PRAGMATICS
AS A THEORY OF LINGUISTIC ADAPTATION

First working document
drafted for the
International Pragmatics Association
in preparation of a
Handbook of Pragmatics

by

Jef Verschueren
Belgian National Science Foundation
and
University of Antwerp
The IPRA WORKING DOCUMENTS are drafted for, and distributed among all the members of, the INTERNATIONAL PRAGMATICS ASSOCIATION in preparation of a Handbook of Pragmatics. Other IPRA publications include: a continuously updated annotated bibliography of pragmatics; a semi-annual IPRA Bulletin (supplemented with a bi-monthly news section in the Journal of Pragmatics); and the IPRA Papers in Pragmatics, a working paper series.

INTERNATIONAL PRAGMATICS ASSOCIATION
University of Antwerp, Linguistics (GER)
Universiteitsplein 1, B-2610 Wilrijk, Belgium

Secretary General: Jef Verschueren (Antwerp)
President of the Board: John Gumperz (Berkeley)
Members of the Consultation Board: Elizabeth Bates (San Diego), Manfred Bierwisch (Berlin), Andrzej Boguslawski (Warsaw), Dwight L. Bolinger (Palo Alto), Melissa Bowserman (Nijmegen), William Bright (Los Angeles), Noël Burton-Roberts (Newcastle), Jean Caron (Mont Saint-Aignan), Wallace Chafe (Santa Barbara), Aaron V. Cicourel (San Diego), Eve Clark (Stanford), Herbert H. Clark (Stanford), Bernard Comrie (Los Angeles), Jenny Cook-Gumperz (Berkeley), Benoît de Cornulier (Nantes), Florian Coulezas (Düsseldorf), Anne Cutler (Cambridge), Marcelo Dascal (Tel Aviv), Steven Davis (Burnaby), Alice Davison (Urbana), Teun A. van Dijk (Amsterdam), Simon Dik (Amsterdam), Norbert Dittmar (Berlin), Wolfgang U. Dressler (Vienna), John Dubois (Los Angeles), Alessandro Duranti (Rome/San Diego), Umberto Eco (Bologna), Susan Ervin-Tripp (Berkeley), Gilles Fauconnier (Paris), Charles J. Fillmore (Berkeley), Joshua Fishman (New York), Dorothea Franck (Amsterdam), Bruce Fraser (Boston), David Good (Cambridge), Rob Grootendorst (Amsterdam), Hartmut Haberland (Roskilde), Robert H. Harnish (Tucson), Erland Hjelmquist (Göteborg), Jerry Hobbs (Menlo Park), David Holdcroft (Leeds), Paul Hopper (Binghamton), Delli H. Hymes (Philadelphia), Rodolfo Ibarra (Campinas), Paul Johnson-Laird (Cambridge), Paul Kay (Berkeley), Gerard Kempen (Nijmegen), Ferenc Kiefer (Budapest), Ekkehard König (Hannover), George Lakoff (Berkeley), Robin Lakoff (Berkeley), Beatriz Lavandera (Buenos Aires), Chungmin Lee (Seoul), Stephen Levinson (Cambridge), John Marshall (Oxford), James D. McCawley (Chicago), Jacob Mey (Odense), Wolfgang Motsch (Berlin), Ahmed Moutaouakil (Rabat), Terry Myers (Edinburgh), Elinor Ochs (Los Angeles), John Ochs (Berkeley), Herman Parret (Louvain/Antwerp), Andrew Pawley (Auckland), Jerzy Pelc (Warsaw), Carlo Perfetti (Pisa), Livia Polanyi (Cambridge, Mass.), Jerrold Sadock (Chicago), Roger Schank (New Haven), Emanuel A. Schegloff (Los Angeles), I.H. Schlesinger (Jerusalem), Christoph Schwarze (Konstanz), John K. Searle (Berkeley), Joel Sherzer (Austin), Roger Shuy (Georgetown), Michael Silverstein (Chicago), Dan Slobin (Berkeley), Carlota Smith (Austin), Catherine Snow (Cambridge, Mass.), Karl Sornig (Graz), Takao Suzuki (Tokyo), Deborah Tannen (Georgetown), Sandra Thompson (Santa Barbara), Charles Travis (Montreal), Robert Van Valin (Davis), Emanuel Vanllee (Bucharest), Yorick Wilks (Las Cruces).

IPRA WORKING DOCUMENT 1

Editor, IPRA Bulletin: Johan van der Auwera (Antwerp).
PRAGMATICS

AS A THEORY OF LINGUISTIC ADAPTATION

First working document
drafted for the
International Pragmatics Association
in preparation of a
Handbook of Pragmatics

by

Jef Verschueren
Belgian National Science Foundation
and
University of Antwerp

January 1987
"That is the essence of science: ask an impertinent question, and you are on the way to the pertinent answer."
(Jacob Bronowski 1973: 153)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface 9

0. INTRODUCTION: PRAGMATICS 13
  0.0. Prologue 13
  0.1. Beginnings and growth 17
  0.2. Early restrictions and promises 20
    0.2.1. Conversational maxims and speech act rules 20
    0.2.2. (Indirect) speech acts and implicatures 20
    0.2.3. (Indirect) speech acts and presuppositions 21
    0.2.4. Presuppositions and speech acts 22
    0.2.5. Presuppositions and implicatures 22
  0.3. Definitional problems 22
  0.4. The component view of pragmatics 25
  0.5. Split over unity 28
  0.6. Grammaticism in pragmatics 33
  0.7. An alternative: The perspective view of pragmatics 35
  0.8. An impertinent question 38

1. THE NOTION OF ADAPTATION 41
  1.0. Introduction 41
  1.1. Universality vs. adaptability 41
  1.2. What is linguistic adaptation? 43
  1.3. Macro- vs. micro-processes of adaptation 45
  1.4. 'Adaptationist' views and concepts 46
    1.4.1. Evolutionary epistemology 46
    1.4.2. The origin and evolution of language 48
    1.4.3. Language acquisition 49
    1.4.4. 'Local' adaptationist explanations 50
    1.4.5. Related pragmatic notions 50
  1.5. Functionality and functionalism 50
  1.6. Conclusion 51

2. MEDIUM OF ADAPTATION 53

3. OBJECTS OF ADAPTATION 59
  3.0. Introduction 59
  3.1. Micro-analysis: Acquired 59
    3.1.1. Physical world 60
      3.1.1.1. Time 60
      3.1.1.2. Location 61
    3.1.2. Social world 62
    3.1.3. Speaker 64
      3.1.3.1. The number of speakers 64
PREFACE

Article II.1. of the Constitution of the International Pragmatics Association (IPRA) specifies that IPRA shall be devoted, among other things, to: The search for a coherent general framework for the discussion and comparison of results of the fundamental research carried out by those dealing with aspects of language use or the functionality of language in fields such as linguistics, text linguistics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, ethnomethodology, the ethnography of speaking, anthropological linguistics, procedural and developmental psycholinguistics, artificial intelligence, neurolinguistics, semiotics, the philosophy of language, speech act theory, communication theory, rhetoric, stylistics, etc. The same paragraph stipulates that this search should be a continuous exercise in flexibility, rather than an attempt to impose a monolithic and unchangeable ideological unity, and that it is not intended to create a new, artificial, field of research, but to enhance understanding by promoting communication across the various disciplines which are, in part or in their totality, relevant to pragmatics. Article III.1. further indicates that IPRA, as one of its activities, shall prepare a Handbook of Pragmatics, compiled and published in such a manner as to satisfy the demands imposed by Article II.1. and by an additional article declaring IPRA’s devotion to the dissemination of knowledge about pragmatic aspects of language, not only among pragmaticians of various denominations and students of language in general, but in principle among everyone who, personally or professionally, could profit from more insight into problems of language. It would be inconsistent with the goals of the Association to produce a handbook composed of a large number of separate contributions by various individual authors. For one thing, the format has to be such that the handbook remains infinitely expandable and adaptable. Therefore, a loose-leaf, periodically issued publication is thought of (though whether this will be its ultimate shape, is still open for discussion). Second, the handbook needs to be written in a consistent style easily accessible to a wide target audience. Third, it has to be the product of a genuinely collective effort, in which all IPRA members are invited to participate under the guidance of our Consultation Board.

In the light of the foregoing remarks, this Working Document should be interpreted as a preliminary, and quite tentative, proposal for a possible general framework. Its
only ambition is to be a starting point for discussions. It should not be treated as a first draft of what should ultimately grow into the Handbook.

The introductory chapter (0.) is a personalized account of the considerations that led this author to the formulation of the proposal in the later chapters. The actual shape of that proposal, though certainly influenced by the expressed background ideas, is not logically connected to them, and should be evaluated in its own right.

Chapter 1 describes the basic theoretical notion used to justify the organization of the tentative framework. In addition to brief explanatory texts, chapters 2 through 7 include rather extensive lists of topics which, if shared with editors of the phenomena under discussion. In keeping with the original idea that existing subdivisions of the field of pragmatics, in its widest sense, ought to be taken for granted, the same topics may be listed in different places. The fact that this happens only occasionally should not be regarded as evidence for the erroneous conclusion that the lists in question, which are basically derived from an extensive indexing system developed in cooperation with Jan Huys of the 2000-page A Comprehensive Bibliography of Pragmatics (Jan Huyts & Jef Verschuren 1987), constitute an attempt at classifying linguistic phenomena. On the contrary, the basic tenet will be that most of the phenomena listed can only be given a proper pragmatic description if looked at from the diversity of angles motivating the distinction between the different chapters of this outline.

Various steps will have to be taken before any part of the Handbook will be in a publishable form:

1. Receipt of this Working Document implies, for all IPRA members and Consultation Board members, an invitation to provide criticism and comments, to indicate aspects of the general framework (as proposed, or in terms emerging from their criticism) which their expertise would help them to further elaborate or comment upon if elaborated by others, and to indicate whether and to what extent they would be willing to do so.

2. The original proposal, possibly already adapted on the basis of received comments, will be further evaluated during the 1987 International Pragmatics Conference. (The form this evaluation will take still has to be decided on.)

3. A number of case studies (which members are invited to produce) using and testing the revised proposal, will be circulated.

4. A complete revision of the original proposal, based on received comments, and findings resulting from the conference and from the case studies, will again be made available in the form of a working document.

5. Members will be invited to offer contributions elaborating aspects of their choice; before incorporating those contributions, they will be refereed (mainly by members of the IPRA Consultation Board); incorporation may involve inserting different parts of a single member's contribution in different
0. INTRODUCTION: PRAGMATICS

0.0. PROLOGUE

Let's get to the bottom line at once. Before starting to produce this text, I decided not to entrust the following sentences to the fugitive medium of speech, because I'd like my message to reach more than just one or a few persons. The nature of the message being 'scientific,' and the potential audience for such a message type being largely international, I have chosen to encode it in English rather than in my own native tongue; otherwise its meaning would be in danger of getting lost for the vast majority of the scientific community it is aimed at.

Given the basic truth that I do not have genuinely native intuitions about English, I am not able—or less able than I would have been otherwise—to dispense with the help of some tools while trying to accomplish the task of encoding. Since writing— if it is not electronically transmitted at once—involves a significant delay between production and reception, I have ample time to consult 'sources' on the English language. Thus, when I was about to formulate my first sentence as "Let's get to the essence at once," I could grant myself the luxury of hesitation. Keeping in mind the writer's maxim that repetitiousness is bad style, and anticipating that I would need the word 'essence' more often than desirable in the remainder of this text, I picked up Roget's Thesaurus for an alternative. I selected 'bottom line' in spite of its being marked 'Informal' and its being overused by politicians. There are at least two ways of countering possible objections against this choice. First, I am trying to write American English, a variety of the language in which informality is a more pervasive feature; and whatever would be good enough—in terms of language—for the U.S. President, whoever he may be, is surely good enough for me. Second, I am only doing pragmatics, rather than something else which is so highly reputable that it takes itself completely seriously; and judging from the cross section of pragmatists I am acquainted with, most of them would probably not stumble over a certain degree of informality.

Sensitivity with respect to sexism in language, which is characteristic of a sizable portion of my target audience, however, almost triggered the clause "whichever he or she may be" qualifying 'the U.S. President.' Even now, after making a choice, I am not sure whether it was the right one: Will it be inoffensive to my readers to adapt the form of my pronouns
only to the real world, or am I expected to make them range over all possible and potentially desirable ones?

What, then, is the bottom line?

Talking, or using language expressively and/or communically in general, consists in constantly making linguistic choices consciously or unconsciously, for linguistic or extralinguistic reasons. These choices are situated at every possible level of linguistic structuring: phonological, morphological, syntactical, lexical, semantic, etc. They may range over variety-internal options; or they may involve regionally, socially, or functionally distributed types of variation. The basic desire which set in motion the string of choices constituting the writing of this text, is to argue that and to demonstrate how pragmatics could and should be conceived as the study of the mechanisms and motivations behind any such choices and of the effects they have and are intended to have.

None of the current theories of pragmatics (to the extent that theories—in the sense of coherent and systematically organized sets of assumptions, principles and procedures)—can be said to exist at all are adequate to capture the full richness of this fundamental intuition. Moreover, it would be pretentious to believe, at our present state of knowledge about the use of language, that anything resembling the latest outline of a program leading to a sufficiently sophisticated theory could be formulated right now. Even the planned Handbook of Pragmatics for which chapters 1 through 7 of this text form a preparatory working document, can no more than such an outline in its initial stage of publication, primarily intended to organize our present limited knowledge in such a way as to stimulate future research and to limit the risk of misguided and disconnected fragmentary studies. Even this perspective for the Handbook may seem overly ambitious. So, why the attempt?

The first reason is sheer despair. The jumble of scientific enterprises which deserve (or might be condemned to bear) the label 'pragmatic,' is marked by such a high degree of fragmentation that two linguists with slightly different methodological and terminological backgrounds might be unable to understand each other when talking about the same subject, even if the points they are trying to make are very similar. This fragmentation, and the resulting despair, should become clearer in the further course of this introductory chapter. A coherent theory of pragmatics—or at least, a coherent way of organizing knowledge about pragmatic aspects of language—should be constructed, one way or another, to achieve a degree of comparability across topics of inquiry, across terminologies, and across methodologies. Such comparability is a condition sine qua non for any form of fruitful cooperation, has been recognized for ages as a basic requirement for the accelerated gaining of insights by researchers in the sciences. Without comparability across methodologies and terminologies, and without interdepartmental cooperation, we cannot even dream about the applicability of our insights in areas such as language teaching, the treatment of speech disorders, international and intercultural communication, or natural language processing systems, to name just a few of the more important ones. (1)

My own involvement with pragmatics had its origin in speech act theory. After wandering through speech act theory for a number of years, it dawned upon me that continued theorizing within a piecemeal framework was in serious risk of becoming a rather frivolous activity as long as no procedures could be developed to settle (at least some of) the issues raised, on empirical grounds. Empirical investigations call for specialization. For reasons we cannot go into here, the demands of specialization and an empirical approach, led to the choice of metapragmatic terms in natural languages (including speech act verbs and other 'verba dicendi') as the

(1) It was in exactly those terms that the establishment of the International Pragmatics Association was motivated. From the announcement: "Pragmatics is a large, loose, and disorganized collection of research efforts. (This sentence was borrowed from a letter by Jerry Hobbs in response to an earlier circular.) The second incentive for the potential support for IPRA was that researchers in an ever-increasing number of different disciplines make constant or occasional use of pragmatic notions. But their contribution to our understanding of human verbal communication often does not reach its fullest potential as a result of the emerging theoretical, methodological, and terminological diversity. Though, when confronted with the complexities of language use and human communication, such diversity could mean strength, this strength has turned into the weakness of fragmentation in the absence of a more or less coherent general framework in terms of which one can compare the results of various forms of research dealing with basically similar or related forms of functionality. Needless to say that, without intermethodological and interterminological comparability, significant and far-reaching results of fundamental research in pragmatics are harder to achieve, and that their applicability remains entirely dubious. This state of affairs is regrettable in the face of the many important domains in which knowledge about pragmatic aspects of language is indispensable, such as language teaching, language rehabilitation, crosscultural communication, natural language processing systems, etc.

(2) To be consulted on hermeneutics: H.-G. Gadamer (1975) and (1981); part five of F. A. Dallmayr & T. A. McCarthy (eds.) (1977).
topic of inquiry. (3) Soon, however, this line of inquiry (born from a fundamental distrust of a purely theoretical approach to linguistic interaction) led to a painful and conspicuous need for the kind of global, all-encompassing, pragmatic knowledge base of which chapters 2 through 7 of this working document are intended to sketch, tentatively, some fundamental parameters.

The paradox of empirical research seems to be that it is needed to substantiate and validate the same theories (or visions) that it inevitably has to rely upon for its frame of reference. Some sort of coherent pragmatic framework is needed as a descriptive and heuristic tool on which guidelines can be based for the formulation of conditions on the use of metapragmatic terms (as a method for the semantic description of such terms). When universalis in the lexicalization of linguistic action are aimed at, it is also needed as a heuristic tool on the basis of which a standardized set of speech events can be constructed to be used in elicitation procedures designed to discover relevant lexicalized categories of metapragmatic awareness. (4) After completion of the metapragmatic data gathering, it is again to be used as a descriptive tool for a coherent account of the findings.

In addition, metapragmatic terms in natural languages touch upon a range of aspects of linguistic (inter)action which is literally endless. Thus the seemingly restricted and quite specialized topic of investigation calls for insights scattered over the complete domain of verbal behavior. This is not a problem of the specialist coming in to specialize in a particular area because one does not know enough about most other things; but in order to become a good specialist, one has to know quite a lot about everything else.

It should be clear, then, that the intention underlying the skeletal framework proposed in chapters 1 through 7 is not to create a new language about (pragmatic aspects of) language because natural language itself would not be rich enough. Thus, the motivation is certainly not to be found in Charles Morris' rather naive suggestion (made when discussing the need for specialized languages) that

"The everyday language is essentially weak in devices to talk about language, and it is the task of semiotic to supply a language to meet this need." (Morris 1938: 12)

Rather, it is exactly the study of some of the devices which natural languages offer to talk about language, and an ever-growing awareness of their richness, that originally prompted this author's involvement in the (admittedly risky) enter-

prise under discussion. The underlying intention, as said before, is simply to create a coherent frame of reference in terms of which language, or pragmatic aspects of language, or language about pragmatic aspects of language (depending on one's fixations), can be discussed in a way that would facilitate the comparison of different researchers' findings across topics of inquiry and across methodologies and terminologies.

Before formulating our tentative proposal, a few remarks will be made about the state of the art. Though these remarks will clarify, to a certain extent, the origin of the ideas embodied in chapters 1 through 7, they do not constitute logically necessary premises on which the plausibility of the proposed outline depends.

0.1. BEGINNINGS AND GROWTH

If our program is ambitious, to the point of being pretentious, it should be remembered that pragmatics, as a notion, was born from a far more ambitious project. It was in his attempt to outline a unified and consistent theory of signs or semiotic, which would embrace everything of interest to be said about signs by linguists, logicians, philosophers, biologists, psychologists, anthropologists, psychopathologists, aesthetics or sociologists, that the founding father of pragmatics, Charles Morris, proposed the following definition of our field.

"In terms of the three correlates (sign vehicle, designatum, interpreter) of the triadic relation of semiosis, a number of other dyadic relations may be abstracted for study. One may study the relations of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable. This relation will be called the semantical dimension of semiosis, (...); the study of this dimension will be called semantics. Or the subject of study may be the relation of signs to interpreters. This relation will be called the pragmatical dimension of semiosis, (...), and the study of this dimension will be named pragmatics." (Morris 1938: 6)

A somewhat diluted version of this original delineation defines pragmatics as the study of how language is used. The problem with this definition is that it can be extended in such a way as to include everything that linguists can possibly deal with. Chomsky's (1965) dichotomy between competence and performance had to be supplemented with the notion 'competence to perform,' 'communicative competence' (Habermas 1971, 1979; Hymes 1967) or 'pragmatic competence' (even recognized by Chomsky 1980: 224-225). A typical definition of this notion would run as follows:

"For purposes of inquiry and exposition, we may proceed to distinguish 'grammatical competence' from 'pragmatic competence,' restricting the first to the knowledge of form and meaning and the second to knowledge of
conditions and manner of appropriate use, in conformity with various purposes. Thus we may think of language as an instrument that can be put to use. The grammar of the language characterizes the instrument, determining intrinsic physical and semantic properties of every sentence. The grammar thus expresses grammatical competence. A system of rules and principles constituting pragmatic competence determines how the tool can effectively be put to use." (Chomsky 1980: 224)

But unlike many other tools, language is not a 'thing' which leads an independent and unchanging life once it has been 'made.' It requires constant adaptations to different purposes and circumstances of use. And for a descriptive account of the meaning and an explanatory account of the form of linguistic entities, it is often necessary to refer to conditions of their appropriate use. An awareness of such basic facts underlies, for instance, the Wittgensteinian meaning-as-use doctrine. But unqualified adherence to such a doctrine is not at all needed to understand that, strictly speaking, every aspect of competence is part of one's competence to perform. In other words, also the so-called 'grammatical competence' determines the way in which language gets used. Thus the form/meaning vs. use opposition is not unproblematic. While maintaining the contrast, Morris also recognizes this issue when introducing the notion of a 'pragmatic rule.'

"Syntactical rules determine the sign relations between sign vehicles; semantical rules correlate sign vehicles with other objects; pragmatic rules state the conditions in the interpreters under which the sign vehicle is a sign. Any rule when actually in use operates as a type of behavior, and in this sense there is a pragmatic component in all rules. But in some languages there are sign vehicles governed by rules over and above any syntactical and semantical rules which may govern those sign vehicles, and such rules are pragmatic rules. Interjections such as 'Oh!' commands such as 'Come here!', value terms such as 'fortunately', expressions such as 'Good morning!', and various rhetorical and poetical devices occur only under certain definite conditions in the language; they may be said to express such conditions, but they do not denote them at the level of semiosis in which they are actually employed in common discourse. The statement of these conditions under which terms are used as they cannot be formulated in terms of syntactical and semantical rules, constitutes the pragmatic rules for the terms in question." (Morris 1938: 35; emphasis added)

This formulation, which places everything that syntax and semantics cannot cope with, in the custody of pragmatics, has no doubt contributed to the 'waste basket' view of pragmatics.

Another problem with Morris' definition of pragmatics is its scope.

"By 'pragmatics' is designated the science of the relation of signs to their interpreters. (...) Since most, if not all, signs have as their interpreters living organisms, it is a sufficient circumstance to characterize pragmatics to say that it deals with the biotic aspects of semiosis, that is, with all the psychological, biological, and sociological phenomena which occur in the functioning of signs." (Morris 1938: 30)

If the motivation for Morris' theory of signs was to try to sketch a theoretical structure which could incorporate whatever of interest could be said about signs by linguists, logicians, philosophers, psychologists, biologists, anthropologists, aestheticians and sociologists, it should be clear from this passage that pragmatics gets more than an equal share of the burden.

"Vagueness of delimitation and wideness of scope, together, have put the growing field of pragmatics, as Morris envisioned it, on the road toward boundless diversification—an effect which is the exact opposite of the unification he dreamed of. Today, anthropological, linguistic, and study the relationships between languages and cultures. Sociolinguists are concerned with the ways in which social relationships, patterns, and networks interact with language structure and language use. Neurolinguists try to reveal the biological aspects of speaking and listening. Psycholinguists study the relationships between language and mind in general. Do linguists and psychologists concentrate on the ontogenetic origin and evolution of language. Linguists and philosophers of language focus on a rather narrow, though itself quite diversified, range of topics; thus, Austrian and Searlean speech act theory emerged as the philosophical study of language in action, proposing the 'speech act' as the basic unit of analysis, and has inspired linguists in various ways; Grican conversational logic formulates rules for conversational exchanges, and reflects on how these influence interpretation processes; linguists studying presuppositions attempt to determine what implied propositions have to be true for an expression to be appropriately used; those dealing with the given/new and topic-comment distinctions try to discover how 'common' or 'mutual' knowledge is reflected in sentence structure, and how it gets gradually extended in a text. Text linguists and discourse analysts describe how macrostructural properties of texts and discourses relate to processes and strategies of discourse progression. Conversation analysts and ethnomethodologists undertake detailed linguistic analyses of conversational exchanges—often with sociological background notions in mind—in order to unravel their most intricate mechanisms, often viewed as manifestations of micro-sociological patterns and relationships. Instead of being a part of the universe of all possible subjects, to which many more could be added, are investigated with different aims and methodologies, and discussed in various divergent and confusingly overlapping terminologies.
0.2. EARLY RESTRICTIONS AND PROMISES

Though anthropological linguistics, sociolinguistics, procedural and developmental psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, and the like, would still be included in the rather amorphous 'Continental tradition' in pragmatics, these disciplines mainly lead a life of their own. The separate identity of such disciplines, relatively well established in actual practice, is partly responsible for the growth, over the past twenty years, of a more restricted 'Anglo-American tradition' which, in general, reserves the term pragmatics for the study of such topics as deixis, implicature, presupposition, speech acts, and conversation. In the beginning this restriction carried promises of theoretical unity. Just consider the following examples of points of contact between the various topics involved.

0.2.1. Conversational maxims and speech act rules

More often than not, the rules formulated for speech acts are specific applications of the more general principles of conversational cooperation. Take, for instance, Grice's (1975) second maxim of Quantity ("Do not make your contribution more informative than is required") and his maxim of relation ("Be relevant"). These are clearly reflected in one of Searle's (1969) preparatory rules for asserting ("It is not obvious that H knows p").

As a second example, compare the maxim of Quality ("Try to make your contribution one that is true") with the sincerity rule for asserting ("S believes p").

0.2.2. (Indirect) speech acts and implicatures

Grice's (1975) account of conversational implicatures and Searle's (1975) definition of indirect speech acts, are very similar. With reference to the following exchange:

A asks B: "How is C getting on in his new job?"
B: "Oh, quite well, I think; he likes his colleagues, and he hasn't been to prison yet."

Grice remarks:

"I think it is clear that whatever B implied, suggested, meant, etc., in this example, is distinct from what B said, which was simply that C had not been to prison yet." (1975: 43)

Compare this with the following quotation with reference to indirect speech acts:

"... the speaker's utterance meaning and the sentence meaning come apart in various ways. One important class of such cases is that in which a speaker utters a sentence, means what he says, but also means something more..."

In such cases a sentence that contains the illocutionary force indicators for one kind of illocutionary act can be uttered to perform, IN ADDITION, another type of illocutionary act." (Searle 1975: 59)

Moreover, in his account of the 'illocutionary derivation' needed to arrive at the meaning of an indirect speech act, Searle (1975) makes explicit reference to the principles of conversational cooperation. For instance, in order to explain the following exchange:

Student X: "Let's go to the movies tonight."
Student Y: "I have to study for an exam."

Searle proposes, i.e., the following steps:

"Step 2: I assume that Y is cooperating in the conversation and that therefore his remark is intended to be relevant (principles of conversational cooperation).
Step 3: A relevant response must be one of acceptance, rejection, counterproposal, further discussion, etc. (theory of speech acts).
Step 4: But his literal utterance was not one of these, and so was not a relevant response (inference from Steps 1 and 3).
Step 5: Therefore, he probably means more than he says. Assuming that his remark is relevant, his primary illocutionary point must differ from his literal one (inference from Steps 2 and 4)." (Searle 1975: 63)

0.2.3. (Indirect) speech acts and presuppositions

In the same illocutionary derivation, Searle also needs the following step:

"Step 6: I know that studying for an exam normally takes a large amount of time relative to a single evening, and I know that going to the movies normally takes a large amount of time relative to a single evening (factual background information)." (Searle 1975: 63)

There is a fundamental sense in which 'background information' and 'presupposition' are synonymous, though the latter has acquired a number of more restricted meanings. Background information is also referred to in a further definition or characterization if indirect speech acts:

"In indirect speech acts the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and non-linguistic, together with the general
powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer." (Searle 1975: 60-61)

0.2.4. Presuppositions and speech acts

One of the major definitions of presuppositions advanced in the literature, crucially depends on functions of language which are generally discussed in terms of speech acts:

"Sentences in natural language are used for asking questions, giving commands, making assertions, expressing feelings, etc. (...) We may identify the presuppositions of a sentence as those conditions which must be satisfied before the sentence can be used in any of the functions just mentioned." (Fillmore 1971: 380)

0.2.5. Presuppositions and implicatures

Grice (1975) claims that a sentence such as "He is an Englishman; he is, therefore, brave" conventionally implicates (because of the word 'therefore') that all Englishmen are brave. What is a conventional implicature here for Grice, can easily be described in terms of presupposition.

There is also a point of contact between presuppositions and conversational implicatures. Consider one of Grice's classical examples:

A: "I am out of petrol."
B: "There is a garage round the corner."

B's reply implies that the garage is open and that it has petrol for sale. But what is an implicature for the hearer, is in fact a presupposition for the speaker.

0.3. DEFINITIONAL PROBLEMS(*)

(6) Paragraphs 0.3. through 0.6. consist mainly of segments from Verschueren (1985). (I want to thank the editors and publisher of the Journal of Linguistics for their permission to use these materials.) They basically take the form of a review of Leech (1983) and Levinson (1983). The reader should be careful not to interpret this strategy of exposition as a negative value judgment on these two books. On the contrary, I have consciously selected two of the best works available as points of reference for the arguments I want to make. Also, in keeping with the warning formulated in the Preface, it is not necessary for the reader to accept my arguments in order to find the outline of a theoretical framework in chapters 1 through 7 acceptable. My criticisms of Leech (1983) and Levinson (1983) embody some of the motivations that led up to the writing of that outline.

Though a drastic reduction of the field of inquiry might be quite welcome for practical -- if not pragmatic -- reasons, and though sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic issues, for instance, are obvious candidates for exclusion (because they are dealt with in rather well-established disciplines), whatever remains within the scope of Anglo-American pragmatics presents us with a serious definitional problem. Levinson's (1983) extremely careful weighing of the pros and cons of various definitions does not lend much further than the vague notion of pragmatics as the study of meaning in context (given substance only by ostensibly defining it as the study of whatever phenomena his book Pragmatics discusses, viz. deixis, implicature, presupposition, speech acts, and conversation).

Though such a definition leads to the acceptability of the claim that semantics deals with truth-conditional aspects of meaning whereas pragmatics is concerned with aspects of meaning that cannot be accounted for in terms of truth conditions, it certainly does not support a boundary between pragmatics and sociolinguistics. As Levinson admits, "drawing a boundary between sociolinguistic and pragmatic phenomena is likely to be an exceedingly difficult enterprise" (p. 29).

Similarly, in order to define the topic of his book Principles of Pragmatics (concerned mainly with speech acts and implicature), Leech (1983) postulates a distinction between the one hand 'general pragmatics', the rather abstract study of "the general conditions of the communicative use of language" (p. 10) (7) with which he is concerned, and on the other hand 'socio-pragmatics' dealing with "specific local conditions on language use" operating "in different cultures or language communities, in different social situations, among different social classes, etc." (p.10) (as they have been studied in sociolinguistics and most types of conversational analysis). And 'pragmalinguistics' which considers "the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions" (p. 11). If this is meant to be a distinction between what

(7) Leech views pragmatics as an updated form of rhetoric (which also appears from some earlier writings such as Leech 1980 and 1981).

"But my approach to pragmatics is by way of the thesis that communication is problem-solving. (...) This conception of communication leads to a rhetorical approach to pragmatics, whereby the speaker is seen as trying to achieve his aims within constraints imposed by principles of 'good communicative behaviour'." (1983: x-xi)

The connection had already been formulated by Morris, with the additional comment that rhetoric is only a restricted form of pragmatics (which, indeed, also Leech's pragmatics is in comparison with Morris'):

"Historically, rhetoric may be regarded as an early and restricted form of pragmatics, ..." (1938: 30)
can and what cannot be assumed to be universal, there can be
no distinction in actual practice since the question of what is and what is not universal is entirely empirical (a claim
that would be supported by Levinson) so that a decent general
pragmatics can only be arrived at via sociopragmatics and
pragmalinguistics.

Equally problematic would be any attempt to introduce a
principled boundary between pragmatics and much of the
research conducted under the label 'psycholinguistics.' Just
consider the study of problems of comprehension to which the
notions of (context-based) inference and (conversational)
implicature are inevitably central.

Neither Leech (1983) nor Levinson (1983), the authors of
the only two genuine textbooks on pragmatics in English, are
successful in delimiting the scope of Anglo-American
pragmatics is a principled way. Given the degree of overlap
among the phenomena dealt with under the various headings
that can be included in a wider conception of pragmatics,
this is hardly surprising. A theoretically and methodologically
important question could be, then, whether it would not be
wise to return to Morris' original definition for a
radical rethink of the relationships between various forms
and domains of investigation, rather than to accept a
division of labor which has come about in a somewhat
arbitrary and accidental way. (8)

Of course, the onus is on

(8) A different way of expressing the same idea is to be
found in Jan-Ola Östman's (1986) dissertation:

"Levinson (1983: 7) seems to imply that sociological,
psychological and cultural aspects cannot be the concern of
pragmatics, since these fields are already covered by
sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics. Against this I
would argue that we need to be able to talk about
psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic phenomena in
language not as epiphenomena that are half linguistic
and half something else, but rather as aspects of
linguistic study per excellence. That is, we need a
larger framework for psychological, sociological and
and cultural aspects of language: and this framework is what
pragmatics should be able to offer us." (p. 16)

Exactly ten years ago, Hartmut Haberland & Jacob Mey (1977)
voiced a similar sentiment in their plea for a pragmatics
incorporating the relation between language and societal
practice:

"The point we're making is that, for example, a
sociolinguistics that does not make reference to people
(individuals, groups, classes) is impossible, whereas a
sociolinguistics that does, 'naturally' belongs inside
linguistic pragmatics." (p. 3)

Though I do not deem it necessary to make the imperialistic
demand for a complete incorporation of all sociolinguistic
studies into pragmatics (see 0.7. and especially 1.5.), I
certainly share the underlying spirit.

anyone who believes that a coherent theory of pragmatics can
be built up within the widened Continental tradition.

There is another, independent, motivation for theory
formation from a different angle (say, the Continental view
of pragmatics). Since all the basic notions of Anglo-American
pragmatics originate in philosophy, one may wonder whether
one of the problems with the existing theories is not simply
that they are all responses to specific problems of a philo-
sophical nature, not as readily applicable to linguistic
theorizing as they might seem at first sight.

In the following paragraphs, before entering the search
for an alternative, the existing views (with Leech's Prin-
ciples of Pragmatics and Levinson's Pragmatics as prime rep-
resentatives) will be given some closer attention.

0.4. THE COMPONENT VIEW OF PRAGMATICS

Both Leech (1983) and Levinson (1983), as most others,
ado to a component view of pragmatics: the view that
pragmatics should be a component of a theory of language on a
par with phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics, whereas
sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics, to use just these two
eamples, would be outside this set of contrasts altogether
(see, e.g., Levinson 1983: 29). Later I will expand on why
one might believe that pragmatics should be treated not
merely as a (functional) perspective on (any aspect of) language—a
definition about which at least Levinson would have serious
hesitations (see p. 7 and pp. 40 ff.). But Leech's discussion
of the contrast between grammar (including semantics) and
pragmatics, provides us with an excellent opportunity to
demonstrate what we perceive as weaknesses in (at least one
version of) the component view.

Leech defines the contrast between grammar and
pragmatics in terms of eight postulates. The first one:

"The semantic representation (or logical form) of an
utterance is distinct from its pragmatic interpret-
ation." (p. 19)

A sound motivation is adduced for this postulate, namely the
absurdity of "attempts to state everything about meaning, if
not about language in general, in terms of speech acts and
speech situations" (p. 20) and of claims to the effect that
the semantic representation of every sentence should contain
a performative verb describing its illocutionary force (i.e.,
the performative hypothesis). It is indeed not desirable to
add elements to the logical form of a sentence in order to
explain aspects of its pragmatic interpretation. However, the
postulate obscures the fact that the logical form of an
utterance itself (as all other structural aspects of
language) can be viewed from a pragmatic perspective (and
thus be the subject of pragmatic investigations) as a choice
adapted to a functional need. The choice between, say, "I am
reasonably satisfied" and "I am not dissatisfied," the
semantic structure of which is clearly different though they
may refer to the same state of mind, will in most cases be
contextually motivated. Instead of claiming that the pragmatic interpretation of these sentences has to be viewed as additional to and distinct from their logical content, it may make more sense to say that the difference in pragmatic interpretability is directly attached to the distinct logical forms in question (though their logical properties can probably be studied separately).

A second postulate runs as follows:

"Semantics is rule-governed (grammatical); general pragmatics is principle-governed (rhetorical)." (p. 21)

The basic intuition underlying this postulate is the same as (i) the one motivating Levinson's defense of an empirical approach to pragmatics where the emphasis should be "on what can actually be found to occur, not on what one would guess would be odd (or acceptable) if it were to do so" (p. 287) since "cases of \ldots impossible discourses are hard if not impossible to find" (p. 292), and (ii) this author's earlier claim that "Pragmatics does not lend itself to the asterisk approach" (Verschueren 1984b: 174). Leech is absolutely right when he criticizes, with reference to this postulate, the way in which 'orthodox' speech act theory formulated rules for speech acts:

"Such rules assume a taxonomic decision: either an utterance counts as a warning, or it does not. \ldots\), they represent an unrealistic and unrepresentative view of what communication by means of language is like. Any account of illocutionary force which defines it in terms of rules like this will present a limited and regimented view of human communication." (p. 23)

Illocutionary meaning is, indeed, much more negotiable than Searle's (1969) treatment (which, by the way, is presented as a semantic theory, and would thus conform to Leech's own view of semantics as opposed to pragmatics) suggests:

"The indeterminacy of conversational utterances also shows itself in the NEGOTIABILITY of pragmatic factors; that is, by leaving force uncertain, a may leave h the opportunity to choose between one force and another, and thus leaves part of the responsibility of the meaning to h." (pp. 23-24)

On this count, however, there is not a profound contrast between illocutionary meaning (the domain of pragmatics) and, say, lexical meaning (which would normally be included within the domain of semantics). In fact, Searle's approach to speech acts is completely parallel to the 'checklist approach' in lexical semantics which Fillmore (1975) has convincingly shown to be wrong. Also the semantic content of lexical items is variable, hence negotiable and therefore susceptible to an approach which takes a pragmatic perspective. It is because of a failure to see this point that Leech can claim, in his introduction to a chapter on English speech act verbs, that

"one substantial difference between talking about speech acts and talking about speech-act verbs is, of course, that the distinctions which are non-categorical or scalar in the former case are categorical in the latter case." (p. 198)

Though there is indeed a substantial difference, I would strongly disagree with Leech's assessment of its nature.\(^{(9)}\)

The third postulate:

"The rules of grammar are fundamentally conventional; the principles of pragmatics are fundamentally non-conventional, i.e. motivated in terms of conversational goals." (p. 24)

In contrast to Searle's claim that it is a matter of convention that expressions under certain conditions count as statements, promises, etc., Leech maintains

"that a promise is recognized as a promise not by means of rules (except in so far as rules are required in determining sense), but by means of a recognition of g's motive; and that Searle's rules apply only to the extent that they specify conditions which will normally follow from that recognition." (p. 24)

But, it could be argued, motives could not really be recognized if there would not be conventions involved at all (in addition to the conventions constituting the logical form of sentences). How else can we explain that a sentence such as "I'll come tomorrow morning," uttered in a culture where the 'institution' of promising is not attributed a prominent role, does not lead to the recognition of the same motive as in mainstream western cultures, though the logical form remains unchanged? Leech does not offer a black-and-white contrast between convention and motivation:

"In so far as grammar is motivated, it is motivated at least in part by pragmatic considerations." (p. 27)

and

"The process whereby pragmatic constraints become conventionalized, in the pragmatically specialized features of grammar, provides an explanation of how, over a long time-scale, grammar itself becomes adapted to pragmatic constraints." (p. 28)

But the interaction is so pervasive that it would be hard to single out a distinct set of pragmatically specialized features of grammar (unless one wants to restrict one's discussion to the most obvious of candidates: the set of delictic contrasts in natural languages). Hence, the contrast

\(^{(9)}\) For a further explanation of my disagreement, see Verschueren (1981a).
between a grammatical component and a pragmatic component of a linguistic theory (each with its own strictly definable domain). On this count, it is hardly motivated, though it seems well-established as a convention among linguists.

Similar remarks could be made with reference to the five remaining postulates all of which are based on sound intuitions, but all of which suffer from a strict adherence to the component view of pragmatics. The component view also involves a hierarchy, ranking levels of linguistic structuring, with pragmatics at the top. Since its immediate neighbor one step down on the scale is semantics, a consequence of this view is that any attempt at defining pragmatics postulates all primarily concerned with establishing its border with semantics. In fact, this is Levinson’s main definitional concern, which he gives a lot of close and careful attention. Though Leech embeds the issue in the more general contrast between grammar and pragmatics, the semantics-pragmatics delimitation problem is also central to his discussion, as will have been clear from the first two postulates, and as appears again from the first part of his fourth postulate:

"General pragmatics relates the sense (or grammatical meaning) of an utterance to its pragmatic force. (...)" (p. 30)

Unhappily, this practice obscures the fact that pragmatics should, in general, be able to relate linguistic features (at any level of linguistic structuring, not just at the semantic level of 'sense') to contextual features. Thus, Leech’s formalization of his second postulate is no less restrictive at the level of pragmatic force (even if it is meant to include, in addition to illocutionary force, implicatures of various kinds) is no doubt too narrow a notion to encompass all aspects it needs to cover in order to accomplish this general task.

0.5. SPLIT OVER UNITY

We have already demonstrated that the restrictions imposed on pragmatics by the Anglo-American tradition did not produce an unproblematic definition of the field, and that the underlying component view of pragmatics (if not in principle, at least in the actual form it takes) may be hardly tenable. But what about the earlier prospects of unity? Rather than to let the many points of contact (mentioned briefly in section 0.2) lead them to a harmonious approach, pragmatists have indulged in various kinds of fraticide (the unqualified rejection of rival theories) and cannibalism (the incorporation of some potentially useful notions into overextended versions of others)—two divergent but by no means disjunctive ways of trying to achieve unity.

For both Leech (1983) and Levinson (1983), the orthodox version of speech act theory is their whipping boy, though their approaches differ. One of Levinson’s main tenets is that speech act theory has little to offer for our understanding of how language is actually used in conversational interaction. The essence of his criticism is a rejection of the literal force hypothesis (LFH), “the view that illocutionary force is built into sentence form” (p. 263), which underlies the notion of indirect speech acts. He maintains that

"a mere approximate correlation of the three basic sentence-types with their traditional corresponding forces (questions, orders and statements) is not sufficient evidence for LFH"

because

"Such a correlation can be accounted for, in so far as it has a firm basis, by assigning truth-conditional meanings to each sentence-type in such a way that rational users would find them generally useful for the associated purpose." (p. 276)

And since

"the functions that utterances perform are in large part due to the place they occupy within specific conversational (or interactional) sequences"

one can see why

"speech act theory is being currently undermined from the outside by the growth of disciplines concerned with the empirical study of natural language use." (p. 279)

In other words, conversational analysis can completely replace speech act theory.

At least two aspects of this analysis are troublesome to me. First of all, though the existence of a distinction between literal force and indirect force is rejected, a quite similar contrast is the subject of some detailed discussion in the chapter on conversational analysis. Consider the following paragraph on pre-requests (such as "Is there any more?") and requests (such as "Please give me some more"):

"In the case of requests it seems clear that one prime motivation for employing pre-requests is provided by the preference ranking which organizes responses to requests themselves. Request refusals are dispreferred: therefore, by the accompanying rule for production, to be avoided if possible. One major reason for utilizing a pre-request is, then, that it allows the producer to check out whether a request is likely to succeed, and if not to avoid one in order to avoid its subsequent dispreferred response, namely a rejection. Given which, in cases of doubt, pre-requests are to be preferred to requests." (p. 357)

Though this is a powerful line of explanation for the occurrence of what are traditionally called indirect speech acts, this does not yet show that no indirectness (in the
sense of a movement away from a more direct or literal usage) may be involved. One wonders why it would not be possible to preserve the distinction and to talk about it in terms of degrees of (pragmatic) markedness, so that structurally simpler utterances (e.g., the three major sentence types used with their traditionally associated forces) could be said to be least marked (if rarely completely unmarked) whereas higher degrees of structural complexity (measurable, for instance, in terms of processing time) would correspond to higher degrees of pragmatic markedness. Levinson needs this very notion of markedness anyway in his explanation of preference organization (p. 307), the key concept on which the above explanation hinges.

A second problem is that an unqualified rejection of speech act theory, however justified it might be from Levinson’s point of view (i.e. as a description of actual language use), necessarily results in the loss of some potentially useful insights. It is this author’s opinion, for instance, that the substance of traditional speech act analyses can largely be saved if they can be reinterpreted as a reasonably adequate first approximation of the prototypical core of the meaning of speech act verbs in English. Such an admittedly rather destructive—rescue operation requires a rejection of Searle’s aims (the description of universally valid categories of verbal action) as well as his methodology (the formulation of necessary and sufficient conditions).\(^{(10)}\) Such a reinterpretation may ultimately be useful to conversational analysis itself. Though a segmental view, positing labeled unit acts as the basic building blocks of verbal interaction, should never be returned to, conversational analysts will, in the long run, also have to come to terms with the meaning of natural language metapragmatic notions such as ‘request,’ ‘invitation,’ ‘greeting’ (as well as many other non-illocutionary linguistic action notions such as ‘answer,’ ‘whisper,’ or the key notion ‘conversation’ itself) which are constantly used in their analyses. The use of such terms cannot be avoided. Thus, in order not to make Searle’s error (which consists in the illusion that he would be able to completely detach his analyses from the English words he needs to identify that which he wants to analyze) all over again, they require careful scrutiny, not in spite of, but because of the fact that

”It does not follow from the existence of such terms that there is a close connection between folk metalanguage and the categories actually utilized in speech production.” (p. 368)

It is the non-obvious nature of the connection—and a connection there must be unless one holds the rather pessimistic view that whatever humans say has no bearing on what they talk about—which necessitates its careful analysis. Indeed, as Leech puts it,

“it is to commit a fundamental and obvious error to assume that the distinctions made by our vocabulary necessarily exist in reality.” (p. 177)

But it would be an equally grave error to ignore the fact that the reality pragmaticians are dealing with is social reality, that interpreted reality cannot be understood without understanding the interpretations held by the interpreters involved, that (though language cannot be said ‘views’ are at least partly reflected by the language. Thus it seems that linguistic relativism, if it is still outlawed, will have to be reinstated (probably at a higher level of sophistication) by pragmaticians.

There is another, independent, reason for not neglecting natural language metalanguage. Neither Leech nor Levinson hardly deals with the problem at all (see, though, pp. 234-235). Leech’s mistake is not to approach the meaning of used, within an interactional context, to talk about verbal the interaction itself. This double layering (only hinted at once, at the explanation of why certain verbs can be used performatively logiological possibility and pragmatic permissibility of Leech to avoid defining explicit performative utterances as descriptive and performative at the same time. Whereas Levinson’s criticisms are meant to lead to an elimination of speech act theory (the fraticide approach), everything that he considers interesting about speech acts he introduces a twofold extension of the notion. First, he calls speech act rules (as formulated by Searle) implicatures:

”I wish to argue that Searle’s speech act rules, with one category of exception, can all be replaced by implicatures. The exception is the propositional content rule, which in my account corresponds to a statement of conventionalization; all other ‘rules,’ in my account, are non-heuristic strategy from the sense and from general principles.” (p. 44)

(10) For more details on this paradox of speech act theory, see Verschueren (1983b).

(11) For a full-length discussion of this string of assumptions, see the first chapter of Verschueren (1995a).
This extension seems to confuse application with derivation. Though the sincerity condition "S believes that p" is clearly a statement-specific application of Grice's (1975) maxim of Quality "Do not say what you believe to be false" (which may make its separate statement as a rule superfluous for a theory of pragmatics; pp. 171-172), it can hardly be said to be historically derived from it.

The same confusion underlies a second overextension: also utterance-specific applications of the maxims are called implicatures. Thus, if A asks "When is Aunt Rose's birthday?" and B replies "It's sometime in April," Leech would claim that "B believes that Aunt Rose's birthday is in April" is an implicature arrived at via the maxim of Quality, just as "B is not aware of which day in April is Aunt Rose's birthday" is an implicature derived via the maxims of Quantity and Quality. In my terminology, the former would be an application, and only the latter a derivation. Eliminating this distinction destroys the intuition which originally motivated Grice's introduction of the new term: that in some (or maybe most) cases people mean more than they actually say, and that this additional meaning can be calculated from a number of principles which are supposed to remain unchanged in most instances of linguistic (and maybe even non-linguistic) interaction.

A logical consequence of Leech's position is the elimination (as in Levinson's view) of the distinction between direct and indirect speech acts:

"All illocutions are 'indirect' in that their force is derived by implicature. There is, however, a great deal of variation in their degree of indirectness." (p. 33)

This variation, however, is not accounted for systematically. The extension of the notion 'implicature' is itself said to be a consequence of the thesis that sense and force are two distinct kinds of meaning" (p. 33). Though it is quite acceptable to reinterpret Searle's speech act theory in terms of Grice's conversational logic (with cooperation as its key notion), it is hard to see why Leech's overgeneralization of 'implicature' would be a necessary consequence of his attempt to maintain a strict separation between (semantic) sense and (pragmatic) force—an attempt which is itself guided by a strict adherence to the component view of pragmatics which we discussed above. Why should pragmatic force be a monolith to be explained in terms of a single concept? In his attempt to do so, Leech also extends the notion 'implicature' into the domain of presuppositions. About sentences (1) to (3)

(1) Is she BADLY hurt?
(2) Is she badly hurt?
(3) Is she badly hurt?

he says:

"In (1), for instance, s implicates that s is already aware of the fact that she is hurt. In (2), s implicates that s is already aware that someone is badly hurt. In (3), s implicates that s is aware that someone has claimed or believed her to be badly hurt." (p. 70; numbers adapted)

Clearly, no derivation via the cooperative principle and its maxims is necessary to arrive at these implicit meanings stress and which are even likely to be overtly present in the preceding context. Does Leech's approach, then, not simply lead to the loss of useful distinctions rather than to a unitary description of divergent phenomena?

0.6. GRAMMATISM IN PRAGMATICS

In spite of Leech's introduction of an opposition between grammar and pragmatics, the component view of Anglo-American pragmatics seems to involve, both for Leech (1983) and for Levinson (1983), an attempt to keep pragmatics as 'grammatical' as possible. Thus 'uncontrollable' aspects of linguistic interaction are branded as irrelevant for a theory of pragmatics. Levinson, while including ironic, metaphoric and indirect implications of what is said, wants to

"exclude the unintended inferences that intuitively have no part to play in a theory of communication." (p. 18)

Similarly, Leech claims that

"perlocutionary effects do not form part of the study of pragmatics, since pragmatic force has to do with goals rather than with results." (p. 203)

Though the motivation for this position is easy enough to understand, it seems hard to justify for someone who is primarily interested in the empirical study of conversational processes. Unintended inferences and effects (even those which Leech's remark is primarily meant to exclude) have to be dealt with constantly in conversational interaction. Thus, an account of this dynamic adaptability is intuitively central to any theory of communication. It also seems hard to justify that a theory of pragmatics in which, for instance, a pragmatic notion of truth (remember the maxim of Quality) has a vital role to play would not allow for a falsity (which are clearly perlocutionary matters, if one understands this terminology) which is arrived at by being attempted, seems necessary rather than objectionable if we ever want to understand how people communicate.

This general attitude underlying Principles of Pragmatics and American pragmatics, as prime examples of the Anglo-American tradition in pragmatics, leads to a number of problems, some of which I want to enumerate here by way of illustration.

First, why is it that in a use theory of language—which is essentially what pragmatics should be—Levinson devotes so
much attention to the careful analysis of the phenomenon of presupposition without really going into the many ways in which presuppositions can be (strategically) used in actual interaction? No attempt is made to remedy this weakness (which, to my knowledge, characterizes most work on presupposition), in spite of the fact that Levinson realizes

"that there is a fundamental way in which a full account of the communicative power of language can never be reduced to a set of conventions for the use of language" because

"wherever some convention or expectation about the use of language arises, there will also therewith arise the possibility of the non-conventional exploitation of that convention or expectation." (p. 112)

This infinite adaptability is the quintessence of what pragmatics should be about.

Second, in his discussion of politeness, Leech shows that he is aware

"that people typically use 'polite' in a relative sense: that is, relative to some norm of behavior which, for a particular setting, they regard as typical." (p. 84)

Yet,

"General pragmatics may reasonably confine its attention to politeness in the absolute sense" because

"Relative politeness is therefore variable on many dimensions, according to the standard or set of standards under scrutiny." (p. 84)

Thus variability is expelled from the realm of genuine pragmatic theorizing. But variation in language usage is the product of communicative adaptability and, therefore, it should be central to the concerns of pragmatics.

Third, as a result of discarding variability as a factor to be reckoned with, some absolute claims are made which should in fact be recognized as culture-dependent. Close attention to the kinds of data provided by, for instance, Keith Basso (1972), could have destroyed some of the confidence with which Leech introduces

"an additional maxim of politeness, the metalinguistic 'Phatic Maxim' which may be provisionally formulated either in its negative form 'Avoid silence' or in its positive form 'Keep talking'" (p. 141).

However justified it may be for Anglo-American culture.

Similarly, close attention to actual effects on hearers would have urged Leech to modify the claim that

"the point of the strategy of indirectness, here, is to bias the impositive more and more towards the negative choice, so that it becomes progressively easier for it to say no." (p. 109)

The surface function of indirectness may indeed be to make an impositive less overtly compulsory, but the intended and actual effect is often to make it harder to say no.

0.7. AN ALTERNATIVE: THE PERSPECTIVE VIEW OF PRAGMATICS

Though all criticism in the previous paragraphs was directed at the Anglo-American tradition in pragmatics, this does not mean that the Continental tradition has a better record. A component view of pragmatics, with much the same characteristics as those pointed out with reference to Leech (1983) and Levinson (1983), also underlies Morris' original definition (11) as well as most of the Continental tradition which is more or less faithful to it. Not only is it hard to defend in itself (as was amply illustrated in the discussion of Leech's formulation), but it has also failed to produce any sort of unity. Whereas the Anglo-American tradition failed to remedy vagueness of delimitation in spite of its restriction of scope, the Continental tradition has not even made a show of guiding the diversification resulting from the vagueness of delimitation and wideness of scope which characterized Morris' vision (see 0.1). Some halfhearted attempts were made to construct a coherent theory of pragmatics or a framework for the empirical study of pragmatic aspects of language. But most were guided by the intention to undermine rival views rather than to incorporate them into an improved vision. Moreover, most of the existing versions of the component view (not only within the Anglo-American tradition which we have given some closer attention) show a distinct lack of boldness when it comes to deciding what phenomena should or should not be handled by a theory of pragmatics.

(12) Though Morris also speaks of dimensions of semiosis, his view is basically componential:

"Syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics are components of the single science of semiotic but mutually irreducible components." (1938: 54)

Also the hierarchical ordering of these components he seems to agree on:

"In a systematic presentation of semiotic, pragmatics presupposes both syntactics and semantics, as the latter in turn presupposes the former, for to discuss adequately the relation of signs to their interpreters requires knowledge of the relation of signs to one another and to those things to which they refer their interpreters." (1938: 33)
But what could be the alternative?

Fragments of a response to this question are implicit in the preceding discussion. It was suggested that pragmatics should be able to cope with negotiability, variability, and adaptability in language. Also, it was claimed that pragmatics should be able to relate linguistic features (at any level of linguistic structuring, not just at the semantic level of 'sense') to contextual phenomena. In other words (also used before), pragmatics should be defined as a (functional) perspective on (any aspect of) language. It was also said that pragmatics could be conceived as the study of the mechanisms and motivations behind any of the choices made when using language (at the level of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, whether they are variety-internal options or whether they involve regionally, socially, or functionally distributed types of variation) and of the effects they have or are intended to have.

But how can a theory of pragmatics possibly perform all these duties?

The key is probably a radical departure from the established component view which tries to assign to pragmatics its own set of linguistic features in contradistinction with phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. If pragmatics does not belong to the contrast set of these 'horizontal' components of the study of language, neither does it belong to the contrast set of 'vertical' components such as psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, etc. (each of which studies processes or phenomena which can be situated at various levels of linguistic structuring which are the proper domain of different horizontal components, and each of which typically relates such processes or phenomena to a segment of extra-linguistic reality). (See Figure 1.)

Pragmatics should be defined, rather, as a perspective on whatever phonologists, morphologists, syntacticians, semanticists, psycholinguists, sociolinguists, etc. deal with. Insofar as phonologists, morphologists, etc. adopt this perspective themselves, they are doing pragmatics. Many types of research associated with the vertical components are de facto related to or belong to the pragmatic perspective, but not all—which is why the disciplines need to be mentioned separately.

It is not the intention to preclude the possibility of viewing the horizontal and vertical components as perspectives as well, nor to ban 'component' as a term applicable to pragmatics. Mainly a number of corollaries ofBell's (1977) work was found to make it objectionable. Yet the component view were found to make it objectionable. Yet there is at least one essential difference between pragmatics and what we have called the horizontal and vertical components of linguistics. In contrast with phonology, with morphemes, syntax basic units of analysis, morphology with morphemes, syntax with sentences, and semantics with propositions, pragmatics of horizontal components would be clearcut and without areas of overlap. And in contrast with the vertical components which overlap specific segments of extra-linguistic reality as have specific segments of extra-linguistic reality as correlational objects (neurophysiological mechanisms for psycholinguistics, mental processes for psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and culture for anthropological linguistics--a categorization which is not meant to imply any judgments as to the interaction or lack of interaction between these) no such segments can be assigned to pragmatics.

If we are satisfied that pragmatics is a perspective on language rather than a component of linguistic theory with its own clearly definable object of investigation, we are still stuck, of course, with the problem of how to define this perspective. Before entering that problem, however, we should point out that the perspective view of pragmatics is not being voiced here for the first time. In their editorial introduction to the first issue of the Journal of Pragmatics, Hartmut Haberland & Jacob Ney say:
"Linguistic pragmatics, \ldots, can be said to characterize a new way of looking at things linguistic, rather than marking off clean borderlines to other disciplines." (1977: 5)

Even earlier, at a time when respect for pragmatics among theoretical linguists had only just started to spread, Ann Weisgerber (1976) concluded her seminal paper on the problems of the 'performatory theory' (treating every utterance as a single, classifiable act) as follows:

"Syntax, semantics, and pragmatics are a famous triad. It is perhaps natural to assume that the same relation holds between semantics and pragmatics as between syntax and semantics, but it \{i.e. this assumption\} is unwarranted. Our current view of syntax and semantics is that they are related as parts of a continuum, separated by either a fuzzy boundary or a nonexistent one. We have no justification for placing pragmatics on this continuum, or for assuming that a formal theoretical structure developed to handle language abstracted from performance can be adopted for the study of the communicative interaction of people in real-world situations. It has been shown more than once recently \ldots\ that pragmatic considerations have effects on syntactic transformations, but this does not mean they have to be written into syntactic trees. This is very important for us to realize. As theoretical linguists embarking on the study of pragmatics we are not just slightly widening our area of investigation, but we are taking an entirely different point of view on language.

We must take care that we do not burden ourselves with theoretical constructs that are not appropriate to the new endeavor, or we will miss the opportunity to gain the fresh and revealing insights into language and human beings that pragmatics so temptingly offers." (p. 729; emphasis added)

It is unfortunate for pragmatics that her warning was not always kept in mind.

0.8. AN IMPERTINENT QUESTION

It was Jacob Bronowski who claimed "That is the essence of science: ask an impertinent question, and you are on the way to the pertinent answer." (1973: 153) No doubt a great deal of impertinence will be required to find the right angle from which a pragmatic perspective can be defined in such a way as to enable pragmatists to stand up to the battery of demands they inevitably have to face.

What, then, is the most profoundly pragmatic question we can ask about language?

One impertinent question which might lead us in the direction of a coherent theory of pragmatics is the follow-

ing: What, and how, does language contribute to human survival (on the level of the human race, smaller and larger communities, individuals, day-to-day situations)? The remainder of this text is a first tentative approximation to a possibly tolerable response in which adaptation figures as a key notion.

Elsewhere (see Verschueren 1981b) this author has drawn the attention to a typically expansionistic mentality characterizing linguistic explanation procedures: if the scale phonology-morphology-syntax-semantics-pragmatics is regarded—\{as it usually is\}—as a hierarchy of levels of linguistic description, there is a clear tendency for explanations of phenomena situated at a particular level to include evidence from another level of description, this 'other level of description' being invariably higher up on the scale (of 'horizontal' components) or completely outside this scale on a higher level of generality (to be located, in our present terminology, with reference to one or more of the 'vertical' components of a theory of language). A problem with this practice is that pragmatics is not only to be regarded as the universal benefactor which offers linguists a way out whenever they get stuck, but that there are also purely pragmatic notions (the most central one being, maybe, the concept 'linguistic (inter)action' which themselves require clarification and explanation. If linguistics were to be kept purely 'linguistic' as possible, and if the only admissible direction of explanation is upwards, then one should conclude that pragmatics is of the highest level of the hierarchy—indeed, the highest level of the hierarchy—of the linguistic description.

The point of the present text is to demonstrate that, in addition to the empirical-conceptual way out of the pragmatic deadlock provided by metapragmatics ('empirical' because the object of investigation—metapragmatics—consisting of forms of investigation conducted at a lower level of the hierarchy—of the linguistic—of the linguistic description. In addition to other possible empirical routes of escape, there is also a theoretical way out. Any decent answer to the above impertinent question would take pragmatics far beyond the limits of 'linguistics proper.' It would definitively break through the internal contradiction characterizing structuralism (which is to recognize that language is a system or network of functionally related elements within which each element derives its essence from its function) and relations with other elements, without recognizing that linguistics should also be able to apply this principle to language as a phenomenon functionally related with other aspects of reality). It would literally 'open up' linguistics to the world. It would make linguistics into an extension of the biological sciences in a much more real sense and in a much more daring way than anyone has ever attempted thus far.

By comparison, whereas Chomskyan linguistics—\{to take
just one example—would be restricted to biological morphology (dealing with the 'structure' of plants and animals, analyzing them in terms of cells, tissues and organs) and taxonomy (dealing with the classification of all living things, grouping organisms according to observed or hypothetical relationships), pragmatics would get the full burden of physiology (the study of the functions, tissues, organs), embryology (concerned with stages of formation and development), genetics (the study of inheritance and variation and the mechanisms by which these operate) evolution (the study of the possible origins of living things, of how they have changed, and of the ways in which these changes have occurred), and ecology (the study of the relationships of plants and animals to each other and to their environment)."
impossible to talk in Chomskyan terms about the use of language for expressive and communicative purposes (which is probably why Chomsky, sensing the need for a defense on this point, claims so vigorously, in his otherwise well-taken argument against viewing language solely as an instrument for communication, that either we must deprive the notion 'communication' of all significance, or else we must reject the view that the purpose of language is communication' (1980: 230)): in the areas of expression and especially communication, the most interesting aspect of language is not the kind of universality Chomsky aims at, but its adaptability.

In the sense described, universality and adaptability are incompatible opposites. Yet the notion of 'pragmatic universals' or 'universals of linguistic (inter)action' is not self-contradictory. Humans have the ability to learn other languages than their own and to start functioning more or less efficiently in communicative styles different from their habitual one. Hence there must be a universal core. However, there are at least two different views of universality.

First, an assumption of maximal universality can be made. According to this view, the researcher's own experience can be treated as maximally representative of the corresponding universal experience. This attitude does not only characterize Chomskyan linguistics (which, until recently, ignored the relevance of looking at a wide range of languages to discover the principles of the universal grammar to be described) but also, for instance, Searle's version of speech act theory (which is intended to provide, on the basis of the philosopher's own introspection, universally acceptable categories of speech acts—see also O.5.). The dangers of such an approach should be obvious. Though the learning of other languages and communicative styles can only be explained with reference to the existence of a universal core of grammatical and pragmatic competence, the point of learning is always to get mastery of the differences. (15)

Therefore, the second view, the assumption of minimal universality is a much safer starting point to approach a new language or culture. When talking about 'universals of adaptability' (or 'pragmatic universals' or 'universals of linguistic (inter)action') this assumption is necessary. This is the basic reason for distrust in theories of pragmatics, though the paradox of empirical research (see 0.0.) renders the construct of this or a similar theory indispensable as a descriptive and heuristic tool (needed even for metapragmatics, for the sake of the comparability of research results, if not for more profound reasons as well).

1.2. WHAT IS LINGUISTIC ADAPTATION?

The term 'adaptation' may be encumbered with behaviorist connotations, suggesting a stimulus-response mechanism; anything 'in the world' can act as a stimulus to produce a linguistic response. This association of unidirectionality potentially attached to the expression 'adaptability of language' should be dismissed explicitly.

Adaptation, as observed by biologists, is a unidirectional process. Though goal-directed, it is not teleological in the sense of being goal-initiated and goal-determined, since "natural selection is strictly a posteriori process that regards current success but never sets up future goals" (Ernst Mayr 1974: 17-38). The ultimate function of adaptation always transcends its initial purpose. Every form of adaptation creates new possibilities. It could be claimed, for instance, that division of labor, as known amongst humans, would not have been possible without language; yet division of labor was probably not the initial 'goal' of the development of language in humans. Similar examples could be given with reference to most biological phenomena of adaptation, which is why Darwin often used the term coadaptation, and repeatedly focused on the multidirectionality of adaptation processes in the natural world;

"(...) how the innumerable species inhabiting this world have been modified, so as to acquire that perfection of structure and coadaptation which justifies our admiration. Naturals continually refer to external conditions, such as climate, food, etc., as the possible source of variation. In one limited sense, as we shall hereafter see, this may be true; but it is preposterous to attribute to mere external conditions, the structure, for instance, of the woodpecker, with its feet, tail, beak, and tongue, so admirably adapted to catch insects under the bark of trees. In the case of this insect-eater, which draws its nourishment from certain trees, which has seeds that must be transported by certain birds, and which has flowers with separate sexes absolutely requiring the agency of certain insects to bring pollen from one flower to the other, it is equally preposterous to account for the structure of this parasite, with its relations to several distinct organic beings, by the effects of external conditions, or of habit, or of the volition of the plant itself." (1958: 28)

Darwin further asks:

"How have all those exquisite adaptations of one part of the organisation to another part, and to the conditions of life, and of one organic being to another being, been perfected?" (1958: 73)

Add to this question, which certainly forestalls restrictive interpretations of the directionality of adaptation. (4) Lewontin's (1982) arguments against the metaphor of tria-
and-error adaptation implying "that the world is divided up into pre-existing ecological niches and that evolution consists of the progressive fitting of organisms into these niches" (p. 159), (ii) his claim that "There is a constant interplay of the organism and the environment, so that although natural selection may be adapting the organism to a particular set of environmental circumstances, the evolution of the organism itself changes those circumstances." (1978: 159)

and (iii) Waddington's (1959) and Bateson's (1980) belief that causality in biology is circular rather than linear. It should be clear, then, that when applied to language, the notion of 'adaptation' would become void if interpreted behavioristically.

If linguistic adaptation goes from language to circumstances (using 'circumstances' pretheoretically as a cover term for whatever language is interadaptable with), or from circumstances to language, or both, it should be possible to illustrate all of these possibilities. First, clear (and even rather extreme) cases of how language gets adapted to the circumstances, are abundant. A single anecdote should be sufficient to demonstrate this. I remember going to a concert in Budapest with my wife. We came in almost late—nobody was talking anymore—and sat down next to a middle-aged couple. During the interval, I began to talk, in Dutch. The woman, who was sitting next to me, turned to me and said, gesticulating, "Pause...pause" and then, pointing with her hand. "How long?" Assuming that she was Hungarian, that she had correctly diagnosed us as foreigners, and that her command of English was not too perfect, I replied, in the same style "Ten minutes," repeating "Ten" while holding both hands up, fingers stretched. She seemed satisfied, turned to her husband, and started talking to him in English, with an unmistakably native Texas twang. Thus she had obviously assumed us to be speakers of this unintelligible language. Hungarian, and having been frustrated by earlier attempts to make herself understood in idiomatic English, she had opted for expressions of a somewhat simpler nature. This anecdote, as so many others, shows that--given the right circumstances—probably well-educated people are even prepared to completely mutilate their own language. Clearly, this is adaptation of some sort. The process of how reality is shaped here, or gets adapted to language tend to be grotesque. The oldest example (followed by most people at war until today) is provided by the Old Testament when thousands of Ephraimites, because they misrepresented the word 'shibboleth,' are recognized and killed by Jephthah's warriors. More peaceful members of the same directional category of adaptive events are the traditional declarations of orthodox speech act theory: institutional speech acts (such as 'baptizing,' 'pronouncing a verdict,' etc.) which create a state of affairs in accordance with an expressed propositional content.

Most adaptive events, however, are much more subtle, showing adaptation from language to circumstances and from circumstances to language at the same time. Consider, for example, systems of politeness which are shaped by and shape social relationships. The choice of a system of solidarity politeness (tu, first name, etc.) as opposed to a system of deference politeness (vous, family name, title, etc.) is typically based on closeness between the interlocutors. But when this closeness is absent (as is often the case when solidarity politeness is used by speakers of American English, for instance), it gets created to such an extent that it is impossible to repress it without overt hostility: after opening a conversation on a first-name basis, a switch to more formal forms of address can only be made to show some sort of antagonism, and this would generally be regarded as very impolite indeed (in spite of the higher degree of politeness which is usually associated with the linguistic choices involved). This is why Scollon & Scollon (1981) recommend deference politeness as the best initial approach in interethnic communication, because it fully recognizes the existing differences between the interlocutors and the resulting potential for difficulties.

Examples such as these really make it clear that linguistic adaptation is not a one-way process: by choosing a 'mode of communication,' speech gets consciously adapted to certain beliefs and goals in this case, but the adaptation itself entails various kinds of beliefs and goals which then further determine the course of interaction. The dynamics of verbal interaction cannot be grasped fully unless we talk about it in these, or similar, terms.

Yet our initial question about the contribution of language to human survival had much wider implications. In the following section I will introduce a few distinctions necessary to clarify the range of phenomena within the scope of an adaptation theory of pragmatics.

1.3. MACRO- vs. MICROPROCESSES OF ADAPTATION

What has usually been included in the domain of pragmatics (especially within the Anglo-American tradition) are all microprocesses of linguistic adaptation. They are the processes of adaptation which take place in the day-to-day context of communication between individuals or small groups of individuals.

It is often useful to distinguish acquired microprocesses (as they commonly occur in adult speech) from developmental ones. Developmental microprocesses of adaptation are those typically occurring in the course of language acquisition (which is a lifelong process of effort on the part of the child to successfully adapt to adult speech, aided (or hampered) sometimes—at least in certain cultures—by the adults' sporadic attempts at reverse adaptation in the form of 'baby talk').

All adaptation processes which essentially transcend (though they are of course reflected in) the day-to-day
context of communication between individuals or small groups of individuals, are macroprocesses of adaptation.

Under the heading of synchronic macroprocesses one can discuss, for example, diglossia, societal bilingualism, interethic communication, etc., which are traditionally topics for sociolinguistics. Diachronic macroprocesses are involved in pidginization, creolization, language shift, language death, etc. It is essentially the study of all these macroprocesses that enables pragmatics to cope with linguistic variability, in keeping with Dell Hymes' (1974) adage that "in the study of language as a mode of action, variation is a clue and a key" (p. 75).

1.4. 'ADAPTATIONIST' VIEWS AND CONCEPTS

Though arrived at independently through a consideration of the need for unifying the fragmentary, but intuitively illuminating and practically useful, field of pragmatics, our notion of 'linguistic adaptation' does not appear in a vacuum. Rather, one could see it as an instance of what Philippe Van Parijs (1981) calls an 'emerging paradigm' in the social sciences. There are at least five ways in which it can be linked up with existing traditions (see 1.4.1. through 1.4.5.)--though one should be careful not to extrapolate adherence to all the implications of those traditions from the mere existence of a relationship.

(16) Our view of pragmatics does not include every form of sociolinguistic or psycholinguistic research. In that respect, Morris' pragmatics is wider in scope. Consider, however, the following quote:

"It will be convenient to have special terms to designate certain of the relations of signs to signs, to objects, and to interpreters. 'Implicates' will be restricted to Dpa, 'designates' and 'denotes' to Dpa, and 'expresses' to Dpa. The word 'implicates' (but does not designate) 'furniture with a horizontal top on which things may be placed,' designates a certain kind of object (furniture with a horizontal top on which things may be placed), denotes the objects to which it is applicable, and expresses its interpreter. In any given case certain of the dimensions may actually or practically vanish: (...) or it is a sign may have implication and yet no actual interpreter and so no expression—as in the case of a word in a dead language." (1938: 7)

It is very unclear what 'expresses its interpreter' means; but Morris seems to suggest that dead languages have no pragmatics whatsoever. Not only does he thus disregard the role of authors and readers, but he also misses the point that language death is itself a fundamentally pragmatic process.

1.4.1. Evolutionary epistemology

Evolutionary epistemology (see, e.g., D.T. Campbell 1974; also discussed, with reference to language, by Geoffrey Leech 1983--see fn. 13) basically extends biological theory, and in particular its natural selection and trial-and-error paradigm, to all aspects of behavior and socio-culture, including language, learning, and science. Organisms are viewed as engaged in continuous problem-solving, adaptations as the product of 'epistemic' processes, and evolution in general as a growth of knowledge. The belief is expressed that

"seeing living systems as knowledge systems is one way of laying the foundations for what in the end will be a truly unified theory of evolution." (H.C. Plotkin 1982: 12)

There is no need to adhere to a strictly Popperian model of language learning in the child or of language development in the species, nor to Popper's critical hypothetical realism in the philosophy of science, to accept the plausibility of the view that human language (an intrinsic property of the human species) and verbal interaction (a behavior type which humans have become more and more dependent on) can, and maybe should, be seen—as at least partly—in biological terms.

One caveat that we should keep in mind is Lewontin's (1982) objection against the trial-and-error view of evolution, which tends to treat the 'environment' as something 'out there,' overlooking the organism's reconstruction of the environment. Another one is captured in Philippe Van Parijs' introduction of a distinction between natural selection mechanisms in evolution (selecting features through the selection of the entities which they characterize) and reinforcement mechanisms (selecting features directly). Van Parijs argues, explicitly in connection with the way in which languages are shaped, that the latter "provide a much more promising basis for the legitimacy of functional explanations." (p. 216)

To the extent that evolutionary epistemology is concerned with learning, it is reflected in Jean Piaget's psychological theories in which adaptation is a central notion (see, e.g., Piaget 1971), and in Vygotsky's (1978) views of mental development which allow him to talk about 'those means of adaptation we call signs.' Piaget's way of coping with the multidirectionality of adaptation is to define it as an equilibrium between assimilation (the integration of a new element into an organism's activity) and accommodation (the organism being modified as a result of
the assimilation).

1.4.2. The origin and evolution of language

Even when disconnected from the more general attempt to extend biological theory to aspects of behavior and culture, embodied in evolutionary epistemology, theories of the origin and evolution of language show a strong tendency to refer to phenomena of adaptation.

As far back as 1875, William Dwight Whitney implicitly ascribed the origin and growth of language to an adaptive process by treating it as a gradually developing response to the human need for communication (though he would not have admitted to a continuity between *Naturwissenschaften* and *Geisteswissenschaften*, and though he firmly placed linguistics in the latter category). Similarly, though strongly emphasizing that language is a cultural, rather than a biologically inherited function, and that

"Speech is not a simple activity that is carried on by one or more organs biologically adapted to the purpose." (p. 9)

(in the sense that they would have been especially developed for language), Edward Sapir (1921) claimed that

"It (*speech*) is an extremely complex and ever-shifting network of *adjustments*--in the brain, in the nervous system, and in the articulating and auditory organs--tending towards the desired end of communication." (p. 9; emphasis added)

Reference to evolutionary adaptation of a biological kind, implying an extension of biology beyond the realm of 'nature' proper (and therefore not in contradiction with the earlier views as such), has become more explicit since. Thus, while recognizing the huge qualitative leap from 'zoosemiotic' to human speech, Roman Jakobson (1970) argues that there is an evolutionary continuity and that, as far as human language is concerned, there cannot be a strict dichotomy between nature and culture. And the connection could not have been expressed more clearly than in the following remark by Philip Lieberman:

"Human language could have evolved only in relation to the total human condition. There would have been no selective advantage for retention of the mutations that gradually resulted in the evolution of human language if language had not been of use in what Darwin in 1859 termed the 'struggle for existence.'" (1975: 1)

Most recently, restricting myself to just three authors, Derek Bickerton (1981) denied that there would be a direct continuity (in terms of levels of complexity) between mammalian call systems and language:

"A call and a sentence may both constitute communication, but in the ways in which they work they are more at odds than chalk and cheese; for some chalks and some cheeses at least have the same color and texture, whereas language and call systems do not even have this superficial resemblance." (p. 220)

Yet he described the origin of language as the adaptive development (subject to a Paradox of Continuity) of a bioprogram for language in the human species, explaining at the same time the creation of creoles as well as the child's acquisition of language.

1.4.3. Language acquisition

Under the label of 'ethology,' various students of child language (including Becker 1984, Foppa 1979, and Mahoney 1975) have approached (pragmatic aspects of) language acquisition from a biological perspective. Says Becker (1984):

"Ethology has important and interesting implications for the ways in which we study pragmatic development and for the conclusions we draw about pragmatic behaviors." (p. 2)

In other words, language acquisition can be--and has been--described as a chain of adaptational steps resulting in adult speech.

Further, also in connection with language acquisition, the phenomenon of 'baby talk' has been viewed as the adult's adaptation (whether momentary or systematic) to the level of the child.

(18) Bickerton describes the Paradox of Continuity as follows:

"On the one hand, all the species-specific adaptive developments that we know of have come about through regular evolutionary processes, and language, remarkable though it may be, is only one such development; therefore, language must have evolved out of prior mammalian communication systems. On the other hand, if one has anything like a complete understanding of what language is and does, one realizes that there is not simply a quantitative, but a qualitative and indeed unbridgeable, gulf between the abstractions and complexities of language and the most abstract and complex of known mammalian systems (which, indeed, seem pretty direct and simple); therefore, language cannot have evolved out of prior mammalian communication systems. Thus there must have been evolutionary continuity in the development of language, yet there cannot have been evolutionary continuity in the development of language." (1981: 216-217)
1.4.4. 'Local' adaptationist explanations

Adaptationist descriptions and explanations have been offered for a diversity of more restricted linguistic phenomena. Thus the speech act type of requesting has been viewed in relation to its functioning in social groups, drawing attention to its adaptedness to ways of resolving the conflict between natural competitiveness and the need for cooperation (e.g. Becker 1984). Natural selection has been adduced (by Pavley & Syder 1983) to explain the differences between certain syntactic and morphological usages in conversational and formal written English. Ideophones have been described (by W.J. Samarin 1978) as adaptations to the expressive function of speech. Sound symbolism in general has been related, for instance, to a biologically determined 'frequency code' which associates high acoustic frequency with the meaning of 'large' in Babar, therefore dominant, aggressive, threatening, etc.; see John Ohala (1984). And even the differential voice qualities of men and women have been attributed to biological adaptation processes.

1.4.5. Related pragmatic notions

A number of current pragmatic notions are directly translatable into adaptationist terminology. On the 'local' level, most readers will have noticed that one of the phenomena covered by the notion of linguistic adaptation is Fehrle's (1976) 'direction of fit': assertives, for instance, are said to show a word-to-word direction of fit; they are attempts to make one's propositional content match a state of affairs; directives, on the other hand, are characterized by a world-to-word direction of fit, as they are attempts to bring about a state of affairs. Similarly, the notions of 'felicity' and 'appropriateness' mean, in fact, the same as adaptedness (with respect to goals, intentions, circumstances, etc.).

1.5. FUNCTIONALITY AND FUNCTIONALISM

As should be clear from section 1.3., our notion of linguistic adaptation covers the whole range of phenomena, occasionally dealt with in biological terms or easily amenable to such treatment, presented in 1.4. When trying to ease the noun 'adaptation' away from its static connotations and, when interpreting it explicitly as continuous and multidirectional readjustment, the legitimacy of its application to individual organisms as well as to the species should be self-evident. This double dynamism of adaptability is the key to the definition of the functionality referred to when we tentatively defined pragmatics (in chapter 0.) as a (functional) perspective on (any aspect of) language. In other words, pragmatic functionalism--if we may use a tautological expression just once--consists in viewing

linguistic phenomena from the point of view of their adaptive nature. And functional explanations are those that can be phrased in terms of adaptation phenomena and processes. (19)

This delimitation of the field of pragmatics enables us to establish a clearer (though, of course, still fuzzy) boundary with related fields such as sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics. On the 'sociolinguistic' side, our definition expels cases of 'random variation' from the realm of pragmatics. Thus traditional descriptive dialectology, as well as purely correlational sociolinguistic studies are marginal at best. Similarly, purely structural investigations of historical change are not within the scope of pragmatics, nor are cases of descriptive accounts of the evolution of language. On the 'psycholinguistic' side, we exclude descriptions of relatively unadaptable psychological structures and processes, i.e. those which have not observably changed in the human species for a long period of time. Yet, more will have to be said about them in chapter 2.

1.6. CONCLUSION

It should be clear from the foregoing pages that the notion of 'linguistic adaptation' grants pragmatics a much wider scope than most other notions proposed before as key concepts. One attempt at (re)unifying the field was, for instance, that of defining 'pragmatics' as 'the study of appropriateness conditions on the use of natural language' (Verschueren 1978: 143). The notion of appropriateness conditions is clearly related to Morris' concept of pragramatical rules. It has, however, some disadvantages. First, it seems suitable only to analyze microprocesses; it can only be used to capture speech act theory, conversational logic, discourse analysis, and some sporadic microprocesses studied in sociolinguistics and anthropological linguistics (such as code-switching in conversations). Second, the term 'appropriateness' is too much associated with a normative or prescriptive approach in linguistics (though this association is not logically necessary).

The defectiveness of the definition of pragmatics as the study of meaning in context has been shown before. Not only does this view make pragmatics into a mere extension of semantics, which it is not (if, at least, there is some validity to the perspective approach), but it leaves the notion of context further unanalyzed. Relevance cannot function as the single most important key to the use of language: relevance is only one particular form of linguistic adaptedness on the micro-level of analysis. Speech acts, texts, discourses, have all been proposed as the basic units of pragmatic analysis. A rejection of the component view,

(19) Here we come close to the claim by Philippe Van Parijs (1981) that all functional explanations in the social sciences necessarily have to be 'evolutionary.'
however, implies that there is no need for a basic unit of analysis—indeed, positing such a unit would be highly undesirable and misleading. Pragmatics cannot simply be defined as the study of the functions of language. Talking about pragmatics processes in terms of functions, is only one of several angles from which they have to be approached.

Within the perspective view of pragmatics, pragmatists are faced with a multiplicity of tasks. Whenever a pragmatist wants to describe a form of linguistic adaptation (whether it is a microprocess or a macroprocess) he or she should determine:

1. what the objects of adaptation are (since language, in every instance of use, is interadaptable with a wide range of aspects of the 'context,' or of what we have called the 'circumstances' up to now);

2. at what level of linguistic structuring the process takes place (since there is no such thing as a 'basic unit of analysis' which is automatically taken as the descriptive point of departure);

3. what stage of adaptation is involved (since adaptation is by definition a temporal and dynamic process);

4. the degree of adaptation (the extent to which the utterances under investigation can be said to be 'adapted,' in terms of the degree of accessibility of the processes involved);

5. its function(s) (since every adaptation process, though there is usually a typical function which is associated with it, can be exploited strategically). This rule of thumb will be clarified in the course of chapters 3 through 7. But first the medium of adaptation requires some further attention.

2. MEDIUM OF ADAPTATION

Pragmatics, if defined as a theory of linguistic adaptation, approaches language as a means--itself highly adaptable--of adaptation in the human species and in individual human organisms. Though it is itself a means of adaptation for humans, language (consisting merely of potentially recordable fugitive sounds that disappear as soon as they are produced) requires a medium through which it can perform its adaptive function.

The medium through which language performs its adaptive function shows a non-dichotomous dual nature. Its duality is captured by the terms mind and society. The rephrasing mind in society illustrates the non-dichotomy.

Here we touch upon a common topic for dispute. It cannot be denied that everything social is processed through individual human minds. In that sense the mind is primary, and a mild form of mentalism (founded not so much on a terribly profound insight as on a platitude which is too often overlooked) may be warranted. This position parallels Darwin's view that, in accounting for biological adaptation processes, the nature of the organism may be much more important than the nature of the 'conditions' (which must be interpreted so as to include the interaction with organisms of the same kind). Yet L.S. Vygotsky (1978) may also be right when he claims that

"Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (inter-psychological), and then inside the child (intra-psychological). This applies equally to voluntary motion, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals." (p. 57)

In the sense of this 'general genetic law of cultural development,' society is primary. This position parallels Durckheim's view that, even when trying to explain highly personal decisions (such as the decision to commit suicide), social forces must be taken into account.

These two positions are perfectly compatible. The danger of overemphasizing the primacy of the individual mind is particularly acute because of its attractiveness. First, it would seem to reduce the object of inquiry to a more manageable size and, above all, to a 'reality' which, though
infinitely complex, is inherently accessible to the individual researcher. Second, since this 'reality' is largely non-transparent it would seem to justify the formulation of hypotheses essentially immune to empirical evidence, such as Chomsky's innateness hypothesis. Therefore it may be wise to draw attention not only to Vygotsky's widely recognized point of view, but also to a number of (adaptable or adaptational) linguistic phenomena which are not to be discovered in individual human organs, and which, ipso facto, highlight the societial side of language as a means of adaptation. A case in point is the appearance of patterns of development which, though employing properties to be found in individual organisms, do not take place in individuals at all. I am thinking of the linguistic counterpart to what is known among biologists as 'correlated variation,' which surfaces in the linguistic literature as, for instance, 'synchronic implicational universals.' More in general, social processes may be operative without being at work in any individual. Consider, for instance, scientific discourse (a discourse type which should be the example par excellence to illustrate the cognitive or mental side of language). The acceptance of new theories, or 'paradigm shifts,' often result from forces which are neither observed by nor observable in an individual scientist's thought—though they leave traces in the thought of many individuals.

Ultimately, both aspects of the medium of adaptation, the mind (with its psychobiological basis) and society, are themselves adaptable structures. But to the extent that no observable structural changes take place over long periods of time, they can be approached in their capacity as 'relatively unadaptable' properties of human organisms and the human species. If approached from that perspective, they are not the subject of pragmatics. (See also section 1.5.) In many cases, however, the borderline between a pragmatic and a non-pragmatic approach will be largely academic. Though it would be too dogmatic to bar the possibility of a non-pragmatic approach to, for instance, psychobiological structures and processes underlying language, it will usually be hard to abstract from their actual use (which, if taken into account, immediately leads us into pragmatics).

What follows is a suggestive, but insufficiently systematized, list of topics related to the medium of adaptation, some of which can only be approached pragmatically (in our definition of pragmatics), and some of which can—albeit to varying degrees—be studied from a non-

(20) Implicational universals "state that a given property must, or can only, be present if some other property is also present. As Comrie 1981: 17) Though arrived at the basis of synchronic data, such universals imply a pattern of development. They have been formulated with reference to syntactic properties of language (see Comrie 1981) and to certain lexical domains (see, e.g., Brent Berlin & Paul Kay 1989).

(21) As in all the following chapters, lists of topics are based on the indexing system of A Comprehensive Bibliography of Pragmatics (Jan Nutt & Vera Verschuren 1987). Thus they have not been directly inspired by the needs of the theoretical framework proposed in this working document, but rather by the current state of discussion in the relevant literature. Gaps will therefore be inevitable.
- Common sense
  - Judgment
    - Morality
      + Value judgment
    - Social norm
  - Intuition
    + Linguistic intuition
  - Linguistic knowledge
    - Linguistic norm
    - Linguistic rule
      + Grammatical rule
      + Semantic rule
      + Constitutive vs. regulative rule
      + Optional vs. obligatory rule
    + Variable rule
  - Linguistic procedure
  - Language proficiency
    - Monolingualism
    - Bilingualism
    - Multilingualism
    - Diglossia
    - Polyglossia
    - Foreign language proficiency
    + Literacy
  - Communicative competence
    - (Intersecting with social norms)
      + Politeness
      + Etiquette
      + Taboo
    - Metapragmatic awareness
    + Metapragmatic concept

Cognitive development
  - Sensori-motor period
  - Pre-operational period
  - Concrete-operational period
  - Formal operational period
  - Formal-operational period
  - etc.

Socio-cultural development
  - Socialization
  - Enculturation

Language acquisition

Language processing
Since all language use is by definition language processing, the label applies recursively to everything touched upon in the following chapters. Numerous specific processing labels occur in the literature: stress assignment; lexical choice; grammatical choice; subject assignment; etc.>
  - Production
    - Planning
      + Planned vs. unplanned speech
    - Speaking
      + Articulation
    - Writing
    - Formulating
    - Production error

+ Slip of the tongue
- False start
- Hesitation
- Pause
- Repetition
- Repair
- Self-repair

<see also chapter 7>

* Comprehension/Reception
  - Word recognition
  - Inference
  - Hearing
  - Listening
  - Reading
  - (Misreading)
  - Understanding
  - (Misunderstanding)

* Processing characteristics
  - Automaticity
  - Creativity
  - Ease of processing
  - Fluency
  - (Stuttering)
  - Individual differences in processing
  - Inertia
  - Intelligibility
  - Naturalness
  - On-line processing
  - Productivity
  - Salience
  - Task-dependency of processing

* Representational structure
  - Frame
  - Scheme
  - Script
  - Language-free representation
    + Pictorial representation
  - Logical representation
  - Symbolic representation
  - Propositional representation
  - Linear Representation
  - Network representation
  - Tree representation

Developmental deficiency
  - Down’s syndrome
  - Retardation

Language pathology
  - Aphasia
  - Dementia
  - Psychiatric disturbance
    - Autistic language
    - Schizophrenic language
3. OBJECTS OF ADAPTATION

3.0. INTRODUCTION

It hardly makes sense to talk about linguistic adaptation without making explicit what the objects are that language is interadaptable with. In other words, whenever a pragmatician wants to describe a form of linguistic adaptation, one of the necessary questions he or she will have to answer is the following: What does language, under those aspects which constitute my present object of investigation, get adapted to? When asking this question, however, one has to keep in mind that the way in which language gets adapted to certain 'objects of adaptation' may—and often will—also affect properties of these objects themselves. (Remember the discussion of the multidirectional character of the adaptation process; see 1.2.)

In this chapter, as in all the following ones, further subdivisions are based on the distinctions drawn in section 1.3:

- micro-analysis
  - acquired
  - developmental
- macro-analysis
  - synchronic
  - diachronic

(In some of the following chapters there are, in addition to these four subdivisions, some remarks on universals—pertaining to all four levels of analysis.)

3.1. MICRO-ANALYSIS: ACQUIRED

In general, language needs to be adapted to circumstances and purposes (which, in turn, tend to get affected by this process). In the area of everyday personal interaction (the object of investigation at the micro-level of analysis), language is basically a tool for communication from mind to mind—though we should never forget that both these minds (or sometimes small sets of minds) fit the description 'mind in society' (see chapter 1). Therefore, the way in which language gets adapted to circumstances and purposes is by way of getting adapted to the beliefs, attitudes, desires, intentions of speaker(s)/author(s) and hearer(s)/reader(s). In other words, linguistic utterances
are shaped in accordance with the speaker's and the hearer's background assumptions about the 'real world' and about each other's beliefs, attitudes, desires and intentions with respect to the 'real world' and to each other. Thus, at least every element indicated in Figure 2, which is a very rough and open-ended scheme of 'objects of adaptation,' has to be given further attention.

**Figure 2**

After a few general comments in the following paragraphs, with direct reference to what is indicated in Figure 2, again a rough list of topics will be presented.

3.1.1. Physical world

Elements of the physical world, such as time (if we can grant ourselves the liberty to regard this as a property of the physical world) and location might, at first sight, seem to be of minimal importance as objects of linguistic adaptation. Yet, many expressions (probably in all natural languages) are appropriate only under conditions which can be specified along these dimensions.

3.1.1.1. Time

Consider, for instance, greetings. They do not only offer us the trivial observation that 'Good morning' is only

(22) From the lack of correspondence between the scheme in Figure 2 and the list of topics inspired by the index to our pragmatics bibliography, it will be clear that neither one can function as a final framework ready for use in the planned Handbook of Pragmatics.

appropriate in the morning and 'Good evening' in the evening (an observation which becomes somewhat less trivial when we try to determine the variable time spaces covered by 'morning,' 'evening,' and their equivalents in different languages). But, in addition to their being related to stretches of time as such, greetings tend to be related to time relative to certain events. "Good morning," for instance, would normally be used only when meeting someone for the first time in the morning; uttering the same formula again when meeting the same person once more later that same 'morning' would lead--at least--to suspicions of absent-mindedness. "Good evening" can be used when meeting or parting in the evening. Whereas 'Good night' can only be used when parting at a time (typically 'bed-time') when there is not a sufficiently significant part of the 'evening' left for the speaker to be able to say "Good evening." "Hello" and "good-bye" can both be said at any time of the day or the night, but the former only when meeting, the latter only when parting--a division of labor which is less than self-evident for some learners of English as a foreign language.

That there is nothing trivial about these facts becomes especially clear when we observe to what extent they change from language to language, though some languages have found ways of making it easy for themselves. Thus, the well-known Hawaiian greeting "Aloha" can be used at any time of day or night, whether meeting or parting (which follows from its very general basic meaning of 'love,' 'affection,' 'to express affection'). Another example is the spoken Hungarian which has managed to drop the time indications from "Jo napot kivanok" (I wish (you) a good day), "Jo reggett kivanok" (I wish (you) a good morning), etc., while sometimes preserving the accusative suffix attached to the noun indicating the relevant stretch of time as in "t kivanok" which, as a result, can be used at any time.

Equally obvious ways in which utterances are 'anchored' (23) in time, are provided by the full range of linguistic indicators of time deixis, including tense, time adverbial(s), etc. (For a brief overview of the issues involved, see Levinson 1983: 73-79.)

3.1.1.2. Location

Just as indicators of time deixis anchor utterances in time, indicators of place deixis such as spatial adverbs, demonstrative pronouns, some verbs of motion, etc. anchor utterances in space. (For a brief discussion, see again Levinson 1983: 79-85.)

However, location is not only relevant with respect to deixical elements. Consider, for instance, the way in which the loudness of one's voice tends to get adapted to the speaker's (and the hearer's) location. I was told about an American daycare center where one of the first things

(23) The term 'anchoring,' which is applicable to a wide range of pragmatic phenomena, has been borrowed from Jan-Ola Ostman (1986). It is also used, more specifically with reference to deixis, by Stephen Levinson (1983).
children are taught is the difference between their 'inside voice' and their 'outside voice.' Such examples show, of course, that often it is not so much location as such which determines linguistic choices, but location in its interaction with surrounding social norms and institutions. Ignoring this type of interaction (which also results in the fact that cases of 'pure' deixis--both of time and space--are relatively rare) would defeat the purpose of any theory of pragmatics. One has to stretch one's imagination to find instances of language use which would not be forms of social action (even if one recognizes the non-communicative status of Noam Chomsky's (1975: 61-62 and 1980: 229-230) examples of non-communicative language use). And since social action is by definition meaningful in the sense that it is interpreted by the 'actors' involved, any attempt to single out uninterpreted aspects of verbal behavior must be futile.

3.1.2. Social world

There is no end to the number of social factors that language is interadaptable with. Most of them have to do with social settings or institutions. Within these settings and institutions many linguistic choices depend on relationships of dependence and authority, or power and solidarity, not only between speaker and hearer (as discussed separately in 3.1.) but also between the speaker and/or the hearer and the people talked about. In addition, social settings and institutions impose all sorts of rules on the way in which a language can be performed--on what can perform them (or has the proper status to perform them). They also determine the 'performability' of a wide range of acts under specified circumstances.

In extreme cases, a completely different 'code' of a language has to be chosen in the course of certain social activities. Some languages of New Guinea, for instance, may alternate between an everyday version and a hunting version (spoken only while hunting).

For many languages, the concept of 'social relationships' may have to be expanded--in order to explain certain linguistic choices--to relationships not only between people, but also between people and animals, people and plants, and even people and things, to the extent that certain animals, plants, and things are 'interacted with' as an essential part of people's daily activities. It is on this basis that one can explain the sailor's choice of 'she' as the pronoun to refer to his ship in English, a language which normally makes all lifeless things grammatically neuter. A more general case is provided by Rapanui (the Polynesian language spoken on Easter Island) which, as most other Polynesian languages, has two sets of possessive pronouns and collective adjectives. According to V. Fuentes (1960: 602-606) different possessive forms would be used for the following two sets of nouns, for both of which English provides 'my.'

(i) A-series (tsaku) (ii) O-series (tooku)

my son  my father  
my husband  my master  
my wife  my car  
my sheep  my horse  
my potatoes  my house  
my fish  my clothes  ...

The A-series does not only include husband, wife, children, all descendants, people of inferior rank, but also food, edibles, utensils, tools, trees, plants, domestic animals (except for the horse), etc. The O-series includes all ancestors, parents, people of a higher rank, the horse, boats, cars, all means of transportation, clothing, houses and furniture. At first sight, these categories seem rather random. However, Fuentes tries to explain them in the following way. The basic distinction is that the A-series is used for objects and persons which depend on the speaker, whereas the O-series includes objects and persons on which the speaker depends (or which are superior to the speaker). This dichotomy may be easy enough to understand when it comes to distinguishing 'son' from 'father' or 'master.' It also explains clearly enough why domestic animals belong to the A-series but why the horse and the log behind this choice seems to be that, within the network of relationships characterizing Rapanui culture, people are viewed as dependent on their horse to get somewhere (at least, to got there in a reasonably short period of time without too much effort)--a dependency relationship which carries over to boats, cars, and other means of transportation. The final test confirming this explanation is that a horse that has never been used by its owner, according to Fuentes' observations, belongs to the A-series. Similarly, people are viewed as dependent on clothes and housing to keep warm and healthy. But what about food? Vegetables are cultivated and would die if it were not for the care people take of them. And (though this may be a weak point in the chain of reasoning) it is considered to be totally up to humans to leave fish in the sea or to take them out. Others (e.g. Krupa 1982: 113) have interpreted the distinction as one between alienable (dominant) and inalienable (subordinate) possession. Even if we do not accept all the details of

(24) V. Krupa (1982: 115):

"In its origins the category of possession was obviously motivated by the distinction made between personal alienable property on the one hand and objects possessed in an organic, integral and collective manner on the other. This semantic basis underlying the category of possession can be traced through all the Polynesian languages, although it may vary in detail (e.g. in MAO (fa'ari) the word whasaa='mother' combines the inalienable marker while TON (fa'ioni) fa'ee=mother' takes the alienable marker.)"