

The question as to what role the concept of intention plays in semantics and pragmatics is one of the major topics in the recent philosophy of language. In natural languages, the expression's encoded meaning often does not suffice to determine the reference. The expression's reference changes relative to the context of utterance. How is that contribution determined on each occasion of use? Philosophers disagree whether intentions play such a determining role, and if so, in what way.

Linguistic acts are complex intentional actions. Hence, it is worthwhile to examine the notion of intention in the philosophy of action and mind. We say that we have an intention to do something in the future, that we do something with a certain intention, and that a certain action is intentional. What connects these three different notions? In the first part of the project, I will look at different answers that philosophers provide to this question.

The first research problem to which I shall apply the considerations concerning the notion of intention in the philosophy of action and mind concerns the distinction between automatic deictic expressions (such as "I", "here", "now") and non-automatic ones (such as "this", "he", and "that dog"). The criterion is based on the existence of a simple rule which for every occasion of utterance picks out the referent. The paradigmatic example of a non-automatic deictic expression is "this". In the absence of a simple rule, different candidates are proposed for reference fixing role: conventions, demonstrations, intentions, or salient features of context. In my project, I will analyze examples of uses of deictic expressions which challenge the automatic/ non-automatic distinction and I will probe the latter's accuracy.

The second research objective concerns the notion of a speaker reference. Philosophers distinguish between what an utterance of an expression means in a context and what a speaker means by uttering this expression. Semantic reference and speaker reference are characterized in terms of different types of intentions: general and specific intentions; primary and directing intentions. Although the speaker reference seems to be univocal, cases of misidentification of the object by the thinker challenge this simple view. An important question concerns what determines the structure of our intentions. I shall provide an answer to this question by analyzing the role that intentions play in coordinating actions.

The third research objective concerns various aspects of implicit meaning.

I expect the results of the planned investigations to shed new light on how we draw the line between semantics and pragmatics.