

*Pragmatics without intentions: On the outlook and applications of Hearer-Oriented Pragmatics*

Current pragmatics is built on the Gricean intentionalist view of communication. According to the view, the speaker's role in communication is to produce an utterance with a communicative intention and the hearer's role in communication is to identify the content of the utterance through recognizing the intention and reasoning about the mental states of the speaker.

The aim of the talk is to argue for a hearer-oriented approach to pragmatics. As I argue, current understanding of the role of the hearer in communication is unduly restrictive and we should broaden it. The broader view of the hearer's role in communication rests on the idea that hearers use utterances as a source of information which they exploit in different ways and for different purposes. Identifying the speaker's intentions can be relevant for some of those purposes (e.g. coordination of actions with the speaker) but is of no importance for others (e.g. self-concerning planning).

In my talk, I discuss the consequences of the hearer-oriented approach on the current research in experimental and evolutionary pragmatics. With respect to the former, I argue that the Gricean view has detrimental effects because it makes us systematically blind to certain aspects of human communication, and thus to certain possible explanations of pragmatic phenomena. With respect to the latter, I argue that the hearer-oriented approach opens up a way for a gradualistic account of human communication and can explain certain discrepancies of the currently preferred transformative model of the evolution of communication which focuses on the explanation of mind-reading capacities.