Philosophy of language in light of spoken language corpora

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The philosophy today

- Philosophy of language as inspirer of linguistics
- Philosophy of language as consumer of linguistics
- What is wrong with the 20th philosophy of language? 5 problems
- Why is it wrong? Scritpmaniacness
- What do we hope to understand about

Philosophy of language in the 20th century: a biographical review

- "The linguistic turns" by
  - Frege(first order logic etc.)
  - Russell(definite description etc.)
  - Wittgenstein(logical form etc)
  - Carnap(metalogic etc)
  - J. L. Austin(speech acts)
  - Chomsky(syntax etc)
  - Grice(non-natural meaning)

Philosophy of language in the 20th century: A recap

- Predilection for “sentencehood”
- A bhorrence of incompleteness
  - against incompleteness of systems
  - against partiality of situations
- Language as an autonomous entity
- D i sembodiment of words
- Science of possibilities

Predilection for "sentencehood"

- Frege's emphasis on truth values
  - no sentence without truth or falsity
- Modern logic with Propositional and Predicate calculus
- Even for Austin a sentence uttered was a paradigm
- Meaning of a sentence as a function of words therein and structure thereof
- Grice, an exception, maybe

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A bhorrence of incompleteness

- The other side of the same coin, but
  - emphasis on "a language as an enumerably infinite set of sentence" as evidence for fear of incompleteness
  - De terminacy of interpretation, indeterminacy only as parametric
  - belief that a sentence must be understood

→ Language as a closed system

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Language as an autonomous entity

- The very basic assumption of modern linguistics since German historical linguistics and Darwinian linguistics
- modularity
- language as a system of independently definable "symbols"
- governed by a set of rules

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D isembodiment of words

- A leap between phonetics and phonology
  - from concrete, physical
    to abstract, symbolic
- From words to morphemes
- Words as abstract entities

Prosodies, paralinguisticali
→ becoming secondary

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Linguistics as science of possibilities

- A s a result
  - linguistics being a science of possibilities, as opposed to actualities, which is not so bad, but
  - the criteria for empirical confirmation lost,
  - with “intuition” as a replacement
  - and a list of rules that would potentially generate a infinite number of sentences

These are due to emphasis on written language

- In written language,
  - Sentences are complete, most of the time
  - A set of sentences is definable formally
  - The repetition of the same symbol, or the reoccurrences of tokens of the same type, can be formally, not physically, defined
  - forms of words, morphemes are formally definable and the definition works,

So for them,

Spoken language is

- not a real, serious target of science
- a result of psychological and physiological disturbances that go in the way after the brains create a sentence, an aberration from the norm
- only a reasonable target after "written language or language of thought" is thoroughly studied

Why am I not happy with these?

- Language is there for communication and spoken communication is primary
- Words are concrete units and have perceptible qualities
- Linguistic behavior is not so autonomous, penetrating and being penetrated by other personal and social factors
- Language is Incomplete, which fact is shown by the need for context
- We don't talk sentences but words, mostly in an acceptable order

What can the study of spoken language tell us philosophers? (1)

- Phenomena in spoken language are not aberrations from what language should be like
  - Disfluencies (like repairs and repetitions, and even abandoned words) have communicative functions
  - Overlapping and interruptions are legitimizable behaviors
  - Fragments do have full-fledged functions

Hence need for serious study, and then for philosophical insights

What can the study of spoken language tell us philosophers? (2)

- Use of spoken language is not just "an utterance of sentence"
  - Speech acts do not require a completed sentence, but
  - Sometimes, complete sentences are not enough for speech acts, and
  - There are utterances that are not associated with the performances of speech act of any kind

Hence "speech act theory" must be replaced with a more general theory, which can be philosophical

What can the study of spoken language tell us philosophers? (3)

- Words are real
  - Words are not an ordered triple of meaning, sounds and form
  - Words are not concatenations of phonemes like morphemes, they have a different principle of individuation

Hence need for philosophical thinking of the principle of individuation for words

Too Tentative a Conclusion, or rather a list of questions

- Need for a philosophical theory of action then for one of interactive action then for tool-using action
- Language as a communicative tool
- How different is language from other tools?
- Doing more important than saying

But, anyway,

- We have more and more nice corpora
- better analysis tools and typically a huge storage and rapid CPU
- We can record, do not have to "transcribe" any more
- It is time we started the real science of language, which will interact with a liberated philosophy of language