

5. On the Architecture of Intersubjectivity*

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Introduction

The Harvard-M.I.T. brand of psycholinguistics came into being as the love child of generative grammar and *individual* (as opposed to *social*) cognitive psychology. And transformational-generative linguistics, it was argued, represented a return to a pre-positivistic view of science (Fodor and Garrett, 1966). Based on this philosophy, the idea of linguistic competence came to resemble the idea of ideal physical (e.g. bodies falling freely through perfect vacua).

Fodor and Garrett's reference to perfect vacua is very deceptive, however. It is certainly true that Newton was concerned with ideal physical events, but his most impressive insight was that gravity is based on an attraction between bodies, that is, an *interaction*. A science of psycholinguistics based on the utterance *in vacuo* represents, therefore, actually a return to a pre-positivistic, pre-Newtonian, and scholastic approach. Its obvious shortcomings cannot be remedied by additional scholastics, such as adding a set of increasingly complicated auxiliary hypotheses concerning contexts onto an explication of "deep structures" or "propositional form and content" of sentences *in vacuo* (see Chomsky, 1972; Fillmore, 1972; Lakoff, 1972).

The conceptual framework suggested in the present paper is based upon the assumption that language is a thoroughly and genuinely social phenomenon. The notion of an utterance deprived of its context of human interaction is as absurd as the notion of a fall deprived of the gravitational field within which it takes place. *What is made known* in an act of verbal communications can therefore be properly assessed only if we venture to explore the architecture of intersubjectivity within which it is embedded.

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The Skeleton of Intersubjectivity

Communication aims at transcendence of the "private" worlds of the participants. It sets up what we might call "states of intersubjectivity". In order to explore such states, we need to start with the a system of co-ordinates such as the one indicated in Fig. 1. These co-ordinates may be defined in terms of three dimensions: the time at which the act of communication takes place, its location, and (in the case of spoken language) the identification of listener by speaker and vice versa. The I and YOU constitute the two poles of potential states of intersubjectivity, and they are immediately given in terms of an unequivocal *direction of communication*. Whatever is shared, presupposed, or assumed to be known already is hence shared, presupposed, or assumed by the I and the YOU within a temporarily shared **HERE** and **NOW**.

The intersubjectivity established **HERE** and **NOW** of a dialogue will take on very different denotative extensions depending on what constitutes the topic of discourse. The spatial-temporal-social co-ordinates of states of intersubjectivity can therefore not be assessed independently of each other, nor—as we shall see—independently of *meta-contracts* of communication endorsed by the participants in the communicative act.

On Complementarity of Intentions and Control of the Temporarily Shared Social World

In order to explore some of the basic prerequisites for intersubjectivity, let us now briefly examine what happens under certain conditions of serious communication disorders. Consider, for instance, the so-called *homonym symptom* of the schizophrenic. The patient may start out talking about a grand party, and he says:

(I) I too was invited, I went to the ball . . . and it rolled and rolled away. . . .

His intention in this case is to make known something about a ball to which he was invited and what happened at that ball. We, the listeners, immediately comprehend what is said because we are spontaneously decoding it in accordance with the speaker's intention and *on his, the speaker's, premises*. At the moment of his pause, we thus very likely expect him to continue with "and then . . ." or some such expression: We know he has been invited to that ball, he is going there, and we expect him to make known what happens next.

It is precisely at this moment, however, that our firmly rooted, though entirely intuitive and unreflective, assumption concerning complementarity between *the act of speaking and that of listening* is disconfirmed.

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Having uttered "the ball . . ." the schizophrenic seems to stumble, in a way. His act of speech is disrupted, his story does not continue in accordance with what he initially intended to make known. He pauses, apparently bewildered by what he himself has just uttered.

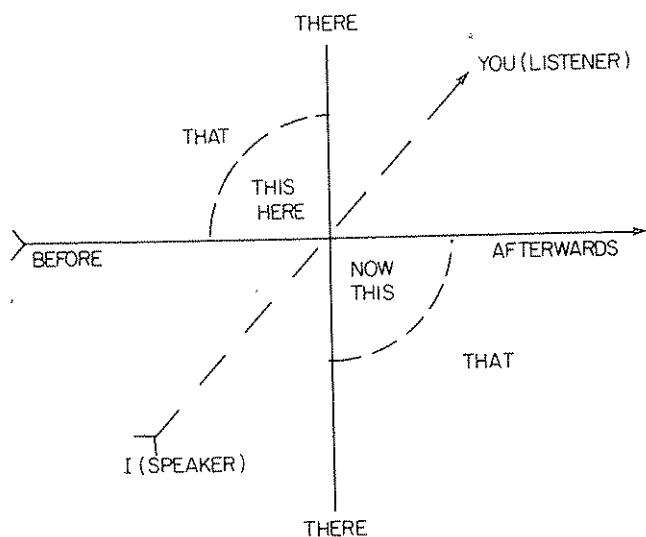


FIG. 1. The spatial-temporal-interpersonal co-ordinates of the act of speech.

His answer represents a perfectly rational solution to this riddle, however, once we endorse *his* basic distrust in intersubjectivity and accept the riddle as such. The spoken form "ball" is, of course, also the word for a very familiar object: It refers to a toy having a spherical shape, which is used in play or athletic games. The word ball is in fact used more to refer to such objects than in the way the schizophrenic had intended to use it initially on this occasion. What he says after the pause about rolling is thus in some respect a "publicly" plausible completion of his act of speech. Instead of finishing what he intended to say, he tries to complete the sentence with a phrase that *may* have made something known to a listener who was not bound to his premises. His pause after having uttered "the ball" thus signals lack of control of the intersubjectively established *HERE* and *NOW*.

Such control is under normal conditions unequivocally linked to the *direction of communication*: The speaking "I" has the privilege of pointing out the objects, events and states of affairs to enter the field of shared attention. Which of all possible entities of an experientially shared situation will be introduced and enter the slots of *THIS*, *HERE* and *THAT*, *THERE* of the formal skeleton of intersubjectivity is thus in principle determined by the speaker. The same holds true for any topic, whether

introduced by deixis, by identifying descriptions, or by other means. The listener has to accept and engage in whatever social reality is introduced.

And this is exactly what *we* do when listening to (I). As the speaker is uttering “. . . it”, we spontaneously make sense of what he is saying in terms of the ball to which he has been invited. The full-fledged act of verbal communication is thus, under normal conditions, based upon a reciprocally endorsed and spontaneously fulfilled contract of complementarity: *Encoding* is tacitly assumed to involve *anticipatory decoding*. It is taken for granted that speech is continuously *listener oriented*. The speaker therefore monitors his speech in accordance with his assumptions about the extent of social world and strategies of categorization which are shared by him and his listener. Conversely—and on precisely those premises—*decoding* is tacitly assumed to be *speaker oriented*, aiming at a reconstruction of what the speaker intends to make known.

Intersubjectivity has thus in some sense to be taken for granted in order to be achieved. It is based on mutual faith in a shared social world. Thus decentration in both interactants is a necessary basis for this reciprocally endorsed contract of complementarity. Wittgenstein's comment (1968, p. 108) that language is “habit and institution” certainly holds true for the fundamental complementarity inherent in acts of communication: What George Herbert Mead coined “taking the attitude of the other” (Mead, 1950) constitutes such a basic and pervading feature of normal social interaction that it remains entirely inaccessible to the reflective consciousness of the speaking I and the listening you.

On Meta-contracts and Variant Premises for Intersubjectivity

In order to gain some more insight into the subtle interplay between what is said and what is taken for granted we are therefore forced to transcend the traditional paradigms of substitution within linguistics and literary text analysis. These paradigms are all intralinguistic, in that one segment of discourse is being replaced by another in order to examine similarities and differences between the two. Contractual and partly institutionalized aspects of intersubjectivity are, in such an analysis, of secondary concern if they are of any concern at all. In order to bring such aspects into focus, we have to engage in systematic substitutions of the I-YOU co-ordinate of the act of communication (see Fig. 1).

Let us now transplant the incoherent segment of the schizophrenic's story about the party into an entirely different setting. This time, we are listening to a poet as he is reciting:

Our immediate reaction is a kind of bewilderment incoherent story. We know the poem, some of us may know. Others may experience it intuitively and emotionally. Still others may venture to them by the poet. The poet managed to portray a “ordinary reality” is what we firmly expect.

Consider, next, what for example, the war in famine in India, and the brought together in a assume that the poet who is made known by a desensitized orientatic mediately abolished. The structured the college on founded and essential

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Our immediate reactions on this occasion are entirely devoid of the kind of bewilderment we experienced when listening to the former incoherent story. When asked what is conveyed by (I') as part of a poem, some of us may perhaps answer that we honestly do not quite know. Others may express a feeling of having grasped its meaning intuitively and emotionally, without being able to put it into words. Still others may venture to verbalize the feeling that has been conveyed to them by the poet. They may maintain, for instance, that he has managed to portray conditions of human existence when our grip of "ordinary reality" is wavering because we discover that things are not what we firmly expected them to be.

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Consider, next, what may happen when newspaper headlines about, for example, the war in Vietnam, the increase in sales of cosmetics, the famine in India, and the stabilization of the European stock market are brought together in a college poem. Since firmly and unreflectively we assume that the poet wants to convey some things over and beyond what is made known by professional news reporters, our habitual and desensitized orientation toward daily mass media novelties is immediately abolished. To the extent that the author indeed has constructed the college on that assumption, our expectation is institutionally founded and essentially correct. It is, moreover, *eo ipso* self-fulfilling.

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Spontaneous and contextually appropriate interpretations in such different settings testify to a capacity to adopt the attitude of different "others". The general paradigm of complementarity thus allows for variant premises for intersubjectivity which can vary according to the institution and situation. Such premises have to do with what is unreflectively taken for granted, with the basic WHY of communication and what Ducrot (1972) has coined "les sous entendus" and "l'implicit d'enoncé". An utterance *in vacuo* can therefore only be examined with respect to its message *potential*. Its potential meaning must be considered by examining these *drafts of contracts concerning shared categorization and attribution*, which are conveyed in the speech act itself.

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The significance of variant premises for intersubjectivity is more clearly illustrated if we transplant newspaper headlines into a book of poetry, segments of a patriotic speech into an academic lecture, excerpts from medical reports into a funeral sermon, and fragments of an informal conversation between two friends into an interpersonal setting characterized by an unequivocal master-to-servant relationship. The main lesson to be learned from such transplantations is very simple: What is made known is dependent on what kind of meta-contract of

communication has been tacitly and reciprocally endorsed in each particular case.

On Anticipatory Comprehension (Vorverständnis)

Hermeneutic philosophers of language (Apel, 1968) and scholars of literature (Wellek, 1966) argue that whatever is made known in acts of verbal communications has to be conceived of as expansions and/or modifications of a pre-established shared *Lebenswelt*. Let us now examine how their concept of anticipatory comprehension (Vorverständnis) may be explicated in terms of the logic of information theory.

The main features of the latter can be exhibited by means of a very simple question-and-answer task. An object is located in one of the cells of a square consisting of 16 cells (see Fig. 2). I know where it is, but you do not. Your task is then simply to find out in which of the 16 cells the object is located, and you are requested to do so by means of questions that can be answered by either yes or no. The dialogue may hence proceed as follows:

- (1) "Is it in the right half?" "No."
- (2) "Is it in the upper half of the left half?" "Yes."
- (3) "Is it in the right half of the upper half?" "No."
- (4) "Is it in the upper half of the left half?" "No."

What has been made known at this stage is that the object is located in cell X, and the entire dialogue can in this case be described as a sequentially arranged reduction of an initial state of uncertainty on your part. This initial state corresponds to the entire square in Fig. 2: You know at the outset that the object is located in some as yet not identified cell of that square, that it may be located in any one of the 16 cells. My first answer serves to eliminate one-half of that entire area, my second answer eliminates one-half of the remaining half of it, and so on. Let us deliberately ignore these purely quantitative aspects, however, and turn to the dialogue as such.

Notice, first of all, that the word "square" does not enter our dialogue at all, despite the fact that at every single stage the message transmission is based upon the assumption that the two of us have the same particular square in mind. We assume—correctly, and by a tacitly endorsed contract—that we are talking about the same square. This constitutes the *initially shared, unquestioned or free information* onto which your very first question is nested or *bound*. Whether I have shown you a visual display of the square or carefully described it to you in advance is of no particular significance in the present context. It constitutes in either case an initially shared social reality and a *sine qua non* for further meaningful discourse on the location of the object.

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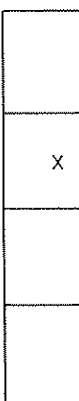


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This is not only true of the unmentioned square, however, but also of, for example, *the right half of it* introduced in question (1)—or rather *the left half* implied by my answer—when it from stage (3) on is no longer mentioned. Notice, thus, how my answer at every successive stage is

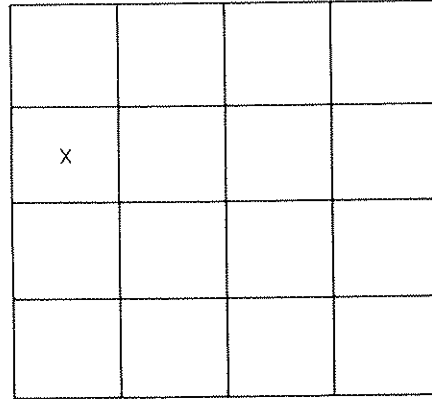


FIG. 2. Square for the question-and-answer game.

“Yes.”
 “No.”
 “No.”

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nested onto what at that particular stage has already been established as a shared social reality (or unquestioned, *free information*). Notice further how my answer at stage n is tacitly presupposed in your question at stage $n+2$. Both of us know (and know that the other knows) after stage (1) that the object is located somewhere in the left half of the square in Fig. 2. This shared knowledge is a prerequisite for what is made known at stage (3), even though at that stage it is tacitly taken for granted by both of us.

What is left of sequential structure in our dialogue, when we leave out quantification, is a particular pattern whereby novel information is nested onto what is already assumed to be the case. What is made known at any particular stage is thus not only made part of an expanded shared social reality, but serves at the same time as a prerequisite for making proper sense of what is said next. And this dual function is preserved also when my four successive answers are condensed into one single utterance such as:

(II) It is (in the square), in its left half, in the upper half of that left half, in the left half of that upper half, and in the lower half of that left half.

Analogous patterns of nesting are often encountered in narratives, for instance, when the identity of some person is taken for granted by the narrator—and *eo ipso* intersubjectively established—on the basis of inference from what has been made known at some earlier state. We

may, for example, hear about two persons, one old man and one young man. The latter is subsequently referred to as *the son*, although nothing has been *said* about kinship. Only two persons have so far been introduced into our temporarily shared social world. Therefore when "the son" (by virtue of the definite article) is assumed to be known already, he has to be the younger one of those two men and nobody else.

Message Structure: Nesting of bound to free information

What appears from the general perspective of information theory as sequential constraints may, from the perspective of the architecture of intersubjectivity, be assessed as *Vorverständigung* based upon tacitly endorsed contracts concerning a temporarily shared social world. Message structure may accordingly be conceived of as a particular pattern of nesting, generated in an interplay of tacit and verbally induced presuppositions on the one hand and semantic potentialities on the other.

Consider, for instance, what may be made known by a sentence such as:

(III) My spinster aunt is an infant.

The sentence is one of the many so-called *semantic* anomalies so eagerly documented by semanticists of the Harvard-M.I.T. school at an early stage: It has to be relegated to the abyss of unreason by scholars who believe in invariant semantic features rather than in semantic potentialities bound to variant premises for intersubjectivity (see Katz and Fodor, 1963, p. 200).

A great many things may be known by such an utterance, however, depending on which meta-contracts of communication have been endorsed and what is jointly and tacitly presupposed at the moment of speech. Its *message potential* may then, within each type of setting, be explored by examining possible questions to which (III) provides the answer. These may ask, for example, *how* the speaker's aunt is, *who* is an infant, *which of his aunts* is an infant.

Let us briefly consider two contextual variants. Consider, first, a conversation between two friends. The listener knows already the speaker's aunt by sight, and *an infant* is stressed in response to his question as to how that lady is. Message transmission must then be conceived of in terms of a pattern of nesting of information analogous to that of the question-and-answer game: What is made known by "an infant" is bound to "My spinster aunt", and the latter is in turn bound to an already intersubjectively identified entity within the temporarily shared social world at the moment of the act of speech. What is intended by the speaker and presupposed to be intended by him on the part of the listener is hence neither the early stage of life

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Let us next examine a case when (III) is uttered in response to *who* is an infant. The latter question may for instance be raised in an informal and noisy discussion about candidates for political offices, one of whom happens to be the spinster aunt. The conversation is in such a situation by a tacitly endorsed meta-contract restricted to adult persons only. What is said about them, moreover, has to do with their potential capacities as politicians rather than as artists or athletes.

Even an overheard fragment of an utterance such as ". . . is an infant" is for that reason immediately understood in terms of the general abstract potentialities suggested above, but on this occasion constrained by *le sous entendu* that someone is claimed to be an infant when viewed as a politician. And (III) uttered in response to the question "Who is an infant?" is hence, by anticipatory comprehension, "perfectly understood": It makes known *whom* the speaker declares immature with respect to political insight and skill.

The meaning potentialities *intended* and *understood as intended* in the phrase "an infant" can thus only be revealed by assessing the message structure. We must therefore first examine how the phrase is bound to other segments of the utterance and to tacitly endorsed presuppositions. Its entire set of semantic potentialities must subsequently be matched against all presuppositions to which the phrase is bound. We must also examine *if* and eventually *how* what is already taken for granted overlaps with what otherwise (in other contexts) might be made known by the expression.

We find then that some potentialities have to be disregarded on the ground that what would be made known by them is already presupposed. Such potentialities are therefore redundant. This is the case with a semantic potentiality such as *animate* of the phrase "an infant" in the settings we have analysed above. Certain other potentialities are overruled by what in that particular act of communication is taken for granted. This applies to age or stage of life cycle potentialities: Stage of life cycle is unequivocally conveyed by "spinster" and constitutes part of the unquestioned, free information to which "an infant" is bound. Such overruling is by no means an arbitrary or magic affair: The outcome is strictly determined by nesting of bound to free information. This precise phenomenon has for ages been explored in the literary analyses of metaphors.

An elimination of redundant and overruled semantic potentialities, however, yields only a partial determination of what is made known. We have thus so far only restricted what is made known in the expression "an infant" to a subset of its meaning potentialities defined by the elimination of *animate* and early stage of life cycle. What is left may

therefore be described in terms of abstract, but largely open potentialities, such as dependency and immaturity. Such a description may in fact represent a very plausible account of what is conveyed by the expression in the conversation between the two friends: The listener may not be any more informed at all at that stage, and the innocent dependency and/or immaturity of that spinster aunt is possibly going to be a central theme as the conversation continues.

What is left open and largely undetermined after our procedure of elimination, however, may in other cases be further specified in view of additional presuppositions to which the expression is bound. This is clearly the case in the noisy and informal discussion of political candidates: Whatever is made known by "an infant" when said about some such candidate is by a tacit meta-contract bound to refer to him in his capacity as a politician. This does not by any means imply that the expression has been fully and finally determined with respect to propositional content. On the contrary, the remark may very likely initiate a lengthy dialogue concerning what, more precisely, has been asserted by "an infant". What has been "perfectly understood", however, is that neither status as animate nor stage of life cycle nor immaturity in general has been asserted. Further clarification of the phrase may from now on be safely restricted to dealing with political immaturity and, possibly, of semantically mediated emotive and attitudinal contagion.

This is indeed a deplorably poor achievement when gauged against criteria developed within formal logic, yet not so poor when we keep in mind that it is achieved in and about a multifaceted, only partially shared, and only fragmentarily known world. Even such a partial determination of what is made known is in certain respects quite an impressive performance, definitely beyond the capacity of a person in a schizophrenic or autistic state of mind, and also, I believe, beyond what can be accounted for by the expanded versions of propositional analysis proposed by semanticists of the Harvard-M.I.T. school. It presupposes complementarity and reciprocal role taking. The speaker must monitor what he says on the premises of the listener, and the listener must listen on the premises of the speaker. Both of them, moreover, must continually relate what is said at any particular stage of their dialogue to whatever at that stage has been jointly presupposed.

On Commonality with Respect to Interpretation (Interpretationsgemeinschaft) and Shared Strategies of Attribution

Rossi (1973) maintains about Lévi-Strauss and the emphasis upon "l'inconscient" in structural analysis:

The preoccupation with covering the basic structure of the sender of the receiver intersection of two intent

Critics have accused Lévi-Strauss and irrational to a positive social life (see Corvez, 1966) having brought to our reflected-upon cognitive pre-conditions, moreover, which a variety of philosophical inquiries seem to converge of interpretation "... w such thing as an interpreter of language are called an unreflectively taken-for-granted interpretation, *eine Interpretation* (Ponty (1962) conceives of premises for a given dialogue. And Lévi-Strauss' search for the "silence", in other words, range of situational variables

Let us now ponder what the logical point of view, is in subjectivity. Imagine, for how a particular person verbalized your impressions are asked about it. Subjective dialogue is considering the job. Being aware of that nor particularly interesting

(IV) He is easy to please

Imagine, on the other hand, person you are asked about a solitary expedition that is full of exciting events. Assume the person's capacity to endure you may very well answer

(V) Oh, he can gain it

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and the emphasis upon

The preoccupation with the unconscious is a preoccupation with discovering the basic structures which are common to the mental mold of the sender of the receiver of the message, and which enable a genuine intersection of two intentionalities (p. 43).

Critics have accused Lévi-Strauss of having elevated the unconscious and irrational to a position of dominance and control in human and social life (see Corvez, 1969), but he may with equal right be praised for having brought to our attention basic taken-for-granted and not-reflected-upon cognitive pre-conditions for human interaction. Such pre-conditions, moreover, constitute a very intricate problem area in which a variety of philosophical, humanistic and social scientific inquiries seem to converge. Wittgenstein (1962) claims that any scheme of interpretation ". . . will have a bottom level and there will be no such thing as an interpretation of that" (p. 739). Hermeneutic philosophers of language are concerned with such a bottom level in terms of an unreflectively taken-for-granted commonality with respect to interpretation, *eine Interpretationsgemeinschaft* (Apel, 1965, 1968). Merleau-Ponty (1962) conceives of situationally and interpersonally established premises for a given dialogue as "a certain kind of silence" (p. 184). And Lévi-Strauss' search for *l'inconscient* may indeed, as suggested by Rossi, be interpreted as an attempt to explicate a widely shared aspect of "silence", in other words, the common denominators of a whole range of situational variants.

Let us now ponder what, more specifically and from a social psychological point of view, is implied by such tacit pre-conditions for intersubjectivity. Imagine, for instance, a situation in which you are asked how a particular person is. And let us assume that you have never verbalized your impressions of that person until the very moment you are asked about it. Suppose, moreover, that your partner in the dialogue is considering the person he is enquiring about for a particular job. Being aware of that and knowing that the job is neither well paid nor particularly interesting, you may perhaps answer:

(IV) He is easy to please.

Imagine, on the other hand, a situation in which you know that the person you are asked about has decided to start out on a long and solitary expedition that in all likelihood will be monotonous and devoid of exciting events. Assuming that your interrogator is worried about the person's capacity to endure months of solitary and uneventful travelling, you may very well answer:

(V) Oh, he can gain pleasure from small things.

Making known your impression of a particular person in situations such as those described above is clearly something more than converting

a ready-made cartesian cognitive representation into a temporally extended sequence of speech sounds. It is a social activity in the sense that you spontaneously monitor what you say in accordance with tacit assumptions concerning what both of you already know and what more your listener wants to know. You may thus induce a shared perspective by which the person you are talking about is considered a potential manipulandum, or you may engage your listener in a verbally induced strategy of attributing talents to him.

What is made known by words such as "easy" in (IV) and "can" in (V), moreover, is clearly bound to a more comprehensive scheme for attribution (Heider, 1958). The latter is in some respects analogous to the square in Fig. 1: It is taken for granted as a shared frame of reference for making sense of what is said. And this may hopefully be demonstrated in Fig. 3 as we ponder what is made known by cryptic expression such as:

- (VI) John is easy;
- (VII) John can; and
- (VIII) John is eager.

Some composite state of affairs of the general form (X(do)Y) is evidently taken for granted in all three expressions. The two poles of the composite state of affairs, moreover, make for a subdivision analogous to that by which the square is divided into the right and the left half, since what is made known about John is dependent on which

of two distinctively different "easy" in (VI) is thus concerned with part or aspect of some person; either "eager" or "can", John is attended to as a "eager", moreover, makes known aspects rather than his ability.

Heider's enquiries into the structure of revealed inference rules between words. They may be said to aim at discovery of the mental mold of the shared frame which enable a genuine sharing of rules of attribution. Sharing rules of attribution are, in fact, also prerequisites for our initial imprisonment in a shared social world: What is made known are, in fact, also prerequisites for verification: What is made known matters and succeeds.

The message potential of the shared frame are thus bound to a particular partition (*eine Interpretationsge*) of verbal communication. The partition one suggested in Fig. 3 is gauged against criteria of being yet comprehensible and about which nothing is shared taken for granted, even if (X (do) Y) may remain a shared social world in the face of decentered shifts of perspective. "can" on one occasion be a feature of a culturally shared discourse about ease, ea

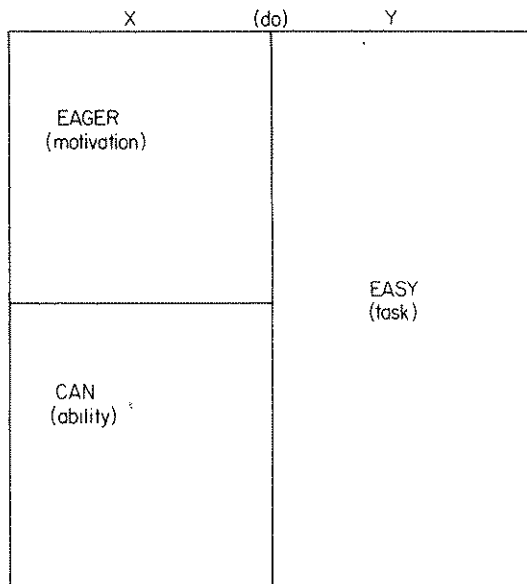


FIG. 3. Tacit presuppositions inherent in EASY, EAGER and CAN.

On Message Structure
Verbal

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of two distinctively different capacities he is talked about in. The word "easy" in (VI) is thus comprehensible if and only if he is considered as part or aspect of some action or task ((do)Y). What is conveyed by either "eager" or "can", on the other hand, can only be made known if John is attended to as a potential actor; as X is in (X(do)). The word "eager", moreover, makes sense if and only if said about motivational aspects rather than his ability as a potential actor.

Heider's enquiries into attribution are investigations of behaviourally revealed inference rules rather than explications of interrelationships between words. They may hence, like the enquiries of Lévi-Strauss, be said to aim at discovery of "... basic structures which are common to the mental mold of the sender and the receiver of the message, and which enable a genuine intersection of the two intentionalities". Sharing rules of attribution is indeed a basis for enabling us to transcend our initial imprisonment in a private and egocentric world. These rules are, in fact, also prerequisites for obtaining consensus with respect to verification: What is made known by "John can" is proved true if he tries and succeeds.

The message potentials of expressions such as (VI), (VII) and (VIII) are thus bound to a particular commonality with respect to interpretation (*eine Interpretationsgemeinschaft*). None of them makes sense in acts of verbal communication unless some scheme for attribution such as the one suggested in Fig. 3 is tacitly presupposed and mastered by both participants in the act. Each expression is of course incomplete when gauged against criteria for fully determined "propositional content", yet comprehensible and partially determined by aspects of the scheme about which nothing is said. Some task or intended action is thus always taken for granted, even though the particular nature of (do) in (X (do) Y) may remain unknown. A prerequisite for a temporarily shared social world in the case of (VI), moreover, is a capacity for decentered shifts of perspective on people such that a particular person can on one occasion be attended to as a source of action and on another occasion as (aspect of) a task. Figure 3 may thus be said to portray features of a culturally shared "kind of silence" out of which adult discourse about ease, eagerness and ability is generated.

On Message Structure and Residuals in Acts of Verbal Communication

Irrational compartmentalization of knowledge is sustained by vicious circles. The *raison d'être* of an encapsulated expertise on *sous entendus* and literary exceptions must thus in part be sought in a general semantics concerned with "literal" readings and "propositional content". The hermeneutic scholar thus often deals with residuals from the general

, EAGER and CAN.

semanticist's analysis, and his own exegesis is addressed to us as insiders of a presumably universal, though entirely open and undefined *Interpretationsgemeinschaft*.

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I have in the present paper examined basic premises for inter-subjectivity such as complementarity of intentions, capacities for decentred categorization and attribution, and a capacity to adopt the perspective of different others. An analysis of message structure will thus—unlike assessment of propositional form and content—have to deal with residuals in terms of tacitly taken for granted shared social realities and/or presupposed commonality with respect to interpretation. Such residuals, however, are *not* to be conceived of as *ad hoc* manifestations of some undifferentiated and only intuitively revealed *Interpretationsgemeinschaft*, but must in each case be specified by a systematic analysis of nesting of *bound* to *free* information.

The residual may in some cases be conceived of as analogous to the axiomatic foundation for interpretation of particular scientific statements. What is made known by EASY, EAGER and CAN in expressions such as (VI), (VII) and (VIII) thus appears to be bound to a tacitly and reciprocally taken for granted "space of action" in a fashion resembling that by which particular geometrically defined terms for distances, areas, and volumes are bound to axiomatically defined Euclidian space.

Partial determination implies on other occasions simply optional elaborations of some general draft of a contract. What is conveyed by the word INFANT in a particular situation may thus, by tacitly endorsed meta-contracts, be intended and understood in terms of political immaturity, but such consensus may in turn serve as a point of departure for negotiations concerning specific criteria for verification. Moreover, what is made known by POOR may on two different occasions be unequivocally determined in a general fashion as the opposite of WEALTHY, yet in a conversation about inhabitants of the third world be specified as living conditions below the subsistence level and in a dialogue about neighbours as dependence upon public financial support. Full mastery of the general poverty-wealth potentiality of POOR is thus revealed in contextually appropriate optional elaborations—and so contingent upon the generalized capacity to adopt the perspective of different others.

Semantic competence can therefore only be appropriately understood as an integral component of *communicative competence*. Semantic potentialities inherent in ordinary language must be conceived of as drafts of contracts concerning categorization and attribution, bound to more comprehensive schemes, yet to a considerable degree negotiable and contingent upon meta-contracts in the form of actively induced or pre-established *sous entendus*.

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