating; if, by contrast, (2) is uttered to contribute to the execution of a formal procedure for delegating, it may fail to constitute the act intended by the speaker and take effect as a bizarre assertion instead. It is instructive to stress that the notion of the conversational record is designed to supplement rather than replace the concept of the common ground: we need both of them to account for conversational dynamics and allow for cases in which, as with the malapropism case discussed above, the actual force of an utterance is subject to discussion or even negotiation (for a discussion, see Witek, forthcoming). However, when it comes to accounting for the constitution or foundations of semantic facts, Lepore and Stone claim that we should use the former rather than the latter. They argue, namely, that language elements mean what they do by virtue of grammatical conventions whose function is to help discourse participants keep their representations of the conversational record sufficiently aligned or, in other words, to coordinate what they are committed to take as publicly recognizable contributions of their speech acts.

Finally, let us briefly consider questions Q5 and Q6. Viewed from the perspective of the extended-grammar outlook, verbal comprehension — in normal cases — involves a mixture of coding and disambiguation; cases that depart from what can be called, following Millikan (1984: 69), 'normal language flow', draw on our powers of imagination. To participate in a normal discursive practice, then, one has to know the rules of grammar and be able to perform abductive reasoning (Thomason et al., 2006) whose function is to resolve conventionally determined ambiguities.

As Wilson and Sperber (2012: 263) would put it, then, Lepore and Stone limit "the role of metapsychological processes in verbal comprehension [by arguing] for an extension in the domain of grammar, and hence in the scope of (non-meta-psychological) linguistic decoding processes". In other words, they reduce all cases of linguistic underdeterminacy to ambiguity, which can be called, following Bach (1994: 125) 'semantic overdetermination'.

Despite the differences between the Gricean approach and the grammar-based alternative to it, the two programmes share one common idea. Namely, they take for granted that language conventions are rules which algorithmically determine mappings from linguistic forms to their meanings, and that following or using a language convention is an automatic process. This idea is rejected by the Austinian view, which I present in the next subsection.

4. The Austinian approach

A central idea behind the Austinian approach proposed in this paper is that using language is a socially-constituted practice that involves performing *essentially conventional* speech acts: acts done conforming and normally *as* conforming to conventions (Austin, 1975: 105). It remains to be considered, however, what the conventions that make linguistic interaction possible are and what it means for conversing agents to follow them.

The language conventions model which plays a central role in the Austinian approach draws on three ideas.

The first one comes from Ruth G. Millikan (1984,1998, 2005) who defines conventions as patterns of activity — e.g., driving on the left, shaking right hands, using forks as eating utensils, using certain grammatical structures and phrasal constructions, and so on — that proliferate, first, by reproduction and, second, because of the weight of their cultural precedents rather than due to their capacity to produce certain effects; she also claims that every language convention construed as a pattern of linguistic activity can be represented as a lineage of its past uses.

The second idea comes from Marina Sbisà (2002, 2009, 2013a, 2013b) who claims that what makes a speech act conventional is the fact that its characteristic effect comes into being and persists by virtue of a tacit and negotiated agreement among the speaker, her interlocutors, and other relevant social partners, which can be reached either by default or through the process of interactional negotiation (for a more extensive discussion of this issue see Witek, forthcoming); by extension, I argue that what Sbisà calls *interactionally negotiated agreement* plays a key role in the mechanism whereby conventional linguistic patterns perpetuate or, in other words, in the mechanism underlying the growth of conventional lineages.

The third idea concerns the cognitive aspect of language conventions. As Jaszczolt (2016a: 50) argues, "language users are guided by past experiences of discourse they were engaged in; they have the memory of the use of a word and this memory

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[8] I thank one of the reviewers for raising this point.

guides them in the word selection for the situation at hand." She adds, however, that the historical uses stored in memory differ in the degree of their accessibility or salience (Giora, 1997).[9] By analogy, I claim that linguistic precedents that are equivalent in terms of their lexical and syntactic properties come in different degrees of salience and, as the corollary to this, the lineage they form provides a workable input to the cognitive processes underlying meaning construction and interactional negotiation. In short, language conventions construed along the Austinian lines can be represented as families of reproduced items whose development involves interactional negotiation and the members of which have different degrees of salience.[10]

Let us have a closer look at Millikan's notion of natural conventions as reproduced patterns of activity. What makes such patterns conventional, she argues, is that their form is arbitrary in relation to their function. For instance, forks and chopsticks are alternative eating utensils that have proliferated in different regions of the world due to the weight of their cultural precedents; in other words, their forms are arbitrary in relation to their function. According to Millikan, items forming a conventional lineage have been copied from one another either directly or through what she calls "counterpart reproduction" (1998: 164). Every counterpart-reproduced pattern consists of two complementary parts. The reproduction of one part is constrained by the need to fit in with the other. Counterpart reproduction, Millikan argues, "easily results in standardization of forms, more easily than by direct copying. Copies of copies easily drift away from the original; the need to fit counterparts retards drift." (Millikan, 1998: 164) Examples of counterpart-reproduced patterns are hand-shaking and driving on the right. Other examples can be called *leader-follower* patterns. Their reproduction involves the interaction of two agents: the leader, whose contribution is "wholly or partially observable" (Millikan, 1998: 171), and the follower, who responds to the follower's action by producing his complementary part of the pattern. According to Millikan, most of language conventions are *leader-follower* or, more specifically, *speaker-hearer* patterns. For instance, the primary pattern for assertive speech acts involves two complementary aspects: the speaker's utterance of an indicative sentence and the hearer's forming the belief whose content coincides with what the speaker says; according to the Austinian perspective, there is also a wide array of secondary patterns for assertives (see Witek, 2015a, 2019). They are secondary in that their hearer's parts are not reduced to straightforward trust but, rather, take the form of other responses that assertions "invite by convention" (Austin, 1975: 117). Secondary speaker-hearer patterns, then, can be likened to rhetorical relations in the sense of Asher and Lascarides (2001, 2003; cf. Witek, 2015a, 2019). By analogy, the primary pattern for directive acts involves the speaker's utterance of an imperative sentence and the hearer's complying with what he is told; there is also a number of corresponding secondary patterns whose hearer's parts, even though they do not take the form of straightforward compliance, are rhetorically related to what the speaker says. There are also other speaker-hearer patterns which correspond to rhetorical relation; for instance, the participants in dialogue (3) can be naturally regarded as reproducing a pattern that corresponds to *Plan-Elaboration*.

In my view, the mechanism underlying the reproduction of language conventions necessarily involves interactional negotiation. In other words, whether one's current use of a language element is a new member of a certain conventional family is a matter of a tacit agreement among relevant social partners, which can be reached either by default or through interactional negotiation (Sbisà, 2009; 2013b; cf. Witek, forthcoming). Following a conventional pattern, then, is never automatic. In saying this, I do not mean to deny that acting in accordance with a convention can be an effortless and unreflective process; what I have in mind, rather, is that it always involves an agreement — tacit or more or less explicit — which is subject to negotiation. It is true that "language users are guided by past experiences of discourse they were engaged in" (Jaszczolt, 2016a: 50), and past uses of a language element constrain what may count as its new use; nevertheless, they underdetermine what can be regarded as saying or doing the same. Language conventions are open-ended lineages whose evolution involves interactional negotiation. Resolving underdeterminacies, then, is an indispensable aspect of every conventional act: an act performed *as* conforming to a convention.

According to the Austinian perspective, every language is, as Millikan (1998: 176) puts it, "a tangled jungle of overlapping, crisscrossing traditional patterns, reproducing themselves whole or in part for a variety of reasons, and not uncommonly getting in each other's way". By way of illustration, let us consider two speech situations: one in which Anna talks to Tom and utters sentence (4):

(4) I will come to your lecture.

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[9] This idea plays a key role in the view Jaszczolt calls 'Salience-Based Contextualism', which draws on but goes beyond Recanati's (2004) *meaning eliminativism*. She claims, namely, that language is not only "a socio-cultural phenomenon, formed and reformed in use, [but also] a cognitive phenomenon that is governed by, and restricted by, the structure and operations of the brain" (Jaszczolt, 2016a: 50).

[10] The idea that different uses or meanings of a linguistic item vary in the degree of their salience comes from Giora (1997: 185), who defines the salience and, by the same token, accessibility of a meaning of a certain word or construction as a function of its conventionality, familiarity, frequency, or givenness status in a certain context; she also claims that "salient meanings are processed first" (Giora, 1997: 184). According to her, "if a word has two meanings that can be retrieved directly from the lexicon, the meaning more popular, or more prototypical, or more frequently used in a certain community is more salient. Or, the meaning an individual is more familiar with, or has learned recently is the more salient. Or, the meaning activated by previous context, or made predictable by previous context is the more salient." (Giora, 1997: 185) Jaszczolt (2016a: 102–107) goes further and distinguishes between *contextual* and *lexical, context-free* salience. An example of the latter is the context-free salience of one of the two possible interpretations of the noun 'bulb' (which can be understood as a light or as a plant part; for a discussion of this example, see Giora, 2012: 153); an example of the former, in turn, is the salience of Homer Simpson as the referent of the name 'Homer' uttered during watching *The Simpsons* (for a discussion, see Jaszczolt, 2016a: 102). I thank one of the reviewers for suggesting that I clarify the notion of salience used in this paper.

and the other in which sentence (4) is uttered by Peter during his conversation with Maria. Viewed from the perspective of Austin's (1975: 92–93) theory of speech acts, by uttering sentence (4) Ann performs the *locutionary act* of saying that she will come to Tom's lecture. The act involves three aspects: (*i*) the *phonetic act* of uttering a sequence of noises which constitute a *phone*, (*ii*) the phatic act of uttering a *pheme*, i.e., uttering a sequence of certain words belonging to and *as* belonging to a certain vocabulary and conforming to and *as* conforming to a certain grammar, and (*iii*) the *rhetic act* of uttering a *rheme*, i.e., the act of using the pheme with a certain contextually determined sense and reference. Let us assume, following L. W. Forguson (1973; cf. Recanati, 2004: 148; Witek, 2015b: 26–28, and Witek, 2022: 78–79), that the phatic meaning of Ann's utterance comprises at least two elements: (*a*) a rhetic act potential and (*b*) a certain illocutionary potential. That is to say, pheme (4) puts constraints on the rhetic content and the illocutionary force with which it can be uttered. More specifically, any utterance of (4) (*a*) represents a future state of affairs that the speaker of *this* utterance comes to his or her interlocutor's lecture[11] and (*b*) takes effect *either* as a promise, prediction, warning *or* even a threat.

Viewed from the perspective of the Austinian approach, the two utterances of (4) — one made by Ann and the other by Peter — contribute to the same *phatic* lineage and share the same *phatic meaning*. They belong, however, to two different *rhetic* lineages: Ann's utterance of (4) represents *her* future coming to Tom's lecture, whereas Peter's utterance of the same pheme represents *his* future coming to Maria's lecture. In other words, Ann's speech act is rhetically equivalent to Paul's utterance of sentence (5):

(5)   Ann will come to Tom's lecture.

However, phemes (4) and (5) differ with respect to their illocutionary potentials: although they both can be used to make a prediction, a warning, or even a threat, only the former may, provided a number of other felicity conditions are met, constitute a promise (Searle, 1969: 57).

In a similar vein, pheme (1) can be ascribed a complex illocutionary potential which embraces the force of asking a question and the complex force that corresponds to what Asher and Lascarides (2001) call dot type *question•request*.[12] Normally, elements of the phatic family to which (1) belongs, then, contribute to the illocutionary lineage of *questions*[13]; some of them, however, contribute to the illocutionary lineage of *requests*, too.

In short, utterances forming the same phatic lineage normally contribute to different rhetic and illocutionary families. A rhetic lineage contains different phemes which, like Ann's utterance of (4) and Paul's utterance of (5), have more or less the same sense and reference. An illocutionary lineage, in turn, embraces utterances equivalent in respect of their normative effects construed as changes they bring about in the domain of "rights, obligations, entitlements, [and] commitments of the participants" (Sbisà, 2002: 434) in discourse. Language conventions, then, constitute a complex network of crisscrossing phatic, rhetic, and illocutionary lineages which, as Jaszczolt (2019): 50) would put it, is "formed and reformed in use".

The idea that phatic, rhetic, and illocutionary acts are conventional in the sense of being performed as conforming to conventions comes from Austin. In "How to Do Things with Words" he defines the phatic act as "the act of uttering certain vocables or words, i.e. noises of certain types belonging to *and as* belonging to a certain vocabulary, in a certain construction, i.e. conforming to and as conforming to a certain grammar" (Austin, 1975: 92). Likewise, he characterises the illocutionary act as the act done as conforming to a certain conventional procedure (Austin, 1975: 105). The rhetic act, in turn, can be best understood as the act performed by following what he elsewhere (Austin, 2013: 5) calls descriptive and demonstrative conventions which determine the act's sense and reference, respectively. A central idea behind the proposed Austinian approach is to represent Austin's phatic, rhetic and illocutionary conventions as lineages of linguistic precedents and use this perspective to account for other aspects of linguistic organization.[14]

By way of illustration, let us consider the following example that comes from "The Sopranos", a crime drama television series. Tony, a mafia boss, calls Paulie to find out whether he and Chrissy managed to dump the body of Valery, a Russian gangster. He has no idea that after their arrival to the forest in which they wanted to bury the corpse, Paulie and Chrissy found that Valery was still alive; they gave him a shovel and made him dig his own grave. The following conversation takes place:

(6)   Tony: a. Did you wrap the package?
      Paulie: b. Not yet.
               c. We are about to, we had a little problem.
      Tony: d. What problem?
      Paulie: e. The package hit Chrissy with an implement and ran off.
      Tony: f. Is there any way the package could survive?[15]

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[11] An utterance's rhetic act potential can be represented as its utterance-bound (Korta and Perry, 2011) or token-reflexive (García-Carpintero, 1998) truth conditions.

[12] See footnote 4.

[13] "Normally", because pheme (1) can be uttered non-literally (Bach and Harnish, 1979; Bach 1994) or used in the so-called etiolated or non-serious communicative mode (Austin, 1975; cf. Mękarska and Witek, 2020: 155–160, Witek, 2022: 77–79).

[14] I am grateful to one of the reviewers for suggesting that I clarify this point.

[15] "The Sopranos", season 3, episode 11 "Pine Barrens", directed by Steve Buscemi, written by Tim Van Patten and Terence Winter.

A.J., Tony's son, who sits on a nearby sofa, is apparently puzzled by what he hears. What confuses him, it seems, is why his father uses the word 'package'.

Viewed from the Austinian perspective, sentence (6a), taken as a syntactic object defined by its lexical and structural properties only, contributes to two different phatic lineages and, consequently, can be assigned two different phatic meanings. In short, it is ambiguous. It can be read *either* as a question of whether the addressee has covered in paper or other soft material a certain contextually salient object packed in a box, *or* as a question of whether he or she dumped a certain contextually salient body. Both readings are conventional. The convention underlying the former can be represented as a family of past *ordinary* speech situations in which (6a) was uttered by English native speakers; the convention behind the latter, in turn, is a lineage of past *ritualized* or *inner-circle* speech situations in which (6a) was uttered by mafia members. At a higher level of abstraction, however, the two lineages are intertwined and constitute a family of all past uses of (6a) construed as an uninterpreted syntactic object; depending on whether the current speech situation is ordinary or ritualized, different members of this syntactic family are activated as salient and contribute to the process of meaning construction and negotiation.[16]

Besides phatic, rhetic, and illocutionary lineages, there are conventional families of adjacency pairs and lineages of executions of procedures. One example of the former is the lineage of speaker-hearer interactions that correspond to the relation of *Plan-Elaboration*. Lineages of procedure executions, in turn, collect speech situations that involve (*a*) performances of certain illocutionary acts and (*b*) contextual factors on which their felicity depends. For instance, there is a lineage of procedure executions whose members involve (*a*) utterances that take effect as orders and (*b*) contextual states of affairs that correspond to such conditions as "the speaker stands in an appropriate authority relation to the hearer", "the speaker desires that the hearer performs a certain action", "the hearer is able to do what he is told", and so on.

According to the Austinian approach, language conventions construed as lineages can be described in terms of rules and conditions. One can, for instance, characterise a certain phatic family using the notation of a compositional semantic theory, describe rhetic lineages and their members using a model-theoretic framework, and represent a class of procedure executions by specifying a set of felicity conditions. It should be kept in mind, however, that the rules and conditions posited by semantic and pragmatic theories are nothing but convenient representational devices that make it possible to describe, at a certain level of abstraction, a huge mass of discursive phenomena and group them into phatic, rhetic, illocutionary, rhetorical, and procedural lineages. As Austin (1975: 148) puts it, "[t]he total speech act in the total speech situation is the only *actual* phenomenon which, in the last resort, we are engaged in elucidating." Speech acts that in a certain respect count as cases of saying or doing *the same* constitute a lineage of reproduced precedents. It is instructive to stress, however, that

> "[t]he same" does not always mean the same. In fact it has no meaning in the way that an "ordinary" word like "red" or "horse" has a meaning: it is a (the typical) device for establishing and distinguishing the meanings of ordinary words. Like "real," it is part of our apparatus in words for fixing and adjusting the semantics of words. (Austin, 2013: 3)

By extension, we can say that it is part of our apparatus in words for grouping speech situations into lineages of different types.

The Austinian perspective addresses the six questions listed in Section 1 and, as a result, offers a coherent metatheoretical position which constitutes an alternative to both the Gricean programme and the extended-grammar outlook. Let us begin with metasemantic questions Q_1 and Q_2. According to the Austinian approach, there are no such objects as literal meanings construed as abstract objects which are, first, algorithmically determined by the rules of lexical and compositional semantics and, second, are subject to contextual modulation, enrichment or disambiguation; instead, it is assumed that language elements have past uses which are grouped into phatic lineages that can be characterised in terms of rhetic and illocutionary potentials. The Austinian position in metasemantics, then, can be called the *semantics of speech act potentials*. Taking into account its negative claim, it is reminiscent of meaning eliminativism (Recanati, 2004: 146—151; cf. Jaszczolt, 2016: 50). However, it goes beyond the eliminativist position in that it takes collections of past uses to be *conventions* construed along the lines presented at the beginning of this section: families of reproduced items (Millikan, 1998, 2005) which differ in the degree of their salience (Jaszczolt, 2016a) and develop through mechanisms of interactional negotiation (Sbisà, 2009, 2013b). The Austinian conventions are not used algorithmically. Moreover, they do not produce linguistic underdeterminacies in the Gricean sense and do not give rise to ambiguities posited by the extended grammar outlook. Although past uses of a conventional item — be it a pheme, a rheme, an illocution, a rhetorical relation, or a procedure — fail to determine all the essential properties of its new uses, they provide reference points for the social process of interactional negotiation.

The Austinian foundational semantics, in turn, consists in the specification of the phatic, rhetic, illocutionary, rhetorical, and procedural patterns which are invoked and reproduced by members of a given community. It is also claimed that speaker-hearer patterns perpetuate because they perform a coordinative function: they help the conversation participants to keep

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[16] As one of the reviewers aptly points out, the utterance of (6a) — and the same can be said of the utterances of (6e) and (6f) — is perfectly analysable as a metaphor. In my opinion, however, we can do justice to this observation within the proposed Austinian reading of the 'package' example. The utterance of (6a) can be regarded either as a *familiar* or *novel* metaphor (for a discussion of this distinction see Giora, 1997: 190—193). If the former is the case, it can be regarded as a new element of a certain lineage of ritualized speech situations which represents a code used by mafia members; as Giora (1997) argues, familiar metaphors which are frequently used by members of a certain group are salient to them. If, by contrast, the utterance of (6a) is a novel metaphor, one can argue that it invites the process of standardization and, provided the invitation is accepted by Tony's interlocutor, initiates a new lineage; it is worth noting, namely, that in uttering (6e) Paulie follows the precedent provided by Tony and thereby contributes to creating a new familiar metaphor.

their individual representations of the common ground sufficiently aligned (for an extensive discussion of this issue, see Witek, 2019).

Let us move to metapragmatic questions Q_3 and Q_4. Viewed from the Austinian perspective, the structure of a speech act involves three elements: (e_1) a pheme produced by the speaker, (e_2) the context of its production, and normally (e_3) the speaker's intention which is embodied in her act of *reproducing* and, hence, *following* certain rhetic, illocutionary, rhetorical, and procedural patterns. Element (e_1) brings a certain phatic meaning construed along the lines of the semantics of speech act potentials. Element (e_2), in turn, has the following three characteristic properties.

First, as Sbisà (2002) notes, the context of the speaker's act is constrained or limited in a principled way. Let us consider again a lineage of procedure executions, e.g., the collection of speech events that have been collectively agreed to be executions of the procedure for issuing orders. Every member of this conventional family involves (*a*) an utterance that takes effect as an order and (*b*) *only* those contextual states of affairs on which the felicity of the order depends. By way of illustration, let us consider a situation in which Ann talks to Tom and utters sentence (7):

(7)   Go and pick up wood.

Let us assume that in uttering (7) Ann initiates the reproduction of a speaker-hearer pattern whose complementary hearer's part is complying with what he is told. At the same time, she invokes the procedure for issuing orders whose past executions constitute a relevant procedural lineage. According to the procedure in question, the felicity of Ann's utterance of (7) *qua* an order requires that a number of contextual conditions are met. It requires, for instance, that Ann stands in an appropriate authority relation to Tom. This and other requirements, which are defined by the invoked procedure, fix the *limited context* of Ann's directive act.

Second, the context of a speech act is subject to interactional negotiation or, more specifically, can be accommodated. Roughly speaking, accommodation is a context-repairing or context-adjusting process that is guided by the default assumption that what the speaker says constitutes an appropriate conversational move of a certain type (Lewis, 1979; Stalnaker, 2014; Langton, 2015, 2018; Witek, 2015c, 2021). For the sake of illustration, let us assume that prior to her utterance of (7), there was no authority relation between Ann and Tom. However, if her words take effect as an order — i.e., if Tom and other discourse participants take her utterance to constitute a felicitous illocution of this type — then "*ceteris paribus* and within certain limits" (Lewis, 1979: 340) — her authority over Tom comes into existence (for a discussion of this issue, see Witek, 2015c, 2021).

Third, depending on the particular kind of the language game that is being played, its participants may represent the context of their interaction either as the common ground or the conversational record. Unless something goes wrong, it does not matter which one of these two strategies is adopted. Let us consider, however, misuses of language such as malapropism (Lepore and Stone, 2015: 218), inapt or careless pointing (Korta and Perry, 2011: 47—51), slips of the tongue, etc. If produced in the course of an informal talk, they are likely to be *interpreted* against the background of the common ground and *update* the conversational context understood as the set of propositions mutually accepted by the enlightened speakers and hearers. Let us assume, however, that they occur in a more formal interaction, e.g., during a court hearing, parliamentary debate, or bridge auction; in such a case it is more likely they are *interpreted against* and *registered by* the conversational record. It is instructive to stress, however, that normally the common ground and the conversational record are used and updated in parallel and we need both to represent the dynamics of discourse.

Let us focus on element (e_3) of the structure of a speech act — i.e., the speaker's intention which is embodied in her act of reproducing a conventional pattern — and consider question Q_4. According to the Austinian approach, speech acts are *intentional* in that they are not only done conforming to conventions, but normally done *as* conforming to conventions ('normally' because there are unintended, albeit successful, speech acts; more on this below). In other words, when issuing her utterance the speaker intentionally invokes a number of conventions and thereby contributes to the determination of the force and meaning of her words. It is instructive to stress, however, that the actual contribution of her act is subject to interactional negotiation and her intended interpretation can be overridden by the hearer's uptake (for a more extensive discussion, see Sbisà, 1992 and Witek, forthcoming). In short, although her intention alone does not determine the interpretation of her words, it plays a role in the mechanism whereby it is negotiated.

Finally, let us briefly consider questions Q_5 and Q_6. According to the Austinian approach, verbal comprehension involves *salience-based activation* (Giora, 1997; Jaszczolt, 2016a) of certain past uses which are stored in memory and contribute to the phatic family from which the linguistic form uttered by the speaker is derived. The activated uses — which belong to various rhetic, illocutionary, rhetorical, and procedural lineages — determine the speech act potential of the speaker's utterance and provide inputs to the construction and negotiation of its occasion-specific force and meaning. Viewed from the Austinian perspective, the class of pragmatic mechanisms and faculties underlying verbal comprehension is heterogenous and cannot be reduced to our inferential skills or abductive processes responsible for disambiguation. As Sbisà (2009: 48—49) puts it,

> patterns may be cognitively processed in different ways, for example by means of Gestalt-like mechanisms, but also, if needed (as in the case of unfamiliar patterns, gravely incomplete display, and other complications), inferentially, which would assign a legitimate role to inferential theories of illocutionary force understanding.

In short, the mechanisms underlying successful communication involve salience-based activation, Gestalt recognition, abductive inferences, semantic composition, and other cognitive processes that can contribute to the construction of occasion-specific discourse meanings.

Before getting to the concluding remarks, let us have a closer look at the mechanisms of interactional negotiation. To this end, let us consider two examples that come from drama television series. The first one is taken from "The Queen's Gambit", a miniseries written and directed by Scott Frank. In episode 5 entitled "Fork", the following conversation takes place.

(8) Beth: a.   Anger clears my head.
    Harry: b.   Anger is a potent spice. A pinch wakes you up, too much dulls your senses.
    Beth: c.   Where'd you get that from, a fortune cookie?
    Harry: d.   Mrs. Grecco, my second grade teacher.

Beth intends her utterance of (8c) to be a *sarcastic evaluation* of or even an *attack* on Harry's previously expressed opinion. In other words, she wants to ridicule what Harry has just said and thereby to convey that she does not want to take his opinion seriously.[17] In my view, this function is part of the conventional meaning of her utterance. That is to say, she contributes to the reproduction of a conventional speaker-hearer pattern that involves the speaker's putting forth a serious opinion and the hearer's asking a question of the form 'Where'd you get that from?'[18] To defuse her attack, Harry utters (8d). More specifically, he takes her utterance of (8c) to be a standard question that invites the response of giving an answer. In short, there are two factors that play conflicting roles in negotiating the actual force of Beth's utterance: her sarcastic intention and Harry's uptake manifested in his response which, as a matter of fact, takes effect as an indirect answer to Beth's question.[19] I'm inclined to say that the latter prevails over the former and, as a result, Beth's plan to attack and ridicule Harry's opinion does not come off: her utterance taken as a sarcastic evaluation is a speech act misfire and takes effect as a standard question. Harry recognizes Beth's intention to ridicule what he has said, but effectively blocks its fulfilment.

It is worth noting that Beth's utterance of (8c) may take effect as a standard question independently of whether Harry recognizes her original intention to ridicule; besides, if her intention is mutually recognized but effectively blocked by Harry, it will be registered by the common ground.[20] Should Harry fail to recognize Beth's intention, her utterance of (8c) would not be mutually recognized as an act of ridiculing him and, as a result, would not be represented as such by the common ground of conversation (8); nevertheless, it would be registered by the conversational record as a standard question. If, by contrast, Beth's intention was mutually recognized but effectively blocked, the common ground would represent her utterance (8c) as an attempt to ridicule Harry; still, the conversational record would only register that she performed a standard question.

The second example illustrates the possibility of there being unintended, although successful, speech acts: acts whose effects are registered by the conversational record without being registered by the common ground. Like example (6), it is taken from "The Sopranos". Tony is walking around a plant nursery. He wants to buy an axe and pesticide. At some point he notices Mr. Piocosta. Tony has no idea that Jeremy, Mr. Piocosta's son, torn A.J.'s shirt in a school scuffle and refuses to pay 40 U.S. dollars by way of compensation. It is quite possible, however, that Mr. Piocosta knows about the case. The following conversation takes place.

(9) Tony: a.   Mr. Piocosta, right? How are you doing?
             b.   You remember our boys?
             c.   Went to camp Aheka together.
    Mr. P.: d.   Of course, Tony, how are you?
    Tony: e.   Good, good.
             f.   Your kid still got that killer crossover dribble?
    Mr. P.: g.   Yeah, I guess so.
    Tony: (raising his hand in which he holds an axe)
             h.   That's gonna get him a scholarship.
    Mr. P.: i.   So how's Anthony?
    Tony: j.   He's moody, you know, for a kid that age, you know.
    Mr. P.: (looking anxiously at the axe)
             k.   Well, it was nice seeing you, Tony.[21]

Taking into account its topic and the identity of its participants, dialogue (9) can be described *either* as a friendly conversation between two fathers about their sons *or* as an indirect albeit ritualized speech action of intimidation for extortion.

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[17] One may ask whether ridiculing is an illocutionary or perlocutionary act. I am inclined to say that it is neither. It is not an illocutionary act, since it does not take effect by modifying the normative relationship between the speaker and the hearer. Nor is it a perlocutionary act, since the central point behind ridiculing is not to "produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons" (Austin, 1975: 101). My hypothesis is that ridiculing consists of expressing one's negative attitude towards a certain target — e.g., a certain person, a speech act, an idea, or an opinion — and thereby publicly stigmatize it as untrustworthy. In this respect, it can be likened to ironizing construed as an etiolated speech action whose point is to present its target — i.e., a certain contextually available thought — in an unfavourable light (Witek, 2022). I am grateful to one of the reviewers for suggesting that I clarify this point.

[18] To achieve a similar conversational goal, Polish native speakers would say 'Sam na to wpadłeś?' or 'Sam to wymyśliłeś?' ('Did you figure it out yourself?' or 'Did you make it up yourself?', respectively).

[19] As Asher and Lascarides (2001, 2003) would put it, Harry's utterance of (8d) is linked to Beth's utterance of (8c) with the rhetorical relation of Indirect-Question-Answer-Pair (IQAP). As one of the reviewers aptly points out, the relation IQAP should be distinguished from an indirect answer in Searle's (1979) sense: the latter is an indirect speech act — i.e., one speech act made by performing another — which is inferable along the Gricean lines; the former, by contrast, is a relational illocution which holds between two different discourse segments and is determined by the rules of discourse coherence.

[20] I am very grateful to one of the reviewers for making these two claims.

[21] "The Sopranos", season 1, episode 4 "Meadowlands", directed by John Patteson, written by Jason Cahill.

Interestingly, it takes effect as a successful intimidation: next day, acting at the behest of his father, Jeremy gives 40 dollars to A.J. How is it possible?

Viewed from the Austinian perspective, dialogue (9) can be regarded as an execution of a procedure for intimidating. The procedure makes a significant use of innuendo. It involves referring to or even praising the victim's relatives — see turns (9f) and (9h) — combined with making gestures that can be regarded as unfriendly or even aggressive — see the axe that Tony holds in his hand. The procedure also requires that the intimidator have a certain identity, e.g., is a mafia boss. In short, based on his behaviour, Tony can be taken to be making a ritualized and indirect act of intimidating for extortion purposes.[22]

The Griceans would say that the situation under discussion is a mere case of miscommunication: Mr. Piocosta does not know that Tony is not aware of the conflict between A.J. and Jeremy and, as a result, takes Tony's friendly behaviour to be an intimidation. This description is true as far as it goes. To go further, however, we need the Austinian ideas of conventional patterns, uptake and interactional negotiation to explain *why* Mr. Piocosta has reason to think that Tony is intimidating him and *why* Tony's words, contrary to his intentions, take effect as a veiled intimidation.

For the Griceans, intimidations made by innuendo are cases involving indirect speech and conversational implicatures (Pinker et al., 2008; Camp, 2018). Viewed from the perspective of the extended grammar outlook, in turn, they should be accounted for by reference to the imaginative powers of our minds. The Austinian approach, by contrast, enables us to understand them as ritualised acts performed by executing an accepted conventional procedure.

5. Concluding remarks

The main contribution of this paper is to the areas of metasemantics, metapragmatics, and the metatheory of cognitive science. I have proposed the Austinian approach to meaning and communication the central idea of which is that language conventions are lineages of negotiated precedents which vary in their degree of salience. I have also argued that it is the Austinian view rather than the extended grammar outlook that offers a genuine alternative to the Gricean programme.

My goal in this paper has been programmatic; much more work needs to be done to give more substance to the Austinian approach and justify its central claims. In my view, however, the proposed programme sheds new light on the nature of linguistic underdeterminacy and the role it plays in the functioning of language conventions. According to the Griceans, cases of linguistic underdeterminacy are inevitable consequences of the way language conventions work and as such pose a central challenge to pragmatics (Wilson and Sperber, 2012: 261). Viewed from the Austinian perspective, by contrast, linguistic underdeterminacies are resolved not by pragmatic processes that take place at the post-semantic stage of interpretation, but by acts of *using* and *following* language conventions; in other words, an essential feature of any conventional family of precedents is that its elements fail to determine the exact properties of its new members. Underdeterminacy construed along the Austinian lines, then, "invites interactional negotiation" (Sbisà, 2013b: 240), which is an inherent aspect of following language conventions.

Moreover, the Austinian approach enables us to account for a number of puzzling phenomena characteristic of verbal comprehension. For instance, it enables us to argue that ironizing is a socially-constituted communicative practice and that ironic utterances, rather than being manifestations of our 'imaginative engagement' (Lepore and Stone, 2015: 177—180), are speech actions done as conforming to a certain procedure (Witek, 2022). One can also use the Austinian framework to develop a non-Gricean account of demonstrative reference which does justice to what Korta and Perry (2011: 49) call the 'forensic aspect of the notion of what is said'. What is more, the Austinian approach offers an interesting perspective on the nature of accommodation construed as a context-fixing or context-adjusting process (Witek, 2015c, 2021). A detailed discussion of these issues, however, goes beyond the scope of this paper.

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[22] One may ask whether veiled threats are illocutionary or perlocutionary acts. I must admit that I have yet to find a well-grounded answer to this question. Nevertheless, I am inclined to say that the act of making a veiled threat has a certain illocutionary dimension in that it gives the addressee reason to perform a certain action; in this respect, it can be likened to the *ad baculum* technique understood as a complex commissive-*cum*-directive act (Budzynska and Witek, 2014). For the purposes of the present paper, however, it suffices to note that at least some veiled threats are *ritualized* and *conventionalized* forms of essentially implicit speech acts, i.e., acts which would have little chance of succeeding if they were made explicitly. I thank one of the reviewers for suggesting that I clarify this point.

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Maciej Witek is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Szczecin (Szczecin, Poland) and the coordinator of the Cognition & Communication Research Group. His areas of research are philosophy of language and philosophical pragmatics. He has published a number of papers on speech acts, linguistic underdeterminacy, linguistic norms, presuppositions, accommodation, and language evolution in journal such as Journal of Pragmatics, Synthese, Argumentation, Language & Communication, Language Sciences, Grazer Philosophische Studien, Organon F, and Lodz Papers in Pragmatics. He has co-edited (with Iwona Witczak-Plisiecka) a monograph "Normativity and Variety of Speech Actions" (Leiden: Brill, 2019).