WHY I BELIEVE IN MONSTERS (AND YOU SHOULD TOO)

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Abstract

According to Kaplan's bidimensional theory of demonstratives, the descriptive content of any indexical term(and the sentences they appear in) is only employed to determine its reference in any possible worldrigidly but cannot be expressed by the sentence's truth conditions. Kaplan then argues that an indexical sentence's informativeness depends on what he calls its character, a property of the context that relates a particular context to a concrete content, but it cannot be a part of the proposition the sentence entertains (its content), primarily given the logical inconsistencies the opposite would show in the theory of conditionals and counterfactuals. I agree with Kaplan that indexicals should not be considered disguised descriptions. Nevertheless, I believe that their content is informative and, therefore, part of the proposition these sentences express, even though that implies accepting the existence of content shifting operators within the same context--what Kaplan dubbed *monsters*. This paper, therefore, presents an alternative account to indexical terms and sentences employing the Interactive Theory introduced in Colomina-Almiñana (2022). This approach considers that the meaning of any sentence, the proposition it expresses, depends upon three interrelated factors: the speaker's intentions when uttering, the audience's potential uptakes of such statement, and the conventions established by the speech community both speaker and audience belong, or the linguistic interaction takes place. The critical element is the so-called speaker's point of view, an objective perspectival networking background that allows lexical and syntactic mechanisms to trigger and update potential conceptual presuppositional content shared by both speaker and audience and whose existence is prior to any context and circumstances.

Key words

contextualism, demonstrative, indexical, presupposition, proposition, common ground

Introduction

This article provides a systematic approach to the meaning of indexicals, traditionally understood as key to explaining the foundations of the semantics of natural language in context. Such an explanation feeds from a few observations presented in Colomina-Almiñana (2022).The book offers a novel approach to metasemantics based on the Interactive Theory. This theory argues that the meaning of any linguistic item is its cognitive content. Nonetheless, the cognitive content of words and sentences depends upon three different but interconnected elements: the speaker's intentions when making a statement, the audience's interpretation of what

is said, and the conventions that allow both phenomena to occur. This theory does not seem different from any other that takes seriously the context of use of any sentence (its utterance) or any pragmatic theory that considers Gricean ideas. Nevertheless, such a theory is different in many ways.

First and foremost, it is the only theory that successfully combines speaker intentions, the audience's possible uptakes, and conventions to explain the meaning of our natural language. Second, the meaning that a given audience entertains is always different and determined by the conditions established by at least one speech community, not only the context and the circumstances. Any statement that a speaker can make in any of the over seven thousand natural languages (and their dialects) spoken on Earth is then sanctioned differently by the speech community to which speakers belong (or the linguist exchange occurs). In other words, each speech community constrains what is said and how one can say it. Third, given that the speaker always wants something concrete out of their utterance, determining what the content of such a statement is obliges us to pay attention to what that might be, mostly when the interpretation of what is said does not match the expected outcomes. Given that we are creatures who respond to reasons and have interests, the speaker's intentions when choosing what is said and the audience's potential interpretations must be considered in our analysis of language and meaning as part of a collective rational endeavor.

The Interactive Theory then explains how and why each sentence of our language gets associated a cognitive content and, as a corollary, why that content can change its truth value within the same context, contradicting the contextualist's claim against the existence of such possibility in any natural language. As a secondary goal, it argues for pluralism regarding propositions grounded on the idea that different speech communities impose different conditions to determine their languages' content and meaning. It provides a crucial advantage over contextualist and relativist proposals. Since the content of any statement depends on the objective conditions offered by the speech community, no content is subjectively relative to the speaker's assessment conditions or circumstances.

Therefore, the book proposes a hybrid theory that accounts for our intuitive view about what contents our audience entertains in ordinary conversation and a pluralistic approach to the criteria employed in individuating linguistic content. More specifically, it more accurately accounts for the relationship between language and reality, the type of knowledge speakers possess when we say that they know a language and the mechanisms that explicate its acquisition and production. Such an approach, therefore, answers questions regarding the nature and understanding of language, its origin and structure, and, more importantly, how ordinary natural language works.

This article employs some caveats from the Interactive Theory to provide an alternate explanation of the "logic of demonstratives." According to the classic contextualist approach, given the contradictory nature of the existence of content shifting elements in the same context, indexical linguistic elements can only refer to one and only one determined object per context, and the such referential connection

is maintained in every possible world in which such indexical is meaningful. As Kripke would say, they are rigid designators since they directly refer. Unlike the contextualist approach, the Interactive Theory argues that the content of indexical terms and sentences is informative and, therefore, could be considered a part of the proposition they express, but only if such content is presupposed in the common ground shared by the speaker and audience. This explanation only works should the presuppositional content be understood under maximally local scenarios, as expressed by what the article calls "the speaker's point of view", since only in such cases can an indexical's context-shifting effect be explained by lexical and syntactic mechanisms embedded in ordinary natural language.

The structure of this paper is as follows. Section 2 presents Kaplan's traditional contextualist explanation of indexicals. Besides Kaplan's efforts, the existence of operators that would allow truth value shifting sentences within the same context (*monsters*) is possible in both the logic of demonstratives (Section 3) and several natural languages (Section 4). Section 5 analyzes indexicals under the Interactive Theory to conclude that, besides its contradictory appearance, the existence of monsters has no significant consequences for the semantics of ordinary natural language.

1. The Logic of Demonstratives

Following the insights established by Montague, Kaplan(1989) offers a quantificational compositional derivation to account for the meaning of any sentence. Sentences that include non-indexical terms acquire their truth value directly from adding the references of their component items according to the compositionality principle of meaning. This is possible because "an onindexical is a function from circumstances to extensions" (Kaplan 1989, 507). Therefore, their meaning is determined once and for all by their rigidity and the nature of compositionality itself since these terms are directly referential. Therefore, they designate the same object in every possible world where it could be employed.

Nevertheless, there are some linguistic items(such as "I," "you," "yesterday". etc., the so-called indexicals) in which content is opaque and resists the traditional compositional analysis because they refer to different individuals, times, etc., depending upon who utters them, when, etc. In other words, even though their reference is directly and rigidly fixed, it is contextually dependent. Kaplan's (1978) first famous solution derives "the meaning of an indexical as a function from contexts to extensions (substituting for fixed contents)" (Kaplan 1989, 507). Given the difficulties in equating context with circumstances for indexical sentences, primarily in modal quantificational scenarios, Kaplan(1989) then proposes a two-step strategy (double-indexing, he calls it, following Kamp's(1971)work on the temporal English adverb "now"). The solution claims that the truth value of these sentences since the content of indexicals is underdetermined without a context, depends on their *character* (a function that relates a particular context to a particular content) and their *content* (as a function from world-time pairs to truth values). According to this

framework, the semantically basic two-dimensional relation is that of sentence *s* being true at context *c* in an index *i*. A context is the concrete location that accommodates what is said by the speaker to the time, the place, and the possible world of utterance, or the centered world. An index is an *n*-tuple set of features within this context that produces the concrete speaker and the concrete audience. In other words, "indexicals are rigidly specified once the character of a sentence is applied to the utterance context before the content is derived" (Anand and Nevins 2004, 507), and hence they are also directly referential. This means that the content of a sentence containing indexicals is also determined once and for all when the proper context has been fixed, and no further truth value shifting can occur. Briefly, an indexical reference is also rigid, even though contextually determined.

This theory's semantic consequences are obvious and have notorious metaphysical embedded implications. Kaplan, like Barcan, Montague, Kripke, and others in this tradition, argues that indexicals are not and cannot be disguised descriptions. This means that an indexical term such as "I", for example, is not equivalent to the descriptive phrase "the speaker making this statement at this moment and this context" (or something similar). Nevertheless, the reference of a sentence containing "I" still is the speaker that utters that sentence in this context and moment, which entails that indexical terms are directly referential. As seen before, Kaplan considers that the informative content of an indexical sentence only helps fix the concrete reference of such a sentence in the moment of assessment. It is understood as some "pragmatic" move where the "descriptive" and informative aspect of the indexical is employed to center the world in which the sentence is meaningful. That is what the sentence's character provides to the equation, and as a pragmatic element, it cannot be part of the sentence's truth conditions (its content). Therefore, such informative content cannot be part of the proposition the indexical sentence expresses but must be an element offered by the context of utterance.

An essential part of this conclusion is the labor behind the logic of demonstratives (Kaplan 1979). As early as Kaplan (1968), Kaplan insists that the orthodox lambda-calculus-based semantics for variable binding items such as demonstratives, particularly indexicals, cannot contain displacing devices that operate on character. Kaplan claims that this has to do with some intuitive a priori knowledge we have about the truth of a sentence such as "I am here now" (which must be true in all possible worlds where a speaker utters it given the binding necessity that the speaker is here now at the time of uttering the sentence). This intuitive knowledge is absent in a modal sentence such as "I am necessarily here now", which is false (since it may be some possible world in which the speaker utters the sentence somewhere else than where she is now). Nevertheless, Kaplan devotes all of Section 8 in his 1989 work on demonstratives to reinforce the argument. There he states the following:

> "My liberality with respect to operators on content... does not extend to operators which attempt to operate on character. Are there such operators as 'In some contexts it is true that,' which when prefixed to a sentence yields a truth if and only if in some context the contained sentence (not the content expressed by it) expresses a content that is true

in the circumstances of that context? Let us try it: (9) In some contexts it is true that I am not tired now. For (9) to be true in the present context it suffices that some agent of some context not be tired at the time of that context. (9), so interpreted, has nothing to do with me or the present moment. But this violates Principle 2! Principle 2 can also be expressed in more theory laden way by saying that indexicals always take primary scope. If this is true -and it is- then no operator can control the character of the indexicals within its scope, because they will simply leap out of its scope to the front of the operator. I am not saying we could not construct a language with such operators, just that English is not one. And such operators *could not be added to it*. [...] Operators like 'In some contexts it is true that,' which attempt to meddle with character, I call *monsters*. I claim that none can be expressed in English (without sneaking in a quotation device). If they stay in the metalanguage and confine their attention to sentences as in 'In some contexts, I am not tired now' is true they are rendered harmless and can even do socially useful work" (Kaplan 1989, 510-511).

Kaplan then accepts the existence of monsters at a metasemantic level but negates them at a semantic and even empirical level. As seen before, this is a direct consequence of defending indexicals as special linguistic items triggering the context parameter, which primary function is to establish one of the values that center the adequate world of evaluation. In other words, Kaplan considers that indexicals function as "descriptions" with informative content because they force a context of evaluation to entertain the concrete propositional content of a sentence. What this means is also apparent. The meaning of an indexical sentence cannot be considered propositional because it cannot be reduced to functions from worlds to truth conditions. Therefore, Kaplan's theoretical apparatus for demonstratives and indexicals must be understood as a conceptualized approach leaning toward a pragmatic mechanism to avoid reducing indexicals to descriptions, mainly to avoid subjectivity-link into content and meaning. Since Kaplan joined the semantic tradition that considers that reference is about objects (*de re*) and not about the properties that concrete speakers can attribute to them (*de dicto*), if one wants to maintain the objectivity of meaning in indexical sentences, then one must detach any sentence evaluation of any individualized content a speaker can provide, including those sentences whose truth value is dependent of the context where it is uttered.

The main difficulty with Kaplan's reticence in accepting the existence of monsters is that they exist at both the theoretical-logic and empirical-semantic levels, as the following sections demonstrate.

2. Monsters in the Logic of Demonstratives

As mentioned above, Kaplan (1989) considers that two principles guide the semantics of indexicals: 1. their reference depends on their utterance context, and 2. they are directly referential. This means that an indexical contributes to any sentence of which it is a part of exactly its content (as exhausted by the extension of its referent), which is rigidly fixed by the context of utterance of such a sentence. For this reason,

an indexical's reference (and its contribution to the sentence it contains) could vary across contexts but, as Principle 2 tells us, cannot change within the same context.

This point is crucial to understand why Kaplan considers that indexicals function as if they were descriptions without being descriptive definitions. Even though an indexical could appear embedded into other linguistic elements, such an indexical's contribution to the meaning of the sentence containing it is not affected by such an embedding. It does not provide additional cognitive content because it is not a part of the expressed proposition. Therefore, indexicals are essentially contextual. This is the reason why Kaplan separates the two aspects of meaning. On the one hand, there is what is said: the content of the linguistic item in context. On the other hand, one finds the character: the semantic ruling that tells what content is associated with such linguistic item across any context in which it could occur. As seen before, Kaplan borrows this idea from intensional logic: any linguistic item has a unique character, which allows competent speakers to employ it adequately since it displays a concrete content according to the context of use (i.e., depending on who utters it, when, where, etc.). Thus, any sentence has a character (as a function from context to content) and a content (as a function from possible worlds to truth values).

In Kaplan's analysis, the two-step process is required to discern what a sentence says in all possible contexts in which it could be employed. Since, for any sentence, there is a context and a set of circumstances (the possible world where it is uttered), the truth of such an utterance depends on the context in which it is uttered. In other words, the scenario in which a sentence is uttered affects what is said and whether that is true or false. If this is so, as Kaplan defends, contexts generate contents, and circumstances serve to check whether such contents correspond to reality. Therefore, for Kaplan, indexicals are always context-sensitive, while intensional operators could affect the circumstances of evaluation. Given that a monster is a linguistic item that forces the audience to interpret the sentence, it appears as if such a sentence were employed in a different context than the one in which it is expressed, basically inverting the role of character and content, such semantic devices must be banned from Kaplan's approach.

Unfortunately, even the standard compositional semantics of variable binding items such as demonstratives and indexicals employs monstrous operations. Assume, as Kaplan does, that language is compositional. If this is true, it seems that no operator can exist that shifts content-fixing parameters (monsters), for, if it were, it would tear apart the context of utterance from the context of evaluation. As Rabern (2013) and Rabern and Ball (2019) claim, Kaplan's approach is in tension with this account. Think of a complex phrase such as "*Every man* is such that *he* is mortal", in which the sentence "*He* is mortal" embeds into a quantifier (example from Rabern 2013, 16; Rabern and Ball 2019, 14). The standard compositional analysis considers quantifiers are shift assignments. Therefore, the semantic compositional reading of the complex sentence is monstrous because the quantifier (by shifting the parameter upon which the content of the complement is grounded) jams the content of "*he*", avoiding it from entering the content of the complex sentence. Remember that for Kaplan (1989, 546), the distinction between the parameters that fix content and

evaluate it is only the differentiation among context and possible worlds that makes him consider such assignment a parameter of the context. Nevertheless, this does not seem to be any news since this is the type of behavior one should always expect from quantifiers. It is only under Kaplan's approach that what is said seems to have a special semantic halo, making it immune to monsters besides being the norm in scenarios such as the one depicted above.

Briefly, in Kaplan's approach, monsters are character-compositional but not content-compositional for no specific semantic reasons. This has two main consequences: 1. Kaplan's argument that direct referential terms' truth values do not shift is unmotivated, and 2. since monsters do not operate on content but context, we have to distinguish between knowing the conditions under which a sentence will be truth-evaluable and knowing the different conditions under which every possible utterance of a sentence will have a specific truth value (something that it cannot be reduced to compositionality rules). Therefore, a solution that considers something other than only grammatical/semantic rules is required.

3. When Natural Language Semantics meets the Logic of Demonstratives

On the empirical side, myriad studies demonstrate that many languages exhibit some sort of indexical content shifting. Examples include languages belonging to different linguistic families, such as Amharic (Schlenker 1999; 2003), Navajo (Speas 1999; Schlenker 1999), Zazaki and Slave (Anand and Nevins 2004; Anand 2007), Catalan Sign Language (Quer 2005), Nez Perce (Deal 2010, 2020), Matses (Fleck, 2006), and Uyghur (Shklovsky and Sudo 2014), among others. Even English has been shown to include some monstrous constructions.

Take, for instance, the following sentence (from Partee 1989, 347): "Only I ordered a drink that I liked". Imagine that I, with my partner and child, go out and order some root beer with lunch. If I utter the sentence above, the sentence seems intuitively true. I am the only one that liked the drink that we all ordered since I am the one who likes root beer. Nevertheless, there is another reading in which such a sentence is patently false. We all ordered root beer, even though I am the only one that likes it. But the sentence says, if uttered by them, that they liked the drink (root beer) they ordered, which is not the case. Oddly enough, the first reading in which "I" does not refer to the speaker but to me is the only one that follows the principle of compositionality, even though it violates Kaplan's Principle 2. The sentence is, then, monstrous.

Consider now the Zazaki language (a West Iranian language spoken by about 2 million people, mainly in the South Anatolian region of Turkey belonging to the Kurdish nation). According to Anand and Nevins (2004), all Zazaki indexicals can potentially shift reference when within the scope of the verb "to say" ("*vano*"). For instance, the sentence "Hesen said that *I* am rich" ("Heseni va ke *ez* dewletia") has at least two readings, depending on whether the pronoun "I" ("*ez*") is interpreted as referring to me (the speaker) or him (Hesen) because that particle's content can be shifted by the attitude-reporting verb ("va").This sounds counterintuitive and also

violates Kaplan's Principle 2. Nevertheless, it is a semantic feature of Zazaki, and its speakers seem to know how and when each interpretation must occur.

Direct discourse complement, a grammatical construction in Navajo (a Southern Athabaskan language belonging to the Na-Dené family spoken by about 150,000 Native American people in the western areas of the United States of America), also serves as an example (cf. Speas 1999). This construction shows some interesting semantic features depending upon what elements it includes and that it affects how it is interpreted even within the same context. On the one hand, it can be understood as having the properties of a functional category when including syntactic heads such as agreement and complementizers, which will align this grammatical construction with the patterns displayed by direct discourse. Nevertheless, on the other hand, the construction can also be interpreted as modified by including deixis (of first or second person and even temporal modifiers) and evaluative predicates. The interpretation of this last case renders it closer to the indirect discourse.

Briefly, in Navajo, a grammatical construction (direct discourse complement) must be interpreted relative to the utterer's viewpoint when it includes personal and temporal deictic terms and evaluative predicates. In Navajo, then, a demonstrative pronoun such as "I" within a direct discourse complement would be interpreted from the utterer's viewpoint and not from the subject's viewpoint, as it would be expected. For example (Speas 1999, 6), in a context where Kii and I are standing by a tree with axe marks on it, Kii says to me: "Díí tsin yítsééł" ("I chopped this tree here"). The next day, you and I are looking through a window of our house at that same tree. I tell you: "Kii nléi tsin yítsééł ní" meaning, "Kii told me that he chopped that tree over there", even though the literal translation of such a sentence, as the presence of the verb 3o.1s.chopped ("yítsééł") suggests, would be, "Kii says that I chopped that tree over there".

A false conclusion that one can extract from the previous examples is that monstrous constructions always require the presence of a psychological or attitude verb. This is not the case. Monsters can be syntactically independent of any verb embedding clause. All that is required is that they are reinterpreted according to such embedding clause, which will change the meaning of the sentence within the fixed context. It only happens that this operation prominently often occurs in constructions with attitude verbs and usually within direct discourse reports.

The proper conclusion to extract from the above is that some natural languages show indexical-shifting sensibility due to the presence of a context-shifting operator either embedded in some syntactical structure or syntactically independent from an embedding attitude predicate. This means that 1. all these natural languages are already equipped with the elements required for context-shifting, and 2. speakers of those languages have somehow an implicit knowledge of the mechanisms that are operating in the language that establish the various conditions under which any possible appearance of an indexical will determine a concrete truth value. After all, that is what it means to be a competent speaker of a natural language.

4. How the Interactive Theory Explains the Content-shifting Phenomenon

Solutions to the consequences of monsters' presence for semantics have come from different places. Contextualist approaches have built systems that try to control shifting operators through some rigidifying content-fixing element, and even more relativist approaches have introduced additional evaluation parameters, broadening the scope of context to include more dynamic aspects such as assessment possibilities and the utterer's viewpoint. The problem with these theoretical frame works is that they only amend the Kaplanian program so that compositionality can explain meaning by adding some property-ascription item that avoids the reference to falling under propositional content. In other words, language is psychologically void under these approaches since speakers have no relevance in what they say and what language means, or it becomes solipsistic because the speaker's mental state strictly guides it.

The empirical research in Section 4 showed how syntactically savvy individuals help explain the content-shifting sensitivity of language. Since reduction to syntax assumes that speakers can automatically talk without being necessarily aware of (the knowledge of) their language, something is missing. A semantic frame is required to establish a simple way to fix what a particular speaker says in a concrete time and place. We need, therefore, to explain how the syntactical structures and elements of any language capture such sensitivity as well. However, it is also apparent that neither meaning is something that grows in a tree nor syntax is independent of the speakers of a language. Speakers build meaning, and speech communities are those who arbitrarily determine what each structure and term of a language represents.

The Interactive Theory defends that a reductive approach to language undermines the scope of semantics and leaves many of its foundational aspirations unexplained. The meaning of our words and sentences is not, and cannot be, only dependent upon any content words possess by themselves or any property speaker can attribute to objects but is grounded in their societal usage, their utterance in a given context, the intention that the speaker has when uttering such words and sentences, and its interpretation by their audience plus the conventions established by the adequate speech community. If this is the case, we must abandon the illusory endeavor of finding a unitary theory of language and focus our attention on the analysis of localized ordinary speech usage.

A usual phenomenon one finds in ordinary language is ambiguity. Some terms and sentences have more than one reading. Speakers and audience, though, have more or less an implicit intuitive knowledge of how such terms and sentences must be interpreted for them to make sense. It simply is how it is. Besides the semantic content that grammatical constructions might carry, speakers and audience have grown up being trained to entertain other non-linguistic elements to complete and enrich the meaning of such terms and sentences when a syntactic gap appears. Context centers the world one is talking about, and then the reference of such terms and sentences is fixed. This, as seen above, fits the standard Kaplanian view that linguistic items are always associated with fixed linguistic content.

Nevertheless, other linguistic phenomena problematize this conclusion. Some we have seen in the sections above. Others, like the Frege's puzzle, have more profound implications. Think of the following sentences (from Rabern 2013, 18): 1. "Rebecca believes that all optometrists are optometrists", and 2. "Rebecca believes that all eye doctors are optometrists". Sentence 1 is tautological, sentence 2 is informative. Nevertheless, since eye doctors are also called optometrists, both sentences must always have the same truth value. It seems intuitively true, though, that it might be some possible scenario in which sentence 1 is true and sentence 2 is false: if Rebecca does not know that optometrists are eye doctors, for instance.

The type of scenario described above is usual in ordinary speech. In sentences where indexicals are present, it seems that the weight of the proof falls on the assignment of a value depending upon its reference. Therefore, building some approach in which we can somehow control such assignment or, at least, be able to predict the value-landing by anticipating the possible reinterpretation of the indexical's reference will be an advantage. After all, the type of device we are looking for is some epistemic context shifting control device that would allow us to accurately determine the truth conditions before having to fix the reference of the indexical terms present in whatever sentence must be evaluated. We, speakers, do this in ordinary speech, and it is prior and independent of centering the context. We can accommodate what any speaker says when we hear it because we assume that the speaker is a rational individual trying to communicate in a proper, ordinate, and cooperative way. In other words, we presuppose that what the speaker says somehow fits the common ground (Stalnaker 2002) that we, the speaker and audience, share. Suppose this is not the case, like in sentence 2 above. In that case, the audience must find a way to understand and interpret the speaker's statement by accommodating the new to the old information and updating the common ground.

One solution here would be to assume that Rebecca does not know that eye doctors are called optometrists. We presuppose that what she says is informative and that she is trying to update the common ground. In other words, the audience will accommodate what Rebecca said to fit the shared knowledge we all, belonging to the same speech community, have. When things do not go as expected, some accommodation process happens, and the common ground is updated accordingly. As Lewis (1979) would say, the linguistic scoreboard is kept up to date to incorporate each and all information provided through a linguistic exchange. This is my preferred solution, but there are others. For instance, when my son Ausiàs started talking, he employed the sound "Chita" to refer to milk. The semantic content came up out of the efforts of my partner Nicole and me to understand him. Even though it lacked explicit stipulation, due to our communicative cooperation (and much other stuff related to parenthood, I guess), such term acquired meaning: it started to be employed in our house to refer to milk. This phenomenon, conversational implicature, is a way to explain how the spontaneously created word "Chita" gets associated its meaning in a concrete conversational scenario. A similar phenomenon, conventional implicature, may also help explain similar scenarios, for instance, when we refer to animal paws as legs. Other modulation and negotiation strategies

have been depicted. They all help us understand the phenomena we have on our hands. Nevertheless, as said before, none of them make sense if the perspective from where we are talking is not established and explicitly determined first.

This is what the Interactive Theory calls the speaker's point of view. When my child says "Chita", when we use "legs" to refer to paws, or when we have to expand the scope of a term such as "Triceratops" to include also the Torosaurus after new paleontological research is completed, we must first determine from where we are talking about. In our house, we know that "milk" is the word used to refer to milk, but we adapted our vocabulary, at least when talking to Ausiàs, so that he and we could communicate and get a sip of milk. We all acquired Ausiàs' point of view and then updated the common ground in such a way that "Chita" meant milk, and at the same time, we reinforced our small speech community. When somebody outside such speech community heard the word, only could but inquire: "what is that?" Our answer was always the same: "It is the way our kid calls 'milk,'" explicitly incorporating Ausiàs' point of view. In the same way, the common ground was updated so that "legs" could be used informally to refer to paws and other animal's extremities. We employed a homocentric's point of view that molds linguistic content and its truth conditions accordingly. Something similar occurs when we talk about dinosaurs and their classification since one must follow science's point of view. The explanation is very intuitive: it is simply what we do when talking, and it is also the way we think. However, establishing this is especially dangerous since it is too close to a relativistic position. This is why it requires empirical labor and cannot be reduced to any closed system.

As seen above, Kaplan's issue seems to be empirical, primarily because of his insistence on banning any context-shifting and other hyperintensional operators from a theoretical, logical standpoint. He recognizes the labor that resources such as quotation marks can provide. Nevertheless, given that the intensional reading of an operator of such a kind would violate the requirement of direct referentiality, he must forbid the existence of any devices that can shift the linguistic meaning of words. Kaplan fell victim to point of views: he could not see that we talk this way, besides often being against the point of view of the logic of demonstratives. Meaning-shifting operators exist in natural language, and speakers and audiences have learned to deal with them.

5. Conclusion

The Interactive Theory claims that language was not created in a vacuum. Language is a human artifact and, as such, evolved to respond to human needs and demands. As humans, we reason, have dispositions, perform inferences, act in various ways, and are sensitive and cognitively aware of others and the world surrounding us. Our language must display all of these facts, and any serious analysis that pretends to be complete must, therefore, address and explain them.

It also challenges the traditional view of meaning, which dominates the current literature. Contextualists such as Kaplan argue that each sentence of our

language carries and displays one and only one proposition (its content) in a context because of the way truth conditions constrain truth value. Contextualists arrive at similar conclusions. In contrast, the Interactive Theory argues for pluralism regarding the propositions one can associate with the sentences of our languages. This pluralism is grounded in how speech communities build conventions that constrain utterance success, the speaker's intentions when selecting a specific sentence, and the audience's potential interpretations of such utterances. Separately these views are not particularly new, and others have defended them in the past. However, all combined, they not only explain the determination of any concrete proposition but also reshape any sentence's scope and, hence, the generation of new propositional content. What is novel, then, is three-fold: first, the Interactive Theory combines conventions, speaker intentions, and audience's uptakes; second, the way that I defend it (by assuming a multifunctional theory of language based on empirical data); and third, a defense of the conception of propositions as acts.

The Interactive Theory then argues that linguistic acts require interaction between speaker and audience. The act is not established by the speaker or the audience in isolation but through interaction with the speech community to which they belong. The speech community determines the speech act that the speaker performs. The speech community also constrains how any act must be interpreted by the audience (both conform to a convention), which determines what the speaker must say, how, when, to whom, etc., to display specific content. It is an institutionalized behavior. Furthermore, the speaker must decide which of all the possible behaviors a society/community makes available would employ to accomplish her intentions: to be successful in her communication, to successfully promise, etc.

To summarize, the Interactive Theory defends the speaker's intentional display of specific content when making a statement and the proper institutionalized act performed by such statement altogether with the audience that adequately recognizes and interprets the speaker's intentions when making it determine the proposition within. After all, as Austin said, only when one considers "the total speech act in the total speech situation" the true meaning of statements is revealed. Therefore, the interaction between a speech community's conventions, the speaker's intentions, and the audience's interpretations constitute all structured propositions of the shared natural language. The speaker's point of view tells us which is relevant.

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