

Preface

This volume contains a selection of the papers that were presented at the Fifth Amsterdam Colloquium, which took place in August 1984. The papers collected in this book center around two themes: lexical semantics, and pragmatics.

Contributions to the first theme address both more theoretical, foundational issues, as well as matters of description, and some papers do both. Bartsch's paper pursues an approach to lexical meaning that relies heavily on context to determine various 'dimensions' of interpretation of lexical items. Her paper is a classification and an investigation of these dimensions, and it contains, moreover, a description of the meaning of various classes of adjectives in Dutch. The paper by Ter Meulen gives an analysis of the way in which events are located in space and time, using the framework of Situation Semantics. She discusses such problems as the relation between an event and the individuals participating in it, matters which are highly relevant for an account of temporal and aspectual properties of verbs and the like. Moortgat's contribution is to the study of productive word formation processes within the Montague grammar framework. His goal is to maintain compositionality as a constraint on interpretation, also in morphology, while at the same time keeping lexicon and syntax as separate components in the grammar. To this purpose, he adds rules of functional composition, thus underscoring the need for and the usefulness of a more flexible approach than 'orthodox' Montague grammar allows. The paper by Shirai is concerned with the content of the Japanese particles *wa* and *ga*. His claim is that a proper description of their content and function can be arrived at only if we allow epistemological concepts, such as 'well-knownness', to enter into our semantic vocabulary. Zimmermann's paper deals with meaning postulates as a means to connect lexical and logical semantics. It contains a detailed examination of various proposals for a particular meaning postulate (which is to ensure that certain adverbs are transparent), and it derives some general methodological morals from this that extend beyond the particular case discussed.

To the second theme, the foundations of pragmatic theory, two papers are devoted explicitly (though various pragmatic factors also play a role in other papers, *e.g.* those by Bartsch, ter Meulen and Shirai). Link's contribution deals with an 'age-old' problem in the theory of presuppositions: the projection problem, *i.e.* how compound expressions inherit the presupposi-

tions of their components. Side-stepping the heated debate whether this is a matter of truth-conditions or of conditions of use, Link argues that it is both: a semantic notion of presupposition combined with a notion of admittance by context and general information processing strategies will do the job. The paper by Landman, finally, deals with another central concept of pragmatics: information. Using certain informational paradoxes, such as Conway's paradox and the Hangman, Landman critically discusses various theories of information representation developed within the possible worlds framework.

From this short indication of the contents of the various contributions it may be clear that they share a common theoretical and philosophical interest in the foundations and applications of lexical semantics and pragmatics, yet that they also display a wide variety of approaches and frameworks. 'Logical' semantics in the broad sense of that word is no longer tied to a particular framework or set of principles, as it was in the stage of its inception. Rather it is a many-coloured thing. We hope that the papers in this volume may help to convince the reader that this constitutes a virtue, rather than a vice.

A companion to this volume, containing various papers read at the colloquium which deal with the theory of generalized quantifiers and the theory of discourse representation, appears as GRASS 8.

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The editors