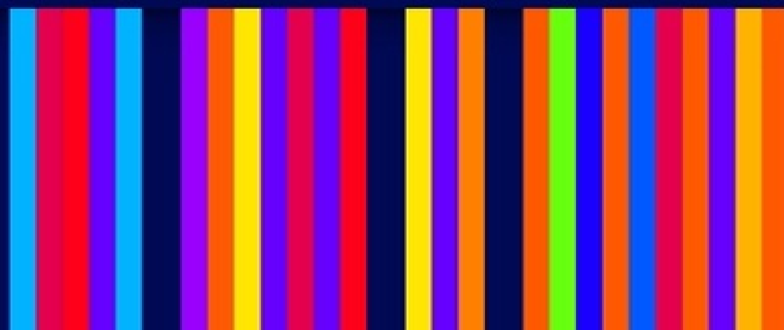
DE GRUYTER
MOUTON

Adrian Pablé, Christopher Hutton

SIGNS, MEANING AND EXPERIENCE

INTEGRATIONAL APPROACHES TO LINGUISTICS AND SEMIOTICS

SEMIOTICS, COMMUNICATION AND COGNITION



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Semiotics, Communication and Cognition

Edited by
Paul Cobley and Kalevi Kull

Volume 15

Adrian Pablé,
Christopher Hutton

Signs, Meaning and Experience

Integrational Approaches to Linguistics and Semiotics

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ISBN 978-1-5015-1069-4
e-ISBN (EPUB) 9781501502316

e-ISBN (PDF) 978-1-5015-0228-6
e-ISBN (EPUB) 978-1-5015-0231-6
ISSN 1867-0873

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
A CIP catalog record for this book has been applied for at the Library of Congress.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at http://dnb.dnb.de.

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www.degruyter.com

Epub-production: Jouve, www.jouve.com

This book is dedicated to the memory of Roy Harris (1931–2015)

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

T.S. Eliot, Little Gidding, The Four Quartets

O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the dance?

William Butler Yeats, Among School Children

Anyhow, it is all nonsense. I mean, the notion that language is made of words is all nonsense—and when I said that gestures could not be translated into “mere words”, I was talking nonsense, because there is no such thing as “mere words”. And all the syntax and grammar and all that stuff is nonsense. It’s all based on the idea that “mere” words exist—and there are none.

Gregory Bateson, Steps to an Ecology of Mind

Inhaltsverzeichnis

Semiotics, Communication and Cognition
Titel
Impressum
Widmung
Preface
1. Theoretical Foundations

Intellectual background: integrationism, linguistics and semiotics
The metalanguage of linguistics and expertise
‘Integration’
Parameters and principles
‘First-order’ and ‘second-order’
Surrogationalism
The language myth
Segregationalism and structuralism
The semiotics of writing
Is there such a thing as ‘data’?
The status of the anecdote
Aims of integrationism
Integrationism beyond language
Integrationism: a summary

2. Topics and Issues

2.1 Language and expertise

Case studies

On ‘folk’ and ‘scientific’ linguistic beliefs (Harris 1990a: 462 – 3)
Lay and professional metalinguistic knowledge (H. Davis 1997, 2001)

Questions for reflection

2.2 What ‘a language’ is (not)

Case studies

Language games (Tao & Tam 2010)
The ‘foul language fiasco’ (Cheung 2010)

Questions for reflection

2.3 A new epistemology

Case studies

Dialect perception (Harris 1990b)
Autism and ‘linguistic’ knowledge (Harris 2009b: 13 – 16, Bisgaard Nielsen 2011)

Questions for reflection

2.4 The myth of names

Case Studies

The castles of Bellinzona (Pablé 2009; 2010; 2012a)
Names in intercultural communication (Hoyois 2010)

Questions for reflection

2.5 Responsibility and the sign-maker

Case studies

The truth about truth-conditional semantics (Harris 1987a: 156 – 61)
Language, responsibility, and online forums (Wong 2010)

Questions for reflection

2.6 Integrating reality

Case studies

The subjectivity of the ‘real’ (Pablé 2011a; 2013b)
The Great Wall of China (Zhou 2010)

Questions for reflection

2.7 Cognitive mythology

Case studies

‘Logical thinking’ (Harris 2009e: 37 – 42, Zhang 2013)
Autoglottic space (Harris 1989b: 99 – 106)

Questions for reflection

2.8 Signs, communication and integration

Case studies

Integrating language and practical action (Jones 2011)
The railroad sign code and (un)successful integration (Bade 2011)

Questions for reflection

2.9 The ‘language gap’

Case studies

Monkeys and communication (Harris 1984)
The origin of language (T. Taylor 1997a)

Questions for reflection

2.10 Language and freedom (of speech)

Case studies

Freedom of expression and trademark law (Hutton 2009)
Language and liberty (Harris 1990c: 157–159)

Questions for reflection

3. Discussion Materials

Research questions & methodology
The origin of language
Alternative frameworks
Saussure: code and communication

4. Conclusion
Further Readings

References
Index

Preface

This book is designed to serve as an academic introduction to integrationism and integrational linguistics and to the wider domain of semiotic inquiry into which it falls. It explores debates, difficulties and controversies that are of relevance to a wide range of fields and disciplines. The book originated in an undergraduate course, Signs, Language and Communication, co-taught by the authors in the School of English at the University of Hong Kong. The course was first taught in 2010 (and consecutively in 2012 and 2013), and ideas and materials from student projects, as well as postgraduate dissertations, have been included. Originally conceived as a companion volume to Roy Harris' Introduction to Integrational Linguistics (1998), the book as written is a stand-alone, analytic survey of integrationism and an exploration of its relation to linguistic theory and semiotics.

The book is divided into three main sections: (1) Theoretical Foundations; (2) Topics and Issues; (3) Discussion Materials. These are followed by a list of references. The Theoretical Foundations section offers a summary of the basic intellectual position taken by integrationism. It uses two contrastive reference points, namely mainstream linguistic theory and the discipline of semiotics. The focus in explicating integrationism is primarily on the founder of integrational linguistics, Roy Harris, not least because of the vigour and clarity with which he has laid out his intellectual position. However the text includes materials and ideas from his students, collaborators or others engaged with integrationism. This work does not pretend to offer a full account of Harris' own intellectual journey (which includes significant works on topics such as art, writing, history), nor of the writings of integrationists, who have followed a diverse set of trajectories.

The body of the book, Topics and Issues, consists of a set of short sections organized by subject area. They are relatively self-contained, and might be read selectively or in a different order. Each section includes a Case Studies and Questions for Reflection sub-section. The topics discussed are classics in Harrisian writing; at the same time, many of the issues raised here have been taken up more recently in the sociolinguistic literature, where the code-based notion of 'a language' has been criticized as inadequate (e. g. identity studies, polylanguaging, global Englishes), as well as in certain branches of semiotics (e. g. the distributed view of cognition). Non-integrationists who find themselves in agreement with a Harrisian critique of the orthodoxy, albeit only superficially, will find this section helpful in positioning integrationism vis-à-vis their own unorthodox stance. The third section, Discussion Materials, contains material for further study, in particular some longer quotations for analysis, an analysis of interpretative issues arising from the 'speech circuit' section of Saussure's Course in General Linguistics, as well as further questions for general discussion. In addition to full details for references included in the text, a brief guide is given to collections and other sources of integrational writings.

The structure and organization of the book has been the subject of extended discussion between the authors and between the authors and the series editors. Responses to earlier drafts of the work were sharply divided, with some readers preferring the Theoretical Foundations section as a stand-alone statement of integrational views, while others found the sections with case studies more illuminating. Our aim in structuring the book in this way has been to allow as many voices as possible to be heard, and we have used an open-ended question format in conjunction with extensive direct quotation and dialogues, so that the text might serve in part as a sourcebook for a reading group or for the classroom context. We also feel that the structure reflects the way people often read longer texts today: they do not consistently start at the beginning of a text and work their way through to the end. There is no ideal structure for a work such as this, as the authors have

multiple audiences in mind. The mix of theoretical explication and open-ended discussion reflects a tension in integrationism itself between its ambition to serve as a normative theory of the sign (that is to explain what signs are and how they work) and an appeal to the diverse and contradictory beliefs about language of 'sign-makers' of all kinds, including linguistic specialists.

Given that integrationism has hitherto focused its attention on linguistics, we feel that the time is ripe for a broader engagement with semiotic themes. We therefore seek to promote a closer dialogue between integrationism and semiotics, and we frame the book with a discussion of some of the points of intersection and contrast. This task is not without its difficulties. Integrationism is a relatively recent academic phenomenon, whereas semiotics, depending on how one defines it, has a history of more than two thousand years: "semiotic theory is woven into the entire fabric of world philosophy and theology, and [...] each epoch has made its unique contributions to the understanding of signs" (Corrington 1992: 159). The diversity of contemporary semiotics, even if one restricts the definition to theories that take their starting point from C. S. Peirce (1839 – 1914), is much greater than that found among integrationists. Integrationism has had language and linguistics as its central focus, whereas for many semioticians, given their wider, biologically-driven frame of reference, linguistic interaction is not necessarily the prototypical form of interaction. From the semiotician's point of view, the focus on language and speech in linguistics confines it to "the provincial realm of human utterance" (Corrington 1992: 159). Semioticians tend to stress the developmental primacy of nonverbal communication, and to resist the reduction of communication prototypically to language: "Verbal communication is extremely rare in the universe and is a very late evolutionary product" (Corrington 1992: 160).

Integrationism, while rejecting the strict delineation between language and non-language found in mainstream linguistics, has arguably retained the centrality of language as an attribute of homo loquens. Integrationists share many assumptions about language and communication, yet there is no overall 'party-line' on wider questions of ontology, epistemology, philosophy of science, and the place of integrationism within the broader intellectual questions addressed by semiotics. Integrationism, it might be argued, now needs to address the limits (or lack thereof) of its relevance to wider intellectual debates. Indeed there are indications that integrationism is expanding its range of intellectual interests, and this will increasingly bring it into contact with semiotic themes. Therefore more recent integrationist writings have been included in this volume, especially those not covered in any length by Harris in his Introduction to Integrational Linguistics. These deal with topics such as reality, freedom, and responsibility.

As will become clear, integrational theory developed as a direct response to modern linguistics, and has been shaped by its engagement with the fundamental tenets it identified there. While Harris offers a sustained critique of mainstream or 'orthodox' linguistics as a mode of exposition and explanation, the discussions in this book bring into view a range of questions and research topics without necessarily contrasting an integrational view with one from linguistics. Linguistics remains nonetheless an important reference point, but semiotic theory is used in order to contextualize integrationism within contemporary debates about the nature of the sign. As noted above, semiotics is not a unified or homogeneous field, and is understood here primarily as a set of theories of the sign which trace their origins to the work of C.S. Peirce. Integrationism and semiotics share a dynamic understanding of the sign and a rejection of the static, idealization of langue which has defined modern linguistics. They differ markedly however in intellectual style. Integrationism, for example, shows the influence of ordinary language philosophy, even while it is suspicious of it as a method, whereas semiotics has little time for the kind of critical 'commonsensism' to which integrationists sometime appeal (see discussion in Cowley 2007). Integrationism is arguably anthropocentric, whereas semiotics is system-oriented. For many semioticians, the theory of signs decenters the human and posits parallels between biological and technological systems. For Harris, the machine as metaphor summons up a largely dystopian vision (Harris 1987a), whereas many semioticians are technophilic and embrace the information age, posthumanism, the open-ended possibilities of the human-machine hybrid or cyborg (Haraway 1985, Bendle 2002), and visions of a "cyberpunk future" (Clark and Chalmers 2010: 27).

A recent integrationist conference held in Switzerland (June 23–26, 2014) dealt with the question of integrationism and humanism. Given his evocation of the individual sign-user and the emphasis on responsibility and accountability, one might plausibly characterize Harris as a traditional humanist. Within semiotics, many of the strands of thinking about language, signs and communication focus on sign-processes which operate outside individual consciousness, or indeed in its absence. Integrationism has tended to assume a notion of the individual, volitional self, putting it potentially at odds with mainstream semiotics and theories of extended mind or distributed cognition (Menary 2010). This raises an open-ended series of philosophical questions, a full treatment of which lie beyond the scope of this book. Yet we see one of the future benefits of an encounter between integrationism and semiotics to be a more rigorous examination of ideas of the self and the individual within integrationism.

As noted above, integrationism takes as its starting point an engagement with Saussure's Course. But it also seeks to move beyond the Course and the domination of orthodox linguistics over the study of the sign (Cobley and Haeffner 2009). This book, by its very open-endedness, has as its goal a broader encounter between the study of language and other approaches to signs and communication within semiotics. While integrationism focuses on language and has its origins in an encounter with linguistics, it does not assume that linguistic communication represents the essence or the prototype of all communication by signs.

Against this background, Signs, Meaning and Experience offers a guide to an important set of intellectual issues and problems concerning language and communication as broadly conceived. It sets out the fundamental assumptions that guide what we term an 'integrational' approach. Integrationism might be conceived of as a movement, an intellectual tendency, or simply a range of overlapping approaches. While it deals with many topics that concern psychologists, anthropologists, semioticians and philosophers (to mention but a few), integrationism has its immediate origins in dissatisfaction with the answers that linguistics has provided to fundamental questions. Integrationism does not claim that it can provide definitive answers to all linguistic questions; indeed one way of understanding integrationism is as a denial that such answers exist. Integrationists would argue that many of the questions posed by modern linguistics have no definitive answer. A substantial subset consists of pseudo-questions about entities postulated by linguists themselves and almost all rely on the assumption that language (and languages) can be studied through the application of methodologies which identify invariant units of analysis. Integrationism sees theorizing about language and languages as always mediated by a variety of socio-cultural, historical and intellectual factors, some—perhaps most—of which are of necessity hidden to the theorist. This being so, integrationism does not provide an alternative methodology for studying language, languages or signs, a position for which it has been much criticized. But we need to insist on this point: integrationism is not a method.

This book therefore does not offer the reader an introduction to a particular mode of analysis. Rather it aims to enable the reader to 'think like an integrationist', and to think through linguistic and semiotic questions as they emerge in everyday life or in academic contexts. There is a particular style of thinking, a form of awareness, and a special kind of reflexivity which integrationism seeks to foster. In many ways this involves a double consciousness, an awareness both of the fluidity, density and complexity of our linguistic experience, yet also of the power of the reifications, constructs and fictions that shape our communicational world. Communication and the study of communication must wrestle with the apparent continuities that we experience within the ongoing stream of life, our sense of order and habit, and our search for and need for order, set against the sense of flux and contingency that we experience when we try to define the essences or entities that anchor us to the world and each other.

The authors are grateful to Roy Harris for permission to quote from two unpublished papers, and to reprint a section of the Saying Nothing dialogue from The Language Machine and to Nigel Love for permission to reprint a lengthy extract from his article 'The locus of language in a redefined linguistics' (Love 1990). We would also like to express our thanks for feedback and comments received from friends and colleagues, in particular the series editors Paul Cobley and Kalevi Kull,

David Bade, Dorthe Duncker, Peter Jones, and Nigel Love. We would also like to acknowledge the comments and criticisms of students from the University of Hong Kong and the University of Cape Town, many of which led to changes in the text.

1. Theoretical Foundations

Intellectual background: integrationism, linguistics and semiotics

Integrationism is concerned with the fundamental questions that arise when we try to understand language and communication. It represents the beliefs and writings of an international group of scholars who were either students of, or heavily influenced by, Roy Harris (1931– 2015), Emeritus Professor of General Linguistics at the University of Oxford. From the beginning, critical engagement with the history of linguistic ideas, most notably Ferdinand de Saussure's Course in General Linguistics ([1916] Harris 1983a), has been fundamental to integrational linguistics. In Saussure's Course, Harris identifies what he terms the 'language myth' in its fullest and most articulate form. Briefly stated, that myth holds that linguistic communication involves the transfer or conveying of thoughts from one mind to another, and the related notion that languages achieve this by virtue of being 'fixed codes' (Harris 1998: 32). In this sense, integrationism can be understood as an extended critique of Saussure and the discipline of linguistics which took the Course in General Linguistics as its founding text. But in a wider sense, integrationism is a response to, and in dialogue with, notions of the sign, meaning and communication as they have been elaborated in the Western intellectual tradition.

While there is no immediate or single predecessor to integrationism, one important part of the intellectual background was Oxford philosophy and thinkers such as G.E. Moore (1873 – 1958) and the so-called 'ordinary language' movement associated with Gilbert Ryle (1900 – 1976), J.L. Austin (1911–1960), among others. A second presence in the background was the writings of J.R. Firth (1890 – 1960) in linguistics, and the notion of 'context-of-situation' associated with both Firth and the anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski (1884 – 1942) (Robins 1971). Firth argued that linguistic meaning was best understood as "a complex of relations of various kinds between the component terms in context of situation" (Firth 1964: 11, see Joseph, Love and Taylor 2001: 57–71). The philosophical writings of the so-called 'later Wittgenstein', in particular the Philosophical Investigations (1978), were a further important point of reference, as was the phenomenological sociology (termed 'ethnomethodology') of Harold Garfinkel (1917–2011) (Garfinkel 1964, Heritage 1984).

In terms of intellectual history, one can locate a turn to the study of sign systems (the 'semiotic turn') and systems in general ('systems theory') at the beginning of the twentieth century. Saussure envisaged a discipline of semiology which would study "the role of signs as part of social life" and "investigate the nature of signs and the laws governing them" as part of "social psychology and hence of general psychology" (Harris 1983a: 33). There was already a demarcated conceptual space for this discipline within which linguistics would be embedded. By placing the study of language in this wider semiological frame, Saussure argued that one could get a clearer sense of what language systems have "in common with all other systems of the same kind" (Harris 1983a: 33). Rather than looking at features of language such as "the vocal apparatus", one could look at language systems alongside social phenomena such as 'rites' and 'customs' (Harris 1983a: 34). This suggests a dialectical relation between linguistics and other disciplines within semiology. By looking at other systems of signs we understand what is truly semiological about language systems; but the semiological study of language is also the model for the study of other signs systems. One consequence of the rise of structural linguistics was the emergence of structural anthropology (Lévi-Strauss 1949). In the wider intellectual culture, linguistics and structural models derived by analogy with linguistics assumed intellectual dominance over semiology (Barthes [1965] 1967, Cobley 2001: 4). That dominance was extended into post-structuralism (Derrida 1967), which took

the unraveling of the closed language system as the model for the deconstructionist encounter with texts, literary tradition and the history of Western philosophy. In this Saussurean tradition, the linguistic sign is the sign par excellence.

The second figure in the semiotic turn was Charles Sanders Peirce. Peirce, in contrast to Saussure, began with a general theory of the sign and subsumed the linguistic sign within its general framework and categories. Saussure's theory of language is resolutely Cartesian, in that the social system of langue inhabits an autonomous mind. Peirce, by contrast, was strongly anti-Cartesian; he understood semiotics to be a unifying and synthesizing discipline. This led to a rejection of ontological distinctions such as those between 'body' and 'mind' or 'sign' and 'concept' or 'sign' and 'reality'. Saussure's dualist view of the Cartesian self had its analogy in the theory of the linguistic sign as the union of 'signifier' and 'signified'. Harris terms this a 'bi-planar' model (Harris 1988: 14). In Peirce's semiotics, a dynamic and interacting set of triadic relationships dominate. Peirce differs most profoundly from Saussurean semiology in building the 'interpretant' into the fundamental understanding of the sign. Whereas the Saussurean system is static, and movement and change are assigned to parole, Peirce's model of semiosis incorporates the idea of the unfolding interactions of signs. Each interpretant becomes a new sign which creates a further interpretant. Semiosis is a dynamic process which is intrinsically temporal (Peirce 1931–58, Merrell 2001, Hutton 1990: 8 – 30).

The anti-Cartesianism of Peircean semiotics is a reflection of the idea that sign-relations are universal across ontological domains. Mind is not a category set apart ontologically from semiotic processes in other domains. Since both mind and the world are characterized by sign-relations, there is no divide between them, and hence no Cartesian puzzle about how mind relates to matter (body). In other strands of semiotics this unity (or 'coupling') of mind-world takes on elements of evolutionary (though not uniformly Darwinian) thinking. The notion of embodiment and in particular 'embodied mind', which has emerged in some lines of semiotic thought, involves a rejection of the idea that internal or mental representations are fundamental to human cognition. Rather than an autonomous entity that plans actions on the basis of internal representations of the world, the mind is deemed to have co-evolved with the environment. In radical form this implies that the brain and the environment are not ontologically distinct. What is perceived or oriented to in the environment is the product of action-oriented 'affordances': "The affordances of the environment are what it offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes, either for good or for ill" (Gibson 1979: 127, Waters 2012). An affordance is defined by Clark (1997: 50) as "nothing other than the possibilities for use, intervention, and action offered by the local environment to a specific type of embodied agent". The idea of mind as 'embodied' (rather than 'embrained') is a key tenet of Antonio Damasio's Descartes' Error (1994), and runs through a whole range of systems theoretical approaches to human cognition. An influential 'ecological' thinker in this respect is Gregory Bateson (1972, 1979).

Yet it would be wrong to see Saussurean semiology and Peircean semiotics as two completely distinct and independently developing strands of thought. Figures like Mikhail Bakhtin (1895 – 1975), Roman Jakobson (1896 – 1982) and Michael Halliday (1925-) have drawn on and contributed to both traditions. Further complicating the picture, the term 'semiotics' as used today refers to an eclectic mix of cultural studies, psychoanalysis, literary and film criticism, anthropology, sociology, systems theory, cybernetics, ecology, linguistics, philosophy, theology, etc. However mainstream linguistics, in particular those branches that are concerned with a reductive, systemic analysis of language structure, has developed in a relatively autonomous manner. Linguistics can be understood as a discrete sub-discipline of semiology, which has little or no interaction with semiotics. In this sense, the contrast between the Saussurean and the Peircean concept of the sign remains of direct relevance today.

In analyzing different theoretical frameworks, the book seeks to bring into focus these deep structural tensions in the theory of the sign. One fundamental question that arises for both the Saussurean and the Peircean models is the place of the individual sign-user within the theory. More technically, the issue is the status of individual agency or subjectivity, the place within the theory

(or lack thereof) for the “agency of subjects” (Cobley 2010b: 2047). Saussure remarks that the sign “always to some extent eludes control by the will, whether of the individual or of society: that is its essential nature, even if it may be by no means obvious at first sight” (Harris 1983a: 16). Acts of individual speaking, what Saussure terms parole, are taken to be located in time and space, and understood as willed or intentional. But the frame for individual speech is provided by what is in effect an impersonal language system. Acts of parole are transitory events; they are epiphenomenal in respect of the system, and the forces steering the direction of change in the system cannot be reduced to conscious, intentional acts of individuals. For Saussure, ordinary language users lack reflexive insight into language. He refers to “the superficial view taken by the general public, which sees a language merely as a nomenclature” (Harris 1983a: 34), that is, as a set of words which function as names or labels for things. In this sense, in their adherence to this naïve or misleading picture of language, Saussure’s language users are shown to lack reflexive understanding of the language system they are operating.

The Course claims to adopt the point of view of the ordinary language user. This operates as a methodological device to create a uniform and systematizable object of study. Saussure claims that the ordinary language user is faced with a static system: only by entering into the point of view of this language user can the linguist identify a stable object of study (Harris 1983a: 117). At one level this is a subjective turn, since historical relationships and patterns of change invisible to the ordinary speaker are no longer the core concern of what Saussure termed the linguistics of synchrony. But at the same time this point of view is an idealization or abstraction away from the individual experiences of language users, since there is no reason to assume that one speaker’s experience or point of view is the same as any other’s. It assumes a single vantage point from which language presents itself as forming a unified or homogeneous system. Nor can the moment-to-moment experiences of actual speakers be captured within this frame. In Chomskyan linguistics this (quasi-)subjective turn is found in a different form. Noam Chomsky (1928-) created the methodological postulation of the ‘ideal speaker-hearer’ (Chomsky 1965) whose knowledge of the language or underlying competence is independent of the contingencies that affect its operation or which form its psychological and social setting. In order to gain access to this knowledge (‘competence’), the linguist uses grammaticality or acceptability judgments elicited from native speakers who are presented with decontextualized language data (Chomsky 1965: 19 – 20). This ‘subjective’ input is understood as offering the least contaminated access available to the abstract and impersonal knowledge that it is the task of the linguist to characterize.

The Peircean tradition, as developed by Charles W. Morris (1903 – 1979) and Thomas Sebeok (1920 – 2001), and under the impact of what came to be called ‘biosemiotics’ (Jakob von Uexküll 1864–1944, Ludwig von Bertalanffy 1901–1972), has likewise no clear place for the will of the individual, self-conscious agent. Peircean semiotic theory arguably goes further than Saussure’s Course in negating or marginalizing individual agency, since it includes no direct parallel to parole. Sign systems are impersonal and operate at levels far below human consciousness (e. g. chemical or biological processes), or at high levels of abstraction away from the individual, e. g. the ‘viral’ dissemination of media and news in a modern society, the operation of international financial systems, computer-mediated aggregation in modern astrophysics, and so on. Semiotic theories vary in the degree of radicalness with which they reject the idea of an autonomous self, yet they all recognize the importance of ‘situatedness’ and the time-bound nature of interpretative practice, which is where they connect with an integrational semiology. Even if the self is not autonomous, it is nonetheless uniquely situated at the intersection of semiotic processes. Thus for Petrilli (2012: 47), Peircean semiotics redefined human subjectivity: “The human being, the I, the subject is an extremely complex sign made of verbal and non-verbal semiotic processes and of ‘language’”. The self is “social and communal”, even while possessing “singularity and uniqueness” (Petrilli 2012: 48). Within semiotics one can find a range of critiques of the Saussurean and the Chomskyan sign. For a Marxist-inflected semiotics, Saussure’s model of the sign “failed to examine relations between individual speakers, on the one hand, and the historico-socio-ideological system to which they belong and in which they are constituted as speaking subjects on the other” (Petrilli 2012: 165 –

166, summarizing the work of Ferruccio Rossi-Landi 1983). The semiotician Augusto Ponzio saw Chomsky's speaker as "an alienated subject, a subject that accepts rules, codes and programs passively, submits to them as given and natural"; Chomsky's speaking subject is "uncritical, passive, alienated" (Petrilli 2012: 162, summarizing Ponzio 1973).

The relationship between the individual self, the species and the environment is of central concern to semiotic theory. Whereas integrationism takes a largely anthropocentric view of the self, post-Peircean semiotics views human beings within a much wider biosemiotic frame. Each species operates with a milieu or Umwelt with which it has co-evolved. Two species that exist alongside each other in the same physical space can be said nonetheless to exist in different environments or Umwelten (Uexküll 1982). This is not to say that there is no 'self ' in semiotic theory, rather that the self is not necessarily a privileged category. For Sebeok (1985: 925), individual identity is understood as a product of a "process of sign-action" which "guarantees to the subject a kind of lifelong cohesive solidarity". The identity of this "semiotic self " is maintained "by a ceaseless rearrangement of its ego-quality (von Uexküll's Ich-ton [...]), propelled by the sort of ongoing dialogue so distinctly recognized by Peirce". This leaves moot notions of individual experience and the moment-to-moment texture of an individual's subjective experience as 'self-in-the-world'.

One possibility is simply to deny the importance of the self for semiotics, a position associated in particular with Niklas Luhmann's systems theory (Luhmann 2012). The concept of the self as an autonomous being with sovereignty over its own experiences is, arguably, historically and culturally local (C. Taylor 1989). However Colapietro has argued that Peirce, while rejecting the Cartesian view of the mind, nonetheless retained "the acting subject". This "refusal to eliminate the acting subject along with the Cartesian cogito is one of the important respects in which Peirce's semiotic vision is superior to the antihumanist orientation of Saussure's structuralist and poststructuralist offspring" (Colapietro 1989: xix). Finding that self is "the problem of finding the locus, identity, unity, and continuity of the self among the rapidly changing 'phenomena' of a stream of consciousness" (Singer 1980: 489). In the case of Peirce, this self must be grounded in the general theory of signs as "an 'outreaching identity' that connects the feelings, thoughts, and actions of one individual with those of others through the processes of semiotic communication" (Singer 1980: 489). This 'semiotic self ' is often presented as dialogical (Wiley 1994a, b) or as built out of layers of self-reference ("a strange loop", Hofstadter 2007). Following Colapietro, Wiley proposes a fusion of ideas from Peirce and George Herbert Mead (Wiley 1994b: 528):

> The Peirce-Mead semiotic self synthesizes three triads: sign-interpretant-object, I-you-me, and present-future-past. Peirce supplied the (incomplete) idea that the self is a sign or word. He also supplied the I-you segment of the trialogical self. Mead supplied the other segment, the I-me dialogue, along with the concept of reflexivity.

The problem that this raises is that the very semiotic quality of this dialogical self leaves little or no room for an understanding of consciousness. Integrationism by contrast does not seek to ground the self theoretically, treating it in effect like 'mind' as having associated 'lay' ways of talking which are seen as adequate to everyday requirements. "Vulgar selfspeak" would be the linguistic counterpart of the intuitive sense that each of us has a self.

An alternative approach to the self within semiotics comes from cybersemiotics. Drawing on the notion of 'qualia', Cobley (2010b) argues that cybersemiotics "is one of the few frameworks which factor first-person experience as central". Rejecting a purely computational model of human cognition, and the view of language "as a sort of culturally developed programme for social information processing between brains" (Brier 2011: 2), Cobley argues that the "concept of qualia figured in cybersemiotics offers a basis for a theory of agency, and hence of subjectivity" (2010b: 2048). However there is a tension between this recognition of an apparently irreducible element of existence, namely first-personhood (corresponding to 'firstness' in Peirce's triadic model), and the requirements of science, notably an understanding of the position of the scientist as observer

('thirdness'). Brier concludes (2011: 5):

> What seems to be lacking is an understanding of how to integrate our knowledge of the role of first person experience, qualia, meaning and signification in our scientific knowledge of the evolution of life and the human nervous system, and how it has developed language, society and culture. Science is an important product of those developments, and is therefore in a strange double position also here.

In short, one can see within semiotics two divergent approaches to the 'first-person self '. The first sees the traditional humanist emphasis on this as a vestige of religious ideas of the soul and of fictions of agency that stand in a way of the understanding of semiotic systems. The second seeks to reconcile the centrality of 'first-personhood', motivation, the "emotions and the fullness of first-person experience" (Cobley 2010b: 2057) with the wider project of semiotics as a universal science of signs.

As noted, the move away from the individual, autonomous subject in semiotics formed part of a turn towards 'systems theory' in the period around 1900, an intellectual revolution which included Freudian psychoanalysis, economic theory, evolutionary theory (including ideas of ecology and eco-systems), important strands of avant garde modernism in the arts and literature, as well as Saussurean structuralism. Integrationism, by comparison, appears at first sight to be highly individualistic and even voluntaristic. It rejects the Saussurean marginalization of the individual's linguistic experience, and understands meanings as created by individual speakers in particular time-bound contexts. Integrationism emphasizes both individual experience as the basis for reflexive awareness of language and individual responsibility for communicative actions as an essential component of being a language user. By virtue of its 'lay orientation' (that is, its desire to re-integrate ordinary and everyday understandings of language into academic discussion) it is bound to accept the validity for some purposes or contexts of the unitary, socially-agentive self, even if intellectually it must be recognized that this understanding of self is far from universal (C. Taylor 1989). Integrationism also recognizes that even if we are in some sense the authors of what we say, that we are 'saying what we mean', we have no definitive control over what others take us to mean: Harris had that experience himself when he chose the provocative title 'The worst English in the world?' for his inaugural lecture at the University of Hong Kong (Harris 1989a), in which he criticized the university's lack of leadership when it came to making Hong Kong a truly bilingual city. Some of Harris' colleagues understood him to be saying that the English spoken at the University of Hong Kong was 'the worst in the world'. Prescriptivist John Honey, in turn, concluded that "after his encounter with Hong Kong English [Prof. Harris] was forced to consider the possible truth of a Chinese acquaintance's judgment that this was 'the worst English in the world'" (Honey 1997: 251). On our reading of the text, there is nothing at all to be found there that licenses this interpretation (Pablé 2015). In that sense, we can after all never fully say what we mean or mean what we say, and, as in Peircean semiotics, the meaning (or 'signification') of our utterances is never fixed and always subject to re-interpretation and re-contextualization.

The central place of individual experience within integrationism does not reflect a full-fledged philosophical position with regard to self-transparency, nor a methodology which implies privileged access to private mental events. Rather, integrationism promotes the more understated principle that individual experience is where we should begin, when we investigate language, since we have nothing else to start with. Our reflections on language in any case always begin 'in the middle of things', in medias res. Since we always come to our thinking about language as language users and makers, we of necessity begin 'in the middle' when we turn to our own experience. That experience ranges from our early childhood socialization into language to, in some cases, academic study of linguistic theory. When we are considering the claims of academic linguistics we can ask whether these make sense when set alongside or against our own experience of language, whether we can translate the claims of language theory into terms that reflect or inform our experience as ordinary

sign-users. We cannot think our way out of our personal experience to find a neutral vantage point on language, nor should we trust any analytical methodology which purports to achieve this. In this sense the lay orientation of integrationism and its turn to personal experience are complementary. Personal experience is the nearest thing integrationism has to a foundation in its thinking about language. Harris even speaks of the terra firma of individual experience (Harris 1981: 204):

> The language-bound theorist, like the earth-bound Archimedes, has nowhere else to stand but where he does. He has ultimately no leverage to bring to bear on understanding language other than such leverage as can be exerted from the terra firma of his own linguistic experience.

By its very nature personal experience defies codification and co-option into an organized, methodologically consistent theory. For Harris, what is important is an "analytical grasp" of that experience, and what enables that is the recognition of the language myth "for what it is" (1981: 204). Integrationism is marked by its radical rejection of reification and of decontextualized thinking about language; yet it recognizes that, since we always begin in the middle, our experiences of language are inevitably permeated by abstract categories, reified modes of thinking and beliefs about language ('language ideologies') that circulate in particular societies. This point about the observer being in media res is made in relation to 'languaging' by Maturana (1988: 9, discussed in Cobley 2010b: 2049):

> An observer is, in general, any being operating in language, or in particular, any human being, in the understanding that language defines humanity. In our individual experience as human beings we find ourselves in language, we do not see ourselves growing into it: we are already observers by being in language when we begin as observers to reflect upon language and the condition of being observers. In other words, whatever takes place in the praxis of living of the observer takes place as distinctions in language through languaging, and this is all that he or she can do as such. One of my tasks is to show how the observer arises.

In analogous fashion, integrationism does not see language as a natural object that can be studied by applying an observer-neutral method of analysis; it stresses that we are anchored in our everyday linguistic practices and in a wide range of implicit or explicit beliefs, assumptions, ideologies and theories, and that no methodology or analytic framework can transcend these. It also argues for the virtues of reflecting on how we think about language – what might be termed 'metalinguistic reflexivity'. Integrationism promotes an awareness of the ways we of necessity treat language as something standing outside ourselves, while constantly reminding us that it is we who make and remake it.

Integrationism begins with a set of fundamental assumptions about signs, language and communication, and therefore it speaks to the very nature of human existence itself. It presents human beings as agents within communication, as actively involved in the creation of meanings, and understands communication as a dynamic, contextual, time-bound activity. As language-users we are immersed in the never-ending, dynamic stream of time, and in the positions, roles and reference points that form our world which are constantly shifting. As human beings we live in worlds of signs but those signs are themselves created and recreated by us. Communication is a creative process which involves an unbounded and unknowable number of factors and viewpoints.

To communicate is to create, but against a background of unknowability and lack of transparency; to understand is to situate events, objects, utterances, texts, signs etc. within our own experience and within our understanding of the point (s) of view of others. We adjust, assess, contextualize and recontextualize our experiences and practices in the light of the unfolding world around us, and have no objective framework or set of given meanings to fall back upon. Contexts are themselves

not objectively defined; they are “not some kind of neutral backdrop against which communication takes place” (Harris 2009b: 71). Contexts are “always the product of contextualization, and each of us contextualizes in our own way, taking into account whatever factors seem to us to be relevant” (2009b: 71). If a letter which is the subject of discussion is passed from one person to the next then each reading might be considered a recontextualization, but one could also see the overall discussion as a single context. If an email is forwarded in a series from one person to the next (perhaps with an accompanying comment), then each reading in the series can be understood as a recontextualization. Unless we presuppose the existence of objective linguistic facts (Labov 1975), what counts as relevant, that is the boundaries of the exchange, must be decided by the participants themselves.

Integrationism stresses the social embeddedness of the individual and the dynamic interchange that creates and sustains our sense of self over time, and our membership of human collectivities. In communicating, we integrate aspects of the situation we are in, including the on-going behavior of people present, with our own past, present and anticipated experience in ways that are not knowable in advance, even (or especially) by ourselves. Nothing is given in advance in communication, in the sense that nothing is agreed upon or definitively established, and signs are created in the here-and-now. Harris argues that the temptation to conclude that signs have intrinsic meanings must be resisted. A golden band only becomes a wedding ring once it is integrated into a marriage ritual. To assume that the maker of an object determines its status as a sign is to succumb to the ‘artificer fallacy’ (Harris 1996a: 92). When we talk about the wedding rings in a jewellery shop window, “we are already ignoring or anticipating or abstracting from the relevant temporal sequence of events” (1996a: 92). Another way to approach this question is to point out that there is a complex chain of economic, socio-cultural and institutional design features at work here. When I see the rings in the jewellery shop window I can contextualize the objects within these ‘macrosocial’ processes as ‘wedding rings’; but the objects themselves have no intrinsic meaning.

A central feature of human language-making and creativity involves the creation of (layers of) stories about ‘what happened’ or ‘what was said’, ‘what is going on’ or ‘what was meant’. Yet all this activity, this memory-work and meaning-creation, is itself situated in time and place and subject to constant amendment and correction. Even formal rituals such as marriage ceremonies or funerals, which stand out from ‘ordinary’ communicational practice as having a prescribed and pre-arranged form, cannot be reduced to the formula or directions, otherwise there would be no point in ‘performing’ the ritual as a unique set of acts. Similarly each performance of a conventional stage play in the theatre, although it follows a set of pre-arranged instructions, cannot be reduced to the script and the stage directions.

The emphasis on context and on the here-and-now within integrationism is intended to capture the unplanned and spontaneous ‘making do’ of all communicative action. This is not to say that we ordinarily live only in the immediacy of our own senses and responses and in the uniqueness of each passing moment. We generally do not enter a new and completely unfamiliar world each day, and we have a strong investment in the construction of regularity and in the maintenance of habits. We attend to patterns, repetitions, and have a strong sense of the ‘usual’ and ‘unusual’, and seek to create and maintain coherence on a number of levels, e. g. at the level of a conversation or over the span of an entire life. But integrationists would argue that we should not mistake the successful construction and maintenance of a sense of social order and relative predictability found in many (but far from all) societies as offering insight into the essential nature of language. Social order can break down, either locally (among a small group of people, or in a family), or across whole societies. Such break-downs frequently involve a sense of communicational disorder or even chaos. Social order is not a found or given feature of our language activity, but a constructed narrative, which can be contested and even ‘fall apart’.

One way to explain this view of the sign is through the slogan “meaning is always ‘now’” (Toolan 1996: 125). Putting this in a more elaborate way, Maturana (1988: 4) writes: “We find ourselves as human beings here and now in the praxis of living, in the happening of being human, in language languaging, in an a priori experiential situation in which everything that is, everything that

happens, is and happens in us as part of our praxis of living." In a complementary sense, however, meaning is never closed. Our interpretation or reading of what is done or said or written is always provisional and subject to revision, either explicitly, or as part of the constant remaking and reshaping of human memory and experience and through the creation of narratives that we construct and reconstruct as individuals, groups, institutions and societies. In semiotics, this endless displacement and deferral is referred to as 'unlimited semiosis' or 'infinite semiosis' (Petrilli 2012: 169). In evoking this open-ended, unbounded 'flight of interpretants' (Petrilli 2012: 61), semiotics, like integrationism, seems to embrace indeterminism, since there is no moment at which the meaning of a sign is definitively fixed and no point of view from which it can be determined what a sign truly or finally means.

The indeterminacy of the sign does not preclude participants sharing a strong sense that meanings have been satisfactorily arrived at. The participants in a communicational episode may experience meanings as determinate enough for the purpose at hand. In this sense, linguistic communication is "the reaching of agreement by verbal signs in particular interactional contexts" (Harris 1988: 120). This is not to imply that the outside observer is able to specify what the signs in question meant to those participants; nor does it rule out disagreement and subsequent re-interpretations either among participants or between participants and third parties. But if we seek the grounds of such an agreement, or indeed the causes of any disagreement or 'miscommunication', there is no procedure or mode of analysis available to us, beyond whatever questions we pose, the resources we choose to draw on, or the strategies of interpretation we adopt. There is no 'magic key' or objective methodology that the academic study of language and communication can provide.

If we follow the logic of indeterminacy within semiotics, it seems to imply an ever-increasing unknowability and uncertainty. As time passes, more interpretants are created, and more interpretants of intepretants, and so on ad infinitum: "The object of representation can be nothing but a representation of which the first representation is the interpretant" (Peirce 1931–58, vol. 1: 339). However in Peirce's work there is a tendency at work which runs contrary to this apparent flow from more to less determinate. The quotation continues:

> But an endless series of representations, each representing the one behind it, may be conceived to have an absolute object as its limit. The meaning of a representation can be nothing but a representation. In fact, it is nothing but the representation itself conceived as stripped of irrelevant clothing. But this clothing never can be completely stripped off; it is only changed for something more diaphanous. So there is an infinite regression here. Finally, the interpretant is nothing but another representation to which the torch of truth is handled along; and as representation, it has its interpretant again. Lo, another infinite series.

This 'absolute object' emerges most clearly in Peirce's evolutionary pragmatics, especially as expressed in his philosophy of science, and his stress on regularity and 'habit'. Peirce speaks of a (dimly perceived) 'final interpretant', and this implies that there is potentially an interpretant which "would finally be decided to be the true interpretant if consideration of the matter were carried so far that an ultimate opinion were reached" (1931–58, vol. 8: 184; Hutton 1990: 23). This sense that the passage of time may lead to more rather than less deterministic interpretations is at the heart of Eco's The Limits of Interpretation (1990), which distinguishes between indeterminacy and the open-endedness of semiosis. In the intellectual background to pragmatics and the semiotics of C.S Peirce is evolutionary theory. If semiotics can be informally described the "study of the difference between illusion and reality" (Cobley 2010a: 3), that is because no system of signs can depart fundamentally from the underlying exigencies of human and other forms of existence. If what I learn today has no relevance for what I will have to do tomorrow, then human existence as we know it would be impossible.

Semiotics attempts to reconcile the time-bound open-endedness of the indeterminate sign with

normative notions of interpretation or even truth. This dichotomy is found for example in Victoria (Lady) Welby's 1893 article 'Meaning and Metaphor'. Welby offers criticism of the idea of 'plain meaning', in terms of a postulated "absolute Plain Meaning to be thought of, as it were, in capital letters" (1893: 512). This reliance on plain meaning derives from an assumption that there is an underlying shared set of assumptions and inferences:

> We have been virtually assuming that our hearers and readers all share the same mental background and atmosphere. We have practically supposed that they all look through the same inferential eyes, that their attention waxes and wanes at the same points, that their associations, their halos of memory and circumstance, their congenital tendencies to symbolise or picture, are all on one pattern. Verily, we need a 'Critique of Plain Meaning'!

For Welby however the study of signs is or should be an evolutionary discipline, in that it strives to provide a more scientific or more accurate account of the nature of semiosis. For example, reasoning is deficient if it is based on wrongly personified abstractions (1893: 510–512) and the abuse of figurative language (Welby 1892). Welby speaks of science bringing the world "to truth" (1893: 525). In integrationism, this tension is not there, since there is an acceptance of the open-ended nature of semiosis. But both integrationism and semiotics in their different ways confront the tensions between indeterminacy, normativity, and social and communicational order.

There is arguably a related and equally complex tension between the integrational theory of the sign and the lay orientation of integrationism. For Harris, "a sign is not something that has to stand in a specific kind of relationship to something else in order to qualify as a sign" (Harris 2009b: 66), which, he admits, "runs counter to the way signs are commonly thought of by most people for everyday purposes" (2009b: 67). Harris adds that "integrational semiology does not endorse 'ordinary language' uses of the word sign", even when it does make sense to use the idiom sign of such-and-such (2009b: 67). What is clear is that, in contrast to Eco's position, integrationism recognizes no a priori limits to interpretation. The meanings of words in an utterance or a text cannot be calculated or determined by any formal analysis, and no amount of notational ingenuity can bring to interpretation a greater degree of precision than that available to ordinary language users themselves. Nonetheless, stability of meanings across contexts and consistency of interpretation over time are explicit goals of particular discourses, such as cultural criticism, theology, politics, and law, and are part of what might be termed 'lay normativism'. While we cannot 'stop the clock' of sign-making and sign-interpretation, in particular contexts a consensus may be created as to what particular words mean, or how a sign (or discourse) should be understood. Much of our experience of meaning is that it is good enough for now and for the purpose at hand, given all the concurrent and anticipated demands on our attention. Yet any interpretation or reading is open to challenge either in the immediate context or as part of a subsequent new context (or 'recontextualization') where what is meant becomes an issue. Ideal fixed points such as dictionary definitions may also serve as important orientation points in particular situations, but are equally vulnerable to challenge and may be dismissed as irrelevant. Definitions produced by professional lexicographers, in particular those of prestige brands such as Oxford University Press and Webster, have institutionalized cultural authority, but that authority is grounded in historical processes, socio-political ideologies, educational and pedagogic practice, rather than inhering in the activity of definition itself.

In the Novelist's Lexicon, the novelist David Peace, in an entry entitled ''~~Pla-gue~~'', provocatively cast doubt on the whole enterprise (Gillet 2008: 87):

> To be honest or stupid or both, but not churlish or contrary (I hope), I am uncertain I understand the premise of this lexicon. However, I am against the presumption of all premises and, equally, I am against all definitions and dictionaries, lexicons and lists, which, in their commodification and exclusivity, are the preserve and the territory of fascists and shoppers.

This position has a certain emotional appeal for the integrationist, who seeks to open up our creative reflexivity, rather than simply recognizing institutionalized authority over language. But for the language learner or the student taking a college entrance examination, this rebellious posture is a luxury they cannot afford. Language teaching and language testing are global industries and their practices and linguistic assumptions should be understood in socio-economic and political context.

Integrationism denies that there is a neutral point of mediation, which can be occupied by a class of experts. As language users and language makers, we are all inevitably drawn into such controversies and cannot avoid taking a stand. For example, anyone who teaches languages or about language within an institutional framework is subject to powerful constraints in relation to both the academic content and the metalanguage of academic inquiry into language.

The metalanguage of linguistics and expertise

The discipline of linguistics has drawn on, and developed out of, many important cultural assumptions, linguistic practices, and technological practices, notably the technology of writing. Issues of language theory tend to be discussed in relation to objects of study such as ‘phonemes’, ‘rules’, ‘structures’, ‘meaning’, and sub-disciplines of linguistics such as ‘semantics’, and ‘pragmatics’. They are the subject of investigation by a wide range of disciplines from linguistics to neuroscience. Much of modern linguistics is highly technical, and the discipline has proliferated sub-branches and specialisms with a wide range of (in part, contradictory) theoretical assumptions and aims. Some branches of linguistics align themselves with the natural sciences in treating the object of study as an external to, or independent of, human experience and agency; by contrast, engaged sociolinguists and applied linguists, critical discourse analysts and feminist linguists see their academic work informed by socio-political commitment, and seek to promote awareness of linguistic disadvantage in order to bring about social reform. While the twentieth century saw a number of theoretical twists and turns, notably the so-called ‘Chomskyan revolution’ (Kibbee 2010), integrationists tend to see the history of linguistic ideas as a set of recurrent tendencies and tensions, and view modern linguistics as embedded in, and part of, that long historical sweep. Integrationism offers a particular style of engagement, rather than a single methodological or ideological framework. It rejects the idea of a scientific search for the single best model or set of procedures for analyzing language and communication, and pursues self-awareness and self-understanding as a more important goal than the modeling of ‘linguistic data’.

Integrationism as it has developed has been both dependent on, as well as in part antagonistic to, academic linguistics in its various forms. One way to understand the relationship might be that integrationism, to quote Toolan (1996: 2–3), is “not ‘against’ segregationalist linguistic analysis and the treatment of languages as mechanistic codes; rather, it attempts to show the inadequacies of any thoroughgoing adoption and application of those principles”. Integrationists tend to assert that nearly all academic linguists share an important set of underlying assumptions (see discussion of the ‘language myth’, below) – this is often a source of irritation to linguists who see in it a form of stereotyping. Integrationists as a group do not necessarily reject the analysis and frameworks of linguistics, rather they see them as inherently limited by what they leave out and by the fundamental questions which they do not address. In that sense, as with any analysis, it is important to understand the limitations imposed by the framework adopted, and this would be no less true of integrationism itself. Hollnagel (1993: xx) puts the point as follows: “in order to have quantification it is necessary first to have a proper qualitative description or model. In other words, it is necessary to specify the data that are needed before they can be sought”. One can think of this qualitative stage as a process of framing the object of study. This can only be qualitative, as the

world presents to us an unbounded range of phenomena for study, and what emerges for us as a pressing intellectual problem cannot be determined by any meta-principle. Saussure's Course sets this out very clearly, arguing in effect that if there is to be an autonomous and systematic discipline devoted to the study of language, then it must frame its object of study in a particular way.

Linguistics has developed a series of highly complex metalanguages associated with different schools of thought and analytical models. In addition, it has retained or redefined much of the traditional vocabulary of the Western tradition, including terms like 'noun', 'verb', 'preposition', 'pronoun'. For example, a linguist might analyze the structure of pairs of sentences which are labeled 'active' and 'passive', identifying them as examples of sentences in English. "The girl kicked the ball" would be an example of an active sentence, and the corresponding passive sentence would be "The ball was kicked by the girl". In the history of modern linguistics, there have been extensive discussions about how to understand or represent the similarities and differences between classes of such sentences. It is important to note that sentences such as "The girl kicked the ball" are treated as objects which can be analyzed free of any particular context; the grammarian is not concerned with any particular speaker or listener, occasion, or with any actual persons or objects. It is assumed that "The girl kicked the ball" in some sense stands for, or underlies, or corresponds to, real world events that are the individual utterances of this sentence; that the sentence is composed of further abstract objects such as the word 'girl' (which is a member of the word class 'noun'); that it is possible to analyze and represent the sequence of sounds and the stress pattern of such a sentence, and so on (Bade 2012). Modern linguistics has devised complex formal models, operating at different levels of abstraction, for representing these basic relationships. Other forms of linguistics involve tracing sounds, words or structures over time, trying to identify causes and patterns of change. One practice which has both a lengthy cultural history and a place in modern linguistics is 'etymology', the search for word origins.

Increasingly, linguists have been concerned with conversation, written texts, discourse, public signage and other phenomena which lie beyond or outside the grammatical sentence. In such cases, linguists are indeed concerned with context, situation, and actual participants or roles, and may see their linguistic analysis as inseparable from ideological or political engagement. One example is the approach now generally termed critical discourse analysis (CDA). Integrationists however may question the exact locus, scope and application of the linguistic expertise possessed by academic linguists to socio-political problems, given that what underlies approaches like CDA is a recognizable orthodox model of language and communication (Jones 2007: 356ff). One can also identify a metalinguistic or reflexive turn in sociolinguistics, where questions of labeling, authority and normativity come to the fore (Jaworski et al 2004).

Integrationism recognizes that it would be hard to imagine a literate society which did not employ a set of abstract grammatical terms, as part of its pedagogical practices, and as a means of labeling and discussing identified segments of language for a wide range of purposes. But integrationism is sceptical of the claims of modern linguistics to have improved on, substantively redefined, or effectively replaced the terms of traditional grammar. To that extent, integrationism rejects the terminology and methodological practices of mainstream academic linguistics; it presents linguistics as jargon-laden and in that sense as alienated from everyday linguistic experience. Integrationism rejects the claim to systematic insight and objectivity that these terminologies embody; it expressly rejects the endowing of terminology with sacred or unchallengeable status; it also specifically rejects the idea that a metalinguistic term can acquire a single, stable meaning and so serve within an objectivist frame of comparison (Pablé 2012b).

Integrationists, it might be objected, also employ what might be termed 'jargon', and their writings are also not all by any means accessible to so-called 'ordinary' or lay speakers. Harris has put forward a number of terminological innovations (see for example Harris 1996a). In this work we introduce key terms used by integrationists, and we seek to explain how they are used and the kinds of insights they embody. This raises the suspicion that integrationists are caught in a performative contradiction, that is, they say one thing and do another. For the use of terminological innovation suggests that there are aspects of language that need to be brought more clearly into

focus, and this implies that there is a lack or deficit in the existing terminology, both the everyday metalinguistics of ordinary speakers and the technical vocabulary of academic specialists. The ascribing of definitions to this terminology might also suggest that these terms by virtue of the meanings ascribed to them pick out or refer to important and permanently present features of language. Uncomfortably for the integrationist, there may well be a profound and unavoidable paradox involved in the assertion that language and languages have no permanent essence or essential features, yet at the same time attributing features of non-permanence, indeterminacy and context-dependency to them.

On the one hand, integrationism aspires to be a semiology, in that it offers a general theory of the sign and sign-making. This ambition inevitably leads to a creative use of academic terminology. On the other, integrationism is suspicious of any blanket rejection of ordinary ways of talking about language, the mind, and meaning. These are often held to be good enough for the immediate purposes for which they are deployed, and only harmful if projected onto a decontextual plane as theoretical concepts which can underwrite a science of language. It is important to bear this general framework and discussion in mind when considering the specialist metalanguage that integrationists have devised for thinking about language and communication.

One further point to be made is that integrationism is not anti-intellectual; it does not reject, indeed it encourages, the creative use of language, and this would include an innovative metalanguage which challenges our preconceptions, breaks the routine of our ‘normal’ metalanguage, and plays a part in reframing discussions about language. Individual creativity and individual responsibility are key themes in integrationism, and the creative use of metalanguage has an important role to play in both of these respects. Further, integrationists cannot dispense with definition any more than any other class of language user; integrationism however points to the dangers of reductionism associated with definition, as well as opening up the possibility for other understandings of reflexivity (Taylor 2000). Importantly, questions about terminology lead us to consider the sense in which the statements we make about language are subject to proof or disproof. Ultimately each person must make their own decision about whether a particular term is useful, and whether they wish to incorporate certain academic terminology into their own way of thinking.

Integrationism, in asserting that language is indeterminate, argues that there is no foundational entity, set of rules or parameters that fix its nature. There is nothing in human society, psychology or biology that determines language in general, its so-called ‘functions’, or its contextual manifestations. Words have neither fixed identities or essences, nor determinate, abstract meanings. We have ways of talking about, debating and even formalizing the definition, the meaning(s) of a word; but these are so-called ‘metalinguistic’ or ‘second-order’ meanings. That is to say, they are constructs which cannot capture the open-ended, here-and-now, negotiated nature of meanings in communication. There are a great variety of labels and categories that we can use to make sense of instances of (first-order) linguistic behavior, but each act of analysis and each category of label is itself provisional and cannot capture the inherent indeterminacy that characterizes communication. The question then arises as to whether it is possible to demonstrate indeterminacy as a (paradoxically) invariant feature of language. Indeterminacy is, it would seem, the one constant of integrational semiotics. One view might be that the arguments for indeterminacy are primarily philosophical, that is, they are theoretical or logical in nature. Alternatively, it might be argued that indeterminacy is a label for a feature of our language experience, that indeterminacy can be observed and studied, indeed experienced (e. g. Duncker 2012).

This discussion leads to further difficult questions about the precise sense in which ‘indeterminacy’, which is a specialized academic term used in the study of meaning and interpretation, can be directly experienced, or brought out as a latent feature of everyday interaction. As argued above, for many mundane purposes and situations, language is experienced contextually as determinate, if by that is meant that it works for the practical purpose at hand. ‘Indeterminacy’ on this account is therefore experienced in the form of a communicational problem,

as a micro-disturbance or dispute about, for example, what was said or meant, who said what to whom and why, or why a remark was misinterpreted or misheard. But participants in such linguistic micro-squabbles generally take up their positions on the basis that there is a determinate or 'real' answer to the question of what was meant. To argue that language is indeterminate is therefore to make a general assertion about the absence of decontextual authority over what words mean.

Integrationism refers to itself as a 'lay-oriented' approach to language and communication. The lay speaker is the ordinary language-user, as opposed to the academic specialist in linguistic theory or the philosopher of language. Integrationism puts the individual's experience at the centre of its theoretical concerns, and stresses that we are all situated as individuals in the flux of communication. It questions the authority of any class of language experts over the individual's linguistic and communicational experience, and regards the ordinary language-user as responding meaningfully and strategically to the complex, ever-shifting, day-by-day, moment-by-moment challenges of life. This is not to say that authorities of various kinds play no role in our language practices, and that such authorities can never play a legitimate role. Often we invoke norms or point to fixed points of reference, and these include authoritative texts such as traffic signs, laws, sacred texts (e.g. the Bible), dictionaries, etc. We may defer to authoritative users such as the author of a text, the 'native speaker' (as guide to 'correct' or 'authentic' pronunciation), the lawyer (as guide to the meaning of the legal text), the lexicographer (as authority over the meanings of words) even if, paradoxically, these authorities are subject to the same integrational processes as all other meaning giving and interpretative activities. We may accept what a particular authority says, but we might equally qualify, analyze, contest, reject, or ignore their opinion.

Integrationism by its participation in academic debates about language also pretends to a form of authority. This emerges in its commentary upon, and critique of, academic linguistics, in the way it directs attention to certain aspects of language and communication rather than others, and in promoting a certain vision of language and communication – one which inevitably involves the rejection of other view. However integrationism recognizes an intrinsic limit to the authority of linguistic experts of all kinds. Linguistic expertise is distributed as a matter of principle among different classes of social actors, and the exact nature of that distribution is itself a question which arises in different ways in different settings and social domains. For example, contentious interpretative questions dealing with the meaning of a sacred text, the application of the law to a particular set of facts, involve not only questions about meaning and interpretation but are inseparable from debates about where interpretative authority should reside. In this sense there cannot be a purely 'linguistic question' which can be adjudicated by a class of experts (Hutton 1996, Jones 2007).

For example, the task of ordering a sandwich in a New York deli is initially daunting, since the number of possible options and substitutions (types and shape of bread, use of butter or some other spread, use of, and category of, mustard etc.) is highly extensive. It is a much more complex version of the 'builder's language' described by Wittgenstein in the Philosophical Investigations, supplemented by whatever other interpersonal greetings, banter and so on which Wittgenstein's language does not allow (Wittgenstein 1978, see discussion below). Efficiency requires the customer to structure their order so as to avoid the server having to ask for a decision at each level of choice. Someone who has worked many years in the deli, or is a regular customer of one, might count as an expert in the linguistic skills that are required, both in the sense that they have mastered the contextual skills, and in their ability to explain or comment on the system. Not all insiders are equally competent in explaining their practices, in the same way that not every artist can give an interesting account of their pictures. There is the further dimension that the orders are shouted back to the staff preparing the actual sandwiches, and the form in which the order is given is transposed by the front-line staff into the form most suitable for transmission to the kitchen.

We should note that this language has no particular relationship to English, in that one could be a so-called 'native speaker' of English and have no idea to go about ordering a sandwich 'properly', or have only a bare command of English but be supremely confident in this task. A linguist might provide an analysis of this 'deli-language', offering diagrams of the various choices, and a model of

how the language works. The experience that underlies the linguist's account is presumably a mixture of observation and experience; it would also be a normalization, in that it would abstract from countless routines of ordering, and describe a single set of rules or norms. In one sense, the linguist's expertise here is simply derived from the experience of the deli, but immediately a set of further questions arise: is there one system for ordering? Is there variation in practices within the deli and among the different delis of New York? and so on. If the linguist goes on to answer these questions, then they are abstracting further and further away from the experiential basis of the original research. Often, especially in grammatical or typological analysis, one linguist will aggregate the work of several others, and may have no firsthand experience of the language practices about which they are writing. Eventually, the researcher might reach a point of view which is far removed from the original experience in the deli, aggregating a standard 'New York deli-language', or tracking patterns of change and variation. Nonetheless, the linguist would not necessarily be able or fitted to work behind the counter of a busy deli, since a further or different range of skills and aptitudes are required. The academic account of the deli-language as an abstract system cannot capture the effect of the mix of new and old customers, and the interpersonal affect of each encounter, the multiplicity of contingent events that occur outside the normative description of the average or generic encounter. The analysis may seek to abstract away from the contingencies of experience to reach a normalized view, an account which would be comprehensible to an imagined reader who is interested but uninformed.

The integrationist would point out that expertise is not located uniquely in any of the roles. If one wished for an account of how a deli works linguistically, one might prefer to interview the staff, the customers or the linguist, depending on what wanted to know, but there is no one single point of view from which we can say what the definitive expertise about this language consists in. The grounding of the linguist's expertise in the deli-language is originally in experience, though the linguist may come to the study with a number of questions, assumptions and theories; once the 'data' has been gathered, other modes of knowledge, and (as integrationists would say), different forms of recontextualization, detach and reform that knowledge, reordering it within categories also in part supplied by the theory (e. g. the categories of linguistic analysis). The linguist may label particular aspects of the deli-language encounter, or moves within the entire process. For example, the linguist might label the initial ordering exchange as the 'offer and acceptance phase' (OAP); the transmission of the order to the kitchen might be the 'transmission' phase (TMP); the delivery of the sandwich from the kitchen to the customer would be a further stage or set of stages. The linguist might use dramatic metaphors, talking of the 'audience' (customers), 'frontstage' (the serving staff) and 'backstage' (the kitchen). In this way the academic account would transpose or translate the insider terms, or offer a grid of categories which are not available, or even of interest, to actual participants. But on this model, there is nothing to stop the linguist's categories diffusing back to the original context, just as terms like 'noun' or 'verb' are used by linguists, language teachers, journalists, and many others. Equally there are people who live their lives without knowing or using or missing these terms.

Seen anthropologically, the metalanguage of linguistics is as valid as any other. But the intellectual move that integrationists reject is the assumption that the categories of analysis underlie, inhere in, structure or generate the activity. On the model just sketched, this would imply that there was an underlying 'real' category OAP and TMP, but that the participants were not aware of it. This complex of problems is not one that integrationism can solve, precisely because authority and expertise about language is not located definitively in any one place or in any one role. Integrationism orients itself towards the process that is involved in thinking through these questions, and the impossibility and undesirability of silencing the sceptical voice, even the voice that is sceptical about integrationism. Integrationism is process-oriented; it is interested in styles of thinking about language and communication, and in exploring the paradoxes, contradictions and complex reflexive processes that it sets in motion.

‘Integration’

The term ‘integrationism’ suggests that an activity or operation called ‘integration’ is at the heart of how integrationists understand signs, language and communication. Integration in a general sense concerns the positioning of the communicative situation, in that the interactants must integrate their past experiences with ongoing exchanges in the present and also anticipate future experience and situations. Integration can be understood as a real time or ‘on-line’ process, in which we respond to events and actions in the immediate present, but which are inseparably bound up with our individual and shared experiences as communicators. More specifically, communication is seen as a semiotic process of integration, in that we contextualize and recontextualize signs into our on-going, real-time activities. Integrationist semiology is based on two theoretical axioms. Firstly, “[w]hat constitutes a sign is not given independently of the situation in which it occurs or of its material manifestations in that situation”. It makes no sense therefore to define the qualities or features of signs in the abstract, or to divide the world up into fixed classes of signs (e. g. words) and non-signs (e. g. objects). Secondly, “[t]he value of a sign (i. e. its signification) is a function of the integrational proficiency which its identification and interpretation presuppose” (Harris 2009a: 73). In this sense, “[e]very act of communication, no matter how banal, is seen as an act of semiological creation” (Harris 2009a: 80). Harris explains integration as follows (2008: 111):

> Living, if I am right, is a process of integration, and I have so far mentioned three of the kinds of integration involved. One is integration of one’s own activities with those of others. Another is the integration of those activities with the physical world in which we all have to find—if we can—food and shelter sufficient to sustain ourselves and our families from day to day. A third is the integration of verbal with non-verbal communication. [...] There is a fourth mode of integration that is tacitly implied in all this, but which I have not so far mentioned. Everything we do as human beings involves the integration of the present with the past and the future: this is temporal integration.

Human beings “communicate with one another not by exchanging thoughts but by integrating their many activities” (Harris 2008: 112).

For integrationists the sign is not something that exists outside the context of its use; the integration or contextualization is the creation of the sign. Anything can become a sign, and while we draw distinctions between verbal, visual, musical, olfactory signs, in actual contexts such distinctions may or may not be pertinent, and any object may take on the role of a sign. The integration of the sign is also the creation of the sign as sign. That is to say, we do not reach out of the context in which we find ourselves to ‘draw down’, ‘select’, ‘employ’ or ‘instantiate’ a particular item such as a word. This might seem a startling and strongly counter-intuitive position, since we commonly speak of ‘using’ words, ‘selecting’ the right term, even ‘inserting’ words into a text, or ‘replacing’ one word with another. In order to speak meaningfully of the ‘insertion’ of a word into a text, there must be an entity, an identifiable abstract object, which exists outside the context in which the word is selected for use. This notion is also part of everyday metalinguistic discourse about language, so the integrational position, namely that integration is actually the contextual creation of the signs, is apparently at odds with both academic orthodoxy and common sense. For the integrationist, integration, contextualization and recontextualization would seem paradoxically to involve no pre-existing entity whatsoever. It might seem therefore that nothing is integrated, since there is no particular entity available for such an operation, and there is no such activity as contextualization, since the signs that are the putative subject of these operations do not exist.

The idea that integration involves the coordination of different activities in real time, and that in communicating we constantly adjust and amend our horizons of expectation, our awareness of what we and others are doing and saying, and our understanding of what is at stake or ‘on the

table' in our conversations, is relatively straightforward. The troubling paradox arises when we talk of signs being created apparently out of nothing yet having meaning in the context of use. It appears that integration = contextualization = meaning. Further, the term 'recontextualization', which is employed by integrationists to emphasize the shifting contexts in and across which we communicate, seems paradoxical, since we can only recontextualize a sign which has first been contextualized, and therefore we must establish or infer a cross-contextual identity for that sign in order to talk of it as being recontextualized. But for these sign-processes what counts as a repetition or recontextualization is ultimately a question for the participants themselves in a communicational episode.

Many theories of communication assume that speakers and hearers draw on, or 'access', linguistic and communicational resources which occupy a 'neutral space'. That space is viewed as existing independently of the intentions and meanings that individual speakers bring to communication. In the case of individual words and phrases, this might be (in part) a shared 'mental lexicon', that is, the store of words and their meanings which speaker and hearer have in common and which they use in communication. Alternatively, there are assumed to be social conventions governing language use which speakers must follow in order to communicate. But where might such a space be located? For integrationists, conventions are expectations that participants have of each other's situated linguistic behaviour in conversational real time (Duncker forthc.). In communicating we do not refer to, or have access to, a context-neutral, atemporal, communicational space. There is no Platonic heaven of words and their meanings, nor is there a mental lexicon on which we draw in order to ensure that we and our interlocutors are able to communicate successfully. What we have at our disposal is our complex and multi-layered experience. Rather than being a pure, decontextual 'language bank', this 'linguistic knowledge' reflects the myriad contexts in which we have participated and the open-ended and unshaped layering of experience. That experience is only in part organized and 'narrativized', in that we can give accounts of what we know and what we have heard. But these are second-order renderings, which themselves are subject to dynamic processes of change, interactional context, limitations of attention and focus, forgetting, remembering and misremembering. When we communicate, we draw on memory, experience, and knowledge. What we do not and cannot do is pluck pure abstractions from a blue Platonic sky. In that sense, while we have a powerful second-order metalanguage about words and their objective existence, we cannot reach out of the context in which we find ourselves and access such decontextual entities. Communication is not the contextual deployment of abstractions (Hutton 1990).

Parameters and principles

For the integrationist, human communication is constrained or shaped by three parameters: (i) biomechanical; (ii) macrosocial; (iii) circumstantial. Biomechanical factors "relate to the physical and mental capacities of the human being"; macrosocial factors "relate to practices established in the community or some group within the community", and circumstantial factors "relate to the specifics of particular situations" (Harris 1998: 29; see also Harris 1996a: 24 – 33):

> Thus the fact that A and B communicate in speech only via sounds of a certain amplitude and frequency is a biomechanical factor, having to do with the physiological constitution of the human body. The fact that A and B cannot communicate in Swahili because B knows no Swahili (even though A does) is a macrosocial factor. The fact that A can speak to B even though separated by a distance of thousands of miles (because a telephone is available) is a circumstantial factor.

A writing system that relies on graphic marks which the human eye cannot distinguish would fail

on biomechanical grounds for everyday purposes. Attempts to devise communicational systems within Artificial Intelligence (e. g. machine translation) have great difficulties in dealing with the circumstantial nature of human communication. The category of ‘macrosocial’ is the most problematic philosophically for the integrationist, since integrationism sees abstract or general categories as always invoked or appealed to in particular contexts or situations, rather than forming or structuring our language practices. Our lay experience is clearly shaped by an awareness of, or orientation to, such rules or regularities: we correct the language usage of others (e.g. children, language learners) on that basis, and appeal to macrosocial norms of all kinds. Telling a child to say ‘please’ or ‘thank you’ sets up an implicit appeal to rules of good behaviour, community standards and so on. But these rules do not constitute or create the behavior; further, the sense of the community or group of which this practice forms a part is highly unstable and locally defined. Rules may be ignored, contested or subject to contextual or cross-cultural re-interpretation. What counts as a macrosocial rule is determined locally or contextually.

A further fundamental terminological and theoretical innovation involves the ‘principle of cotemporality’. Cotemporality can be understood as an elaboration of the circumstantial nature of human communication and interaction, drawing out the further conclusion that there is no systematic way to distinguish between the linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of a situation. Harris (1998: 81–82) offers this explanation:

> This principle is based on a simple lesson of linguistic experience: that what is said is immediately applicable to the current situation, unless there is reason to suppose otherwise. But this holds not only for what we say but for everything we do. In other words, in this respect there is a complete parity of status between linguistic acts and other acts. Linguistic acts do not have some special temporal status of their own, which somehow puts them outside the sequentiality of the rest of our existence. This might be thought to be an extremely banal observation, and in one sense it is. But it is perhaps worth calling it a ‘principle’ when we realize how far-reaching its implications are for linguistic inquiry.

Toolan makes a link between cotemporality and the notion of integration itself. Cotemporality is (2007: 278): “the inescapable chronological integration, at the first order of communicative behaviour, of linguistic signification and the surrounding circumstances and interests that prompt the communicative activity in the first place.” The significance of this principle lies initially in its rejection of an operational autonomy for language; we learn language and use language within the stream of our and others’ actions and thoughts; speaking a language is not a process of matching ideas to words, but the ability to integrate one’s behaviour in its widest sense with the demands that we and others place on it, or indeed, to choose not to, for whatever reasons (Jones 2007: 345):

> Any words we say or write, or any designs or sketches [...] we produce, cannot in principle, then, be hermetically sealed off, either in their creation or their interpretation, from any other part or aspect of the engagement, including, of course, from the so-called ‘non-verbal’ aspects of communication. Partly this has to do with the ‘substitutivity’ and ‘cotemporality’ (Harris, 1981, pp. 161–162) of verbal and non-verbal acts with respect to the pursuit of particular goals. If you ask me how high my new fence is going to be I could either say ‘seven foot’ or gesture with my hand in the air.

Further, Harris stresses that the “chronological parity between linguistic and non-linguistic events in human experience” is essential to understanding “how and why communication invariably proceeds on the assumption that every linguistic act is integrated into the individual’s experience as a unique event, which has never before occurred and will never recur” (Harris 1990e: 47–48). In other words, each utterance is marked by its context, is a product of its context, and is therefore a

unique semiotic event (Hutton 1990). No moment or situation ever recurs, and this applies to all forms of social act, including linguistic utterances. It is important to stress that this does not mean that no remark can ever be repeated, since it is part of the 'common sense' of language use that if someone says something twice, they have 'repeated themselves'. Ordinary language users "entertain the idea that utterances are repeatable" (Love 1998: 104) and it would be difficult to imagine a linguistic culture in which this was categorically denied.

BBC Radio has a long-running panel game, Just a Minute, in which "the contestants are challenged to speak for one minute without hesitation, deviation or repetition on any subject that comes up on the cards" (www.bbc.co.uk/programmes). What counts as 'repetition' for the purposes of this game is a matter for the chair, whose decisions are often disputed by the contestants. The repetition of 'the' is not generally repetition for the purpose of this game; repetition of a word like 'happiness' would trigger a challenge. The Wikipedia entry on this game offers this summary (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Just_a_Minute):

> 'Repetition' means the repetition of any word or phrase, although challenges based upon very common words such as 'and' are generally rejected except in extreme cases. Words contained in the given subject are exempt unless repeated many times in quick succession. Skilful players use synonyms in order to avoid repeating themselves. The term 'BBC' can be successfully challenged for repetition of 'B'.

A similar source suggests that the rules have changed over time, becoming more strict: "Originally, this meant not being able to repeat a certain idea or concept. However, due to challenges over time, it now means not being able to repeat words or even letters (For example, 'BBC' is considered repetition because of the two B's)." (www.comedy.co.uk/guide/radio/just_a_minute/about/). However a review of a large number of episodes (the programme has been running since 1967) would lead to a much more complex, and partially inconsistent, picture. One important factor in the application of the rules is that this is a comedy programme, and the rules are also interpreted for laughs; factors such as whether the player is a novice or an old hand may also be taken into account.

What counts as a repetition cannot be decided with reference to a code or system; it is a question for the participants themselves, or in some circumstances, an observer, or, as in this case, an arbitrator or 'referee'. Toolan (1996: 32 –33) gives the example of ordering in a fast-food restaurant on different occasions ("Give me a hamburger, medium rare, with ketchup and mustard, but easy on the relish"):

> When we assume ourselves to be going through routines or normative activities 'again' we are not in fact misled into imagining that the present activity and communication could possibly be truly identical with previous experiences, or that here and now we are once more going through that experience first undergone there and then, or that the present encounter could be merely a mechanical replication of an earlier one – even in the emphatically routine-laden patterns of communication in fast-food restaurant chains.

Love explains the integrational position on repetition by contrasting it with the idea of the repetition of units in a code (Love 2007: 706). Linguistic analysis in mainstream linguistics "involves identifying and citing the linguistic units" that make up the code. This form of analysis requires "decontextualisation, abstraction and reification", since what is at stake is the identification of invariant units. However "the ultimate basis for these operations lies in the familiar, everyday metalinguistic act of repetition". For Love, linguistic analysis could not operate without a reliance of the everyday notion of repetition (2007: 706):

> What is said or written can be repeated. Someone asks me 'Did you say "bat"?' My answer is: 'No, I said "hat" '. But when I say 'No, I said "hat" ', I am not somehow identifying the abstract unit of the English vocabulary of which my first utterance was a particular instance. I am simply repeating what I said – i. e. producing another utterance. The repetition will not of course be an exact replica. In many cases it won't necessarily be anything objectively like the original. It will merely be similar to the first in whatever dimensions of similarity I think contextually relevant for usefully answering my questioner's question. What those dimensions are will vary from occasion to occasion.

So while the linguist's interest in repetition relies on the everyday intuitive practices that make up our notions of 'repeating a word' or 'saying the same thing twice', it goes further in that it is assumed that there is an objective set of units which the external analyst can identify in their patterns of combination and repetition. For the integrationist, there are no objective patterns of repetition beyond those which matter to the interactants themselves or to commentators with a particular set of interests or agenda. A similar point is made by Jones, with reference to the subjectivity and contingency of what counts as 'the same' (Jones 2007: 341):

> Words do not produce or interpret themselves; people, engaged over some matter, are responsible for that, and, under certain circumstances, answerable too. What is said and how it is taken are facts about the conscious conduct of particular individuals within particular engagements. If a child responds with a furious tantrum to a critical word from mum but then takes (as it seems to mum) 'the same thing' quietly and calmly from dad, this may mean that, if only in the child's eyes, there are different matters at stake in the conduct of the different parents towards her. What 'the same thing' is in communicative terms is something that only the parties to the engagement can determine, since it is their behaviour –the behavior of particular personalities towards one another – that is communication.

'First-order' and 'second-order'

One way to understand the basic integrational position on signs and meaning making is through the assertion that 'first-order' experience cannot be reduced to 'second-order' categories (Love 2007: 705):

> The problem is that if we turn the medium of inquiry back on itself it becomes an object of inquiry, and to envisage treating linguistic phenomena as objects is, in and of itself, to propose a distorted account of them. There are no (first-order) linguistic objects of any kind. Language is a temporally situated, ongoing process – the process of making and remaking signs in contextualized episodes of communicative behaviour.

First-order refers to: here-and-now activity, on-going communicational activity, contextually meaningful behavior: it is situated, happening in real-time and real-space, and unfolds in unplanned ways. The face-to-face communicational event is probably the best example, but talking on the telephone, reading a novel, watching television, writing an email, and countless other activities or events are examples of first-order experience. But one aspect of our communicational practice includes the ability to give accounts of our communicational behavior and experience in terms of second-order categories. Second order concepts are macrosocial abstractions (labels, categories) we employ in order to comment on, explain, or interpret experience. In the case of

language, such concepts and categories are called ‘metalinguistic’. We use such categories all the time, and they are intertwined with, and necessary to, our first-order practices as language-users and makers. Ideas like ‘society’, ‘community’, ‘social order’ are second-order concepts, as are the names of languages (‘Chinese’, ‘French’, ‘Hindi’). In this sense we cannot experience or come in contact with ‘society’ or ‘the economy’, but we make sense of our experience, and we order our social world, by reference to such macrosocial or general concepts. We have a complex and sophisticated range of second-order practices, including a range of practices, beliefs and activities concerning ‘spelling’, ‘glossing, ‘correcting’ and so on, and these are central to our communicational abilities, but they do not describe or underlie those abilities, such as the ability to write or to speak, and are specific to particular situations and cultural contexts.

In calling a practice or form of analysis ‘second-order’ we are tacitly admitting the priority of situated communication against which the practice seems more abstract, more concerned with overt norms, and more conscious. But ultimately, integrationism sees so-called first and second-order practices as inextricably intertwined, and indeed in drawing this distinction we are assuming a particular decontextualized point of view.

Surrogationalism

For integrationists, putting creativity at the heart of the understanding of language and communication involves rethinking the status of all second-order categories. Integrationism questions the assumption that there exist determinate fixed and stable relationships between words and meanings, between language and the world, and language and thought. Words do not ‘stand for’ things in the world or for ideas in our heads. The notion that in using language we apply labels to, or use words to stand for, things and/or thoughts is termed by integrationists ‘surrogationalism’ (Harris 1996a, 2005a). In rejecting surrogationalism, integrationism denies that words are fixed labels which we stick on the world or with which we refer to our thoughts or ideas. Things, objects and situations do not present themselves to us as pre-labelled units, in neatly well-defined and unchanging categories. The environment is not an objective, unchanging background against which we operate. Of course, human beings have the ability to pick out and label objects which they identify in their environment. It would be difficult to see how we could survive without this. However, integrationists do not think that surrogational theories of the sign can illuminate the study of the origin of human communication, nor explain the achievements observed in the domain of human-animal communication.

Any object can be labelled and described in an unlimited number of ways. In our communicational practice we also shape the context which we are in, and thus what counts as background or an object of relevance to us is situation-dependent. We negotiate labels, and make judgments about what is appropriate in which context. We construct such object-word relationships, if they exist at all, in the course of our communicational activity. We do not simply apply a set of pre-existing labels to pre-identified objects, because when we ‘talk about an object’ we do so in the context of a wider set of integrated activities and assumptions (Wolf 1999: 27): “It is no part of the integrational sign’s nature to stand in a correlational relationship with things which exist apart from it. The sign is created within a communicational context and is uniquely relevant to that context. It integrates, it does not correlate with”. There is no fixed entity, the word in question, to which we can appeal; rather we have experience of labeling activities and we bring them to bear on new situations. In many situations and contexts we derive from that experience a sense of stability and predictability. For example, in ordering the same coffee at the same coffee chain every day (e. g. for “a grande decaff skinny vanilla latte”), we are confident that our order, and the label we use for the coffee, refers to a type of object, the cup of coffee, which is stable over time. But that experience of stability is an accomplishment of the company running the chain; it is not given in the relationship between the label and the coffee. The experience of buying the coffee is embedded

in a profoundly complex legal and commercial order, including the language engineering or innovation that accompanies brand creation and maintenance.

Children or second-language learners are taught, at least in part, by a pointing and naming method, and it belongs to our repertoire of skills to be able to respond to questions about the identity of objects. We pass through an archeological museum and seek clarification about the kinds of objects presented to us by looking at the attached labels and explanations; we look from a modernist painting to the label in seeking cues for understanding the image; in an exotic food store we might seek guidance about the names of properties of the imported vegetables; in our work and domestic sphere we are surrounded by large numbers of objects which we can confidently name, or which we can pick out by other methods including description in terms of colour, shape or position, or by pointing. Dictionary and encyclopedia entries are often accompanied by a picture of the plant, animal, machine-part, etc., which is being defined; certain professions have extensive technical vocabularies which designate colours (as in interior decoration), the human body (medicine), or procedures, processes, concepts, documents (law). Thus there is a profound weight of experience and pedagogical practice, and culturally institutionalized ways which encourage us to think of words as labels we put on objects or things.

Integrationism recognizes the cultural salience of these practices, but would stress that the practice of pointing at an object and/or naming cannot represent or stand for our linguistic practices as a whole. It is an interesting experiment to note as one moves through an average day how much (or little) discussion or conversation revolves around objects that are present in the immediate context, and how much on situations, stories, emotions, activities, relationships, needs, plans. Even in those contexts where objects are picked out and named (e. g. in a store where customers must ask the assistants to fetch goods for them), there is always a wider context and set of motivations at work. In our first-order experience, we use signs to integrate our activities. We do not go around pointing or referring to objects and naming them, unless we are engaged in particular recognized activities such as first or second language learning, or identifying and labelling objects in a shop or museum display. Most words have no particular relationship to physical things, even on the second-order level (‘the’, ‘a’, ‘love’, ‘between’, ‘reform’, ‘is’, ‘unicorn’). To take the relation between word and object as the foundation of language is to mistake one specific second-order labeling practice for the essence of language and communication. The pedagogical case of pointing at an object and naming it is not a paradigm example of communication, but rather an ancillary, albeit a necessary, second-order practice. By taking the relationship between a word and a thing as the paradigm or basic relationship, we are again mistaking a specific second-order relationship for our first-order experience.

One of the most influential philosophical works of the twentieth century, Ludwig Wittgenstein’s Philosophical Investigations opens with a celebrated, if somewhat enigmatic, discussion of the relationship between words and things. Wittgenstein begins with the very basic idea that words have meaning in that they refer to things in the world, and seeks to show how this becomes a total vision of the nature of language, in particular because one fundamental social practice involves indicating objects by pointing. Pointing and naming is central to how children are taught language, or at least to our idea of how children learn (Wittgenstein 1978: §1, Joseph, Love and Taylor 2001: 72 – 90). Many centuries earlier, St. Augustine (Confessions, 1. 8.) made an allied point:

> When they (my elders) named some object, and accordingly moved towards something, I saw this and I grasped that the thing was called by the sound they uttered when they meant to point it out. Their intention was shewn by their bodily movements, as it were the natural language of all peoples: the expression of the face, the play of the eyes, the movement of other parts of the body, and the tone of voice which expresses our state of mind in seeking, having, rejecting, or avoiding something. Thus, as I heard words repeatedly used in their proper places in various sentences, I gradually learnt to understand what objects they signified; and after I had trained my mouth to form these signs, I used them to express my

own desires.

Pointing and naming as a pedagogical practice is termed by Wittgenstein ‘ostensive teaching’. Philosophers and linguists talk of ‘ostensive definition’ in cases where the meaning of a word is explained by pointing to it. Wittgenstein points out that this offers ‘a particular picture of the essence of human language’ and that Augustine’s account ‘does not speak of there being any difference between kinds of word’ (1978: §1). Wittgenstein goes on to imagine various ‘language games’ or ‘primitive languages’

> Let us imagine a language for which the description given by Augustine is right. The language is meant to serve for communication between a builder A and an assistant B. A is building with building stones: there are blocks, pillars, slabs and beams. B has to pass the stones, and that in the order in which A needs them. For this purpose they use a language consisting of the words ‘block’, ‘pillar’, ‘slab’, ‘beam’. A calls them out; —B brings the stone which he has learned to bring at such and such a call.— —Conceive this as a complete primitive language.

One way to understand this primitive language is as a set of fixed labels which refer to a set of objects. But the primitive language as described by Wittgenstein is actually a set of commands – to describe it a merely set of labels for objects fails to capture this essential feature. One of Wittgenstein’s aims is to isolate specific explanatory frameworks for how language works, working against “our tendency to impose particular methods (or models) of representation when we talk and think about language” (Joseph, Love and Taylor 2001: 84), and to show how these models do not and cannot stand for language as a whole.

One way to read Wittgenstein’s language parable is as a warning not to take one particular mode in which words relate to things as capturing the underlying essence of language as a whole. As mentioned above, in integrational linguistics, the idea that words gain their meaning in that they ‘stand for’ things is termed ‘surrogationalism’. Within surrogationalism, words are understood as standing for objects outside the speakers in reality (a position termed ‘reocentric surrogationalism’) or for thoughts in the mind (‘psychocentric surrogationalism’), or some combination of the two.

The language myth

For integrationists, the notion of the ‘language myth’ is foundational not only in the study of language, but across a wide range of disciplines and social domains in the Western tradition (Harris 1980, 1981). In brief, it is the notion that languages are autonomous and well-defined entities which provide stable systems of representation for members of speech communities. The myth rests on the idea of languages as fixed or determinate codes (the ‘fixed code fallacy’) which can be described and studied independently of any particular context, speaker or communicational practice. The language myth sets interpretative practices apart, treating them as if they can be studied and understood independently of other social processes and forces (Jones 2007: 338):

> Essentially, the myth entails a refusal or inability to recognise the integration of communicative practices into social processes generally with the resulting theoretical and analytical constructs being derived by an artificial and arbitrary segregation of certain contingent and contextually conditioned aspects of the forms and results of communicative activity from the totality of human conduct.

The fixed code underwrites or implements the transfer of thoughts from one mind to another, a view of communication described in integrational theory as 'telementation'. The code is assumed to provide a stable set of orientation points and determinate relationships which transcend the specific instances of communication and the activities of speakers and hearers, for whom communication is thereby made possible (Toolan 1997: 86):

> Crucial to telementation, or 'ideas-transfer' is the assumption–which is either false, unprovable or irrelevant, and perhaps all three–that when A speaks to B the same idea that A used and encoded into speech is picked out, highlighted, or re-created in B's head. A has an idea and, via the 'conduit' of language, B receives a copy. In telementation, language enables ideas to be faxed or, in a generous interpretation, re-assembled or re-created; what telementation signally excludes, and what a genuinely anti-telementational approach such as Harris's integrational linguistics includes, is the notion that in situated interactions between A's and B's, all parties draw on language to construct or create ideas. It's all the difference between duplication and invention.

Integrationism rejects the picture of communicative understanding as involving the transfer of a thought or idea from one mind to another via a linguistic signal. This transfer is understood to take place by means of the linguistic form or set of forms associated with the thought in the system shared by speaker and hearer. The metaphor of 'transfer' provides no extra insight or information, and does not take us to a deeper level of understanding beyond the ordinary, everyday ways in which people talk about communication, for example, using phrases like 'getting their ideas across'.

Segregationalism and structuralism

Integrationism is anti-foundational, in that it denies that our communicational activity has any underlying guarantee or relies on a set of fixed reference points. We are always in the middle of a temporal and communicational stream, and the reference points we use are shifting along with us. We cannot get out of the stream of communicational life and observe it from a neutral vantage point. In this sense, we are all language-makers, sign-makers, meaning-makers, and as a matter of necessity, theory-makers in the domain of language (Harris 1980). The study of the properties of this hypothetical code has been the central concern of the discipline of academic linguistics and involves what integrationists term 'segregational' assumptions and methods. Mainstream linguistics is 'segregationalist' in several senses: it assumes a constant transhistorical distinction between the categories of language and non-language. Following from this, it demands an object of study abstracted from speakers, hearers, context and unfolding temporality; it relies on a presumption that language is best studied by being broken down into a hierarchy of levels and units of analysis which operate as abstract types through the instantiation of tokens: pragmatics, semantics, syntax, lexicology, morphology, phonology, phonetics. The resulting discipline is also effectively 'segregated' from the surrounding disciplines of literary theory, psychology, anthropology, cultural studies, sociology, physiology, and so on.

Linguistics and many other disciplines rely on the idea of languages as fixed codes that are held to make meanings available for us to use in particular contexts (the 'language myth'). Structuralism is generally understood as a range of approaches and methods that look back to Ferdinand de Saussure's Course in General Linguistics, first published in 1916, as the founding text. One of the key features of structural linguistics was the idea that languages are systematic, and the properties that render a language systematic are independent of the views, perceptions and understandings of speakers. Structural linguistics, in common with traditional grammar, does not begin with the

everyday experience of communication; rather it asserts that the formal features of a language system must be discovered by rigorous procedures and analysis. This analysis is a process of abstraction, one which aims to identify the basic units that make up the system and its sub-systems. Thus a word such as ‘happiness’ might be analyzed into two morphemes happy plus the nominalizing suffix, ness. These morphemes would themselves be understood as having a certain phonemic structure, that is they are divisible into abstract units of sound-structure. The units that make up a language system are therefore themselves formed into sub-systems, and the units that occur in these sub-systems are interdefining.

For a purist form of structuralism, as set out in Saussure’s Course in General Linguistics these interrelationships are the primary reality of the language system. The system as an abstraction is deemed to have a psycho-social reality, and underwrites or guarantees the existence of a community, the speech community, and the possibility of communication among the members of that community. In other words, the meaning of a word is not a relation to an object (idea or thing); that naming or referencing relation can only be established in discourse. Structural linguistics in its purest form emphasized the autonomy and self-sufficiency of the code, rather than the stability and determinate nature of the relationship between language and the reality of sound and meaning. It offers one extreme variant of the language myth, focussing ultimately on the fixed code as autonomous psycho-social reality.

From the integrational viewpoint, the denial that words are simplistically correlated with objects is welcome. But the overall price paid for this is too high, in that structuralism locates determinacy in the interrelations within the system itself, and in the like-mindedness of members of the speech community. Structuralism offers a powerful yet misleading solution to the problem of how people manage to make sense of their own and others’ linguistic and communicative acts in the absence of observable fixed norms and conventions. Structuralism argues that there are latent or inherent norms, of which speakers are not necessarily aware, rather than questioning the model of communication which creates the conundrum in the first place.

The semiotics of writing

Reflection on writing is central to integrational linguistics, not least because of the importance that writing plays in our representations of, and theorizing of, language as a totality. Contrary to a widely held set of assumptions, integrationists question whether writing is a representation of speech, and see it as both autonomous from, and related by a wide range of practices to, speech. Here is how Harris sketches the relationship (2009a: 173): “Speech and writing are biomechanically independent activities. Literacy is the matter of knowing how to integrate the two.” However integrationism recognizes that writing plays a central role in second-order understandings of language in modern literate societies, and in ideas about rationality and reasoning. Printing and the standardized typeface creates a visual stability which we project onto language as a whole; the print against the empty paper (or screen) background suggests that words and sentences can be separated from context, analyzed as free-standing autonomous objects, and moved around as counters in games of logic and abstract reasoning.

Integrationists argue that it is the semiotic modality of writing that has underwritten the basic precepts of modern linguistics. Writing projects visual stability, uniformity and homogeneity, especially when we look at a text set in a single typeface. Peirce’s claim that although on a single (printed) page there are on average 20 tokens of the definite article ‘the’, in “another sense of the word “word”, however, there is but one word “the” in the English language” (i.e. the word-type ‘THE’) illustrates this well (Peirce 1931–58, vol. 4: 537). Further, the possibility of isolating and analyzing written forms against a blank, featureless background, combined with features such as the unambiguous identification of spaces between words, and the combinatorial nature of writing (i.e. the open-ended recurrence of a closed set of units which are deemed identical across their

instance), have profoundly shaped the way linguists think about speech. When linguists talk about language, what they seem to be describing is an idealized version of writing. Linell (2005) analyzes "the written language bias of linguistics", an intellectual phenomenon integrationists refer to as 'scriptism'. Taylor (1997b: 52) defines scriptism as "the influence of writing on the conceptualization of speech".

Writing, like language, is not a given category, and it is possible to think laterally both about the history of writing and what counts as writing, and the future of writing and what might or might not be included under the concept of literacy. In The Origin of Writing Harris suggests that from the point of view of our descendants, "the 'origin of writing' may well turn out to be a point in human sign-systems which we ourselves [...] have not yet reached" (1986: 157). The open-endedness of the notion of literacy is stressed in Rethinking Writing (2000a: 242):

> When future generations are quite accustomed to sitting at a keyboard and 'typing' an audio-visual product that incorporates sounds, letter-forms and pictures systematically interrelated, they will have acquired a new concept of writing, a new concept of literature, a new concept of language.

For integrationists, the notions of 'language', 'languages' and 'writing' are not fixed cultural or social categories. The boundaries between human language, animal communication and non-language are determined neither by biology nor by any particular academic discipline. Similarly, what we understand as writing today may be seen merely as primitive pre-writing, or even 'non-writing', in the distant future (Harris 1986: 157)

Is there such a thing as 'data'?

Questions of 'data' and the possibilities of analysis will naturally arise in the mind of the reader, especially the student or would-be researcher into language. The idea of 'data' is historically and philosophically complex, for all its apparent transparency within the practices of modern linguistics. Data is a second-order concept, in the sense that a particular interaction, stream of discourse, or set of language materials are abstracted, notated within some conventional system, and identified for analysis. The identification of data, even prior to the actual analysis, involves a process of decontextualization and recontextualization. The object of analysis is removed from its original context, reduced to some system of recording or notation and recontextualized within the framework of issues and questions that are relevant for the linguist. On this point, Harris argues as follows (1997: 272 – 3):

> Language does not present itself for study as a neatly disengaged range of homogeneous phenomena, patiently awaiting description by the impartial observer, as is suggested by the misleading expression linguistic data. [...] On the contrary, language occurs nowhere as 'data'. Language offers a paradigm case of interference by investigation. The interference arises from the fact that in linguistics language becomes both the object and the instrument of investigation, as well as the medium in which the linguist's conclusions are ultimately formulated.

For the integrationist, there may be something paradoxical about the search for data for analysis, when we are, during our whole waking lives, and in some of our dream worlds, immersed in the flow of language and interactions of all kinds. In modern consumer societies untold varieties of texts are circulating in media of all kinds; in face-to-face small-scale societies, language or

conversation is central to social life, it arguably remains so in modern urban life. Our engagement in conversation is one of the defining characteristics of human society. It is not clear why we need to go and seek out data for analysis, for what purpose we need to sample and analyze human discourse under the label of ‘data’. Conversational data, for example, must be reduced to a notation system, some variant of writing, and subject to the kind of scrutiny that is not available to actual real-time participants in a conversation. It could be argued that one might be able to observe patterns of usage, or regularities that escape the awareness of the interactants. Techniques of estrangement are central to modernist art and poetry, for example: familiar objects in strange contexts or juxtapositions may acquire a new set of meanings, or invite a formal, aesthetic or ironic scrutiny. It might be argued that when we listen to a conversation in which we are not involved or read a document not intended for us, we are drawing on the linguistic and communicational skills which the linguist-observer seeks to systematize. But then the question becomes one of clarifying what it is that the linguist or the discourse analyst brings to this task. What does a linguist know or have access to, beyond the skills that we acquire as social beings dealing with a complex and multiply self-embedding world of discourse?

One argument is that the very distance that data collection creates allows for insights that are not available to the participants in an interaction. Taking a conversation out of its original context involves making it ‘strange’, and subjecting it to analysis as if it were an unknown or non-transparent set of practices. Or, by leaving our own routines and habits behind, and looking at ‘exotic’ or ‘anthropologically strange’ societies, we may reach insights which the familiarity of our own languages and societies hide from us. The assumption that ‘exotic’ societies have different language usages or cultures can be met with the objection that no two people in a modern city necessarily share all aspects of their linguistic culture, whatever may be meant by this term. The idea that we can read off key elements of culture from the structure of language, and that the study of other civilizations can be best carried out by viewing them through the prism of language structure, is a reflection of the language myth in its purest form. Nonetheless, there may well be merit to the forms of reflexivity encouraged by estrangement from habit, for instance by the experience of being in a situation where one does not ‘speak the language’. These situations are however near at hand. Immersion in a social phenomenon or world may count as one form of expertise; estrangement and distance, another. It may be of great interest to hear the views of a literary critic on the interpretation of a particular novel, if that critic has spent many decades in studying and analyzing the life and works of the author. It would be absurd to dismiss this experiential expertise out of hand. But we may choose ultimately to reject the critic’s view, if we find the interpretation unconvincing, or we find its methodological or ideological basis unacceptable.

It would be a mistake to see integrationism as rejecting all forms of data collection and analysis (see, e. g., Duncker 2011, Makoni 2011, 2012, Christe 2013). For example, a dictionary which includes ‘data’ in the form of illustrative quotations may be of great use and interest for a range of users. The mistake would be in thinking that the dictionary definition, or the definition in combination with the quotations, captures the true essence of the meaning of a word. Dictionary making and dictionary use are culturally institutionalized practices which require a complex set of background skills and draw on a range of assumptions and beliefs about language which require analysis and explication. The collection and analysis of data inevitably introduces its own limitations and simplifications: we should not mistake the analysis of data for the uncovering of a hidden key or underlying essence which explains the practice from which the data is drawn.

The status of the anecdote

Given the questions that arise about the notion of ‘data’, we need to consider how materials about language can be presented and discussed. Integrationists on occasion use the personal anecdote,

the remembered incident and reconstructed experience as a way of illustrating and explaining questions of meaning and interpretation. We give examples of such ‘data’ in the Topics and Issues section below. As a methodology this might seem informal or unreliable. It does not seem to be scientific in any of the generally accepted usages of that term, and it is not possible to provide fixed rules for researchers to guide them in deciding what is or is not an interesting or thought-provoking anecdote. Linguists and social scientists are often concerned about the effect of observer bias, and are trained in methods for dealing with this phenomenon. One concern is that the presence of the investigator (sociologist, linguist, etc.) changes patterns of behavior; a second is that the observer inevitably brings their own framework, experience and presuppositions to the encounter. We see what we expect to see, or what we hope to see, and we have a strong desire to find our hypotheses confirmed. Many disciplines train researchers in methods for eliminating bias, or at least for identifying and reducing it. Integrationism, however, simply accepts that the observer is also a participant, and sees no virtue in a futile attempt to transcend the particularities of our own experience. That is not to say that integrationism is uninterested in generalizations; rather integrationists believe that general questions cannot be approached through a false or artificially induced objectivity. Integrationism seeks an engagement with experience, and is willing to use all kinds of methods and approaches in order to achieve this.

It might nonetheless be objected that the choice of anecdote, and the explanation that is offered, is liable to influence by the integrational assumptions of the observer. After all, how does anyone know what really happened and what it meant? There is a strong likelihood that the anecdote will strike the investigator as interesting or important precisely because it illustrates or speaks to some theoretical point which is already of interest (Zhou 2011, discussing Pablé 2009). After all, academic researchers always need a framework or set of questions to motivate their interest in what is going on around them. That is undoubtedly true. But it is a virtue of this approach rather than a drawback. In using anecdotes we are inviting readers to consider how the story matches up with their own experience. We offer an invitation to think both about the anecdote itself and what its wider significance might be. This mode of presentation invites readers to consider whether they have had any similar experiences, and it offers them the authority to object and to refute the explanation that is offered, or any implied or explicit claims to typicality. The reported anecdote does not come with a claim about scientific objectivity, and therefore it is completely open to debate and discussion by those who were not present in the original encounter. There is no attempt to stand outside the communicational stream as an expert empowered by a scientific methodology. Everyone has countless experiences which they can draw on, and countless ways of recounting incidents or events. This openness to everyone’s lived experience – and to their and others’ accounts of it – is the basic sense in which integrationism is a lay-oriented form of inquiry.

We emphasize the anecdotal, the contingent and the incidental because we seek to offer an alternative to the way linguistics is currently taught in university courses. Students are taught methodologies for linguistic analysis, as if the key to understanding language lay in the specific puzzles thrown up by the theoretical model adopted in the course. Since problems vary with models, that is, they are theory-internal, there is a profound disconnect established between the classroom and the student’s experience of language in their daily life. The second and third sections of this book represent an attempt to give concrete form to this ambition. We aim to cultivate a mindfulness and openness to experience which contrasts with the methodology-driven and problem-solving approach favoured in mainstream linguistics. The methodological mindset is reductionist, and any methodology of linguistic description is a systematic way of seeing and discovering, but, in virtue of its framing of the ‘object of study’, it also represents a form of systematic ‘not-seeing’. But it is important to recognize that linguistic reductionism draws on profoundly important ideas about language in the Western tradition, in fact in all human experience of language. It would be a strange form of engagement with language and communication which simply ignored the fundamental models and assumptions which the academic study of language had produced. The integrationist polemics are directed primarily at the idea that a science of language can transcend the everyday beliefs, practices and meaning-making assumptions of non-

linguists, that a science of language must find the correct, objectively given and methodologically consistent point of view from which language can be seen in its true essence.

Aims of integrationism

Integrationism sees in the reification of language as an objective system the reduction of knowledge to information, in which the deterministic code is the model for human communication (Harris 2009a: 115 – 117). This model of the code represents a depersonalized and mechanized view of human communication, and damages the basic societal model of what knowledge and the transmission of knowledge consist in. Integrationism espouses a rhetoric of liberation and responsibility, rejecting the cultural and intellectual stupefaction which is the legacy of formalist branches of the philosophy of language and linguistics. It argues that individuals and societies should not be tempted to delegate their moral and cultural responsibility to a class of self-appointed experts on language, nor mistake the understandings of words, meanings and languages within academic discourse for the complex, multifaceted reality of our unfolding and unbounded communicational worlds. It stresses the reflexivity of human communication, our ability to think about, comment on, strategize, and evaluate the linguistic and communicational activities in which we are engaged.

Integrationism can be best understood as clearing a space for a wide range of approaches and conceptualizations of language. There is no single neutral value-free and methodologically secure vantage point from which to seek to understand language. Individual experience is thus a logical starting-point, precisely because this theoretical move makes no false pretence to methodological rigour or scientific objectivity, and does not define the reification of linguistic forms and meanings as an end in itself. Integrationism foregrounds individual lived experience because it thereby brings to the centre of attention factors such as agency, responsibility, insight, misunderstanding, disagreement, conflict, and of course the individual and unique context.

Integrationism takes no particular position on the politics of language as debated today, and offers no ‘party line’ in relation to such questions as language rights, feminism, language and sexuality, the impact of global English, language endangerment, and censorship and freedom of expression. That is not to say that integrationists have no views about these matters, and individually they may draw links between an integrational view of language and a particular political or ideological position. Linguistics as a discipline has inevitably incorporated intellectual positions with strong ideological and political implications, for example the vernacularist idea that speech has methodological and theoretical priority over writing (as Saussure’s Course in General Linguistics puts it, “The spoken word alone” constitutes “the object of study in linguistics”, Harris 1983a: 45), or the ideologically driven egalitarian claim that there exists a universal language faculty identical in all human beings (Chomsky 2007, Hutton 2010b).

However integrationism is fundamentally suspicious of claims to academic expertise in linguistics being played as a trump card in political debate. It questions the linguist’s claim to special authority or scientific expertise, regarding it primarily as an act of self-authentication. In stressing the complexity and intricacy of situated action integrationism would reject any global formula or framework for the politics of language. Of course that rejection is also a political position, paradoxically grounded in a form of ‘counter-expertise’ about linguistics. Further, integrationism’s stress on individual agency, responsibility and experience inevitably takes on a political dimension in particular contexts, and rejects what has been referred to as the “morally purged view of language which orthodox linguistics has given to the world” (Jones 2010: 457).

Integrationists agree on a number of fundamental points, in particular that language is indeterminate, that meaning and form are created in context, and that the idea of languages as autonomous, well-defined entities with clear structural characteristics is a myth. Yet it is not necessarily the case that they share a common understanding of what academic or intellectual

activities follow from these basic positions. For some, the critique of linguistics is itself a central task. By challenging the language myth in the form of linguistics, integrationism can contribute to a rebalancing of social and intellectual debate about language. Given the powerful intellectual legacy on which linguistics draws, this also involves rereading and critiquing the history of language theory, and placing ideas about language into their socio-historical perspective. Ideas about language are also found in art, music, design and in other fields which are not generally seen as related to linguistics, and these domains all repay close attention by integrationists. The question is whether it is possible to go further, and to carry out any kind of research programme, fieldwork or perhaps more importantly, other forms of direct intervention in the form of 'applied integrationism'. This would involve the attempt to show the benefits of adopting an integrational point of view in the realms of education, language teaching, language policy, law, media and so on. There is no consensus within integrationism about these questions, and this is a logical outcome of the lack of a prescriptive model or ideal image of what constitutes linguistic order, practice and ideology within integrationism.

Integrationism beyond language

Integrationism has important ramifications for a whole range of domains of human inquiry. Roy Harris has interrogated the foundations of what he terms 'supercategories' such as art (Harris 2003), history (Harris 2004a) and science (Harris 2005a), as well as engaged with science of the mind (Harris 2008), the theory of knowledge (Harris 2009a) and with questions of ontology (Harris 2012a). In After Epistemology Harris criticizes the tradition of Western epistemology, arguing that it is based on a "linguistic consensus" which is "irremediably flawed" (Harris 2009a: 1). What would it take to demythologize knowledge? Here are the basic principles that would guide such as project (2009a: 162):

- knowledge is not a matter of gaining access to something outside yourself
- all knowledge is internally generated by the human capacity for sign-making
- the external world supplies input to this creative process but does not predetermine the outcome
- signs and, hence knowledge, arise from creative attempts to integrate the various activities of which human beings are capable.

In observing an object such as a cat at the end of the garden we do not access perceptual knowledge, rather we apply our observational knowledge. In recognizing the cat we do not undertake complex subliminal reasoning, or process information. This is an intellectualist explanation which adds nothing to the account of our lay subjective experience: "if the integrationist approach to these matters is on the right lines, we do have first-order access to our own everyday experience, because we actually create our own interpretations of those experiences" (2009a: 166). In reporting those experiences to someone else, we introduce "a whole order of knowledge that is not reducible to what I know" (Harris 2009a: 166).

If we frame integrationism in the context of debates about knowledge and certainty, then we can find parallels and analogies with a range of disciplines and approaches. Questions about responsibility, reflexivity, authority and expertise are fundamental to modern anthropology in the post-colonial era, whereas linguistics as a discipline has little collective awareness of the centrality of academic linguistics to identity engineering under colonialism (Makoni 2011, 2012), as well as within authoritarian Leninist states such as the USSR, Laos, Vietnam and the People's Republic of China (Hutton 1998). One strand which has many echoes is the resistance within integrationism to reification, the treating of labels as standing for stable and even quantifiable ideas. The industrial psychologist and ergonomist Erik Hollnagel, for example, questioned the category of 'human error' (1983): "It is [...] obvious that 'Human Error' does not refer to something observable, in the same

sense as decision making does." Hollnagel pointed out that the term conflated several distinct ideas, which should be distinguished in the context of examining operational failures, namely a description of the event, the identification of the cause of the event, and a judgment of the event and its consequences in terms of the desirability of the outcome (see also Bade 2011, for a discussion of accidents in integrational terms).

Integrationism: a summary

We are all language-makers, sign-makers, meaning-makers, context-makers and theory-makers. Integrationism is lay-oriented, in that it rejects any distinction between what one might term 'everyday' views about language and the views of specialists in academic linguistics. This implies an acceptance of everyday ways of talking about language, meaning and the mind ("vulgar mindspeak", Harris 2008: 2), and a concern not to impose a set of metalinguistic norms on ordinary language users. The linguist studying language and linguistic behavior is not in an analogous position to the geologist investigating rocks or the biologist classifying plants. There can be no neat or absolute separation between 'ordinary' ways of talking about language, specialist discourses found in academia, education, and policy making, and integrational approaches. Integrationism has targeted academic linguistics in order to free discussion of language and signs from what it sees as a rigid and unreflexive orthodoxy. The lay orientation of integrationism leads to a complex tension between specialist and non-specialist discourses, not least because integrationism is not plausibly understood as merely a formalized version of ordinary ways of talking about language. By contrast, in the case of semiotics, the overarching project of a unified science of signs requires a terminologically autonomous domain, and this tension is therefore largely absent.

In communicating, we integrate aspects of the situation we are in, including the on-going behavior of people present, with our past, present and anticipated experience in ways that are not knowable in advance, even by ourselves. Nothing is given in advance in communication; signs are created in the here-and-now; the relationship between words and ideas, and words and things, is not fixed: "meaning is always now". First-order experience cannot be reduced to second-order categories. But one aspect of our communicational practice includes the ability to give accounts of our communicational behavior and experience in terms of second-order categories.

Writing is not a representation of speech; however writing plays a central role in second-order understandings of language in modern literate societies. Printing/typeface creates a visual stability which we project onto language as a whole; the print against the empty paper (or screen) background suggests that language can be separated from its context and analyzed as freestanding autonomous objects.

An important part of human language-making and creativity involves striving to achieve and maintain fixed points of reference. Stability of meanings across contexts and consistency of interpretation over time are goals of particular discourses, such as cultural criticism, theology, politics, and law, but this is not achievable in any general sense, though of course in particular contexts a consensus may be created as to what particular words mean, or how a sign should be understood. Any interpretation or reading is open to challenge either in the immediate context or as part of a subsequent recontextualization.

Ideal fixed points (such as dictionary meanings) are second-order constructs and therefore vulnerable to contextual challenge, but they may also serve as important orientation points in particular situations.

Linguistics and many other disciplines rely on the idea of languages as fixed codes that are held to make meanings available for us to use or 'instance' in particular contexts (the language myth). Integrationism denies that our communicational activity has any underlying guarantee or set of fixed reference points – we are always in the middle of a temporal and communicational stream, and the reference points we use are shifting along with us. We cannot get out of the stream of

communicational life and observe it from a neutral vantage point.

An important corollary of integrationism's lay orientation is that the individual, the individual's experience and individual creativity are at the centre of its theoretical concerns. It is in this sense that integrationism, at least for Harris, is a form of humanism (Harris 2012c: 56). However this leaves open a number of important theoretical questions, not least about the nature of integration itself. If we stress primarily the agentive nature of communicative behavior, then integration might be seen as a reflexive, self-aware or conscious process. If we see integration as involving both conscious and unconscious processes, drawing on a vast accumulation of memories, habits, and routines, as well as any aspect of the present context within an evolving horizon of expectation, then integration cannot be equated with only the most self-aware and reflexive aspects of consciousness and behavior. In this respect integrationism takes a less well-defined position than modern semiotics, which explicitly embraces semiotic processes that operate below consciousness (e. g. in biological processes) or above it (e. g. in macrosocial phenomena such as the behavior of stock-markets). Semiotics does not take a unified position on the nature of communication and the status of semiotic codes, but semiotics shares with integrationism a dynamic, temporal notion of the sign. With its historical relationship to systems theory, semiotics is however less amenable to the kind of autonomous, agentive self to which integrationism appeals.

2. Topics and Issues

2.1 Language and expertise

Harris' dictum "everybody is a linguist" (1998: 20) may sound like heresy to many academic linguists. Surely there must be a difference between someone professionally trained in linguistic inquiry and someone without such training as far as their respective knowledge of language (including 'languages') and communication is concerned? Precisely this is contested by integrationists, who treat reflections on and statements about language and communication by academic linguists and laypeople as being on a par. That said, the notion of the lay speaker qua 'expert' is not as simple as it may appear, and, as recently suggested by Sinfree Makoni (personal communication), 'lay speaker' may be regarded as an ideologically charged term in certain cultural contexts. As a consequence, it seems that the lay speaker deserves more careful attention than given so far in the integrational literature.

A great deal of the conceptual apparatus of academic linguistics refers to 'invisible and abstract entities, which cannot be part of anyone's direct experience. Academic linguistics sees itself as uncovering or identifying analytical invariant units which lie outside the conscious grasp of ordinary speakers. However, if invariance is dropped as a 'psychological reality' against which linguistic analyses of human communication are carried out (on the grounds that these are based on a process of abstraction and idealization), the academic linguist's expertise becomes confined to so-called 'surface' phenomena, and it is at this level that professionals no longer find themselves necessarily in any 'superior' position. This may still come across as counter-factual to some of us, as after all many present-day linguists (especially in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics) do claim to deal with variation and language use, i. e. phenomena pertaining to language in use (or what Saussure refers to as 'parole'). However, sociolinguistic inquiry into language-use still relies on a (more or less) tacit acceptance that underlying all situated linguistic variation there is always, at some level, a system governed by invariance. This is the case even with sociolinguists who profess a 'non-coded' view of language (e. g. Bucholtz and Hall 2004; for a critique, see Pablé, Haas and Christe 2010; Orman 2012, 2013a).

From our own experience we know that we, the lay speakers, constantly engage in analyzing other people's (as well as our own) accent, speech defects, favourite phrases, voice quality, loudness, etc.; when a friend of ours leaves a message on our voicemail, for instance, we think we hear in her voice that she was in a particular mood when leaving that message – and sometimes what was said may become for us, by means of an artificial separation, subordinate to how it was said. Likewise we wonder how something was intended by the speaker, or why the listener interpreted it in such-and-such way (based on his reaction). The fact that we commonly make such judgments, and discuss the quality of communicational exchanges with others, suggests that in a certain sense everyone can be described as a 'communication analyst'. And this is where the difference lies, according to academic linguists: lay people may reflexively engage (and show interest) in the folk psychology of communication, but they cannot act as 'language analysts' given that language has an abstract reality which transcends contextual uses in communication. This realm of abstraction presupposes mental operations alien to the untrained ordinary speaker. Harris, in turn, sets out the paradox that "to become a linguistic theorist of any stature" at all, the theorist has to remind himself constantly of the fact that he "speaks with no greater authority and insight about language than a baker or a bus-conductor" (Harris 1997: 237).

Integrational linguists prefer to start with what everyday experience tells us about communication, i.e. with lay notions of communication. However, as already pointed out earlier, the

notion of the ‘lay speaker’ is not altogether unproblematic. Pertinent questions arising on that score may be: Do academic linguists also count as ‘lay speakers’? And if yes, in what circumstances? Furthermore, if “everyone is a linguist”, then this includes of course academic linguists, whose linguistic experience will be greatly influenced by their academic training. It seems, therefore, that the lay speaker invoked by integrationists is itself an abstraction – rather than a concrete individual with a unique personal linguistic history. It might be even argued that the ‘lay speaker-hearer’ of integrationists is just as mythical as the “ideal speaker-hearer” of Chomsky, on the grounds that integrationists equally idealize lay speakers (Zhou 2011).

John Joseph (2003: 1), in his review of the Introduction to Integrational Linguistics (Harris 1998), criticized precisely this concerning the two labels ‘orthodox linguist’ and ‘integrational linguist’:

> The book is filled with remarks about how ‘an integrationist’ or indeed ‘the integrationist’ would reply to this or that statement by an ‘orthodox’ linguist. It is hard to say which of the two is the more problematic character, the straw-man representative of a linguistic ‘orthodoxy’ that is far more diverse than Harris would have his reader believe, or the idealized integrationist clone.

A very ‘unintegrational’ response to this kind of criticism would be to say that in seeking to demythologize linguistics, integrationists aim at cleansing lay society once and for all from the ‘language myth’, thereby working towards a programme of raising a new breed of ‘uncontaminated’ lay speakers. Hutton rectifies such a possible misconception (2011: 505 – 6):

> Linguistics is or should be lay-oriented, but many lay speakers, especially those with advanced formal education, share one or more versions of the language myth. Linguistics itself is built on ideas that run through the Western tradition and are part of its common intellectual heritage. [...] Put another way, the problem is that if ‘everyone is a linguist’, and everyday metalinguistics is infected with the language myth, what is so wrong with academic linguistics? One answer is that academic linguistics projects the language myth onto a blank screen, a contextless, ahistorical background –it is, to adapt Wittgenstein, ‘theory idling’.

What integrationists aim at establishing, therefore, is a society whose members eventually become fully aware that lay thinking about language and communication is mythical, precisely because it segregates the two domains language from communication (treating the former as having both an atemporal and a temporal existence). Segregationism itself, however, is not inferior in status as a lay theory of communication to integrationism. As far as academic linguistics is concerned, integrationists would argue that segregationism ought to be put in its historical and cultural context rather than seen as constituting the foundations of an impartial language science, given that it is itself parasitic on a ‘pre-scientific’ lay linguistics. There is no neutral ground on which to start building a scientific theory of language. What this shows once more is that there never is a ‘starting from scratch’ in any literal sense: no theory, integrationism included, exists in a communicational (and discursive) vacuum. A society whose members exhibit this self-awareness will advance in their quest for self-knowledge, which Harris (2009a: 173) proclaims to be the most important step towards “recognizing the full gamut of human and humane values”:

> Self-knowledge is the key to understanding other people and our relations with them. No progress towards self-knowledge can be based on misconceptions about language and the role it plays in our lives, because that role is too central in its contribution to our humanity. (www.royharrisonline.com)

This is what it means, in a Harrisian sense, to be experts, or, as stated in the concluding lines of The Language Machine (Harris 1987a: 174):

> What is important is that people should come to recognize and understand the mythological processes which language itself engenders. By these linguistic inquiry proceeds, and these it must also transcend. Only then and thus can language makers become language masters, and a society enter into its linguistic inheritance.

This notion of ‘linguistic inheritance’ is not explained in any more detail, but it does point to powerful underlying themes within integrationism, namely democratic empowerment, demythologization, even linguistic liberation. It invites us to imagine alternative social orderings, or to consider how a human society might look in which the language myth is not the dominant understanding of the nature and function of language (see Cobley 2011). This idea of ‘inheritance’ also raises difficult historical and anthropological questions about whether the language myth is a peculiarly ‘Western’ or even ‘modern’ ideology, one which has come into its own in contemporary industrialized, bureaucratic civilization. The idea of a ‘mythless’ socio-linguistic order is highly problematic. This is in any case not a concept which would appeal to an integrationist, not least because integrationism regards the theorist as a non-transcendent, engaged participant in meaning-making and theory-making, not a rational outsider to whom rules, norms and regularities are objectively visible.

Case studies

On ‘folk’ and ‘scientific’ linguistic beliefs (Harris 1990a: 462 – 3)

In this passage, Harris argues that defenders of ‘scientific’ linguistics reject any comparison with folk-linguistics because the latter is mythology (and not linguistics). He then discusses the belief attributed to the Dogon of Mali in West Africa (Calame-Griaule 1963) that “words are bodily fluids”, i.e. according to the Dogon, each utterance begins within the body of the speaker as a quantity of fluid secretion, which is warmed in the liver by heat from the heart. The heated verbal fluid vaporizes, and the vapour is expelled by the lungs, in the process acquiring acoustic properties. The vapour gets trapped in the hearer’s ear, then transferred to his/her larynx, condensed into liquid and swallowed. The liquid will have different properties depending on whether the speech was ‘good’ or ‘bad’ (which in turn depends on the vapour rotation, i. e. whether the speech is expelled by filling the right lung followed by the left lung, or vice versa). Good speech, in the form of the swallowed liquid, refreshes the heart and nourishes the liver, while bad speech causes the swallowed liquid to dry, which in turn heats the heart and contracts the liver. The bad verbal liquid is rejected by the liver and passed on to the spleen. The darkened spleen causes all sorts of physical discomfort. Good speech, on the other hand, is seen as ‘food’ for the hearer, as the intestines ‘digest’ the verbal fluid and distribute the extracted nutritive elements the other parts of the body.

Harris maintains that this account is no more mythical than the corresponding account of speech acts which European students of linguistics find in their textbooks, namely the celebrated analysis of the ‘speech circuit’ given by Saussure. Harris argues as follows (1990a: 463):

> It is worth noting that if Saussure’s ‘scientific’ account is correct, the Dogon folk-linguistic account cannot be entirely incorrect, since the two accounts partially coincide. […] A scientific linguist might well object that no one has ever seen the hypothesized verbal fluid which features in the Dogon account. But a Dogon folk-linguist might equally well object that no one has ever seen an atomic concept in the human brain, of the kind which features in Saussure’s account. And if the process by which the direction of spiral rotation of verbal vapour determines the beneficial or noxious properties of the liquid which the hearer

swallows, according to the Dogon account, seems somewhat mysterious, it can hardly be more mysterious than the unexplained way in which Saussure's speaker and hearer have acquired identically matching stored sets of concepts and sound patterns. Finally, although a Saussurean might protest that the Dogon account simply omits the cognitive phase of 'understanding' altogether, a Dogon folk-linguist might complain in return that Saussure's speech circuit does not explain how speech can cause tears, laughter, anger and other bodily effects. In sum, both the Saussurean and the Dogon folk-linguist can believe in a science of language, and agree that science involves producing good explanations. The difference between them will be that neither thinks the other's explanation of the speech process worth having.

Harris concludes the discussion by pointing out the futility of distinguishing between an 'internal' and an 'external' linguistics, i. e. a lay linguistics and an academic linguistics, insisting that "all linguistics is folk-linguistics" (1990a: 464).

Lay and professional metalinguistic knowledge (H. Davis 1997, 2001)

Academic linguistics is concerned with precision in the definition and use of its specialist terminology. However many terms such as 'word' or 'sentence' belong both to linguistics and to everyday discourse about language. In her study of metalinguistic terms, Hayley Davis rejects the views of those linguists who consider labels such as word, sentence, name, etc. to be universal entities within a mental lexicon. The word 'word' is not a psychological universal. In turn, Davis maintains that metalinguistic labels are not different in kind from words of everyday use because – like any word – they are also context-dependent as well as culture-specific. Davis' fieldwork, involving tests with lay informants, confirms her position insofar as the metalinguistic label considered by her ('word') did not reveal itself as possessing a determinate, speaker-independent meaning: "although all informants are familiar with the term word and accept it as part of their language; they all understand it differently, some even using it in at least two different senses" (H. Davis 2001: 69).

According to Davis, this fact calls into question the Saussurean model of communication which postulates a match between form and meaning. According to Saussure, in fact, the 'code model' of communication guarantees that speakers of the same speech community draw morphemic boundaries in identical ways. In order to safeguard this model and make it compatible with the evidence gathered as part of Davis' fieldwork, one would have to argue that below the level of conscious awareness speakers sharing the same langue indeed draw morphemic boundaries in the same places: however, when asked to identify the various words in a written sentence, lay speakers analyze morphemic boundaries heterogeneously. A sharp distinction would thus need to be drawn between speakers' identical unconscious knowledge and their diverse responses to explicit questioning. With reference to Davis' inquiry, therefore, on the Saussurean view speakers would be understood to interpret words homogeneously on the one hand (as part of everyday first-order communication) and yet offer heterogeneous views concerning the term 'word' on the other hand (second-order reflections on first-order use of words). Academic linguists' metadiscourse, in turn, would have to be seen as exempt from the constraints on lay metadiscourse, in the sense that it would reflect the underlying identities on which speakers unconsciously rely. This would mean that the metalanguage of scientific linguistics is isomorphic with non-reflexive first-order communication. Davis, however, does not believe in the existence of universal linguistic entities, referred to by 'equivalent' crosslinguistic terms (lexeme, Lexem, lessema, etc.), which capture reality more 'accurately' than the lay-inspired, language-specific terminology (word, Wort, parola, etc.). Davis concludes her article as follows (1997: 41):

…there is no 'right' or 'wrong' about the question of wordhood. Any understanding of metalinguistic terms, and there can only be a particular individual's understanding since such

> terms do not pre-date or pre-exist speakers, will be based upon contexts and the speakers' educational backgrounds etc. The views of orthodox linguists being just as much a product of literacy as the informants' judgements add to the continuum of diversity rather than to any conflict of evidence.

Questions for reflection

1. Academic linguists reject the claim made by integrational linguists that as a principle lay linguistic reflections and interpretations are on an equal footing with professional ones. In support of this rejection the academic linguist might list the phenomenon of 'folk (or popular) etymology', i.e. forms which are interpreted, analyzed or even changed under the influence of an erroneous folk belief. Hence, the fact that Old English sæmblind ('half-blind') appeared as sand-blind in later forms of English demonstrates, the historical linguist argues, that lay people tend to get it wrong when they submit their native language to close scrutiny: if that were not so, sæmblind would have 'correctly' continued in the English language as semi-blind (which is what it 'actually' means). Only the philologist, the reasoning goes, has the kind of historical knowledge necessary to reconstruct the path of a lexical change, and to assess whether a word developed 'naturally'. What would an integrationist have to say to this view of folk etymologies as 'false' etymologies?

2. In global brand coffee shops, if you would like your beverage not to be too hot, you can order, say, a "grande (or tall) kid cappuccino" (the form kid is not displayed anywhere). On being asked why it is called 'kid', a Hong Kong staff member of the Starbucks on the University of Hong Kong campus explained that this is so because kids cannot (and do not want to) drink beverages so hot. Does the fact that this answer is given by a Starbucks' employee give it any special credibility?

3. Read the statement below by Ferdinand de Saussure, and try to relate it to the integrational notion of 'expertise':

> In the lives of individuals and of societies, language is a factor of greater importance than any other. For the study of language to remain solely the business of a handful of specialists would be a quite unacceptable state of affairs. In practice, the study of language is in some degree or other the concern of everyone. But a paradoxical consequence of this general interest is that no other subject has fostered more absurd notions, more prejudices, more illusions, or more fantasies. From a psychological point of view, these errors are of interest in themselves. But it is the primary task of the linguist to denounce them, and to eradicate them as completely as possible. (Harris 1983a: 22).

4. Steve Farrow (2004: 273 – 4) comments as follows on the discipline of Applied Linguistics, drawing on Roy Harris' (1987a: 174) distinction between 'language makers' and 'language masters':

> The very phrase [Applied Linguistics] suggests that there is a body of knowledge that can be applied to the world's linguistic problems. But [...] linguistics has not yet set its own conceptual house in order, and until that is done it seems presumptuous, to say the least, for linguists to be pontificating about other people's problems. [...] Applied linguistics is a classic case of a discipline attempting to run before it can walk: we are not yet language masters and never will be unless we begin to take the enormous task of conceptual clarification more seriously. And once we do that, Applied Linguistics will be subsumed under the far more significant discipline that we might decide to call Metalinguistics.

What reasons could there be for Farrow to doubt that linguistics can be ‘applied’ by the professionals in the domains of linguistic rights, language policies, and language education (where indeed academic linguists see an urgent need for intervention)? What is the link between language mastery, as intended by Roy Harris, and metalinguistics? Who, then, are the ‘experts’ who could best tackle “the world’s linguistic problems”?

5. What does the following passage by Hutton tell us about the discrete categories of ‘linguist’ vs. ‘non-linguist’, the relative nature of what counts as ‘correct’ and ‘incorrect’, and about the nature of discourses in general (Hutton 1997: 53 – 4)?

> For some, the notion of taking the lay speaker’s view as primary might summon up images of being trapped on a long train journey with a voluble lay linguist: ‘French is elegant, German is guttural, Eskimos have hundreds of words for snow, word-use is becoming more and more sloppy, the BBC is splitting infinitives, there is no word for ankle in Yiddish, ...’ But these are also the stale ideas of former generations of experts. Perhaps in future years the lay linguist will be discoursing on the language acquisition device, the defects of X-bar syntax and the frequency of pro-drop in the languages of East Asia. The views of the academic linguist and those of the public are connected not least through the education system, where ideas gradually trickle down from specialist disciplines to university students who become teachers to school-children.

6. Imagine the following scenario (adapted from Pablé 2012b): you are a non-Chinese-speaking expat living in Hong Kong, waiting for your bus to arrive. Just across the street you see a Westerner get into a taxi (taxi drivers in Hong Kong are as a rule speakers of Cantonese). You observe how the client says something to the driver, the latter not looking back but only into the rear mirror; from your experience as a Hong Kong resident, you know that taxi drivers often do not look directly at their clients: you tell them where you want to go, and if they understand, they raise their hand to indicate their understanding and drive off without turning to you. But in the episode you are observing you see the driver turn around, briefly interacting with the Westerner; then the latter shows the driver a piece of paper, which the driver takes into his hands and scrutinizes; after that the driver starts to drive. In what sense does your sign-making activity (i. e. your observations) involve expertise? In what way would this activity differ if the observer was a tourist who is visiting Hong Kong for the first time? Would the various contextualized activities that driver and client are engaged in (e. g. the driver turning around, the Westerner showing him a piece of paper) qualify as signs of something at all from the perspective of the newly-arrived tourist?

7. Discuss how the following remarks by Talbot J. Taylor (1993) and George Wolf (1999) relate to Roy Harris’ emphasis on self-knowledge as part of a process of demythologization:

> And it is perhaps by thus bringing ourselves to recognize the source of our compulsion to adhere to, and indeed to continue weaving, the Western linguistic myth, that we may find the means to free ourselves from its entanglement. (Taylor 1993: 234)
>
> In so far as our language appears to be necessarily a certain way, the most and the least that can be said is that we live with myths we have been given. [...] That is, we cannot conceive of life without those myths; yet even to state this is to reveal possibilities of mythless communication. (Wolf 1999: 43)

2.2 What ‘a language’ is (not)

In more recent work Harris (2012a: 114) returned to the question of the ontological status of ‘languages’, defining them as “convenient – and conveniently vague – social extrapolations from language-names”. Elsewhere, in fact, Harris (1998: 55) argued that the European concept of ‘a language’ is tied to language-names (French) via country-names (France) and ethnic names (the French). Why does Harris think of ‘a language’ as an extrapolation? He argues as follows (2012a: 115):

> What leads the integrationist to this conclusion? One kind of experience in particular. Whatever language we may think we speak, we constantly come across expressions we have never met before. This experience bears only two interpretations. One is that we can never be sure we know all the language we think we speak. The other is that languages are constantly changing.

As far as the second interpretation goes, it suffices to refer to Saussure’s theoretical rationale that linguistic changes happen outside of the system, i. e. they are not part of the synchronic état de langue: in other words, what members of a speech community know about their language cannot include what has not yet become part of the social contract. Only thus, moreover, can stable systems be identified and described by the linguist.

When it comes to the first interpretation, the conclusion must be reached that no-one ever knows all the language, including academic linguists; and hence ‘a language’ becomes something that is said to exist while no-one has complete knowledge of it. This is tantamount to denying the much-cherished idea of languages as ‘codes’, known (or knowable) to every speaker. However, as Harris (2008: 58) aptly remarks:

> I cannot see how the members of a linguistic community as vast as all those who regard themselves as speakers of English could possibly have been able to learn such a code in the first place. English is not like a system of traffic lights, where the number of signals can be counted on the fingers of one hand, and those who are in doubt about what the signals mean can consult the Highway Code. English by any count, has millions of words. How could we all have learnt what all of them mean? The answer is that we couldn’t, and didn’t. […] [No] attempts to force the diversity of ‘English’ into the Procrustean bed of codes stand up to a moment’s serious scrutiny in practice. If there are any such linguistic codes, they must be more honoured in the breach than the observance.

Faced with this dilemma, the position could still be defended that what a single individual can know about a language is always only an approximation of what this language ‘really is’. This line of thinking pervades, for instance, variationist approaches to language, where ‘more data’ is constantly required in order to obtain a fuller picture of the sociolinguistic codes (or lects) in operation in a given society. The integrationist, in turn, does not believe that there is any ‘factual truth’ to be known concerning ‘a language’ (such as English): whatever it is any one of us knows about English, it is knowledge on a personal basis, as a result of our being, among other things, speakers/readers/writers of English. To deny the ontological existence of ‘languages’ as fixed-codes is not to deny that what is commonly referred to as ‘English’ does not differ from what is commonly referred to as ‘French’: what the integrationist claims is simply that the question ‘how (much) does English differ from French?’ can have no objective answer. ‘How much’ it differs, in fact, will trigger very different answers depending on who supplies them. Besides the individual human factor, the ‘reality’ of the differences between languages also has a species-specific component. Thus, how

French and English differ, we may presume, will receive a very different answer if non-human creatures with different cognitive capacities were to tackle the question. Perhaps, it might be conjectured, for such creatures they would not differ at all.

How is it possible that denying the existence of 'languages' is regarded as so obviously going against common sense? A possible (integrationist) answer would be that we fail to distinguish between (contextualized) first-order communication and (decontextualized) macrosocially sanctioned linguistic labels –themselves equally 'existing' only in context. Language-names are precisely such high-frequency fossilized forms, consolidating our conviction that individual experiences of 'a language' are experiences of the same phenomenon, i. e. each native speaker of 'English' experiences 'English' (what non-native speakers experience, in turn, is not, for ontological purposes, relevant), and hence that these names refer to something that really exists, independently of personal experience and circumstances. For the integrationist, languages are second-order abstractions evoked by individuals in particular circumstances; however, it is often overlooked that what seems to us to be a common, shared experience of a 'real' external phenomenon is actually inseparable from our individual experience of that phenomenon: in other words, labels such as 'English', 'French' and 'German' are integrated differently by different individuals in different situations, which is why, on such a view, there can be no fixed external entity identified by the name of, say, 'English', which exists independently of individuals' situated perceptions of it. The integrationist, therefore, is not surprised to learn that segregational linguists react with a certain irritation when informants who, they think, are native speakers of English disqualify as 'non-English' what, in the eyes of the linguists, so obviously is 'English', and thus removing them from the list of viable informants (see Pablé 2011a: 28).

The integrational picture of a world where different 'languages' do not exist as first-order realities might lead us to the (wrong) conclusion that we must all speak the 'same language' then, even if this goes against our personal communicational experience. As Harris (2012a: 10) explains, however, the notion of a 'universal language' does not appeal to integrationists, either. Since integrationism treats signs on a par with how they are uniquely contextualized by individuals, the notion of a commonly shared language, regardless whether locally or globally, is incompatible with the radical indeterminacy of the sign. No sign can be attributed to an underlying system ('English', 'German') from a decontextualized perspective. A sign is always 'a sign of ' for someone – 'now'. The world according to Harris, therefore, is not populated by 'languages', 'dialects' and 'varieties of language' waiting to be put on the nomenclaturist's list of language-names.

This position has much in common with models in semiotics, where entities such as languages, cultures and texts are seen as second-order labels, and the associated first-order realities are understood not as completed products but as processes. One term that has been used to capture this process-orientation is 'languaging' (Maturana 1988, Brier 2008, Cobley 2010b, Thibault 2011). Cobley prefers the term 'modelling', given its roots in what he terms 'semiotics proper', so that "language is the species-specific human form of modeling" which has its roots in a fundamental human attribute, namely "an acute and developing cognitive capacity to differentiate within an Umwelt" (2012b: 2054). A further range of theoretical approaches that emphasize the dynamic, open-ended nature of texts and communication is termed 'dialogism'. This denotes 'the quality of an instance of discourse that explicitly acknowledges that it is defined by its relationship to other instances, both past, to which it responds, and future, whose response it anticipates' (Shepherd 2013: para 1). Entities such as languages are ontologically abstract in relation to these process-based and dynamic models. It is worth noting here that integrationists have no particular liking for some of the more fashionable terms in present-day sociolinguistics and semiotics, such as 'languaging': for an integrationist critique of the concept of 'polylanguaging', see Orman (2013a and Orman and Pablé, forthcoming).

Accepting the fictional status of such second-order labels has serious (practical, political) consequences: in fact, linguists' self-imposed mission to stop languages from dying (or being lost) and their commitment to bringing them 'back to life' is based on subscription to the fixed-code fallacy and a telementational account of communication (Orman 2013b). In a similar vein, it is

equally unsatisfactory to think of certain speakers as ‘semi-speakers’ of a (dying) language (Dorian 1977), as these speakers might have developed other (personal and family-internal) means of communicating with their (monolingual) grandparents: if not, then communication between these two generations has truly broken down.

While lay speakers will tend to support the view that indeed their language encapsulates a specific world-view and knowledge worth preserving, the challenge for the integrationist lies with “busting these myths” (Cobley 2011) while at the same time being aware of the necessary cultural sensitivity that questions of language education, language policy and language rights (among others) command. The belief that languages do not exist (as first-order communicational realities) does not imply that integrationists espouse the view that the whole world should now speak, say, English. Embracing an integrational view of what ‘a language’ is not requires us at the same time to accept what it is, namely a second-order abstraction that, inevitably, has a (possibly important) place in our lives. However, it is important (for linguists) to realize that there is no universally valid commandment: “Thou shalt love thy language”.

What is it, then, that we learn when, as children, we learn to speak and write? Harris (2012a: 116) answers the question as follows:

> …we learn certain communicational practices and how to engage in them, just as we learn to play games with others, and partake in communal activities, such as queuing up, waiting for someone, being part of a team, joining in a search for Charlie’s missing hat, and so on.

Analogously, in an article outlining a possible integrational approach to the study of child language development, Talbot J. Taylor (2011: 582) has argued that due attention must be given

> to the reflexive – in particular, the metadiscursive – nature of the child’s developing linguistic knowledge. What we come to know of language – its forms, content, and properties, its powers and uses – is largely a culturally defined construct of our commonplace metadiscursive practices. […] Our acquisition of linguistic knowledge, in other words, is informed by our developing ability to participate (receptively as well as productively) in the metadiscursive practices of our communicational community. […] Coming to master Anglophone ways of talking about language is internally related to the child’s developing mastery of what, in the professional metadiscourse of linguists, is typically referred to as “knowledge of the English language”.

Accepting the integrationist position on the ontological primacy of (first-order) communication over (second-order) ‘languages’ opens up new horizons for a non-compartmentalized study of human interaction.

Case studies

Language games (Tao & Tam 2010)

Kimberly Tao and Marco Tam, two students at the University of Hong Kong, devised a series of language-games for their joint project paper which aimed at showing that humans have the ability to “make or remake languages, as they are ‘language-makers’, by observing and analyzing each other’s performances”, and respectively that “there are no fixed rules within the language-game”.

The first game devised by the two students was called ‘Do You Know What I’m Saying?’. Informants, all Hong Kong Chinese, were put into three groups of two. The members of one group were given a cue card each with a message written in a foreign language (Japanese, Spanish, French), or in a language made up by the performer; the performers did not know what their

respective partner was saying to them, while the audience had to guess what the conversation was about. The aim behind this game was to see whether players would be able to communicate and whether the audience would understand the conversations even though performers did not share a common code. In one situation, for example, A had to invite B for a meal, but B had to decline the invitation. A had to use Spanish while B had to use a language invented by her:

> A (does the gesture of feeding himself while talking): Let's have dinner together (in Spanish).
> B (shakes her head and points at her belly): Kalo (no)
> A (speaks with a rising intonation): You fat?! Are you serious? (in Spanish)
> B (keeps nodding her head): Keekee (yes, yes).

Both groups guessed what the message was that the performers wanted to convey, although they interpreted the reason for declining the invitation differently. The first group thought that B's stomach was aching while the other group thought that B refused because she was on a diet. The authors comment on this first game as follows:

> It was found that the players, who needed to convey the message by starting the conversation in a language that the other did not know, were able to create their own way of communication. On the one hand, the audience, who need to guess what the performers are saying, demonstrate that they are able to impose meaning on the words that they do not understand. The players, in turn, receive the message that they have to convey without having the chance of discussing what exactly the conversation will be about. Nevertheless, they still manage to continue the flow of the conversation by integrating all the activities and contextualizing them. [...] Since human beings have the ability to integrate and contextualize, player A is able to interpret what player B is saying and respond to it accordingly. [...] Similarly, the audience manage to guess the message and impose meaning on the languages that they do not understand by integrating all the activities that are happening at that moment. What is more, the players and the audience are language-makers since the players are able to create their own languages and make sense of the languages that they do not understand, while the audience are able to interpret the messages conveyed in the unfamiliar languages.

The second game, called 'Guess the Word Please!', engaged four people in each round of the game. The players were given a card showing a vocabulary item. The players were instructed to put down three words as hints which would enable their teammates to guess the word on the card. The authors state that the purpose of this game is to see "whether the players' background and experience may alter their interpretations of the items", and whether "contextualization takes place when players are participating in the game and whether meanings are fixed or are time-bound". Some players suggested words which, according to the authors, are similar to those typically found in dictionaries: thus, A suggested the three words 'black', 'furry', 'dirty' for the word mouse, and B put down the words 'guard', 'lovely', 'furry' for the word dog: neither partner, however, was able to guess the words intended. In turn, C used the hint-words 'food', 'women', 'car' for the word money, which does not resemble a dictionary definition of money, but still C's partner was able to guess the word. As language-makers, the authors comment, we can invent our own meanings to a word. They go on to state that meanings are time-bound, as the following example shows: asked to come up with hint-words enabling his partner to guess the item television, player D suggests the words 'behind', 'Jade' and 'LCD'. At the moment of the game, in fact, D's partner is standing behind a television; also D knows that his partner loves to watch the TV channel Jade. What is more, LCD technology is currently being used for televisions, which makes acquaintance with it 'time-bound' as well. The authors also emphasize that shared history may play a crucial role in communication:

hence, when player E suggested the items ‘pearl’, ‘money’, ‘Tiffany’ for the word necklace, it was found (retrospectively) that he did so because he knew that his partner had been given a necklace by her boyfriend which he had purchased at Tiffany’s. Both D’s and E’s partners were in fact able to guess the word correctly.

An important integrational point on that score is that speakers’ common background (or shared history) is not simply information added on top of the dictionary meanings of words: integrationists do not espouse a ‘fixed-codeplus’ account of meaning, but argue that the meaning of a sign is the same as its contextualization. What this game nicely shows is that players make use of the context, their creativity as well as their shared history to get their partners to guess the word correctly. Thus, player F uses ‘Lady Nine’, ‘Buddy’, ‘colourful’ for his partner to guess the word television, which the latter does without difficulty. What this shows, according to the authors, is that the players can “indeed be viewed as lexicographers, since lexicographers are language- makers”, and that “people qua lexicographers can impose meanings on words in a creative way, while it is not problematic for the hearers to understand the intended meanings”.

The authors conclude their insightful paper by reminding the reader that in these two games “six players have created a lot of different meanings based on a few words: it is not hard to imagine that in a society where there are thousands of millions of people there must be innumerable meanings imposed on words, and that therefore there exist just as many ‘languages’”. They conclude that the orthodox notion of ‘a language’ as a game with fixed rules is not something we experience in our daily communicational activities.

The ‘foul language fiasco’ (Cheung 2010)

This Hong Kong episode, dating from Spring 2009, concerned rules of linguistic decorum governing debates in the Hong Kong Legislative Council (LegCo). An opposition legislator, Raymond Wong Yuk-man, at the time a member of the League of Social Democrats (LSD), and known for his dramatic denunciations of government policy, used the phrase tai bu gai 太不該, implying that the financial secretary’s John Tsang Chun-wah’s economic policies were unacceptable. He also used the phrase ‘poor guy’ during the speech, in referring to the plight of many Hong Kongers. Following the speech Wong Yuk-man was reprimanded by the President of the Legislative Council, Jasper Tsang Yok-sing, for using ‘foul language’, the reason being that Mandarin bu gai and English poor guy resemble the vulgar Cantonese expression puk gaai 仆街 (‘drop dead’).

In his paper, Tony Cheung, an undergraduate student at the University of Hong Kong, argues that the President of the LegCo could not help integrating what he heard from Wong Yuk-man during the speech with his past experience of the latter, who in 2008 had thrown a bunch of bananas at Chief Executive Donald Tsang during the delivery of the Policy Report, and whose party, the LSD, is known for using aggressive language and behaviour. Cheung (2010) argues that Jasper Tsang makes Wong’s poor guy and bu gai into signs equivalent to Cantonese puk gaai. In Cheung’s view, Jasper Tsang did not mishear poor guy as puk gaai, but knew that Wang was using the two non-Cantonese near-homophones, given the tone and the way they were being stressed by him, with the intention of offending financial secretary John Tsang Chun-wah. In that particular moment, from the standpoint of Tsang (and others), Cheung argues, the two near-homophones “became new signs”.

It could be added here that what Wong ‘really’ said is not what matters but the intention behind what he said. The integrationist would point out on that score that intentions cannot be measured scientifically, while establishing with the aid of a spectrogram what Wong Yuk-man ‘really’ said would not reveal anything about his ‘real’ intentions. The decontexualized question of what language poor guy, bu gai, and puk gaai are expressions of, objectively speaking, was of no concern to the President of LegCo when he publicly reprimanded Wong Yuk-man. While listening to Wong’s speech, it could be claimed, the President no longer differentiated the signs in terms of their respective ‘codes’. The ‘language issue’, however, may have surfaced as part of the reactions by those supporting the LSD. What is also interesting here is that the incident sparked a further public debate among educators, politicians and lay partisans about whether the expression puk gaai

should be labeled ‘foul’, ‘obscene’ or simply ‘slang’.

Questions for reflection

1. In her defense of the linguistic code, the philosopher of language Siobhan Chapman (2001: 1559 – 60) criticizes integrational linguistics for not being able to explain the semantic basis on which the interpretation of any individual utterance is built. Chapman takes issue with one of Roy Harris’ own examples drawn from The Language Connection (Harris 1996b: 159). Harris argues that if we cite what a third party has said to us, we are not using a set of tokens to instantiate the same types. There is no unproblematic identity on which we can rely as between the ‘original’ utterance and the reported one. Rather we are reporting on an episode of our own (individual) linguistic experience. Chapman discusses this in the following terms:

> [Harris] suggests that, if he reported that Peter said ‘John has pneumonia’, he would be “simply recounting an episode of my own linguistic experience”, i. e. telling you what I understood Peter as saying when I heard him speak”. [...] This begs the question of how the fictional Harris (H) doing the reporting in this example recognized the original episode as one of linguistic experience (italics added). The integrationist stance should suggest that H derived information from the original utterance in just the same way that he would derive information from any other natural or conventional sign. This might seem to work well enough for a comparison of encountering John looking particularly pasty and coughing a lot, with hearing John utter ‘I have pneumonia’. The cough and the utterance, independently or together, could act as signs which, in the context, lead H to understand that John has pneumonia. In the example which Harris offers, however, John need not be present to provide any independent, non-linguistic signs. Rather, H must recognise his encounter with Peter as a linguistic experience, presumably by recourse to the language which he and Peter both speak, and interpret it accordingly. [...] Peter’s utterance is highly meaningful to H, but only because he recognizes it as a sign capable of telling him something about a third party, not available for more immediate inspection. [...] An integrationist [...] needs to explain how, in the absence of John, H is able to learn anything at all about [John’s] state of health.

How would an integrationist argue in light of Chapman’s objection that, in the absence of any “independent, non-linguistic signs”, H could not have recognized his encounter with P as “a linguistic experience” if there was not an underlying code that H and P indeed share? Are there any such things as “independent, non-linguistic signs” at all from an integrational perspective?

2. Discuss the following statement by Roy Harris (2009d: 45) concerning language teaching programmes which give languages priority over language:

> It is at this crucial point that the language myth begins to reveal its ugly side. Once that reversal of priorities is accepted, by which communities are defined by reference to languages, and this reversal is propagated in the name of education to generation after generation, it straightaway feeds the taproots of ethnocentrism, nationalism, social discrimination, and many of the nastier forms of politics; as well as the cultural imperialism that nowadays promotes the notion of a miraculously neutral ‘world language’ (coincidentally called ‘English’) already in place.

3. Consider the following exchange between Alice and the Red Queen (taken from Lewis Carroll’s Through The Looking-Glass) in terms of what it says about the notions of ‘translatability’ and languages as ‘fixed-codes’ (see Harris 1983b):

> ‘She’s all right again now,’ said the Red Queen. ‘Do you know Languages? What’s the French for fiddle-de-dee?’.
> ‘Fiddle-de-dee’s not English,’ Alice replied gravely.
> ‘Who ever said it was?’ said the Red Queen.
> Alice thought she saw a way out of the difficulty this time. ‘If you’ll tell me what language ‘fiddle-de-dee’ is, I’ll tell you the French for it!’ she exclaimed triumphantly.

4. In his discussion of how background assumptions (or contexts) constrain language-users as to which possible meanings of words (of a multiplicity of meanings) can be mutually assumed between interactants on a bona fide basis, Michael Toolan (1996: 31) offers the following example:

> In the restaurant, when the customer asked for a hamburger, did she mean a mile-wide hamburger? Certainly not. As socialized members of the hamburger-eating world, we know what to expect when we order a hamburger in a restaurant, just as surely as the waitperson and cook know what is expected. Furthermore, if we contrast the idea of a hamburger in a fast-food establishment and in an independent restaurant, all the relevant parties know that, in the latter context, hamburger has a somewhat different sense. On the other hand, is it not the case that a mile-wide hamburger is still a hamburger? In a sense, yes it is, we have to concede. But it is not a hamburger in the sense (or in any of the sense) that a customer could in good faith assume as one to which the customer and waitperson would be mutually oriented when the order was made. There is, then, for each speaker of the language familiar with hamburgers, a preferential or probabilistic ranking of the meanings of hamburger, those rankings (each speaker has their own; nor can we assume identity of rankings by any two speakers) having grown up entirely on the basis of previous experience (the linguocultural experiences of eating out, of categorizing food, of glossing the language of menus, etc.).

Following Toolan, could one then say, put as a generalized formula, that addresser and addressee ‘share’ the meaning(s) of words such as hamburger? Could this account be regarded as supporting the orthodox semantic view of words having, synchronically speaking, core (fixed) meanings and peripheral (variant) meanings?

5. Daniel R. Davis (1997) argues that the integrational sign must be conceived of as a three-dimensional sign, whereas the Saussurean sign only has two dimensions. How is this notion of a ‘three-dimensional sign’ to be understood in light of Harris’ principle of cotemporality? Davis (1997: 24) points out that it would be mistaken to assume that the Saussurean sign is “at any given time realized or used within a three-dimensional context”, i.e. “it is not a question of adding a spatial dimension to the two dimensions of form and meaning”. In what sense are the three-dimensional and the two-dimensional signs incompatible? 6. Concerning the integrational tenet that signs are radically indeterminate, Dorthe Duncker (2012: 412) asks the following: “…how come that a person in the middle of producing a communicational initiative may assume that another person is able to contextualize a sign which has not (yet) been produced?” A case in point, according to Duncker, are so-called ‘onomasiological questions’, where person A produces a communicational initiative and simultaneously experiences the need for a certain word or phrase and tries to recover it from person B, i. e. A is inquiring about the material manifestation of a particular sign (which, however, has not manifested itself materially yet). A typical question on that score is: “What’s it called?”. Duncker’s point is that person A, by asking this question, implies that it is a fact that ‘it’ has a name, i.e. ‘it’ already exists (because A knows that he knows but has forgotten and believes that B, in turn, may know what he knows that he has forgotten). Duncker (2012: 413) goes on to state that

> to ask "What's it called?" rather than "What did you say?" or "What did you mean?" makes a whole different order of integrational demands on the interlocutors. The two latter questions hold an individual semiologically responsible in the here-and-now with respect to the (immediate) interactional past while the first transcends the present situation and involves macrosocial factors beyond the individual.

Why do interactants' attempts at recovering word-form and word-meaning not constitute, for the integrationist, a confirmation of Saussure's idea that languages are 'social contracts', i. e. the idea that signs are conventionally fixed and exist independently of and prior to the individual communication incident?

7. Harris has consistently denied that we need to presuppose the existence of languages in order to explain communication:

> For the integrationist, we are starting from the wrong end if we suppose that linguistic communication presupposes languages. The right theoretical priority is exactly the reverse: languages presuppose communication (Harris 1998: 5).

Consider this summary of Harris' position, in a review of The Semantics of Science by Jan Wawrzyniak (2006):

> The challenge consists in rejecting two basic assumptions concerning languages and communication, which Harris calls the language myth, and in the reversal of certain ontological priorities. Thus, for an integrationist, languages are not codes which specify determinate forms and meanings of linguistic signs, and communication is not utilization of such fixed codes to transfer messages from the mind of one individual to the mind of another. Integrationism sees communication as an integration of activities by means of signs produced within the process: signs are not prerequisites of communication but its products. And so communication does not presuppose language, quite the reverse: language presupposes communication.

What is the difference between "languages presuppose communication" and "language presupposes communication"? In Signs, Language and Communication, Harris (1996a: 7) states that integrationists believe that "signs presuppose communication". Is this version preferable to the former two?

8. Discuss the passage quoted below in relation to how your understanding of linguistic creativity will differ based on whether or not you embrace a fixed-code theory of language:

> The fixed-code fallacy fails to come to terms with linguistic creativity on both fronts. It cannot acknowledge the creativity of saying 'It's going to be a nice day' because the sentence It's going to be a nice day has supposedly been used millions of times before. But nor, on the other hand, can it acknowledge the creativity of coining the word unbeatabix [used in the adverting slogan for the breakfast cereal as follows: 'Weetabix is unbeatabix'], because according to the fixed-code theory there just is no such word… (Harris 1981: 153)

2.3 A new epistemology

From an integrational perspective, knowledge is not static or stored in people's minds. Nor does the integrationist think that knowledge is intersubjectively shared in any telementational way, i. e. contents do not 'leap' unchanged from one mind to the other by means of words. The integrational view on knowledge does not conform to lay reasoning or lay ways of speaking: in fact, phrases such as knowledge management, knowledge exchange, knowledge transfer are easily taken to mean that knowledge is something which can be made available to anyone who cares to 'know'. Knowledge is, in short, treated as detachable from individual experience. The integrationist does not wish to deny that knowledge can be communicated, i. e. passed on from one individual to another: what is crucial here is that knowledge is always sponsored and undergoes interpretation by someone. Knowledge is thus very much unlike information. The integrationist rejects the idea that knowledge is a direct result of a so-called 'language faculty' and of knowing a linguistic code, respectively.

The bipartition of knowledge into 'linguistic' and 'non-linguistic', as generally assumed in Chomskyan linguistics, is not in line with integrational thinking precisely because knowledge is taken to be a creative process, pertaining to individuals engaged in making – and not simply using – signs in local contexts (n.b. this sign-making engagement can be individual, or in cooperation with others). Hence, to talk of 'linguistic knowledge' that is shared by all members of a linguistic community and, moreover, existing prior to (and independently of) the individual's actual engagement with the world has nothing to do, for the integrationist, with knowledge at all. Knowledge, like language, is personal: it presupposes a knower and a communicator, and just like language it cannot be treated as something that lies beyond the individual person's command: knowing implies responsibility, and responsibility, in turn, can only be taken by real people in real situations. As Harris makes clear in After Epistemology (2009a: 99), there is no "contextless knowledge": this, in turn, is linked to the notion that signs, from an integrational perspective, have no independent existence, but are seen as radically indeterminate:

> Just as every sign presupposes a context, every item of knowledge presupposes a context. There are no free-floating, contextless items of knowledge. There are no processes of knowing that exist independently of what is known. Knowledge, thus understood, is a form of activity. Most importantly of all, this activity is seen as a constructive, creative process. It is not a passive accumulation or residue of any kind. The creative process requires an active engagement of the self. It is not 'triggered' automatically. It cannot be undertaken by the collectivity on behalf of the individual. It is not an attempt to connect with something outside or alien to the self, but an internal development of the individual's own integrational capacities, exercised and refined in an endless series of contexts that feed into one another. (Harris 2009a: 80 – 81)

For the integrationist, therefore, knowledge has to do with lived experience of integrated activities as they come to bear on contingent situations of the here-and-now. Integrationism stresses the constructive role of the individual in the sign-making process. Knowledge is a matter of an individual's integrational –or communicational – proficiency, which

> …comprises the whole range of knowledge, abilities and experience that [he/she] can bring to bear on the communication situation in question. What this means, in practice, is that communicational events cannot be decontextualized. Episodes of communication are episodes in the lives of particular people at particular times and places. Signs are products of such episodes. (Harris 2009b: 70)

What this means is that individuals' knowledge in any communication situation varies between participants in accordance with how each of them contextualizes what is going on. The sign-making and sign-identifying acts cannot be divorced from their contextualization, as they are one and the same. An integrational epistemology invites us to rethink what it is to 'know' something. As Harris states, the integrational agenda consists of opening up "a radically different understanding of the whole field of human knowledge" (Harris 2009a: 1) and of "the human condition" (2009a: 167). What is needed in the first place for such an enterprise is a distinction between 'pre-linguistic' and 'linguistic' knowledge: the former is knowledge which "does not depend on the words in which it might – at a later stage – be expressed", and which "does not necessarily have any form of linguistic expression already associated with it in [one's] mind" (Harris 2009a: 165), and the latter is knowledge of how to use language meaningfully. These two forms of knowledge will only need integrating when knowledge needs to be made communicable. However, to take up an example of a visual experience proposed by Harris in After Epistemology (2009a: 162), the visual experience of seeing a cat at the end of the garden cannot be simply assimilated (regarded as somewhat equivalent) to my reporting to someone that I saw a cat at the end of the garden. In the latter case, what I do is to show my knowledge of how to 'use language' meaningfully, i. e. in communication with others, in order to make known to others what I have seen.

The classical empiricist model, inspired by an Aristotelian metaphysics, relies on the fact that we all have identical access to reality through our senses, which guarantees identical ideas (or 'impressions') of that reality: the linguistic labels themselves are arbitrary conventions only peripherally connected to our knowledge of the world. However, for the integrationist, individuals' viewpoints are not 'interchangeable' in this sense. As Harris (1996a: 62) has argued:

> ...space is occupied by actual individuals [...] and no two individuals can occupy the same space at the same time. That does not mean that a given space cannot be shared. On the contrary, it is a condition of sharing the same space that each individual occupy different portions of it.

For Thomsen, academic linguistics relies on a disembodied understanding of verbal communication, treating a human being as a 'talking head' rather than a 'communicating body' (Thomsen 2010). Harris (1996a: 62) equally identifies Saussure's two 'talking heads' (A and B) as mere "abstractions masquerading as individuals", who can afford to communicate in a 'no man's land': they occupy no space at all, or in fact the same space, since speaker and listener can be swapped for one another. In turn, what changes with the advent of a Saussurean epistemology is the notion that knowledge cannot be dissociated from communal langue, i. e. knowledge becomes confined to what the language structure allows the member of the speech community to understand: within structuralism, knowledge is treated as revolving about the shared social use of verbal signs rather than individuals' identical perceptions of reality. However, in both the empiricist and the mentalist accounts, knowledge is correlational: thus, in the former model a verbal statement either corresponds or does not correspond to an independently existing world (which makes that statement either true or false), while in the latter model a verbal statement can only count as such (and hence be assessed at all) against the backdrop of a predefined linguistic structure. In both paradigms, therefore, what is 'true' comes to depend respectively on shared sensory experience or the social collective unconscious.

Within semiotics, what one might refer to as 'Kant's problem', i.e. the nature of our knowledge of the external world, is approached in a variety of ways. Uexküll's notion of Umwelt suggests an embodied form of knowledge, since humans and their experienced environment have co-evolved. What guarantees knowledge of the external world is that humans have evolved biologically to interact with it in a wide range of ways, and further they also shape and engineer the world as a social space. One can understand this as an evolutionary take on the anti-sceptical pragmatic insight that human modeling cannot be fictional, since human beings manifestly survive and

interact meaningfully with the environment. On this evolutionary-pragmatic model, the question of the 'truth' or 'accuracy' of our perceptions of the external world is a non-question created by a Cartesian model of the self. It is not a question of an autonomous consciousness peering out at the world, but rather of the existence of myriad forms of 'coupling' between human beings and the world. This relationship can be understood as a form of modeling in Uexküll's sense (Kull 2009, Cobley 2010b: 2053). This point of view also implies a rejection of social constructionism, to the extent that this relies on the primacy of language. While for Sebeok 'primary modeling' includes both the capacity for verbal and non-verbal communication, actual verbal communication belongs to the domain of secondary communication (Sebeok 1988, Cobley 2010b: 2055). Social constructionism from a semiotic perspective abstracts aspects of discourse and implies a two-way perspective, dominated by language, between observer and reality (for a social constructionist critique of Harrisian epistemology and of Harris' conception of the self, see Teubert 2013). It lacks the dynamic, triadic interactions of the Peircean model. Integrationism would similarly reject the deterministic relationship between categories and experience. To the extent that social constructionism relies on a structuralist understanding of language it would be rejected as failing to allow for agency, reflexivity and creativity in our integrated engagement with others and the world.

From an integrational perspective, what is 'true' (and what is 'false') cannot be divorced from the communicational situation in which somebody has expressed his/her belief. For the integrationist, the notion of 'truth' ought best to be regarded as a second-order linguistic construct. The question of 'truth', in fact, is not relevant to 'pre-linguistic' knowledge, but may become an issue when knowledge is verbalized in a subsequent phase (as in the aforementioned example of reporting that I have seen a cat at the end of the garden). It is crucial, therefore, to bear in mind that 'observational' (or 'pre-linguistic') knowledge (Harris 2009a: 164 – 5) requires different integrational activities than displaying knowledge, i.e. expressing verbally what one knows by means of a metalanguage (containing such words as 'truth', 'to know'). Since the former seems to lie beyond the reach of scientific inquiry, the latter is assumed – wrongly as the integrationist would point out – to be a reliable guide to the former. Failing to make the above distinction is at the core of a theory of knowledge which does not take into account the passing of time: to assume, as we all seem to be inclined to do, that what someone says he knows is the same as what he knew and believed before he said so is precisely to endorse such a theory. For the integrationist, displaying (i. e. verbalizing) knowledge is a specific task bound to the contingencies of personal experience and constrained by biomechanical, macrosocial and circumstantial factors. Expressing knowledge, however, must not be conflated with what it is to know something in any practical sense: hence one may not know the name of, say, a building, but one knows perfectly well how to get there, or use it as a point of reference to orient oneself (e. g. while driving). For Harris, knowledge should be construed as an integration of activities and no longer as a search for truth (2009a: 175). Our integrational activities both create and express our knowledge (2009a: 161). The essential step towards demythologizing knowledge is, according to Harris, to stop mistaking it for information.

Case studies

Dialect perception (Harris 1990b)

In his discussion of what he calls the 'dialect myth', Roy Harris (1990b) described a personal experience from his days as a dialectologist of Romance languages: this episode must have been an 'eye-opener' insofar as it revealed a great deal about knowledge, context and experience (1990b: 18):

> I asked an old man whether the patois of his Alpine village was the same as that of another locality a few miles distant. I here translate his reply, given in (what I at the time called) 'Valdôtain':

> Is it the same? I would not know how to answer you. Even in this village the younger people speak differently from my generation. And in the next valley perhaps they use words we don't use here. But, for all that, everyone understands everyone else well enough. Is that the same?

Harris comments on his informant's answer as follows:

> By turning my own question back on me, he made me understand that the mistake lay in the question. What I was asking corresponded to nothing in his own linguistic experience which could provide a determinate answer.

What dialectologists are looking for when they try to explore lay people's perceptions of varieties of language is (socially shared) knowledge made visible by being communicated. As Harris points out, however, knowledge, or beliefs, never exist in any determinate state: being confronted with that question in that particular situation, the informant took the expert's question seriously, by giving an honest answer: dialectal 'sameness' is not just a matter of geographical variation but also of generational concern, but, more importantly, 'sameness' is not an issue when it comes to understanding as part of first-order communication. 'Sameness' and 'non-sameness' might be an issue in other communicational situations, such as when the natives of one locality, when amongst themselves, make fun of the speech of people from another locality. It might well be that jocular remarks about "words they use in the next valley that we don't use here" were part of this informant's linguistic experience, but he may have felt that this was not what the dialectologist interviewing him wanted to hear. At the level of communication, at any rate, the researcher's question did not seem to represent any real concern for the informant.

Autism and 'linguistic' knowledge (Harris 2009b: 13 – 16, Bisgaard Nielsen 2011)

Treating knowledge communicated as merely an 'extension' of non-communicated knowledge may lead to false diagnoses, as Roy Harris' note on autism (2009b: 13 – 16) seems to indicate. Hence, if somebody fails to answer when asked a question, this is taken to be a problem of either language (or langue, 'competence') or communication (parole, 'performance'): in other words, failing to answer questions in a public forum is regarded as a failure to apply one's linguistic knowledge. The autobiography by Daniel Tammet (2006), subsequently diagnosed as suffering from Asperger's syndrome, sheds new light on how autistic behaviour may relate to questions of language: Tammet tells his readers that in school he would not respond to the teacher's simple arithmetic questions because he did not realize that he was expected to say the answer out loud to the class. Daniel knew the answer and also knew that the teacher's question was being addressed to him.

Orthodox linguistics, Harris goes to say, cannot cope with these cases, since, linguistically speaking, there was nothing wrong with Tammet: the teacher's question (7 x 9) triggered the 'correct' idea in Daniel's mind (sixty-three), which is why there was no reason for the speech circuit to break down: what Daniel failed to do is simply to utter the syllables 'sixty-three'. The integrationist does not think in terms of 'language' being on the one side and 'the world' on the other. To view Daniel's problem as having to do exclusively with the latter (and not with the former) is tantamount to saying that Daniel, being 'autistic', lacked certain items of 'non-linguistic' knowledge. For the integrationist, Daniel's hardship was caused by his "inability to contextualize what other people say as something anticipating or requiring a response" (Harris 2009b: 13): in other words, the problem is one of integration (or contextualization) – for which the dichotomy 'linguistic' versus 'non-linguistic' is hardly useful or warranted. Not knowing how to integrate other people's behaviour in contexts of public discourse (here: the classroom context) requires a holistic approach to communication, in which language is no longer regarded as a surrogate of reality.

On that very score, it is worth mentioning that Charlotte Bisgaard Nielsen (2011) is currently looking for ways to analyze "why teachers and Asperger-individuals experience communicational

problems". Taking an integrational approach, she is interested in answering the following two questions: how can society improve the general integration of Asperger-students in educational institutions? What can teachers and coaches do to enhance the integration of Asperger-students in their daily practice according to an integrational approach? Bisgaard Nielsen (2011: 593) argues that

> teachers and institutions must understand that Asperger-diagnosed students are agents in the world just as are ordinary students. They perform as anyone else in verbal and non-verbal ways. Contextualization is therefore a keyword to this investigation and its suggestions. Focusing on how to enhance integration, working explicitly with self-observation in communication may be a tool for teachers to contribute to changing the way people experience and face Asperger-students.

Referring to Harris' discussion of autistic people's integrational knowledge, Bisgaard Nielsen (2011: 596) comments as follows:

> The lack of responsiveness described by the clinical psychologists must be reconsidered as Aspergers' responses are investigated in an integrational perspective. My observations suggest that Asperger-students respond when addressed in appropriate relevant ways, introducing contextualization as a tool in the analysis. Responselessness, then, can be treated in relation to context understandings and what is commonly supposed to be 'non-responsive behavior' can be reconsidered and treated as a chosen – though silent – strategy for engaging in initiative-response sequences – not as an inability – when guiding Aspergers.

Questions for reflection

1. In the academic field commonly referred to as folk linguistics it is customary to investigate mental maps that lay speakers possess as regards dialect/accent regions (for the U.S., e.g. the South, the Mid-West, New England, Metropolitan New York): informants are required to draw the boundaries they perceive to exist on blank maps showing only the national boundaries. The selection of speakers is usually based on social criteria (e. g. age, place of birth, residence, sex, ethnicity). From an integrational point of view, what kind of knowledge do informants display by labeling various dialect regions on a map? Is this notion of knowledge compatible with an integrational epistemology?

2. Consider the following account by the late nineteenth century Dutch geographer H. Witkamp concerning the geographical knowledge of the Sumbanese people (in Kuipers 1984: 455 – 6):

> …one quickly observes that for the average Sumbanese, knowledge of the environment is extremely limited, and entirely local. One is amazed at how they sometimes have no name for a plainly visible peak which they have looked at all their lives, or that the name of a village is unknown to them, a village which in the distance is clearly visible, but happens to be in another district, where they have never hazarded to set foot. And this in a land which is wholly open terrain, where one with a horse can so easily traverse large distances.

Witkamp obviously thought that the Sumbanese exhibited an impressive level of ignorance of the landscape. What form would a likely integrationist objection take of Witkamp's conception of geographical knowledge?

3. If knowledge, as depicted by integrationism, is always context-sensitive and inextricably bound to the knower, how is knowledge of the past (and of past events) explained within such an epistemology (see Harris 2004a)?

4. In their critique of integrational epistemology, the ethnomethodologists Wes Sharrock and Jeff Coulter take issue with Harris' conviction, as presented in After Epistemology (Harris 2009a: 162), that "knowledge is not a matter of gaining access to something outside yourself". Sharrock and Coulter (2011: 522) write:

> To put our primary objection to Harris's putative epistemological critique in more technical terms, knowing is factive, it is an achievement verb [...] All of this amounts to something quite unproblematic: if I really do know something, then what I know is a fact/the truth, about whatever it is I am asserting knowledge, and that is decidable by others according to the criteria we employ which we can understand and which would make the difference between actually knowing and (say) merely thinking that one knows. Knowledge is 'not a matter of gaining access to something outside yourself '? No – knowing is a matter of something's being the case, and that usually means that there is something outside of yourself to be known/knowable.

How would you phrase an integrational objection to the factual conception of knowledge presented here?

5. In his social constructionist critique of After Epistemology (Harris 2009a), Wolfgang Teubert (2013) takes issue with Harris' notion of "observational", or "prelinguistic", knowledge, which the latter attributes to himself when looking out of the window and seeing a cat at the bottom of his garden (and subsequently reporting this personal, interpreted, visual experience to someone else). Teubert, in turn, claims that "all our first-person knowledge is largely owed to discursively transmitted knowledge" (2013: 275), adding that "Roy Harris' 'spontaneous interpretation' of his cat-experience heavily depends on acculturated categories and therefore can hardly be called 'pre-linguistic'". Teubert asks his readers how Roy Harris' cat-experience came about in the first place. He argues as follows (2013: 286, 287):

> Once we throw a quick glance at that part of discourse we can now access by using an internet browser, it becomes evident that he has been primed for this experience. People keep telling us all the time what they see at the bottom of their garden. [...] It seems that what we tend to purposefully perceive is often narrowly related to what other people have told us about their experiences. We also like to talk about things we have heard other people talk about. The discourse to which we have been exposed guides us more than we are aware of. It is, I believe, also true that we focus our acts of observation on those recurrent reports of experiences that impressed us most and that have moulded our behaviour. Perhaps all the rest of what was within our vision stayed dull because it was not anything of which we had heard reports. [...] Without all these 'there is something at the bottom of the garden'-reports that have found their way into Roy Harris' memory, I very much doubt he would have had his private cat-in-the-garden experience in which he has let us take part.

How would an integrationist deal with Teubert's corpus-related evidence that 'seeing a cat at the bottom of one's garden' is a culture-related, much-talkedabout experience (here a typically 'British' way of speaking) that has nothing to do with a personal non-linguistic experience by a detached self, who happens to have seen a cat at the bottom of his garden and informs someone else of this fact? Is seeing a cat at the bottom of one's garden and reporting that one has seen a cat at the

bottom of one's garden one and the same thing? Do Teubert's decontextualized examples of (anonymous) people claiming to have seen something at the bottom of their garden have anything in common with Harris' (imagined) personal experience of seeing a cat at the bottom of his garden? If yes, what is this commonality? Does the 'existence' of such sentences on the web constitute convincing evidence that the personally and independently experiencing self is an illusion, i.e. that any form of (allegedly) private knowledge must in the end be discursively constructed?

6. In his book Antilinguistics, Amorey Gethin (1990) draws a very pessimistic picture regarding language and how it relates to experience. His views bear a strong resemblance to those of followers of General Semantics, notably Alfred Korzybski (1879 – 1950) and Samuel Ichiye Hayakawa (1906 – 1992). One of the central concerns of General Semantics was that people forget or ignore the highly variable levels of abstraction built into language. Frequently they allow the existence of a term or abstract noun to mislead them into thinking that there must be a reality that lies behind it. Taking the word 'intuition' as a case in point, Gethin argues as follows:

> …people assume without question that IT [intuition] exists, that there is a thing, often working powerfully, and the only difficulty is to pin it down. There is a definite truth as to its nature hiding somewhere, if only someone was clever enough to discover it. There is a name for it, so it must exist as a distinct reality. The word has trapped people's thinking inside a circle, where it dashes round and round fruitlessly. It does not seem to occur to them that this 'thing' survives only through the word, retains human faith in it only through the word; and the word is so strong that people do not become suspicious when they cannot pin down its 'reality'? It is not that there is nothing. It is the opposite. It is that there is so much going on. […] [People] do not see that something quite different in fact took place. Nobody knows the details of the story, but at some time certain things have gone on in the head of a human being. She does not understand these happenings and even if she did she could not give any sort of realistic account of them; but she has language and so she gives the happenings a name anyway. (This time: intuition.) The damage is done. It is too late to remember that the original experience was complex and mysterious and not understood. It has acquired a bogus simple clarity. It is too late to consider that the next time in the same person different things may happen; because the context seems rather similar the word will be trotted out. […] And humans are left with a double evil. Not only do they not have any accurate account of their experience. As well, the name-giving gives so much confidence that practically nobody really tries to find out what really happens. The variety of experience is squeezed into a little tube of language. (Gethin 1990: 225 – 226)

How would an integrational linguist respond to Gethin's scepticism concerning names as 'corrupters of experience'?

2.4 The myth of names

On the issue of proper names there seem to exist certain beliefs that few commonsensical people would like to question. These could roughly be summarized as follows:

(i) there is a clear (and necessary) distinction between 'proper names' on the one hand and 'common nouns' on the other hand;
(ii) names 'stand for' certain referents (animate or inanimate) and this relationship is stable;
(iii) as a direct consequence of (ii), there are respectively 'true' and 'false' names.

What does the integrationist have to say on these taken-for-granted views? First of all, it could be

argued that proper names are no less indeterminate than anything else in language. Hence to say ‘my name is X’ requires from that speaker that he/she integrate past, present and future experience, that he/she take into account many different facts concerning the hearer addressed, etc. In other words, using a (or even one’s own) name is a sign-making act of integration like countless others that we perform as part of our everyday (linguistic) activities. For the integrationist, therefore, names are radically indeterminate signs as well. Hence individuals may disagree about whether a certain object is a specimen of a ‘mug’ or a ‘bowl’, just like they may be in disagreement as to whether this person is called X or Y. For the integrationist, this does not mean that, say, X is the ‘true’ name and Y the ‘false’ name of that person. Why not? Because the attribution of ‘true’ and ‘false’ is never contextless. In other words, the labels ‘true’ and ‘false’ may indeed be necessary distinctions in concrete communicational situations, but have no general (i. e. objective) validity. This seems to contradict our personal linguistic experience, for are we not always called X (and not Y), and is not the city we live in always referred to as A (and not B)? The situation, it would seem, is one of stability when it comes to the name vis-à-vis ‘that which it names’. Roy Harris has referred to this commonsense assumption as the “myth of reference” (Harris 2009b: 47– 53), while Harris and Hutton (2007: 208) explain this belief as “a survival from primitive word magic”.

One reason why the doctrine of ‘referential stability’ has never been abandoned is our tendency to take as ‘natural’ (and hence as ‘universal’) a one name-one referent relationship. This tendency has been consolidated by our efforts to standardize languages, where both personal names and place names possess one official written form (or different spelling variants of that form). In reality, we all have many names, including titles, nicknames, abbreviations, pseudonyms, names related to the online context – and so do the places we live in.

It seems therefore that the assumption of a one name-one referent relationship is ‘ethnocentric’, more typical of monoglot communities, and has to do with the institutionalization of names within the modern state (passports, identity cards, signature identification). We cannot assume that the notion of ‘a name’ – or of ‘proper names’ in general – exists in the same way in all cultures (present, past and future).

But surely our modern distinction between ‘proper names’ (referring to particulars) and ‘common nouns’ (referring to generics) is a useful one, corresponding to the external world as it is given independently of our naming practices? The integrational answer to this will be ‘yes’ and ‘no’. For one, it would be pointless trying to undo this distinction, or act as if it had never existed. But the fact that grammarians and philosophers have been debating as to whether or not the moon and the sun should count as ‘proper’ names shows that there is no isomorphism between reality and how language deals with reality: the grammatical category of ‘nomen proprium’ is of no directly ontological or epistemological relevance, insofar as I can know someone or something without having recourse to their ‘proper’, i.e. their own, names (Pablé 2012a). But it has its raison d’être with certain cultural and historical developments in the (linguistic) organization of social life. What matters for the integrationist is that proper names are just as much subject to contextualization as any other linguistic element, and hence require that a particular person establishes a link between a name and a referent in a particular situation at a particular point in time. This link is neither given (or ‘stable’) before nor after, but requires that somebody makes a name the sign of something/someone. The independently given world is not waiting to be labeled (or named) by us, pace the explorers of the New Worlds who thought that way, but to be integrated as we move along with it in our daily activities. In this sense, one may wonder if, and in what way, the external world is simply and purely ‘given’. Harris (2009b: 63) states that the metaphorical conception of a sign as substituting for, or ‘standing for’, something else “has brought more obscurity than enlightenment into semiological studies”. In fact, the substitute sign only seems to explain first-order communicational experience because we endorse the metaphysical assumption that there is a community of speakers who are speakers of ‘a language’ which they share. A surrogational-reocentric view of names is the result of assuming the existence of “something called ‘language’ and something called ‘reality’ which need to stand in a correlative relationship” (Wolf 1999: 42). However, in this context, both ‘language’ (here: ‘names’) and ‘reality’ are second-order macrosocial

abstractions derived from first-order experience.

In order to be name-users we need to be name-makers: knowing a name is not tantamount to knowing a sempiternal truth, for onomastic knowledge requires a particular form of communicational proficiency, i. e. knowing how to integrate a name with a great deal of both previous and present contextual information. Names, from an integrational perspective, are no more and no less reliable than a pointing gesture: they both are meaningful in context only, and their meaningfulness depends on many unpredictable factors and is subject to various glossing practices.

Case Studies

The castles of Bellinzona (Pablé 2009; 2010; 2012a)

This field study is an integrational response to a previous sociolinguistic enquiry carried out by the same author. The objects of study were three local landmarks in the Italian-speaking town of Bellinzona (Southern Switzerland), in fact its three Medieval castles. Informants were chosen randomly in the streets by the fieldworker, who involved them in a problem-solving task concerning local landmarks. The people interviewed were unaware of acting as informants for a study: their motivation to provide information was 'real' in the sense that the situation created for these specific encounters required their personal assistance as experts. The study aimed at observing how people establish reference on the sole basis of names (Pablé 2009), and how people assign names to identified landmarks (Pablé 2010), respectively. For that purpose the informants were confronted with two different narratives (both invented stories) that required them to take into account both the landmark knowledge of the person present in the encounter and that of an absent one, i. e. a local friend of the fieldworker. According to this story, the fieldworker, who presented himself as a 'non-local' (but still a Swiss-Italian), was supposed to meet this (absent) local friend of his (urgently). One version of the story had it that this friend had left a message on the fieldworker's mobile saying that he would be waiting for him at a place with one of a number of possible names: it is important to note that these were local castle names with little diffusion: obsolete ones, or names not readily recognizable as names of a castle. The other version of the story had it that this friend had given the fieldworker appointment at a castle, but the latter could not remember what name his friend had mentioned. In both stories informants were told that this friend was presently unavailable because he had switched off his phone, which is why the fieldworker was in need of immediate help by someone 'knowledgeable'. In order to lend the story further credibility, the fieldworker would always inquire with his informants, on addressing them, whether they were 'from Bellinzona'. Therefore, unlike the setting of a traditional experiment, informants were cast into the role of helpers, who would attempt to reconstruct what the absent person, who, in virtue of being 'local', was assumed to share the same knowledge of the terrain, might have had in mind when telling the fieldworker to meet at such-and-such place; or, alternatively, informants would feel compelled to list as many castle names as possible in order to find out at which castle the fieldworker's friend was waiting for him. The task informants were expected to fulfill was doubly arduous: not only did the fieldworker turn out to be of little use as a source of information (since his friend had not given him any details but just a name), but they also had to integrate altogether unfamiliar names with a situation that involved a person who was not familiar with the locality. In the other version of the story, in turn, informants were asked to produce a number of castle names, which were consistently rejected by the fieldworker as the 'right ones', i.e. the latter simply pretended to be able to tell with confidence that his friend had not mentioned the names proposed by the informants, without, however, being able to tell which one he had mentioned.

The study not only questions a structuralist approach to name systems, i. e. the view that name knowledge correlates with a person's sociological profile (and that therefore uses of language are shared among members of social groups); it also tries to invalidate the surrogationalist thesis. While lay people seem to endorse a reocentric theory of reference, the integrationist is interested in first-

order communication (and how second-order theories of language influence first-order reality). The integrationist claims that first-order communication consists in integrating activities by means of signs which would otherwise remain unintegrated, and that the substitute sign, being context-independent, cannot accomplish this. In fact, the fieldworker was able to observe first-hand how individuals contextualized the names provided in relation to the specific situation they found themselves in; they did not simply recall a pre-established name-referent correlation. The process of contextualization can only become available to direct observation under specific circumstances. The Bellinzona castles, the author argues, constitute ideal objects of study precisely because the castles are three, and located within a very small socio-geographical territory, which is why there is not necessarily only one specific castle (to the exclusion of the other two) that one can arrange to meet at. The other reason is that several of the historical castle names, which were deliberately used in the field study at issue, no longer make sense from a contemporary perspective: for instance, the castle originally called old castle looks like the most modern one nowadays, and would rather deserve the label new castle. The castle built in more recent times, in turn, looks like the oldest one. Thus, being confronted with a situation in which a non-local person is supposed to meet a local person at ‘old castle’, where do you send the non-local? Informants did not approach the task as if it involved a purely factual question, i.e. ‘which castle bears the name X?’. The only question that mattered under the given circumstances was: ‘what did this friend have in mind?’.

In situations of communicational encounter as devised for the Bellinzona interviews, therefore, the distinction between ‘experts’ and ‘novices’ ceases to make sense, as the former can no longer rely exclusively on their knowledge drawn from the official nomenclature (or from a pool of ‘insider’ names), where their alleged superiority over the latter is most apparent: when confronted with obsolete (or historical) castle names, or with names of little diffusion that are hard to classify (in terms of what class of object they denote), local informants no longer display the toponymic competence postulated by structural linguists (analogous to the native speaker’s linguistic competence): instead the task requires from informants (local or non-local) an integrational proficiency, and invoking predetermined social categories as a mode of explanation is no use, as the outcome of the communicational exchanges is wholly unpredictable. Hence, the place to which the ‘experts’ eventually directed the fieldworker (those who indeed did venture to guess) had nothing to do with their onomastic knowledge (intended as something fixed and mentally stored), but depended, among other things, on extra-linguistic information they asked him to supply (e. g. the purpose of the meeting, whether he had come by car and hence could drive to the meeting-point) and the given circumstances of the encounter (e. g. whether it was close to lunch-time when the conversation took place, and the spot in which it occurred). It is worth of notice that the integrational study of the Bellinzona castles originated in a mainstream sociolinguistic approach centered on correlating name variation with social stratification: in other words, the names used by the fieldworker for the integrational field study were names previously compiled through segregational methods in street surveys. What this shows is that indeed the macrosocial constraints on communication are real, but that the (statistical) patterns claimed to be equally ‘real’ by the socio- or corpus linguist turn out to be nothing but second-order abstractions, the result of ignoring the complexities of social interaction.

Names in intercultural communication (Hoyois 2010)

For her study on communication between local taxi-drivers and Western clients in Hong Kong, Laure Hoyois sat in taxis on Hong Kong Island, and told local drivers to take her to the student’s dormitory where she resided. She used the official name Sun Chi Sun Hall, well knowing that for many non-English-speaking drivers the name would mean nothing. The following excerpt is Hoyois’ recollection of such an encounter, followed by her comments (Hoyois 2010: 58 – 9):

From: Central
To: Suen Chi Sun Hall

> We are three girls living in the same students' residency, all coming back from a party. I am not thinking about writing this encounter down at all; we all enter almost at the same time, each of us informing the driver of our destination:
> Girl 1: "Pok Fu Lam Road".
> Girl 2: "Flora Ho Sports Center".
> Girl 3: "Lee Shaw Kee Hall".
> This brief example is useful in order to show again that the reocentric view of how names are attached to, or 'stand for', things, places or objects in the real world might be incorrect. Indeed, a fundamental question arises when we observe the three indications given. Why do the three of us tell the driver a different name while we all live in the exact same place? More than likely, the explanation of this phenomenon, according to the integrationist, would be that in this present situation, we are dealing with a communicational exchange between four individuals, and therefore with four different linguistic experiences which have to be taken into account. The fact that the three participants use here different names hoping to get to the same place is due to the fact that they integrate the past experiences that they have had with the taxi drivers of Hong Kong, and possibly anticipating how the latter respond to other indications than the ones used by them for that interaction. This is the typical example of a situation in which the participants, in order for the communication process to work, are recontextualizing and integrating the here-and-now with the past and the future. The past – for they have been driving in Hong Kong taxis on previous occasions and each of the participants has its own idea of which name works the best in that kind of situation for that very destination. The future – because it is logical to integrate what will follow after mentioning a name alone in such a conversation as we communicate in order to attain a goal, pursuing an objective. In that case, we are anticipating the way the taxi driver will think and where he will take us.

From an integrational perspective, therefore, there is no general question as to whether these three names supplied by the three students count as 'true' names (or not). What is of importance here is that each student uttered that particular name in that particular situation because, based on their past experience, it made sense to do so at that particular moment, i. e. it was presumably done for practical purposes, as each customer wanted to get home as fast as possible.

Questions for reflection

1. What would an integrationist say to the following account by Geoffrey Hall, showing how proper names are allegedly 'learnt' by infants?

> Mother wants to teach her infant son a proper name for a family friend, who arrives one day for a visit. While the child watches and listens, the mother points to the visitor and exclaims: 'Mary!' As a result, the child infers that the word applies to the visiting woman and establishes a mapping between the label, 'Mary', and the person construed as an individual. In this way, he learns a new proper name. (Hall 2009: 404)

Is the situation described above a realistic one? And if yes, why does the integrationist still believe that such an account, if taken at face value, cannot do justice to the complexity of what it is to 'learn' something?

2. In a humorous article about the experience of taking taxis in Hong Kong, Yalun Tu (2010) offers a categorization into distinct personality types, giving each a descriptive label that reflects how the driver deals with the customer and the task at hand. Note that Tu is English-speaking, while Hong

Kong taxi-drivers have Cantonese as their first language. The most common category is The Businessman, who is the 'standard taxicab driver': "No bull, all business. He takes you from point A to point B and never says a word." Other categories include: The Talky-Talk, who is "animated, silly, asks you lots of questions in excellent English all while claiming his English is terrible"; The Nice Guy ("They call you 'sir'; "they drop you exactly where you want to be; they say 'please' and 'sorry' and they smile and you get exact change"); The Speed Demon "Confession: I love the Speed Demon. Belt in, shut up, and hope for the best"; The Cheat ("Thankfully, The Cheat is few and far between"); The Angry Guy. Other categories that Tu mentions in closing, but does not define are: The Talks Way Too Loudly on the Phone Guy; The Too Old Guy; The Guy with 1,000 Cell Phones; The Girl (rarely sighted); The Guy Who Knows Two Words in English.

Anyone who regularly takes taxis in Hong Kong might find this both amusing and also in some sense accurate, in that these categories seem to reflect authentic general types. In other words, these categories are in some sense 'real'. But in what sense? Would we want to say that the journalist brought out a shared set of categories which were previously in the unconscious of experienced taxi passengers in Hong Kong? How can the categories both be real and yet also the humorous individual creation of a journalist?

3. Discuss the following passage by Roy Harris (2009b: 50) in terms of what it claims regarding the notion of a 'real name' and how this is compatible with people's sensitivity when it comes to, say, pronouncing (or spelling) their own names correctly:

> We deceive ourselves by the way we talk about names. We tend to treat personal names as labels that are permanently attached to their bearers, rather like identification marks tattooed on the skin from birth. But names are not like that. As numerous bigamy cases bear witness, it is possible for an individual to lead quite different lives under different names in different places. There is no inalienable connexion between name and bearer; but we tacitly imply that there is when we say, 'Ah! That was not his real name.'

4. In Arthur Miller's play The Crucible (1953), set in Puritan New England, one of the protagonists, John Proctor, struggles with his conscience over whether to confess to being a wizard and having made a compact with the Devil; this confession would save him from the gallows and allow him to return to his wife and children. Proctor knows that meanwhile some of his friends and fellow-citizens are being tortured or executed for the same crime. In the grip of despair, Proctor announces to chief-justice Danforth that he is ready to make a public confession: however, when he is required to validate the transcript of the interrogation by signing with his name, Proctor refuses. When Danforth asks him for the reason of his refusal, Proctor answers as follows:

> PROCTOR Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life! Because I lie and sign myself to lies! Because I am not worth the dust on the feet of them that hang! How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul; leave me my name! (Act IV)

Discuss Proctor's refusal in the context of his acknowledgement that "God sees [his] name", but God does not need "[his] name nailed upon the church" (where all villagers could see it). Why does a signature matter in this context, especially after Proctor has already admitted to having seen the Devil and bound himself to his service? If the integrationist is right in claiming that there are no 'true names', can Proctor's obsession with his good name (and thus his acceptance of the death penalty in order not to taint his good name) still be regarded as a 'responsible' act?

5. Harris (2005b: 185) claims that many of the pictures by the Belgian surrealist painter René Magritte have "Saussurean overtones":

> There is, for example, La Clef des Songes of 1930, which consists of six panels each showing a picture of an object with a word underneath. The perplexity is that in no case do word and picture match. What is clearly an egg is labelled acacia, a high-heeled shoe is labelled the moon, a bowler hat is labelled snow, and so on. There is another painting of 1936, known by the same title, in which a horse is labelled (in English) 'the door' and a clock face is labelled 'the wind'. It is as if some bilingual practical joker had been let loose in a museum and changed round the labels on all the specimens exhibited. Or else it is the work of a mad nomenclaturist.

Harris (2005b: 186) implies that Magritte engages in a form of "linguistic critique". What is this critique and why does it have Saussurean underpinnings? In what way do newspapers, illustrated books, encyclopaedias, etc. perpetuate a commonly accepted fallacy about words, images and things?

2.5 Responsibility and the sign-maker

In the Epilogue of The Language Machine, Harris criticizes modern Western society (including its academic institutions) for being linguistically immature, i. e. for not taking on its linguistic responsibilities, preferring to leave that task to a "mysterious inner machinery, run by programs over which human beings have no control" (1987a: 171):

> A society whose academic establishment accepts with alacrity and even with enthusiasm the prospect of being able to treat verbal communication as a complex form of data-processing is a society which proclaims its linguistic immaturity. The mythology of the language machine is the mythology of a technologically advanced society which has not yet come to terms with its own linguistic self-awareness. It is a society whose linguistic capacities and facilities have fast outgrown its comprehension of them. It is a society which looks in the linguistic mirror, does not like what it sees, and consequently shrinks from its linguistic responsibilities. The signs of its linguistic insecurity are everywhere. (1987a: 172)

The notion of linguistic responsibility is a constant in the Harrisian literature: it relates to Harris' stance against 'dehumanizing' language, first of all within academia (and especially in linguistics), and his fear that lay society will adopt a form of discourse about language which treats it as disengaged from human motives and intentions. In an integrational philosophy, 'responsibility' should be at the centre of inquiry precisely because, the integrationist argues, individuals must not put faith in anything that lies outside the grasp of their own rich personal experience (linguistic or not). To take responsibility for one's own experiences and observations, in fact, means recognizing that there is no objective court of appeal one can turn to in order to certify one's experiences as correct. Affirming one's right to one's experiences is tantamount to admitting one's role as an active sign-maker in a space-time continuum. To take responsibility for one's language is concomitant with accepting, as Harris puts it, "our dayto-day duties as language-makers", and requires awareness that linguistic security cannot be found in a language "presented as being in itself neutral, a mere communal instrument or facility" (1987a: 162). It is important to note that integrationists do not support any form of Humpty-Dumptyism: to take responsibility for one's signs also entails taking into account what one's interlocutors might make our signs to mean. Interpersonal communication involves mutual engagement. If signs were 'shared' within a community, as Saussure's notion of language as a social contract implies, there wouldn't be any need for the kind of continuous self-monitoring of one's words in interpersonal communication. The integrationist's claim that signs are

'private', in turn, does not commit him/her to a solipsistic view of mind.

Within semiotics, the tensions around the notion of self are also reflected in relation to ethics, in particular semioethics. On the one hand, Peirce affords the vision of semiosis as the unfolding over time of sign-relations and sign-processes, suggesting an impersonal universe without an overarching moral purpose. This is also one way to understand the message of modern evolutionary science, as depicting a universe of ceaseless change, interaction and competition without any underlying moral order. Yet modern semiotics draws on centuries of philosophical and theological debate about the nature of the sign (see Deely 2001, Manetti 2010), as well as non-Darwinist, vitalistic and ecological understandings of life-systems, the history of symptomology and medical diagnosis, therapeutic disciplines such as psychoanalysis, and socially engaged forms of thought (Marxism). Petrilli insists that human beings are rational animals and as "semiotic animals, human beings are capable of a global view of life and communication" (2012: 11). Human beings' unique status as semiotic animals (capable of 'metasemiotic' reflexivity) therefore entails an ethical responsibility towards life (Petrilli and Ponzio 2010). This is an open-ended commitment (Petrilli 2012: 14):

> Human responsibility toward life (which converges with signs and communication) in the late capitalist communication-phase of development is unbounded, including in the sense that responsibility is not limited to human life, but involves all life-forms in the planetary ecosystem with which human life is inextricably interconnected.

Semiotics in its widest sense embraces a wide range of ethical positions, in addition to positions which deny the efficacy of ethical intervention (cf. Luhmann's systems theory). Those approaches which seek to provide or emphasize an ethical dimension to the study of signs resist the reduction of human communication to exchange, and stress holism and interconnectedness (Petrilli and Ponzio 2010: 152ff.). Semioethics is, in the words of Petrilli and Ponzio, "working towards a new form of humanism" (2010: 159), drawing inspiration from ideas of dialogue and exchange, ecology, as well as the humanism of otherness of Emmanuel Levinas (1906 – 1995) (Levinas 1972).

As in other domains, integrationism takes its starting point more narrowly from a critique of linguistics. From a Harrisian perspective, language-use automatically qualifies for ethical, political and aesthetic judgements – it must not be confined to only certain 'uses' of language by particular individuals or groups in particular circumstances. By insisting that language cannot be divorced from communication, the integrationist seeks to undermine the agenda of modern linguistics, which consists in studying 'language' (and languages) for its own sake, i. e. as something existing independently of society and of questions of morality. But integrationism proper does not go any further, in that it does not prescribe the kinds of ethical concerns that should be central to a moral vision of language. Integrationism does not take a fixed position on ecological questions, nor on religion, nor on economic questions, except to the extent that it can diagnose the persistence of mythical thinking about language and linguistics. Just what integrationism implies for questions of social ideology is a challenge for future developments in the theory.

One aspect of this social theory is arguably an appeal for a more democratic and tolerant approach to language politics and language ideology. The deeply ingrained notion of 'expertise', cherished in all human societies – useful and important as it may be – has led us to distrust our own conscious experience whenever it conflicts with the expert's view. Nowhere can this tension be felt more strongly than in present-day debates confronting scientists to those who oppose 'Reason', or, as evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins has called them, 'the enemies of Reason'. Scientists have set up a domain of truth pertaining to the real world based on facts, which no lay person is allowed to question: individual experience, as granted by our direct senses, is dismissed as 'delusional' by those who know better. When on the occasion of a debate centered on Richard Dawkins' bestselling book The God Delusion (2006), held at the University of the Highlands and Islands at Inverness, a member of the audience asked Dawkins what he had to say to someone "who had met the living

Lord Jesus Christ, someone who had walked with God for over 50 years", adding that for his life "it had been no delusion", Dawkins replied:

> If you had been born in India, I daresay you would be saying the same thing about Lord Krishna and Lord Shiva. If you had been born in Afghanistan I daresay you would be saying the same thing about Allah. If you had been born in Viking Norway, you would be saying the same thing about Wotan. If you had been born in Olympian Greece, you'd be saying the same thing about Zeus and Apollo. The human mind is extremely susceptible to hallucination. (Dawkins 2008)

When that person replied that he could not "afford to build his life on hallucination", Dawkins responded by assuring him that he did not "doubt his sincerity", but that obviously he did not "share his beliefs" and that "obviously he was hallucinating". The idea of 'sincere but hallucinating' is worth noting here; on the one hand, Dawkins recognizes that there is something like a personal reality, i. e. the man seems to truly believe to have 'walked with God' for the past 50 years; on the other hand, however, observer-independent reality, as established by science, disqualifies that personal reality, which is dismissed as 'hallucination'. In this way the delusional individual can still save face (after all his/her belief is acknowledged to be 'sincere'), and the scientist cannot be accused of incivility. A very common strategy adopted by (popular) scientists, which the episode under scrutiny illustrates quite well, is that of decontextualizing personal experience and addressing the issue in the most general of terms: hence Dawkins shows no interest in the history of that particular person asking the question, but considers him to be merely a representative – not only of a particular religion, but of all religions in all times.

The incapacitation of the individual by science extends to questions of language: language, for the scientist, is reocentrically surrogational, which is why statements about the material world either agree with observer-independent reality or they do not. Natural languages, in this perspective, are imperfect instruments for talking about reality – because they are culturally biased and hence limit their speakers ideologically; in turn, the language of science is confined to what Nature allows it to state, and these statements are 'languageless', as it were – even though nowadays they tend to be formulated in English. Richard Dawkins' answer to a question posed by a young man, who, on the occasion of the aforementioned debate, asked the biologist about the 'why' of our existence, and what science has to say to that, reveals adherence to reocentric surrogationalism as the current semantic doctrine of (popular) science. Dawkins stated the following:

> What I would say about the question 'why?' is: 'Why do you have any right to ask it?'. It's not a meaningful question, except – unless you specify the kind of answer you're expecting. As a biologist it's very easy to ask the question 'Why do birds have wings?', for example. We can do that in Darwinian terms. If you say, however, 'Why do mountains exist?' –there are some questions which simply don't deserve an answer. I mean, the question 'Why do mountains exist?' – you could give an answer in terms of the geological processes that give rise to mountains. But that's not what you want, is it? You want something about the purpose of mountains: 'What is the purpose of a mountain?'. It's a silly question – doesn't deserve an answer. The mere fact that you can ask a question, the mere fact that you can frame a question in the English language doesn't mean that it's entitled to an answer. If I say to you: 'What is the colour of jealousy?': it's a perfectly grammatical English sentence, but it's not a question that deserves an answer. The correct answer is: 'Don't ask such a silly question'. (Dawkins 2008)

What can (and what cannot) be said, therefore, becomes the domain of experts: while the

grammarian qua expert tells students what can (and what cannot) be said in terms of, say, the English language, the scientist qua expert tells lay people what can (and what cannot) be asked about the world and ourselves. Dawkins does not establish a direct relation between what is grammatically viable in ordinary English and what is semantically viable in scientific English: how could it be otherwise, given that not all words and their combinations have to be defined reocentrically in a natural language. Thus, to ask "What is the colour of jealousy?" is altogether fine, say, in a poem, since poetic language, being metaphorical, does not incur the same moral obligations as scientific language. In turn, to ask a biologist "Why do birds have wings?" can only be interpreted 'literally', since the biologist interprets it as a question coming straight out of the 'Book of Nature' – and the words in that Book are reocentrically defined.

In The Language Machine, Harris draws a picture of lay society as a linguistically insecure society: in view of the excerpt discussed above, it is not hard to imagine how that insecurity spreads via expert talk and mass media diffusion, eventually creating a society whose members are afraid of taking responsibility for the language they use, the meanings they intend, and the effects they wish to achieve. In all domains there is fear of raising 'silly questions', which is a sign of 'unreason', or irrationality, precisely because there are no good reasons for asking them. As a parenthesis, Dawkins' position is reminiscent of that of the so-called 'logical positivists', an anti-metaphysical group of philosophers associated with Rudolf Carnap (1891–1970). A central concern of theirs was with the foundations of the language of science and the associated need to be able to strip away the misleading surface structures of language to find the presence (or absence) of empirical propositions. The British philosopher A. J. Ayer in his famous work Language, Truth and Logic (1936) argued that metaphysical statements were not merely false but meaningless, since they did not correspond to verifiable propositions. The philosopher Francis Bacon (1561–1626) had argued likewise against the 'corrupted' logic of the Aristotelian syllogism.

For many present-day scientists, linguistic responsibility is solely viewed in relation to words and sentences as mirror-images of reality. In the eyes of many a modern atheist, getting rid of ideologies, religion and superstitions will restore the human mind to an original state, in which our 'inner machinery' produces sensible questions generating sensible answers (Pablé 2011b). Human reason is treated as a "higher-order mental capacity" – a "natural faculty that detects the difference between good and bad arguments, between sense and nonsense, etc." (Harris 2012b: 82/81). However, as Harris argues convincingly (e. g. Harris 2005a, 2012b), science's discourse about Reason relies on an incomplete analysis of the relationship between ordinary language and scientific language, which takes the form of two conflicting theses, namely "semantic continuity" and "semantic discontinuity" (Harris 2005b: 81– 82):

> They are controversies [...] about whether and how what the scientist says can be linguistically integrated into other (non-scientific) forms of discourse. This integration is the ultimate locus of dispute. All the problems generated are integrational problems. [...] Such integrational problems emerge as insoluble because, and only because, they are formulated on the basis of a traditional reocentric semantics. It is typical of reocentric semantics to conflate questions about meanings with putative descriptions of realia. (This is a semantics in which gas appears as a given, a 'real fact' of Nature, not to be questioned. The only scientific question is what this 'real fact' actually amounts to. Is gas this, or is it that, or is it some third thing? Or perhaps all three? Real definition again.) Adopting a non-reocentric philosophy of language at least holds out the hope of putting such problems in a quite different light, and perhaps of dissolving them altogether.

What, then, is reason? For Harris the whole conundrum is generated by the Aristotelian premiss that the world is the same for everyone. The answer Harris (2012b: 82) gives to the question is the following:

> Rationality is the irrational expectation we cling to that everybody else's world will turn out to be, not just for some purposes but for all relevant purposes, no different from our own. That comforting assumption makes our own world a more congenial place to live in.

Case studies

The truth about truth-conditional semantics (Harris 1987a: 156 – 61)

In chapter 7 of The Language Machine, entitled 'Ghosts and Machines' (Harris 1987a: 138 – 162), Roy Harris discusses truth-conditional semantics with a view to criticizing what is wrong with treating the notion of 'truth' as built into the notion of 'linguistic meaning'. Harris argues that appraising a statement as 'true' requires individuals making such an assessment in concrete situations –in other words, it requires from the individual to assume responsibility for his/ her own sign creation. Addressing the 'epistemological spirit' of the truth-conditional enterprise, Harris (1987a: 159) writes:

> Here we see a semantics which not only drains the concept of 'truth' of any moral content but divorces statements from their communicational context altogether. For while there is no denying that in everyday life we recognize an important connexion between the meanings of the words people use and the truth or otherwise of what they say, nevertheless to reduce that connexion to a simple correspondence between hypothetical 'states of affairs' and 'sentences' is to misrepresent it entirely. The result is a semantics for robots, not human beings. More exactly, it is language-machine semantics. For the assumption is that in the course of the process of language acquisition our internal cognitive machinery computes a fixed semantic value or values for every expression in the language, and does so solely on the basis of the truth or falsity of the statements those expressions may be used to make.

Harris goes on to argue that when we appraise questions of truth and falsehood, our judgment is essentially context-bound: it involves taking into account the circumstances of a particular statement, as well as the speaker's and hearer's points of view. If we agree with X's assessment of a situation, we may use the word true. Showing our support for what X said in a particular communication situation has to do with our understanding what point X's words have for purposes of that situation. By saying that what X says is true,

> we ourselves take responsibility for the trustworthiness of [X]: and thus undertake a moral commitment of our own to any third party involved. The word true is also a lexical mark of that commitment. (Harris 1987a: 160)

Harris (1987a: 160 – 161) concludes the section by criticizing truth-conditional semantics for treating truth as an "impersonal idealization of faultless descriptive accuracy". Such an approach takes no interest in the question "From whose point of view is the statement true?", thereby excluding ab initio the "interpersonal dimension of meaning":

> A semantic theory where rules of inference operate in a communicational vacuum, irrespective of who is saying what to whom, for what purposes and in what circumstances, is a semantic theory in which truth has already been anaesthetized, numbed by a massive injection of formal logic (Harris 1987a: 161)

Language, responsibility, and online forums (Wong 2010)

In his applied research paper, the student Tik Hung Wong discusses the recent phenomena of 'cyber manhunt' and 'cyber bullying', and rightly points out that the internet depersonalizes individuals' words and statements, making users less sensitive to the implications of their actions because they can hide behind their pseudonyms and the anonymity of the web:

> Internet users are inclined to believe that there is absolute freedom of speech in internet fora, to an extent that they are insensitive to the consequences of their impulsive remarks. They seem to assume that it is unlikely that they would be held responsible for what they have said in the internet. (Wong 2010)

Wong looked more closely at one particular Hong Kong online forum (HK Golden Forum) which "has bred the culture of seeking excessive moral justice" by instigating other bloggers to take action against a certain person. On the other hand, Wong notes, the law has become more alert to 'language crimes', thus making individuals responsible for what they have published online. A case in point is an episode involving members of the aforementioned forum, who were announcing (as a joke) that they were going to blow up the China Liaison Office (that is, the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), and were giving advice on how to make dynamite. As a consequence, one of the members was identified and arrested by the police for 'comments made in a virtual community'.

Questions for reflection

1. Integrationists criticize formalistic linguistics and truth-conditional semantics for not recognizing the fundamental importance of the individuals as sign-makers, who have to take responsibility for the words they use and for their interpretations of the words of others. Are not integrationists actually doing something very similar? It might be argued that integrationists are trying to impose their own metalogic on non-integrationists, in effect demanding respect for an integrational metalinguistics of individual responsibility. How, if at all, could this objection be countered?

2. The notion of 'linguistic responsibility' is linked to a very topical issue, namely the idea of 'ownership of language' (Hutton 2009: 125 – 129; 2010a). There are various senses in which individuals and groups might be deemed to own languages, words, texts and utterances. How are language rights related to responsibility and ownership? How about personal identity and group identity?

3. How is linguistic responsibility related to the indeterminacy of language?

4. In his inaugural lecture at the University of Hong Kong in 1989, Roy Harris ended his talk about English in Hong Kong as follows (1989a: 45 – 46):

> The language or languages a community uses must be its own; and communities, like individuals, have the ability to make a language their own. For communities, like individuals, are not just language users: they are language makers. New English or Old English, if Hong Kong wants English, then Hong Kong must make English its own. Otherwise it will surely lose it.

How could the integrational notion of 'linguistic responsibility' be accommodated within Postcolonial Studies, and how does this notion relate to the present-day linguistic reality of former colonies? The inaugural lecture dates back to the late colonial days of Hong Kong. How would one go about ascertaining whether present-day Hong Kong has 'lost English', or made it 'its own'?

5. In his article about teaching a course on the features of ‘American English’ at the University of Hong Kong, Daniel R. Davis (1998: 306 – 7) rejects a structuralist account as the basis for such a course, on the following grounds:

> …this strategy plays into some of the language myths which already beset the students, the myth of a standard language especially. On the one hand, the students have a large investment in the concept of a standard language, since their success in examinations has placed them at the top of the educational ladder in Hong Kong, and this will determine their place in society. On the other hand, acceptance of the mantle of the standard language places them in a permanent crisis of identity. Is their English of a sufficient standard? Is it necessary to defer to speakers of English as a first language? Does conformity to a standard result in a transferral of loyalty from Hong Kong or China to some other place, especially if it results in a usage noticeably different from that of their peers? A structuralist approach gives them a method for learning a variety of English, feature by feature, but in doing so it denies them the possibility of addressing the political situation it has landed them in.

Why is teaching a course on ‘the features of Standard English’ (British, or American) not merely a matter of imparting ‘knowledge’ on your students, but is infinitely more complex, involving society at large, the individual, moral and political aspects of communication, etc.? Why is there no place for a ‘scientific’ approach to teaching such a course, from an integrational perspective, and what arguments can be put forward against a uniform way of teaching its contents, regardless of where one is teaching?

6. When discussing different models of education prevalent in ancient Greece, Harris (2009c: 123) notes the following concerning the Socratic view:

> Education is a matter of developing your own potential as an individual mind. Nothing of intellectual substance is to be taken for granted, whether from your peers or from your would-be educators. That is Socrates’ message to posterity. It is arguably the most valuable message about education that has ever been given in the Western tradition. An educated society, in the ‘Socratic’ view, is a society that not only recognizes but acts on the priority of that message.

How does the Socratic view relate to the Harrisian notion of ‘responsibility’?

7. The following are quotations by the sociologist Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy (1888 – 1973) (see Cristaudo 2012). Do they bear affinities with Roy Harris’ position, and if yes in what way?

> Speech is contrary to all science because in speaking everybody must say something different, whereas the aim of science is that all must say the same thing. (Rosenstock-Huessy 1951: 77)

> Whispering is unauthorized speech. The devil is any person who does not wish to be quoted, and so never attains a rank of a person. For a person accepts God’s judgment over what he has said or done. Thus he can come to know the truth. The devil never receives this verdict because he whispers only, and never speaks truly or confidently. (Rosenstock-Huessy 2011: 188)

> By speech, then, we contribute actual power to the life of society. By this, one thing becomes

> clear. He does not speak who talks about everything. The chatterbox does not speak in the full sense of this term because he does not speak with power. [...] I say something the more, the more committed I am to this statement. He who says something and does not mean it, is a liar. He who says something and makes it clear that he does not mean it, is a chatterbox. Both types of man may say something but they do not speak. Speech enters the scene only when we are back of [stand behind] our words with our reputation, life, honor. (Rosenstock-Huessy 1970: 178)

> Grammar and logic free language from being at the mercy of the tone of voice. Grammar protects us against misunderstanding the sound of an uttered name; logic protects us against what we say having a double meaning. (Rosenstock-Huessy 1988: 25)

2.6 Integrating reality

The question "What is reality?" presupposes a mastery of language, which is why only human beings are capable of asking it (Harris 2012a: 3). For Harris, the question of reality is inseparable from what the human senses allow us to integrate: therefore, Harris (2012a: 4) argues, everyday medium-sized material objects are the most obvious lay candidates for reality (2012a: 21):

> Our confidence about everyday reality is confidence about the way our senses confirm one another, i.e. are integrated, at least in the immediate here-and-now. You can not only see a book on your desk but pick it up and move it somewhere else. The simplest way of accommodating those diverse experiences intellectually is to believe in the reality of the book. What we call its 'reality' is nothing other than its integration in our sensory experiences.

We 'moderns' tend to forget that the question of 'reality', which has no intrinsic priority among the indefinitely many questions that human beings ask (Harris 2012a: 3), is bound to what elsewhere Harris has called 'anthropic' Nature, also termed 'cenoscopic' (Deely 2009: 5), which 'contains objects and creatures and events and processes that human beings can distinguish without the artificial aid of instruments of any kind' (Harris 2005a: 177). Harris goes on to argue that the kind of language that human beings possess has to do with the biomechanical limitations of our senses and with our macrosocial organization into certain kinds of communities. Anthropic language, in fact, suits the kind of environment that anthropic Nature presents us with. Intelligent non-human creatures biomechanically and macrosocially constituted very differently from us would live in a different environment calling for a different kind of language (if indeed they had 'language'). In other words, these creatures would not possess an 'anthropic' language, nor would they live in an 'anthropic' Nature.

According to Harris (2005a: 178), the task of science is to extend our investigations into 'subanthropic' and 'extra-anthropic' matters (or 'ideoscopic', Deely 2009: 5), i.e. into a reality no longer immediately recognizable. Believing in that reality means "taking on trust an analogical extension of the reality of the book to other things too small [or too far away] to be amenable to everyday perception" (Harris 2012a: 21). What this means is that, at the end of the day, science still deals with human reality, as the subanthropic and the extra-anthropic world are 'extensions' of the anthropic world, i. e. they still depend on being grasped by the human senses. In a similar vein, the semiotician John Deely (2009: 10) tells us that

> C[e]noscopic knowledge, the awareness of our world made possible by the type of bodies that we have as semiotic animals, is the only beginning possible for us, the horizon from which

> inquiry takes rise and to which it must always return as to a measure…

Thus, Harris does not approach the question of reality ‘like a realist’; that is, he does not believe in a scientifically objective reality, which orthodox science takes as its object of inquiry. In The Semantics of Science (Harris 2005a), Harris would like the ‘Aristotelian scientist’, who forms his primary target reader, to come to realize the implications of our species’ confinement to the anthropic world. What ‘reality’ is for other creatures (terrestrial or extra-terrestrial) is not something we can know, nor does it really make sense for us to ask this question in another creature’s stead: in fact, as far as we know, we are the only creatures raising this question. It is of human concern – or at least this is what philosophers tell us.

Harris’ criticism of Aristotelian realism needs to be understood against this background. For Aristotle, reality is the same for all of us, irrespective of what names are used in the various languages to refer to the things in the real world: hence, “a stone is a stone whatever you call it”. Aristotle also argues that our mental impressions of the things in the real world are the same. Aristotle reasons like a physiologist, who naturally assumes that, all being equal, we perceive, being equipped with the same sensorial apparatus, the world identically, in accordance with reality ‘as it is’. Thus, to smell coffee means that there is coffee, just as to see snow means that there is snow. If reality ‘as it is’ and our sensory experience of it do not fit, the realist will speak of wrong attribution: you cannot smell coffee if what you smell is actually something else. What this position, advocated by John Searle and referred to as ‘intentional causation’ (Searle 1998), leaves out, however, is that in point of fact our senses cannot be separated from our selves: it is not our senses that cause us to see, feel, smell, taste or hear something – we see, feel, smell, taste or hear it. And each and every human being integrates his/her sensory experiences against a background of personal life-histories. This is not to suggest that our senses are not reliable – clearly they are, or else humankind would not have survived for long; still, human sign-making is not constrained in the sense that it either corresponds to mind-independent reality, or it does not. If that were the case, then (pace Searle) humankind would not have survived for much longer, either.

Where does integrationism stand in the philosophical debate opposing realism to relativism? Harris (2013: 31–32) calls integrationism a form of relativism, but only

> inasmuch as what is integrated is always relative to individuals in particular communication situations. Truth, by the same token, is relativized to the beliefs of individuals in particular situations. Scientific truth is no exception. For everything that is claimed to be a scientific fact, there must be a number of individuals who accept it for reasons that they count as scientific.

Integrationism, in turn, is not a form of ‘cultural relativism’ (e. g. social constructivism), nor does integrational linguistics subscribe in any way to ‘linguistic relativity’. What is wrong with either kind of relativism, from an integrational point of view, is their focus on the reification of ideas of culture and/or linguistic systems (thus overemphasizing the macrosocial dimension, at the expense of what biomechanically conditioned individuals aim to do in given circumstances). Harris (2013: 34) goes on to state that

> beliefs and principles are valid only for the individual person by which they are held. Communication with others consequently depends on ad hoc negotiation in particular circumstances: nothing is guaranteed in advance.

This is where Harrisian communication theory and Aristotelian metaphysics part company. When A speaks to B, crucially both speaker and listener hear what is being said (given the appropriate

biomechanical and circumstantial conditions). However, there is no way for A to find out whether B heard 'the same' as A. Of course, A can ask B to repeat exactly what A has just said (or the 'exact words'). Still, from an integrational point of view, separating 'what we say' from 'how we say it' and 'with what effect' is a typically segregational move, commonly associated with Austinian speech act theory. As speakers, we rely on the assumption that "the listener hears what the speaker hears" (Harris 2012a: 114). As Harris makes clear (2012a: 113), it is because of (the speakers') auditory feedback, i. e. hearing one's own voice when speaking, that speaker and listener are put 'on an equal footing'. This reliance is essential for the communicative activity that we commonly call 'language'. Yet, this should not tempt us to think along the lines of what Saussure's 'talking heads' model of communication falsely suggests: in fact, the notion of 'sharing the same space' (e. g. teacher and students in the classroom) only makes sense precisely because both teacher and the various students occupy different portions of it (cf. Harris 1996a: 62).

Integrationism could be seen as espousing an 'anti-realist' stance in relation to the question of 'reality': Harris does not believe in a purely objective reality. John Deely (2009: 11) tells us that a correct understanding of 'objectivity' must take into account how animal objective awareness of their Umwelt differs from human objective awareness of the human Umwelt. In the animal Umwelt, "objects are considered only in relation to the animals themselves, with no opening further to consider the constitution of objects in relation to the objects themselves": in other words, only in the human Umwelt (i.e. the anthropic world) can objects be contemplated 'for their own sake' and thus come to be regarded as existing independently of those who observe them. The integrationist agrees with Deely's insights: 'objective knowledge' as the result of scientific objectivity is not knowledge about what exists independently of humans and animals; it consists, to use Deely's words, "in the grasp it achieves of the subjective constitution of the physical environment" (2009: 11). Deely calls scientific understanding a "natural fulfillment of the orientation of the human mind to an understanding […] of what is external to our bodies".

For Harris, an integrational account of science cannot afford to ignore the moral question of the individual sign-maker's responsibility vis-à-vis the impersonal language and discourse of science, with which ordinary language can find itself in collision. Saying that scientific knowledge is the "natural fulfillment of the orientation of the human mind" disregards the fact that understanding the 'essence' of material and physical things (through ideoscopic knowledge) is irrelevant for most of our everyday communicational purposes: in many forms of interaction, Harris (2009a: 90) insists, "knowing how to act" takes priority over "knowing that something is the case".

An integrationist approach to reality is characterized by a rejection of a reocentric semantics. As Shirly Tian Zhang (2014) convincingly argues, even such seemingly universal terms as 'time', which the principle of co-temporality grants axiomatic value, is indeterminate qua sign. 'Time' cannot form a scientific object of inquiry altogether independently of the question of how particular individuals construe the sign 'time' in particular circumstances and under particular macrosocial conditions. To debate whether time is 'real' or 'unreal', Zhang claims, is to betray one's subscription to a fixed-code semantics. What this shows is that the question of 'reality', far from being a disinterested question, is inextricably linked to the particular sign theory adopted. Some integrationists, Harris among them, would hence argue that segregational and integrational theories of the sign lead to very different conclusions as regards 'reality'.

Case studies

The subjectivity of the 'real' (Pablé 2011a; 2013b)

Adrian Pablé (2011a) argues that reality cannot be dealt with in any comprehensive way from a realist position nor from a social constructionist one. The former, he claims, does not take individual experience and observation seriously (or only those individual experiences and observations 'in line with' scientific truth), treating what, with hindsight, appears to have been 'incorrect' as an altogether contextless issue. The latter, in turn, presupposes that reality is somehow discursively

constructed, i. e. as the result of socially encoded and locally enacted practices. The following experience, a retelling of what the author's sister told him had recently happened to her, is intended to corroborate the notion of 'first-order reality' as integration (or, in fact, what could retrospectively be analyzed as a failure to integrate):

> One of my sister's neighbours once told her the reason why she had to look after little Nicholas, her cousin Barbara's son, on Mondays: apparently her cousin was suffering from the baby-blues and needed help; this neighbour of my sister's also told her that Barbara was expecting her second child, soon to be born. Some time after this episode, my sister was briefly introduced to Barbara by her neighbour, as the latter two happened to be driving by her house. Shortly after the incident, the neighbour invites my sister to her place, together with other mothers; there my sister meets cousin Barbara, well advanced in pregnancy. Her child, Nicholas, is present too. Around the same time (it is the end of August), school starts again. At the parents' evening, every couple introduces themselves, among whom my sister and her husband, as well as a woman called Barbara (with her husband): later on, my sister recalled the two mentioning that they had a son called Nicholas. In the following weeks my sister sees Barbara on a few occasions, as they both take their children to kindergarten in the mornings. The first day of school she briefly talks to Barbara, for she seems to be desperate (her child is crying because he does not want to stay in kindergarten); Barbara is still pregnant at the time. Some time after that, my sister learns from her neighbour that her cousin has given birth to a girl. Shortly before Christmas, the kindergarten teachers invite all the mothers to a dinner party. My sister is the last to arrive at the restaurant and finds a place next to Barbara. As she cannot remember her son's name, she asks her; Barbara tells her that her son is called Nicholas. My sister, somewhat apologetically, explains to her that she is asking because the mothers, including Barbara, have usually already left by the time she arrives with her child. She adds that she only recalls seeing her two or three times with her boy at the kindergarten. Barbara then mentions to her that they had actually met for the first time at her cousin's, and mentions my sister's neighbour. My sister cannot believe her ears: this woman, mother of the boy who attends the same class as her child, is the same woman as the one she was introduced to in front of her house and whom she met at her neighbour's place some four months before? An important detail in all this is that Barbara apparently did not change her look between the first time she met my sister and the school-related episodes that followed. (Pablé 2011a: 26)

When asked to analyze how this confusion could have arisen in the first place, the author's sister provided the following explanations (as retold by the author):

> My sister accounted for the fact that she did not recognize the Barbara of the school as being the same person as her neighbour's cousin on the grounds that she simply did not expect cousin Barbara's child to attend the same kindergarten as hers. In fact, my sister's neighbour never mentioned to her that meanwhile Barbara had moved to the same village; on the contrary, my sister recollected being told that Barbara came from another village. This is why, according to my sister, she did not associate Barbara, her neighbour's pregnant cousin, with the woman of the kindergarten, who was also called Barbara, was also pregnant, and had a boy around the same age as cousin Barbara. Had she known that Barbara was living in the same community – my sister claims – she would have recognised her as her neighbour's pregnant cousin from the start. (Pablé 2011a: 26)

From an integrational perspective, the 'Barbara case' shows that (i) experience and knowledge of reality are local, and that (ii) reality is not a linguistic and/ or cultural 'construct', nor the result of

the local, contextualized discursive practices engaged in by interactants, as claimed in sociocultural linguistics (Bucholtz and Hall 2004). As far as the realist-scientific notion of 'supra-individual reality' is concerned, the integrationist will argue that such a notion is itself the result of complex forms of (biomechanical, macrosocial and circumstantial) integration. The case also questions our common sense 'realist' assumptions about the past, which we tend to treat as consisting of 'facts' existing independently of the (contextualized) present (Harris 2004a).

The crucial question emerging from Pablé's reflections is, then, where to draw the line between the semiologically 'normal' and the semiologically 'pathological': the integrationist does not deny that being able to recognize a person as a specific person is an essential semiological act; without this ability, we disintegrate, as people affected by severe forms of 'face blindness' can testify. At the same time, we tend to overlook the extent to which our way of talking about 'recognition' is macrosocially conditioned, and respectively to what extent it is linked to related (cultural) assumptions about the self: in fact, underlying the problem of recognition there is the assumption that one is always the 'same person'. This notion of a stable personal identity, aided by the bureaucratically fostered notion of proper names as permanent labels of identification, provides a powerful answer to the question of 'who we are'.

The Great Wall of China (Zhou 2010)

The following personal account by Feifei Zhou shows that we cannot take for granted an impersonal reality as guaranteed by language. What individuals assume to be the case (or 'real') does not coincide with how 'reality' is presented (and imposed) on the level of officialdom:

> My friends and I went to one part of the Great Wall called Jinshanling. We paid at the foot of Jinshanling and went up to climb all the way until we thought it was time to stop and spend the night in a watchtower. The next morning we continued to climb until a guard stopped us and asked us to pay for a ticket. We felt so strange: how come we have to pay again? The guard said we had long been out of Jinshanling, and were already in Simatai. We were not persuaded and found him annoying. So we resisted his requirement and continued to walk on the Great Wall. He said: 'If you don't pay, you can't walk on the Great Wall'. So we descended from the Great Wall and walked in the wild mountain until we couldn't cross the river. Then we had to go back onto the Great Wall. We kept walking and this man was following us threatening we had to pay sooner or later. Then we found people were waiting for us to pay to exit when we had reached the foot of the Great Wall. We argued with the people and said we had already paid to enter; why should we pay to exit? They argued that we had paid to enter Jinshanling, but we had already passed Jinshanling and entered Simatai, which is why we now were required to pay in order to exit from Simatai. According to them, we had visited two scenic spots, which had different names, and for which you had to pay two tickets.

Zhou comments on the episode as follows:

> This incident shows how names were contextualized differently by different people in that particular situation; it also demonstrates how the particularity of knowledge may be required in particular situations. From our point of view, we had paid for a ticket which should enable us to enter the Great Wall, and we didn't take Jinshanling as the name of one, autonomous, part of the Great Wall: we simply took it as a place to enter. And once we were on the Great Wall, as long as it would not be blocked, we should have permission to climb all the way until we would want to descend. The people working there, in turn, divide the Great Wall into several parts; for them, the name 'Great Wall' needs to be particularized as 'Jinshanling', 'Simatai', and all the other names. I can imagine that they do not bother with this particularity in some other situations, but in that paying situation they really insist on that.

Questions for reflection

1. Nini Praetorius (2000: 308 – 310) explains the apparent paradox posed by 'conceptual relativity', i.e. the fact that on the one hand "a person may use different concepts about the same things in different situations, and [...] different people (e. g. belonging to different cultures, having different backgrounds etc.) may have different concepts about the same things", and the fact that on the other hand "people – in spite of these differences – are able to understand each other and determine the differences", as follows (2000: 309):

> The conditions for people belonging to different speech communities to be able to understand each other, and to determine differences in their use of language and concepts, must be that vast similarities also exist in their knowledge, and thus in their notions of things in reality to which their different concepts apply. For, were they not able together to identify, and hence to agree on correct determination of the things that their different concepts concern – i.e. agree that they concern these particular things about which this is the case or true, and this is not – they could not possible [sic] make claims about any determinable differences in their use of concepts and words about these things.

Praetorius claims that the very fact of cultural relativity precludes linguistic or epistemological relativism: in other words, she claims that we would not be able to identify and correctly describe variations in knowledge if individuals (belonging to the same or to a different speech community) did not possess a huge amount of shared knowledge of reality (i. e. knowledge of what is the case, or true, and what is not). How compatible is the notion of 'intersubjectively shared knowledge' with an integrational epistemology?

2. The psychologist of language Jesper Hermann (2011: 576) comments on the fact that when President Barack Obama passed his Health Reform bill in 2010, some Republicans adopted a Cold War rhetoric, spreading talk about a 'communist threat'. Hermann goes on to say:

> Meaning is created in the passing and is not necessarily linked to past events unless we direct our attention towards something in the past. It is therefore both wrong and a blatant injustice to associate a 2010 Health Reform with the communist threat as if we were in a context of the 1930s or 1950s. Even more considering that Obama is a Democrat and still is engaged in warfare in the Middle East and Afghanistan, and shows no traits of communist beliefs whatsoever.

Hermann (2011: 577) condemns this episode on the grounds that by invoking Cold War rhetoric, the Republicans are operating with the fallacious notion that "signs live their own parallel lives and have their own reality". In other words, Hermann is accusing the Republicans of doing precisely what integrationists accuse orthodox linguists of doing, namely treating language as "a readymade dead thing existing out-there-on-its-own" (2011: 577).

Does this episode qualify, as Hermann (2011: 576) claims, as an example of confusing (on the part of those who believed the Republicans) "linguistically mediated reality with the rest of the world and with what it 'stands for'"? In other words, are the Republicans invoking mere words that have no referents? Would it make sense to describe this use of the label 'communist' as linguistically irresponsible, or do such judgments simply reflect our political or ideological views?

3. Amorey Gethin (1990) advocates taking direct experience (unaffected by language) as the true guarantor of reality. For that he directs our attention to the animal realm:

> There is no such innocence in words like "good, bad; right, wrong; beautiful, ugly; wicked, virtuous; dirty, clean; valuable, worthless; deserving, guilty;..." These are as inadequate and untrue as any word. The real world is not divided up into words like that. Again humans should look instead at what they and others do and feel – that is where the truth lies. And I do not think it is fanciful to suggest that one way to clear the brain is to consider the reactions of animals to the actions of others. What, without the 'benefit' of language, does the stray dog feel about it, what does our cat think about it – and what, for that matter, does the mouse, prey to our cat, want to happen? (Morality is not always simple, even without language.) How will the wolf, or the sheep, the whale, the sparrow or the sterling react? If one can think of these things one may get into the direct presence of reality. (Gethin 1990: 229)

What problems might the integrationist spot in Gethin's proposal that instead of having faith in words as the means of knowing reality we should look at what we ourselves and others do and feel? What about the idea that by thinking of animals' actions and reactions, we will experience reality itself? Would you agree with Gethin that linking 'pictures' of experiences is more 'trustworthy' than linking experienced words?

4. Consider the following scenario (adapted from Pablé 2013a):

> ...suppose a good friend is looking out of the window into my garden (or yours, as it were) in a way that suggests that her attention is caught by something/somebody, and I ask her what she sees (because I have no view onto my garden at that moment): let us assume she answers 'a mouse'. How is her utterance to be assessed if I join her and look out of the window as well – and see my hamster instead?

What might an integrationist say about that friend's claim that there is a mouse in the garden (as opposed to the first-person narrator's claim that in reality it is his hamster, which, say, he assumed was inside its cage)? How would this explanation differ from a realist account? Imagine the first-person narrator running out on hearing his friend say that a mouse is in his garden. What could be a plausible explanation for the latter scenario? What does this scenario tell us about language, codes, and reality?

5. David Bade (2011: 723) says the following regarding Chomsky's famous sentence John hit the boy, which the latter presented to his readers in 1986:

> For all we know he [Chomsky] has left the boy lying there bleeding, screaming and writhing in pain for 25 years now. Of course it is most likely the case that in reality there was no boy, there was no John, and no one got hit: Chomsky's 'sentence' meant nothing when he produced it, and it remains just as meaningless today.

Why does Bade make the assertion that "in reality there was no boy, there was no John, and no one got hit"?

2.7 Cognitive mythology

Since at least the publication of The Language Machine (Harris 1987a), Harris has been a relentless critic of the much hailed academic disciplines subsumed under the umbrella term of 'cognitive

science'. He once proposed that cognitive science should be rebaptized 'cognitive mythology' (1990d: 39). More recently, he called cognitive science an "intellectual imposture based on a machine metaphor that nobody quite understands" (Harris 2012b: 22). Already in The Language Machine, Harris had expressed his worries over a society that abuses words because it does not (fully) understand them: he talks about a society "of people ceaselessly bombarded by words they only partly understand" and alludes to John Lennon's assassination by someone who "understood the words of the poet's lyrics, but not their meaning" (1987a: 172). As Harris notes, the favourable reception of cognitive science by the academic establishment was only possible in a computerage society, i.e. "a society such as our own, which readily accepts the digital computer as a model of the human mind" (Harris 2009a: 11). Ironically, such a society is also one that "proclaims its linguistic immaturity" and that "has not yet come to terms with its own linguistic self-awareness" (Harris 1987a: 172). In short, a technologically advanced society is one "which looks in the linguistic mirror, does not like what it sees, and consequently shrinks from its linguistic responsibilities" (Harris 1987a), thus seeking comfort in cognitive science, which assures us that, in spite of all superficial differences (cultural, social and individual), the human mind is only one, and it is perfect because it works like a computer; and it declares verbal communication to be nothing but "a complex form of data-processing" (Harris 1987a: 172), the externalization of universal human thought. And it also foretells us that one day man will create machines in his own image – machines that can think (and communicate) like him.

For Harris, the machine metaphor as used in cognitive science is thus not merely a harmless figure of speech. One suspects that the metaphorical 'machine' is expected by its adherents to become literally true one day, just as the metaphorical 'skin' that was said to form itself around aluminium to protect it from corrosion at the beginning of an acid attack turned out to be a 'skin of fact' (Harré 1961: 26), i. e. "a term conjecturally used to talk about the phenomenon turned out to have a 'real world' counterpart" (Harris 2012a: 72). It is clear that Harris does not think that such a breakthrough discovery will ever be achieved as far as the metaphor of the mind as a computer is concerned: unlike the protective 'skin' of aluminium, Harris argues, the machine analogy is pragmatically implausible, as our minds cannot store information the way computers can: "If you bought a computer and found it as unreliable as your mind, you would take it to the shop and ask for your money back" (Harris 2012b: 22). It is also technically counterproductive, as

> what a computer can do is determined by the way the machine has been programmed by an external agent. There is no such agent in the case of the mind. To claim that the agent is the mind itself is simply to embark on an infinite regress of computers within computers. (Harris 2012b: 22 – 23)

The alleged evidence that cognitive scientists have about the human mind being a neural computer program installed in our heads comes "from language", Harris claims (2008: 31). Harris traces this modern trend historically to René Descartes (1596–1650), for whom linguistic abilities were the hallmark of the human mind. This might sound contradictory, since Descartes tried to make the point that the human mind was precisely not like a machine. He thought that even the most clever of automatons resembling a human being would not be able to answer questions "as the dullest of men can do" because machines cannot handle the variability of the circumstantial parameters constraining verbal communication: thus, machines can only answer the questions they have been programmed to answer, which is why Descartes denied that machines can think, i. e. they do not have a mind. Descartes is arguing like an integrationist here, for his point that machines cannot think is like saying that they cannot perform the function of 'contextualization'. However, grammarians – and later cognitive linguists – were not interested in a Cartesian linguistics of parole, but in his 'mentalist' linguistics, which conceived of words as being mentally represented in the mind, and whose syntagmatic combinations were constrained by the correct and logical applications of 'rules' (the rules of grammar and of logic). As Harris (2012b: 18) remarks, grammar

and formal logic are “parallel enterprises”, insofar as:

> in traditional logic a grasp of grammar is taken for granted. All men are mortal is already taken as the grammatically correct expression of a proposition. In grammar a grasp of logic is likewise taken for granted. All men are mortal already implies that any man is mortal. If you do not grasp that, you do not understand the everyday uses of quantifiers like all and every. In short, grammar and logic are mutually presupposed. The important point is that this relationship of mutual presupposition, although crucial, was traditionally left unexplicated. (Harris 2012b: 23)

Harris’ critique of cognitivism in modern linguistics (e.g. Harris 2011: 65 – 75) is largely a critique of Chomsky and his naïve assumption that traditional grammar, which is pedagogical in nature, already supplies the ‘correct’ basic conceptual equipment required for the description of language in the mind – a description “reformulated [...] algorithmically in computerese” (Harris 2008: 157). Commenting on Chomsky’s analysis of the (contextless) sentence Sincerity may frighten the boy (Chomsky 1965: 64) as consisting of two nouns, a verb, a noun phrase, a verb phrase, etc. and the boy being the object of the verb frighten – analysis which Chomsky claims is “without question, substantially correct”, Harris (2011: 75) concludes as follows: “Thus was the traditional grammarian promoted anachronistically overnight to the rank of cognitive psychologist”. Harris (2011: 75) reaches the following verdict:

> The immense damage which generativism has done to the academic study of linguistics is not merely to resuscitate a language myth that goes back to the days of Plato, but to resuscitate it in a form where it sounds like the product of the latest psychological research.

Cognitive scientists have made ‘mental representations’ of linguistic structures the foundation stone of their ‘science’ of the mind. The representational level, Gardner (1985: 39) tells us, is a ‘natural’ level of analysis, which is separate from the biological or neurological and equally from the sociological and cultural. Gardner goes on to state that

> The cognitive scientist rests his discipline on the assumption that, for scientific purposes, human cognitive activity must be described in terms of symbols, schemas, images, and other forms of mental representation. (Gardner 1985: 39, in Harris 2011: 71)

Harris (2011: 72), in turn, dismisses all talk of mental representations as reflections of tentative linguistic speculations about the mind:

> There is no miracle of ‘scientific method’ by which forcing linguistic structures into a rigorous generative format will eventually reveal hidden mental units or facts about the mind of which speakers themselves are never conscious.

Generative grammarians support the stance that investigations of how language works ought to be entrusted to “a socially anodyne branch of cognitive studies”, which “divorces the linguistic form of discourse from its social causes and effects” (Harris 1987a: 173).

In view of this, it comes as no surprise that cognitive scientists committed to generative linguistics have recently pondered the possibility that human morality is mentally represented as well, namely in the form of a ‘grammar’ – a so-called “universal moral grammar” (e. g. Mikhail 2007). According to the moral grammarian, humans possess an innate moral faculty analogous to

the language faculty postulated by Chomsky: the moral grammarian's interest is in uncovering what constitutes moral knowledge (or moral competence), how it is acquired, how it is realized in the brain, how it is put to use, and how it evolved in the species (Mikhail 2007: 144). This knowledge is 'tacit' and involves knowledge of specific rules, concepts or principles. What is the evidence in support of a universal moral competence? The methodology adopted is that of psychological testing. Informants, of very diverse backgrounds, cultures and languages, are presented with a story they have to judge ad hoc in moral terms; for instance, as part of the so-called 'trolley problem' informants are asked to pass judgment on a father faced with a terrible dilemma: he has to choose between saving the lives of many people (travelling on a packed passenger train) at the cost of his little son's life and saving his son at the cost of letting the many passengers die.

As Mikhail (2007: 145) tells us, "individuals are intuitive lawyers who possess a natural readiness to compute mental representations of human acts in legally cognizable terms", i. e. they analyze moral problems based on the relevance of 'ends', 'means', 'side effects' and prima facie 'wrongs' (e. g. those purposefully, or knowingly, causing harm). Informants are said to intuitively possess knowledge of two specific 'legal' rules (called respectively 'the prohibition of intentional battery' and 'the principle of double effect'). According to the latter, an otherwise prohibited action may be permissible if, for instance, the good effects outweigh the bad effects. Mikhail (2007: 149) declares that "concepts like battery, end, means and side effect are computational formulas that have stood the test of time": humans possess a technical legal vocabulary which is part of an "appraisal system" incorporating elements of a "sophisticated jurisprudence" (Mikhail 2007: 150). The search for a universal moral grammar thus turns out to rely on a fixed-code theory of language, where the metalanguage of modern legal English is said to be represented in the mind of the natural-born human lawyer, who is a native speaker of a specific language; however the same culture-neutral 'moralese' is said to underlie all natural languages.

The cognitive scientists do not see it as problematic that the choices which informants are asked to appraise are imagined ones, usually not concerning themselves, but other (imagined) people. However, judging specific decisions (either one's own or other people's) are contextualized acts – just as is decisionmaking itself – not exercises in abstract thinking as part of a psychology test. Even if one feels strongly that he/she would always judge a certain act as 'impermissible', still all judgments are context-bound, and in making them judges are constrained biomechanically, circumstantially as well as macrosocially. Talk about (supposedly universal) 'intuitive' moral judgments does not alter this. In fact, the question of human morality is far too important as to allow it to be removed into the realm of the imagination. To presume otherwise, the integrationist would argue, is immoral.

Case studies

'Logical thinking' (Harris 2009e: 37 – 42, Zhang 2013)

In many of his writings, Harris devotes a lot of attention to the syllogism as the bulwark of Western rational thinking, and as sponsoring a mythical view of language and its relationship to the world. In the book Rationality and the Literate Mind, Harris (2009e) discusses the work of psychologists and anthropologists whose fieldwork examined the empirical question of whether illiterate people were able to grasp traditional syllogistic reasoning. In this discussion, Harris looks at the research conducted by the Soviet neuropsychologist Alexander Luria (1902 – 1977) among nomadic peoples in Central Asia; during his fieldwork Luria presented members of these groups with incomplete syllogisms of the following kind:

> In the far north, where there is snow, all bears are white
> Novaya Zemlya is in the far north
> What colours are the bears there?

Some respondents argued that they could not tell because they had never been in the north and never seen bears, which Luria interpreted as “refusing the major premiss”. When Luria asked an elderly informant which of the four pictures (representing a hammer, a saw, a hatchet, a log) he considered the “odd one out”, the peasant “failed to see” that it was the log; when it was pointed out to him by Luria why this was so, namely because hammer, saw and hatchet could all be subsumed under the umbrella term ‘tool’ (while log did not fit), the informant stated that this criterion was irrelevant to him: in fact, the log of wood for him was an essential member of the group comprising hammer, saw and hatchet because the latter three could only be classified as ‘tools’ insofar as they were regarded as instruments for performing operations on pieces of wood, i. e. it was the presence of the log in the first place which defined these objects functionally as ‘tools’ (or else they could have been classified as ‘metal objects’). Luria, in turn, put down in his notebook: “replaces abstract classification with situational thinking”, and “rejects use of generalizing term”. For Luria, it was absolutely clear that the nomads investigated were incapable of “performing the abstract act of classification”. Harris, in turn, maintains (2009e: 40) that

> on the contrary, the subjects were performing [these acts] all the time, but not giving Luria the classifications he wanted. Furthermore, their thinking involved ‘theoretical operations’ considerably more sophisticated than Luria’s, because they saw their task as having to work out the rationale behind the various groups of assorted pictures placed before them. Luria, on the other hand, was wanting them to ignore that and classify the pictures as if there were some pre-existing taxonomy in place, into which the objects depicted automatically fell. Quite understandably, Luria’s subjects rejected this approach.

Harris goes on to criticize the mind-set typical of members of literate societies, prejudiced by scriptism, “in which words are treated as context-free items with context-free meanings, […] providing a ready-made universal labelling-system for the world around us” (Harris 2009e: 40). Luria attributes ‘worldly intelligence’ to his nonliterate subjects, but holds them in less favourable regard when it comes to performing within “a system of theoretical thinking”. Thus, Luria sees it as a negative point that his subjects mistrust an initial premiss which does not reproduce their personal experience, and that they are reluctant to accept premises as universals.

The implications of this are profound: they point to the foundations of Western epistemology, which rely on syllogistic reasoning, itself made possible by literacy, as the mainstay of ‘rationality’. However, the syllogism itself is a guarantor of ‘logical’ thought only if treated

> as instantiating a structure regarded as valid quite independently of how things stand ‘in reality’. In short, the illiterates are being tested on whether they can treat words as the same decontextualized entities as their literate comrades have learnt to do at school. (Harris 2009e: 41)

It could be argued, therefore, that the informants’ reactions and replies show once more that language cannot be (and in fact is not) separated from experience in actual communication. However, an impersonal language is the kind of ‘dehumanized’ language that Aristotelian logic fosters, disregarding the fact that for real people in real situations language is always personal. As the informant unwilling to say anything about the colour of the northern bears fittingly put it, on being pressed by the researcher to tell him what his [Luria’s] words implied: “Your words can be answered only by someone who was there, and if a person wasn’t there, he can’t say anything on the basis of your words” (Harris 2009e: 38).

Autoglottic space (Harris 1989b: 99 – 106)

In this article Harris deals with the question of whether – and how – writing restructures thought (Ong 1982). For Harris, the latter insight is "merely a particular case of the more general truth that all new intellectual tools restructure thought" (1989b: 103). The relevant question to ask on that score is: how does this innovation make possible or foster forms of thought which were previously difficult or impossible? Harris believes that in the case of writing this new 'form of thought' consisted in facilitating "a variety of forms of autoglottic inquiry" as well as reshaping "the whole framework of communicational concepts available to a community [...] by destroying the equation of language with speech" (1989b: 104). What this means, crucially, is that the restructuring of thought by writing introduces a new level of verbal conceptualization, which in turn creates an 'autoglottic space', allowing literate people to think in terms of 'sentences' as opposed to 'utterances'. The Aristotelian syllogism inscribes itself in that very space: it is that conceptual space that made it possible for the Greek logicians to ask unsponsored questions (e.g. "What is justice?"). Unlike utterances, in fact, sentences can be treated by their sponsors as 'sponsorless' – they are autoglottic abstractions. Words now have a physical existence which is independent of their author's existence. Unlike spoken language, moreover, writing offers a form of unsponsored language which is not limited to particular categories of speech act or verbal practice (such as proverbs, songs): in other words, any utterance can have a written counterpart in cultures with an adequately developed script. As Harris notes with respect to Plato's understanding of law: even though law requires a sponsor "the criteria by which laws are to be justified in effect treat laws as examples of unsponsored language: that is to say, laws are precepts having virtues and demerits which are to be evaluated independently of their sponsors or their sponsors' intentions" (1989b: 105). Thus it is because of the autoglottic space available when Plato wrote Laws that it was possible for him to evaluate what 'the law' said as distinct from what the law-giver said.

Modern theories of law struggle with a complex of issues that relate to this notion of 'sponsorship'. Laws clearly have sponsors, in that they emerge out of political and legislative processes, and are often ceremonially signed or endorsed by a president or monarch. But the text of the law is subsequently treated by courts as if it were objectively given. The judge does not consult the sponsor (parliament, congress) or the president/monarch about what the law actually means and how it should apply to a difficult case, and the extent to which the judge can look back at the legislative process for guidance is the subject of intense controversy. For 'textualist' judges it is the text itself that should be consulted, and not any presumed intentions or ideological motivations. Citizens are after all accountable to the publicly available meaning of the legal text, and there is no unambiguous way of determining the original intention. Radical critics of law argue that law is actually sponsored by special interests, and the objectivity of the legal text is merely a mask or interpretative fiction (Hutton 2009).

Questions for reflection

1. The American non-profit public benefit organization Real Reason, which "draws on experts in language and cognition at the University of California, Berkeley", advertises its "unique approach" towards developing political imagination as follows:

> The work of Real Reason starts with a core insight of cognitive linguistics – that when people think about complex and abstract things like economies, ecosystems, and governments, they use sophisticated conceptual tools to manage the process of reasoning. As part of everyday thinking, people rely on mental shortcuts. They use building blocks of thought such as metaphors and metonymies, stereotypes and other prototypes, and semantic roles and frames. People rely on the collective knowledge of the stories they know and tell one another. And at the most basic levels of thought, they use what cognitive linguists call image schemas. Together, these components of thought structure people's values, core beliefs, and common-sense assumptions about the world. The cognitive linguists at Real Reason apply

> scientific methods to language data in order to expose the mental models used in everyday reasoning. Why are these conceptual tools worth identifying and understanding? Because they are a critical factor in whether policy proposals resonate or simply fall flat. Some conceptual tools serve as mental obstacles to recognizing basic truths and realities. They impede thinking that is flexible, open-minded, and oriented toward the long term. And they permit complacency about issues like global warming, poverty, and civil rights. Others facilitate adaptive thinking and help people see the connections that matter, such as how taxation is related to building a prosperous and healthy society. (www.realreason.org)

They go on to define 'language data' as:

> The spoken and written words that provide evidence of reasoning patterns and underlying structures of thought.

What might the integrationist have to say about the notion of linguistic expertise in relation to the service offered by Real Reason?

2. Jeff Coulter (2008: 21, 28), following Gilbert Ryle and ordinary language philosophy, argues that

> memory is [not] a matter of storing and retrieving information […] remembering and recollecting are 'achievement verbs' […], not 'process verbs': since 'retrieving' is a process […] it cannot be constitutive of remembering […] Recognizing is another achievement verb often misassimilated in cognitive models to a process, one characteristically involving some form of search-and-match procedure.

While the integrationist will agree with Coulter that indeed remembering (and recognizing) is not about accessing thoughts stored in our minds, he/she would not want to subscribe to Coulter's view that when it comes to mental operations (expressed in English via the verbs thinking, believing, remembering, understanding, etc.) more attention should be paid to the "conceptual articulations and rules of use which apply to their actual topics of inquiry", and hence to "the analysis of their grammars" (2008: 20). According to Coulter (2008: 30), in fact, the "ontological problems about 'mind' and 'the mental' have 'grammatical' resolutions". In what way does this view, informed as it is by ordinary language philosophy, differ from the integrational position?

3. Harris (1990d: 38) objects to the idea that 'thinking' is done entirely independently of anything verbal. Concerning the notion of 'thinking in', he says the following about painters:

> …it seems to me that a painter often thinks in lines, shapes and colours, and not with words. But in the case of the painter, it also seems to me quite gratuitous to suppose that before the painting is started there occurs an abstract 'thinking' process in the painter's head in which lines, shapes and colours do not feature at all.

Taking this quote as the starting-point, consider the notion of 'thinking in', and how helpful your reflections on your own processes of 'thinking in' are for solving this cognitive puzzle.

4. Nigel Love (2009: 43) contests Orwell's (and hence also Chomsky's) view of how language determines thought, and adduces some practical examples to make his point, among which the following one:

> In fact, it is obvious on even cursory consideration that thoughts relate to corresponding pieces of language, if any, in an indefinite variety of ways. For instance, I have no word for the device that enables me to open and close my garage door from a distance. [...] there is no specific lexical item that counts for me as the word for the thing in question. [...] But, pace Orwell, none of this seems to affect my capacity to entertain thoughts about the things in question.

What, then, are the prerequisites, if not words, to entertain thoughts about things?

5. Jan Wawrzyniak (2010) criticizes Anna Wierzbicka's notion that humans possess a universal (i. e. culturally neutral) lexicon of thought. This 'language' is "claimed to have the same expressive power as full natural languages, minus the cultural load" (Wawrzyniak 2010: 652). Natural language systems, on the other hand, are seen by Wierzbicka as less 'effective' systems, because they are "subjective, anthropocentric [and] meaning consists in human interpretation of the world" (2010: 651). Why would the integrationist insist that meaning can in fact only be precisely this, i. e. subjective, anthropocentric, the result of an interpretation of the world?

6. Peter Naur (1995: 215) supports a view of how thought and language relate to each other which was metaphorically expressed by psychologist of language William James (1842 – 1910) as follows:

> A person's utterances relate to the person's insights as the splashes over the waves to the rolling sea below.

Naur (1995: 215) comments on this metaphor as follows:

> This metaphor is meant to indicate the ephemeral character of our verbal utterances, their being formed, not as a copy of insight already in verbal form, but as a result of an activity of formulation taking place at the moment of the utterance.

While the integrationist would fully agree with Naur's rejection of the view that utterances are identical with verbalized thoughts, the notion that we are engaged in an "activity of formulation" while engaged in communicating needs more careful consideration. On that very score, what about the suggestion that "any verbalized 'insight' comprises much, much more than we have a chance to produce verbally"? (Hermann 2008: 95). Can neuroscience perhaps answer the questions of first-order (mental vs. communicational) reality?

7. What is the difference between speaker A uttering the word 'horse' (in the presence of hearer B) and A drawing a horse for B as a substitute for uttering the word (Harris 2000b)? How does the answer provided by an integrationist differ from that of a telementationist?

2.8 Signs, communication and integration

Roy Harris (1996a: 63) believes in the integrational and complementary nature of communication, precisely because, as he argues, communication integrates the lives of those who participate in it, and complements the mental and physical activities of people engaged in dealing with one another: two (or more) sequences of activity can thus be said to have been 'integrated' if the second is construed as complementing the first. Signs are created in the course of a communication

process because they have, for the participants, an integrational function (in relation to particular sequences of activity). Without these signs, the activities between individuals would not (and could not) be semiologically integrated ones. As Harris (2009b: 68) makes clear, integration-through-sign-creation (and sign-creation-through-integration) constitutes "the foundation of society" but its mastery is also "essential for the survival of the individual in many life forms, from primates down":

> In humans the control of integration in bodily activities is one of the prime functions of the cerebral cortex. It is manifested in such everyday achievements as right-hand-left-hand coordination for many manual tasks, and the motor programmes involved in walking and running (limb movement, weight transference, etc.). Integration between hand and eye is essential for the use of all simple tools. (Harris 2009b: 69)

At a more complex level, semiologically integrated activity becomes essential for all forms of division of labour, upon which the survival of even the simplest of human communities depends. Semiological integration as developed by the human species requires a "grasp of time" (Harris 2009b: 73), i.e. our being able to relate the here-and-now to both the past (which we can only remember) and the future (which we can only anticipate). If human beings did not exhibit this measure of psychological complexity, Harris argues, they could not even engage in the most basic of (communicational) tasks: a case in point is Wittgenstein's famous example of a primitive language lacking any metalinguistic concepts, in which a builder gives instructions to his assistant by calling any of four words available to them ('pillar', 'block', slab', beam'). Harris argues that the builder and the assistant would not be able to communicate (i. e. the assistant fetching the item called for by the builder) if neither of them were able to temporally integrate their past personal experience with any of these words, and relate them to a specific item in the here-and-now. In other words, the primitive language envisaged by Wittgenstein can only be functional because its speakers "recogniz[e] the triple distinction between now, before, and after" (Harris 2009b: 73), and this is where integrational and behaviourist views radically diverge: to treat communication between builder and assistant as entirely a matter of the former emitting a stimulus and the latter responding to it, without any consideration of what happens 'in between' the initial and the terminal state, is precisely to deny the integrational nature of human co-operative endeavours. The same applies to self-communication, which Harris (1996a: 167) sees as taking priority over interpersonal communication. This lends itself to a dialogical view of self, which is also a theme of various approaches to semiotics, but it is also a view not incompatible with an integrational understanding of the self in the stream of time. Thus, for Charles S. Peirce "one's mental life is a continuous process of sign generation and interpretation, and the continuous interpretation of earlier thought-signs gives one's thinking the structure of a dialogue wherein a person at an earlier time engages in cognition that she herself understands at a later time" (Lane 2009: 3).

Harris views integration in terms of initiatives and sequels: either A takes the initiative to which B constructs an integrated sequel, or A constructs a sequel in response to the initiative taken by B, or A constructs an integrated sequel in response to his own observation. The basic integrational techniques which make semiological processes possible at all rely on our sensory modalities: this foundation is sufficiently stable so as to facilitate consistent recognition of sensory experiences: we recognize the sound of a door slamming, the smell of coffee, a familiar face, etc. (Harris 1996a: 67). As Harris (2009a: 171) points out, our various senses do not exist in complete isolation from each other but are already integrated 'associatively', i. e. in the course of our lives we build up a vast stock of associations between visual, tactile, auditory and olfactory experiences: thus, when we see a flash we expect thunder, or when we hear a familiar voice we link it to a familiar face, etc. Recognition, therefore, is essential for any semiologically integrated sequence of activities:

> If our minds were incapable of grasping these integrational connexions between what we see, what we hear, what we touch and so on, it is highly unlikely that the human race would have

> survived as long as it has. (Harris 2009a: 171)

Harris goes on to explain that this associative knowledge is intrinsic to the context: what this means, presumably, is that seeing white flakes falling from the sky on an exceptionally cold day in summer will be interpreted as 'snow' when I am in Switzerland, but less likely so when I am in Hong Kong. This is not to say that integrated sequels are automatically contextually appropriate. I have identified the appropriate pattern of temporal integration when, say, I leave the building upon hearing the fire-alarm, but not if I decide to keep the cinema-ticket I have purchased for today's show to use it again in order to view the same film a second time (Harris 1996a: 96).

To say that in the given circumstances an activity complements a previous one does not commit the integrationist to any 'intentionalist' stance, i.e. to say that an integrated sequel has been produced merely commits us to admitting that A's initiative was followed by B's response because B interpreted that particular initiative by A as projecting a sequence of events to which B's response seemed to contribute. Whether or not B's response corresponds to A's intentions in initiating that particular activity (and whether A intended B to respond at all, or perhaps rather C) may indeed be relevant for the participants themselves, but does not change the fact that communication has taken place, i.e. that signs have been contextualized in a specific communicational situation, and this regardless of whether A, B, or C would, retrospectively, agree to label it as such. Thus, A may have knocked on C's door, only to get a response from B, C's neighbour, informing A that "C has gone on holiday" (Harris 1996a: 70). For the integrationist, communication is not limited to speakers and hearers as defined by an external, disinterested party. Anyone may be communicating with anyone, just as anything can be a sign of anything. Human sign-making cannot be 'controlled', i. e. the speaker/writer is not in charge of the meaning of his words – he is, to be sure, responsible for his own words, but cannot be held fully responsible for the interpretation of his words; the hearer/reader, therefore, is not merely a passive participant in the communication process, whose task is to recognize the intentions behind the speaker's (or writer's) words: in fact, where interpersonal communication is concerned, anyone (as determined by factors of a biomechanical, circumstantial and macrosocial kind) is 'in charge', i. e. engaged in interpreting signs.

In discussing a possible typology of integrational sequels, Harris (1996a: 72 –76) notes that in some cases A will communicate with B because (i) he wants to get him to do something (in an active sense), or (ii) he merely wants to inform him, impress him, etc. (A expects B to listen, scrutinize, pay attention, etc., and B's doing so is done 'privately'). In (i) B will be producing an enactive sequel, given that he recognizes that A wants him to do something (and B's sequel may, or may not, correspond to A's expectations, or may even consist in his doing nothing), while in (ii) the sequel produced will be of an assimilative kind. However, as Harris (1996a: 77) points out, integrated communication processes do usually not proceed directly from an initiative to an enactive sequel, but involve assimilation as a mediating process. In fact, to suppose otherwise might invite non-integrationists to conclude that the integrational account of communication is merely a behaviourist account in disguise, with the initiative being the stimulus and the enactive sequel being the response. However, this is far from being the case.

Semiologically integrated activities are constrained by factors of three kinds (e. g. Harris 1996a: 28 – 31), namely biomechanical, macrosocial and circumstantial: human communication depends on the possibility of co-ordinating sequences of activity involving factors of all three kinds. As Harris (1996a: 30) notes, the integration on which communication is based is contextualized integration. Moreover,

> communication, whatever form it may take, requires the participants to exercise certain biomechanical capacities in conformity with the circumstances obtaining at a particular time and place. This in turn may require familiarity with certain macrosocial practices and pro tanto a certain macrosocial proficiency. Communication is impossible or breaks down whenever, and for whatever reasons, such requirements cannot be fulfilled. [...] Although the

> particular combination of requirements varies from one situation to another, they jointly provide the infrastructure on which every communication process rests. (1996a: 31)

More recently, Harris (2009b: 72 – 3) has briefly sketched a possible typology of integration, adding that types of integration are “as varied as the gamut of human activities”. Among the more obvious ones, which may be involved simultaneously in certain episodes of communication, Harris distinguishes the following: (i) interpersonal integration (A holds out his hand on meeting B, and B shakes it); (ii) environmental integration (taking an umbrella before leaving home because the weather looks unsettled); (iii) transmodal integration (reading aloud from a text); (iv) temporal integration (noting in your diary the appointment you made yesterday to meet someone next Tuesday). Harris (2009a: 172) also discusses another kind of integration, i. e. conjunctive integration, which “involves the voluntary combination of distinct autonomous activities”: thus, reading and writing are biomechanically independent domains of activity: knowing how to combine the two is what literacy is about.

The Harrisian view of communication is one which places the focus of interest on the communication process itself, because “managing the process is a matter of survival” (Harris 1998: 28). Those engaged in communicating need to integrate their activities over time, “in such a way that the continuity of the process itself is preserved and rationalized” (1998: 28). Communication is not a discrete phenomenon: where a communication process begins and where it ends, and what exactly it involves, are matters of lay interpretation – it cannot receive any ‘scientific’ answers: “Communication is [...] a perspective from which certain kinds of sequence may be understood” (Harris 2006: 13).

As Harris makes clear, there is no “more basic programme” in human existence than communication: the necessity for integration is overriding – it is the human condition of life:

> We are born into a world that requires us to communicate, to integrate one kind of activity with another and with the corresponding activities of other people. If we manage the integrational task successfully, we live. If not, we die. (Harris 1998: 29)

Case studies

Integrating language and practical action (Jones 2011)

Peter E. Jones calls for a radical re-conceptualization of the relationship between communication, thinking and practical action. Working within an integrationist framework, Jones (2011: 13) argues that two typical aspects of ‘activity’ are its integrated character and its improvement with practice and experience. Crucially, human behaviour cannot (or should not) be understood as a product made of joint contributions from independently identifiable and analyzable kinds of activity (‘linguistic’, ‘cognitive’, and ‘practical’ ones): rather human activity has a differentiated character, with words, actions and thoughts being “all mixed up together in some way, precisely as an integrated continuum”. Human activity displays an ‘integrational’ nature, says Jones, because individuals – by means of their hands, eyes, bodies and brain – tailor and craft specific forms of actions in such a way as to link what they have just done with what they are doing now, and what they need to do next – in relation with whatever else is going on. The role of signs is precisely to serve as ‘links’ in the chain of action: they are “transitions in the unfolding actions of particular individuals” (2011: 14), oriented towards the future and serving a current programme of action. Signs (including words) are created in the here-and-now because for a particular individual in a particular situation they are “a means to an end”; this sign-making ability is a “natural human ability”, which makes an active engagement with one’s surroundings possible at all. Language is thus not seen by the integrationist as merely “a means of representing action” (2011: 15), but as an

integrated aspect of practical action – a tool for accomplishing communicational objectives.

Jones discusses two case studies of practical activity showing how sign-making is integrated in a programme of purposeful action. He stresses that the purposeful actions generating signs can be the result of a collective or of a solo: the following discussion relates to Peter Jones' experience as a saxophone player. Jones is interested in understanding how a saxophone fingering diagram is made into precisely such a diagram. He asks: "What is it, then, that you need to do in order to make this pattern of shapes meaningful to you in relation to playing an instrument?" (Jones 2011: 16). The beginner will try to finger by blowing the note identified on the diagram: this requires one to visually inspect the diagram and the saxophone keys, and identify the black circles on the diagram as each representing a key on the instrument which one needs to put one's fingers on; then, position the fingers so as to match the diagram, and try blowing. Jones (2011: 16) goes on to describe the learning process as follows:

> I look carefully at the diagram and keep glancing back as I try to cover with my fingers what I take to be the keys on the saxophone [...] I keep glancing and checking as I watch my fingers and feel my fingers cover the keys and then I blow. [...] I have felt – I have experienced – the fingering position I want for that written note and have also heard the written note blown with that fingering. This is how I endow the diagram with semiotic value – how I make it into a fingering diagram. [...] In coordinating the visual inspection of the diagram with the tactile movements on the instruments I attribute semiotic value to the diagram; I create semiotic value. In integrating these activities – visual inspection and finger placement – I make of the diagram a sign.

As he goes on to repeat this programme of activity in successive sessions, Jones states that "the communicational landscape is no longer the same". Forming the correct fingering and the correct fingering itself – these feelings – "are now also signs that guide me to the desired outcome [...] The diagram does not have the meaning of a sign nor the form of a sign until I give it the role of a link in this particular activity chain". Jones speaks of the process described above as a 'sign-forming' act: "And the sign is formed differently as my skills develop, until it is no longer formed at all". With reference to the fingering actions following the first-time trials, Jones refers to himself as a 'changed me', who has to 'remake' himself with each time he performs the action, i. e. with each time he sensitizes his body to the feel of the fingers on the keys. Once his skills increase, and the diagram is no longer needed, the signhood of the diagram ceases to exist altogether for him. Jones remarks, moreover, that he has not 'internalized' the diagram as a sign, since "the signs I create in forming the notes are now wholly tactile rather than visual" (2011: 17). The signhood of the diagram, in fact, has been removed, as its 'mediating' role (helping with initial familiarization with the instrument) no longer persists: it has been replaced by "direct sign-forming with and on the instrument [...] I'm no longer aware of how I get my fingers in the right position – my playing action is guided by what I hear and how what I feel meshes with what I hear".

The railroad sign code and (un)successful integration (Bade 2011)

David Bade (2011) recounts an accident between a train and a van which involved an acquaintance and his family. The facts as Bade recalls them are that the van-driver drove around the lowered crossing gates after the train had passed on his side of the tracks, and was hit by a second train travelling in the opposite direction on the far tracks. The whole family of five was killed instantly as a direct result of the driver's course of action. The incident is remarkable, according to Bade (2011: 713), insofar as

> [t]hat particular crossing was marked by a standard railroad crossing sign in front of the tracks and equipped with crossing gates to prevent passage, flashing red lights and ringing

> bells. In addition, the oncoming train as well as the just passed train were blowing their horns as they each approached their respective crossings.

In light of these facts, Bade (2011: 713) asks the reader: “With all these signs, how did the driver of the van fail to get the message? Did those signs communicate nothing to him?”. Bade’s more general answer is that “the interpretation of railroad signs is subject to the same kind of indeterminacy characteristic of spoken and written language” (2011: 715). He goes on to reconstruct the incident involving his friend on the basis of his own history of experience with railroad crossings, and imagines a situation in which the signs are in fact ambiguous: the signals continue ‘operating’ for some time even after the train has passed (in fact, after the train has passed a certain number of yards beyond the crossing). Thus, even though there is no longer any danger involved, the signals continue to sign ‘danger’. It makes sense to assume that with experience most or all car-drivers are aware of this ‘inconsistency’, i. e. after the train has passed, they make the signals mean ‘no danger’. A second, analogous situation concerns trains that stop and remain motionless for quite some time after the warning signals have begun to operate but before entering the crossing. Even though it is against the law, impatient drivers may drive through the crossing by driving round the lowered gates. In such situations, the allegedly unambiguous nature of the railroad sign system (as put down in the manuals) enters in conflict with the human sign-maker experiencing the event of the train passing by (or not yet passing by):

> In such cases we tend to believe our own perception/interpretation of the situation we are in and to discount the technical apparatus as irrelevant in the present situation […] The meaning of the signs from the perspective of the designers of the systems is invariant in time, but for those waiting on a sign or using one in a given situation, the timing of the sign is itself significant. (2011: 718)

Bade explains the accident caused by the van-driver on precisely these grounds: the latter could not see or hear the second train, and therefore presumed that the danger was over once the first train had passed the crossing. As far as he was concerned, he was waiting for only one train to pass, since this corresponded to his usual experience in these situations of attendance. Bade (2011: 718) reconstructs the situation as follows:

> The man in the van found himself in a situation in which the timing of the trains and the timing of the signs led to there being no interval between the operation of the signs indicating the danger existing with the passing train and the danger from the oncoming train: the gates stayed down, the bells kept ringing, the lights kept flashing as though the original communication situation had never ended when in fact it had ceased and a new situation had arisen. […] Before that train had passed far enough beyond the crossing to turn off the sign that ‘meant’ (at that time) danger from the passing train, the approaching train triggered the same set of warning signs to ‘mean’ danger associated with an oncoming train from the opposite direction. The man in the van had no way of knowing that the meaning of the railroad signs had changed as the one train passed and the other approached since he could neither see nor hear the approaching train and the signals themselves neither ceased nor altered in any way to indicate ‘still more danger from another approaching train’ […] The signs with which he was presented were clearly stationary and identical in form, but were unfortunately associated with two different meanings at two different times. Successful communication with such a system of signs clearly cannot be guaranteed by the system alone.

Bade's analysis shows that even the most restricted of codes does not yield the idealized communicational results for which it was designed: a priori successful communication. This is so because human beings are integrating beings who, in concrete situations like those involving the interpretation of traffic signs, are faced with making decisions as to whether they should trust the system (with its invariant meanings) or rather their own personal experience of using that system. However, either choice constitutes, ultimately, the act of individuals engaged in interpretations.

Questions for reflection

1. Harris (1996a: 24) declares that "we are born into a world which has a certain communicational infrastructure already in place", and adds that "its existence predetermines the range of communicational possibilities available to us [...] This range of possibilities structures our communicational universe".

Is this 'predetermination' not averse to the integrationist creed of communication as an unbound process of sign creation?

2. Harris (1998: 29) assumes a somewhat apocalyptic tone when he declares:

> A society in which communication starts to break down is a society whose days are numbered. A society in which communication has become impossible is a society already dead: it has dis-integrated. A relationship between two people for whom communication has broken down is likewise in a state of dis-integration. A person who can no longer integrate today's experiences with yesterday's, or plan for tomorrow, is a person for whom even self-communication has broken down; and any such dis-integration of the self destroys the only basis on which language is possible.

How does the orthodox notion of languages as impersonal fixed-codes relate to Harris' (1998: 29) notion that language is only possible if there is an integrating self? What, then, is the connection between an individual's dis-integration and the language that he/she speaks? And, on that score, how does the Harrisian view of 'dis-integration' of a society compare to the orthodox linguistic view concerning such phenomena as language loss, language attrition, language revival, etc.?

3. Discuss the following personal experience recounted by Sally Pryor (2011: 652) in terms of what it tells us about signs and how they relate to the individual:

> I was in a shop that was having a summer sale and I selected an item hanging immediately under a large white piece of card with "$10" written on it. When I took the item to the cash register, the saleswoman rejected the ten dollar note that I offered and said that the item in fact cost $30. I pointed out the item's former location under the $10 sign and she replied, "It's just a sign, dude!!!"

What does this anecdote suggest about lay conceptions of material signs? Compare Pryor's anecdote with Harris' (1996a: 99) claim that "all signs, in order to signify, require temporal integration", in fact they require "the appropriate pattern of temporal integration", such as "producing the appropriately integrated sequel". On that score, consider a 'No Smoking' sign on a wall: in order to interpret the sign, what do we need to know about the social and cultural context? (For example, in many places one can observe people smoking standing next to 'No Smoking' signs).

4. Saussure's view that the relations that hold between linguistic signs are arbitrary presupposes

that this arbitrariness must be a semiological reality for the users. For integrationists, the issue of ‘arbitrariness’ as posed by Saussure is a non-question: however, one might suggest that a corresponding question for integrationists is “whether the integrational function of the sign depends on necessary or contingent relations” (Harris 2006: 44). However, to ask such a question in a general manner amounts to a ‘decontextualizing strategy’ typical of segregational thinking. In fact, the segregationist will argue that the fact that the traffic light stop-sign is red is not a necessary condition for its correct interpretation, as one could easily imagine a different code in which the colour blue has the function to signal a stop. From an integrational perspective, this is true but irrelevant for a semiology that deals with the real – and not with a possible –world.
(i) When a motorist stops at the red light, which features of this situation are biomechanically, macrosocially, and circumstantially necessary, and which ones are contingent? Is it possible to give a general answer pertaining to this type of situation? Consider, for example, the position of the red light relative to the road, its height above ground level, the weather conditions, etc.
(ii) Explain why Harris (2006: 46) claims that “each instance in which a motorist stops at a red light is a semiologically unique case [...] The sign signifies something different each time”.

5. In a passage on textual meaning, George Wolf (1997: 364) writes the following regarding an author’s intention:

> An integrational view of intention would appear to be simply that intention itself is as fully contextualized as the rest of what gives value to the sign. Thus intention, any more than meaning, relevance, rules, or anything else, cannot be a baseline parameter in terms of which a sign is guaranteed a value, because it itself is part of the context. ‘That’s not what I meant to say.’ But the integrational question is: what is the status of that statement in the context in which it was stated?

If we accept Wolf ’s stance, what consequences does that have for a theory that grounds meaning in intention, i. e. one in which the meaning of an utterance/ sentence is what the speaker/writer intended it to mean? More generally, what is wrong, according to the integrationist, with a ‘speaker-oriented’ theory of communication?

2.9 The 'language gap'

Where do integrationists stand when it comes to the widely accepted view that it is 'language' which separates humans from animals? While in some sense this may strike us as a sensible point to make, the integrationist has certain reservations about it. One of them concerns the question of the 'origin of language'. Harris has not written much on the topic. In the preface to an edited book on The Origin of Language, he reminds the reader that the 'glottogenetic debate' is an "interesting chapter in the history of ideas", whose relevant intellectual context modern linguists have failed to explore (1996c: viii). As far as the human-animal divide is concerned, Harris has noted, for instance, that "it is possible [...] that primate communication depends primarily on signalling techniques which human beings have abandoned in favour of verbal signalling" (Harris 1984: 173). He postulates that humans developed a way of life that pressured them to "evolve a system of communication of the verbal type", whereas previous human signalling systems, like apes' communication systems today, might have been completely non-discrete (systems of signalling that allowed the expression of a wide range of messages, with a considerable degree of subtlety and adaptability) and polymedial (features from more than one modality combined, e. g. tactile, acoustic and visual). Among the passages where integrationists have commented on the 'origin of language', we find Nigel Love's (1998: 100), who imagines that "language must have started when a primordial A first spoke, and a primordial B understood"; he does so to illustrate the claim that languages always presuppose communication, i. e. that 'languages' never had a beginning (at least not from a first-order communicational perspective), rather than to imply that there really was an 'origin of language'.

Integrationists do not espouse generativist theories grounded in the notion of a species-specific 'language faculty' making human language possible in the first place. According to these theories, human language did not evolve through and for the sake of communication. For Noam Chomsky, the leap from non-language to language was instantaneous. Hutton (2010b: 344) has commented that such a leap would have led to the sudden co-presence of a new race of intelligent 'superhominids', endowed with a language organ, living side-by-side with inferior hominid species, the former ultimately outbreeding the not-so-super ones. Such a scenario is, an integrationist would point out, deeply troubling, as "Chomskyan linguistics is in danger of lending support to an idea quite antithetical to its universalism, namely that human beings and human societies are shaped by profound differences in their biolinguistic heritage" (Hutton 2010b: 337). The prospect of such a "linguistic Adam" (2010b: 344), who is biologically superior to other humans by virtue of his linguistic-genetic endowment, is uncanny, calling forth unwelcome spectres of the past.

In an integrational picture, any account drawing on the linguistic divide between humans and non-humans needs to address an issue which mainstream linguistics has not dealt with in any satisfactory way (see also Harris 2012: 111–113): it concerns the (supposed) difference between 'language' (uncountable) and 'a language' (countable): in lay language the two terms are used interchangeably (as the term 'lay language' itself illustrates), while in academic linguistics the term 'language' is used in a primarily abstract sense, "referring to the biological faculty which enables individuals to learn and use their language" (Crystal 1997: 214, italics added). For the integrationist, this very separation is based on a mistaken view of language that treats it as separable from communication.

What stance does semiotics take on the linguistic divide between human beings as opposed to animals? Human beings, like animals, inhabit a species-specific Umwelt. Once we understand that Umwelt as a process of modeling, then a description of that Umwelt "will mean the demonstration of how the organism (via its Innenwelt) maps the world, and what, for that organism, the meanings of the objects are within it" (Kull 2009: 43). In addition, these objects are "not only sensed and perceived or represented and imagined: the objects are also produced" (Kull 2010: 47). All living

organisms partake of semiosis in this sense (Sebeok 2001). However for Sebeok human beings differ from animals in their command of language, their possession of culture, and in their ‘metasemiotic’ ability to reflect on sign-systems and processes. They are, to use Deacon’s phrase, “the semiotic species” (Deacon 1997) or “semiotic animal” (Deely 2001).

Deely has stressed that only human beings can distinguish between signs and things in order to consider the truth or falsity of a particular representation (Deely 2001, Hoffmeyer 2010: 36). Martinelli however challenges any simplistic assumptions about language as a species-specific attribute, noting that there is no consensus as to how to define language. Given evolutionary assumptions, one can argue that a “species-specific trait develops naturally and analogically in one species from a (cognitive, evolutionary, adaptive) basis shared with more species, so it still bears traces of that common basis”. In this sense, “there are zoosemiotic aspects also in language, also in verbal semiosis” (Martinelli 2010: 13). In other words, even if there are species-specific aspects to human language, it emerges out of non-species-specific processes. It is in order to insist on the absolutely distinct nature of human language that Chomsky in effect rejected the entire neo-Darwinian evolutionary paradigm (Hutton 2010b). This debate in semiotics relates closely to the question of whether Uexküll’s Innenwelt, the primary modeling system, is to be equated with language or not.

One possible course to steer for an integrationist in the whole debate of human-animal communication is to remain within the confines of what one’s own (linguistic) experience affords one to state – without hesitation: namely that communication must occur in order for humans to survive, and communication means integration. Based on our own experience as integrating beings who observe animal behaviour, moreover, the integrationist feels confident to assume that the same is true for animals: they, too, communicate. As Harris (1996a: 24) states, in fact, we are born into a world that has “a certain communicational infrastructure already in place”, and our communication is shaped, constrained and made possible by this infrastructure. What seems undisputed is the fact that humans and apes are, biomechanically speaking, quite similar, which is why we can conclude that the two respective communicational universes cannot be altogether different. Having said that, however, our experience is experience of a human communicational universe, regardless of whether we are scientists or lay people, in which biomechanical factors interact with circumstantial and macrosocial ones. Hence, inquiries into primate communication are of a different order (epistemologically) from inquiries into human communication, as we cannot step outside human experience. “How do animals communicate with other fellow-animals, or with humans?” is an interesting research question – and worth pursuing – as long as we treat it as a question that cannot provide the same qualitative answers as the question “How do humans communicate with other humans?”. Commenting on Thomas Nagel’s thought experiment of “what it is like to be a bat”, Harris (2008: 87) writes: “Insofar as drawing attention to the imaginative difficulty is meant simply to highlight the fact that everything science can tell us about bats still does not tell us much about the experience of life as a bat, I agree”.

Semioticians have stressed the communalities as well as the differences between animals and human beings, reacting against the anthropocentric and logocentric mainstream of the Western tradition. In the 1960s Sebeok proposed a domain of inquiry he termed ‘zoosemiotics’ (Sebeok 1977, 1990). This discipline takes the most general definition of semiosis as its basis: “the action of signs, or [...] the process in which something is a sign to some organism” (Martinelli 2010: 2). In addition to mainstream semiotics, zoosemiotics draws on ‘ethology’, the study of animal behavior, associated with figures such as Karl von Frisch (1886 – 1982), Konrad Lorenz (1903 – 1989) and Nikolaas Tinbergen (1907–1988). The exchange of messages in semiosis grounds a notion of communication that does not require intentionality, or at least views it as highly problematic (Martinelli 2010: 2 – 3).

Some semioticians interested in the modalities of human and animal communication have made species-level subjective experience (both animal and human) the centre of their theory. Jakob von Uexküll, for instance, whose works inspired the modern field of biosemiotics, elaborated a “theory of meaning” (Uexküll 1982) based on the fact that the various biomechanically conditioned species

differ in their subjective perceptions of their Umwelt. Uexküll (1982: 26) claims that “life can only be understood when one has acknowledged the importance of meaning”, i.e. biology is not to study non-human behaviours as “mere movements […] mechanically regulated”, but [as] meaningfully organized”. “The question of meaning”, Uexküll (1982: 37) proclaims, “is […] the crucial one to all living beings”. According to him, there is “a comprehensive world at hand, from which each animal can carve out its specific habitat”; he goes on to explain that “each animal moves within its habitat and confronts a number of objects, with which it has a narrower or wider relationship” (1982: 27). However, Uexküll criticizes experimental biologists who have assumed that animals can enter into a relationship with neutral objects: when objects enter into a relationship with subjects, they acquire meaning for those subjects: they become, in Uexküll’s terminology, “meaning-carriers”. Thus, while the objective experimental biologist may treat an object as ‘neutral’ (i. e. as having no contextual, subject-centered meaning), animals can never enter into a neutral relationship with objects, precisely because, unlike scientists, they are unable to ‘neutrally observe’. Thus, objects are endowed with given properties, which acquire different degrees of importance (“key” properties as opposed to “subsidiary” properties) depending on the meaning that the subjects assign to that object: if I pick up a stone in an attempt to chase off a ravenous wolf, what will matter for that purpose might be the stone’s size and weight, whereas the very same stone may be picked up by me because of its smooth surface or its colour if I happen to be looking for stones to complement my stone collection at home.

For Uexküll, therefore, objects have inherent qualities, but what they mean for the subject is, to adopt an integrationist terminology, biomechanically and circumstantially determined. Uexküll (1982: 30) invites us to imagine how a flower stem can play the role of an ornament (in the Umwelt of a girl picking flowers), of a path (in the Umwelt of an ant using the stem as an ideal path), of an extraction-point (in the Umwelt of a cicada-larva that uses the stem to extract its sap), of a morsel of food (in the Umwelt of a cow that grasps the stem and flower to eat it). Each of the four subjects is envisaged by Uexküll as a “meaning-utilizer”. The “meaning-carrier” retains its subject-specific meaning only as long as the “functional circle” (or “meaning-circle”) that connects the object with the subject is in operation.

It is tempting – and in some way sensible – to see a connection between Uexküll’s “theory of meaning” and integrational semiology. For example, Uexküll’s notion that an object becomes what its subject makes it a sign of, wholly depending on circumstantial parameters, reminds one of the integrationist tenet of the indeterminacy of the sign. Ultimately, however, only the integrationist would insist on this indeterminacy being “radical” (Harris 2009b: 81). In a similar way, Uexküll’s insistence that meaning is inextricably bound to the “meaning-utilizer” could be seen as anticipating the integrationist notion that we are “meaning-makers”; perhaps so, but, crucially, the integrationist would insist that meaning does not somehow inhere in objects: it is ‘made’. How animals ‘make’ meaning, we do not know. The notion of meaning in connection with, say, insects or bacteria is not unproblematic, either. In fact, one way to understand Peircean semiotics is that “indeterminacy and determinacy [are] equally real, intermingled aspects of the universe we inhabit, one in which structures are always more-or-less determinate rather than fully determinate” (Hoffmeyer 2000: 262). This generalization cuts across the different domains of life, rather than restricting agency and therefore freedom from deterministic constraint to human beings. This still leaves the question not just of “what it is like to be a bat” but of the status of human subjective experience or “qualia”. As Searle (1992) has argued, there can be no explanation of ‘first-person singularis’ through third-person discourse, and an ‘I’ is not derivable from an ‘it’ (see discussion in Hoffmeyer 2000: 253, and Cobley 2010, above).

Integrationists, in any case, prefer the terra firma of human experience, steering clear from pronouncements on what something ‘means’ to a non-human being. What something means (for us) is bound to our human biomechanical possibilities and human mental capacities, as Harris (2006: 64 – 66) argues in an article on units as “man-made”:

> Staring hard at nature's apple-tree does not tell us whether the apple is a Natural unit. But once Adam and Eve start deliberately picking apples in order to eat them, they make them units, regardless of whether Nature approves or not. Given the biomechanical limitations of the human hand and the human mouth, they could hardly do otherwise. But the blackbird in the Garden of Eden who also treats the apple-tree as a source of food is under no such compulsion. His feeding techniques have different biomechanical parameters: the way he treats the problem is more like the way Adam might treat it if the apple were as big as Adam and much heavier, and Adam had no hands and arms. And if that were the case, Adam would doubtless look at apples in a quite different way. Whether each apple would still be a unit of some kind for Adam is not at all clear. (Harris 2006: 65)

Harris does not himself pronounce on what the apple on the tree 'means' for the blackbird; he rests content with stating what the apple is not for that bird. Instead he imagines what it would be like for a human being (here: Adam) to be subject to biomechanical conditions similar to that of the blackbird. The question for Harris, therefore, is not whether the apple is "a unit" for the blackbird, but whether it would still be for a handless and armless Adam.

This is precisely where the integrationist would distance himself from Uexküll's anthropomorphism: there is, per se, nothing wrong with stating that humans, dogs and flies will perceive the same objects in a house very differently, i. e. the objects will have different "qualities" for each of these subjects (Uexküll and Kriszat 1970: 65). Thus, for the dog, Uexküll and Kriszat argue, bookshelves have no "reading-quality" nor desks a "writing-quality"; the dog perceives them merely as obstacles to moving around freely. The same objects in the house, in turn, are said to all have a "sitting-quality" for the fly. What the integrationist would insist on, however, is that it is always us – laymen as well as scientists, and not the animal itself – who assign this particular "perceptual meaning" to an object. The meaning-assignment, in fact, derives from a comparison with human affairs: if we were the dog in that house, we would certainly perceive some of the furniture as mere "obstacles". However, it is important to remind ourselves that there is no species-neutral language able to accommodate both human and animal first-order experience. It is revealing, on that score, that Uexküll (1982: 30) considers the different roles that the identical flower stem plays on the four 'Umwelt-stages', i.e. the girl picking flowers in the meadow, the cow chewing the flowers as fodder, the ant crawling up the stem, the cicada-larva boring into the stem to extract its sap, on a par. However, the girl's experience of picking flowers to adorn her bodice is a totally different one from the ant's experience of using the flower stem as "the ideal path" to reach its foodarea in the flower-petals: it is not simply a matter of whether language is involved in the meaning-assignment or not: we can observe ants crawling up the flower stem as long as we wish, but we will never know what "quality" the stem has for that creature. Again, it would be a different matter if Uexküll imagined what it would be like for the girl to stand in that flower meadow and be the size of an ant: the flower stem would then become, it could be argued, a 'climbing pole' for the girl.

The neo-Humboldtian linguist Helmut Gipper (1919 – 2005) has pointed to Uexküll's failure to address adequately how the human "self-world" differs from that of animals, noting that the former is "still mainly restricted to physical and sensual endowments" in Uexküll's writings (Gipper 2001: 472). He goes on to state:

> …the ability to think does not reach a human level, […] unless the ability to speak is added, for thought and language are very closely connected – it is even possible to say that the ability to think develops through language during language acquisition. It is thus that the physically and sensually experienced world can be broadened by a mental world, which completes the self-world typical of humans. […] The ability to think enables man to analyze and utilize to an undreamt-of extent what is sensually perceptible. The extension of the

> perceived world by a more differentiated mental world is only possible due to and by means of language (2001: 466/472)

Gipper's Ausbau of Uexküll's theory, being informed by a crude Whorfian relativism, has no appeal to the integrationist: for the latter, humans experience the world as an 'integrated whole'. In other words, language is not an 'extra' in human life, nor is it in any way superordinate to other concomitant human abilities that we become proficient in. From an integrational point of view, language acquisition does not mean the acquisition of 'a language' allowing us, once and for all, to move past the 'animal stage' (when our world is still merely a "perceived world"): in fact, thinking of 'a language' as a pre-existing tool the proper use of which we need to acquire as part of our development qua human beings is not what an integrationist would espouse. We integrate (i. e. communicate) qua human beings from the very beginning, and at no stage in our lives are we 'less human' or 'more animal-like'.

As for the (Augustinian) instrumentalist position on language acquisition, the integrationist would reply that a tool, say a hammer, has no predetermined inherent values (or meanings) that are made to fit with its users' intentions. Thus, what we commonly refer to as 'a hammer' is not a potential tool for hitting nails in the first place, a potential object of aggression in the second place, etc. (until all its potential meanings are exhausted). As far as the integrationist is concerned, anything can be(come) a sign of anything for anybody.

Case studies

Monkeys and communication (Harris 1984)

In an early article, entitled 'Must monkeys mean?' (Harris 1984), the only piece that he devoted to the topic of primate communication, Harris takes issue with what he calls "the apartheid position on communication", i. e. the argument that animal and human communication are equally valid but separate, and that therefore scientists must refrain from applying to animal communication the conceptual framework appropriate to linguistic signalling, which is reserved for the human species. One such term is 'meaning', which, when applied to animal communication, leads us to ascribe to animals certain mental capacities which, the apartheid theorist argues, only humans possess. Hence, according to this position, monkeys cannot know what a signal 'means' – all they do is to react to a stimulus in a specific way. Stimulus-response pairings are triggered automatically and thus predictable: from this it follows that animal signals cannot be meaningful, as no choices are involved. Harris objects to assessing the question whether "monkeys mean" based on whether their signalling system is (or isn't) comparable to the language systems of homo sapiens: this is objectionable, according to Harris (1984: 171), because "meaning [is] taken as emanating from the communication system, rather than from users of the system, whether human or non-human". In fact, this view proclaims the (Saussurean) linguistic sign as the measurement of whether 'meaning' is involved or not. As Harris declares, the two unsatisfactory principles that guide the contemporary discussion on primate communication are thus, on the one hand, "no language without thought" and, on the other hand, "no language without a language-system". Harris (1984: 172) goes on to argue that

> we have no plausible alternative but to use an anthropomorphic conceptual framework in our analyses of animal communication. [...] We cannot somehow avoid the risks of anthropomorphism – whatever they may be – by trying to talk about primate signals in a terminology which draws no implicit comparison between human and animal communication. Any such attempt must be self-defeating. Again, the task of describing what primate signals mean is already difficult enough, without depriving ourselves of the most useful conceptual tools we have for the purpose.

Investigators of animal semantics have to adopt a method of external comparisons, i. e. they have no other option but to "compare a supposedly unknown system of meanings with a supposedly known one" (Harris 1984: 175):

> So the investigator appears to be in a predicament. Although he knows it is not reasonable to assume that he is dealing with a communication system structured like a human language, in order to get his semantic description of that system off the ground at all he is obliged to look for meanings of the kind that will translate, however crudely, into human terms. (Harris 1984: 176)

The important point to realize here is that when an observer assigns a meaning to a particular primate signal, say 'alarm', this should not be construed as implying that if the monkey did speak English, he would agree with the meaning-assignment 'alarm', or that if humans were to assign the same meaning as the monkeys assign to this call, we, the humans, would assign the meaning 'alarm' to it; what it should be taken to mean is that the monkey's behaviour on hearing the signal is comparable to the way human beings might act if they received a signal to which they assigned the meaning 'alarm'. In short, it is the observer who attributes meaning to the monkey's behaviour, not the monkey. Eventually, however, it would be desirable, according to Harris, that analyses be produced of the internal semantic structure of primate signaling systems (instead of relying exclusively on external comparison with human behaviour).

So the crucial question is not whether monkeys mean or not (according to Harris, they clearly do), but rather the question of how they mean. Harris (1984: 175) thinks that we should not be looking in primates for the existence of semantic repertoires based on primate signals of the verbal type; Harris believes that this would serve the purposes of most primate interaction very poorly. In fact, verbal systems of communication are marked by a high degree of inflexibility, whereas from an evolutionary perspective it is more likely that some animal species must have developed systems of communication that semantically differentiate calls with similar acoustic properties, however featuring small acoustic variations hardly audible to the human ear (as is the case with vervet monkeys). In order to warn its companions, in fact, the vervet monkey 'chutters' a series of short, relatively widely separated acoustic units concentrated across a wide frequency band. However, calls with these acoustic properties are also used in three other contexts by this monkey species, namely to threaten members of one's own group, members of another group, as well as the human observer.

The origin of language (T. Taylor 1997a)

In his article entitled, provocatively, 'The origin of language: why it never happened', Talbot J. Taylor argues against the 'language gap' hypothesis, favouring a cultural explanation why only the human species possesses what is commonly referred to as 'a language'. Taylor (1997a: 245) develops an interesting parallel between the eighteenth-century account offered by E. B. de Condillac (1714 – 1780) of why humans started to possess language and the account that generative linguists give of the alleged 'language gap' separating human beings from animals. Both theories, in fact, postulate the existence of prelinguistic man as opposed to linguistic man. The former, "like the animals with whom he lived, must have been the victim of a fundamental disjunction between his mental and vocal powers": in other words, what he lacked was "a neutral intermediary between cognition and phonation" (Taylor 1997a: 246 – 7). It was linguistic man, according to the generativists, who became equipped with an autonomous linguistic structure that made it possible for him to create original conceptual combinations. Prelinguistic man, in turn, possessed no such tool to make voluntary and creative use of his cognitive powers: he was unable to communicate true thoughts via a linguistic code.

Taylor wishes to pursue a different path, which does not presuppose an unbridgeable gap

between the cognitive and communicational abilities separating prelinguistic man from linguistic man and, more crucially, man from the other primates. As evidence Taylor (1997a: 252) cites research involving a bonobo named Kanzi (Savage-Rumbaugh, Shanker & Taylor 1998). According to Sue Savage-Rumbaugh, the bonobo was able to understand simple English sentences never heard before, which suggests that apes can use language reflexively. Crucially, Taylor argues, both ape and human possess a basic language ability: what differentiates them where 'language' is concerned is thus not linguistic creativity in the Chomskyan sense, i. e. the ability to generate and understand sentences one has never encountered (or attempted), but the fact that apes lack language skills – which are cultural skills – acquired by human children "within a nurturing ecology that involves normative socialization, teaching, enculturation", i.e. skills that depend on historical continuity (Taylor 1997a: 255). Thus, if a bonobo is raised in a cultural ecology similar to children's (as Kanzi was), he will acquire language to some extent. But bonobos (and other species of primate) have no such historical record. Taylor, in fact, reminds us that obviously "what we humans do with – what we make of – our basic language ability is much more than (quite different from) what wild apes do with – and make of – their ability" (1997a: 255). Taylor goes on to explain that higher-order apes might have possessed enculturated language skills, techniques and practices of a much higher sophistication than we observe them using in the wild today, which were lost due, for instance, to some environmental catastrophe that left them decimated to an extent that the few surviving orphans had to 'start from scratch', deprived of a collective memory of their culture. Taylor (1997a: 256) adds that an analogous story could be true where the development of the hominid line is concerned: there never was a beginning of human language but an alternating of "progress (i.e. development of more recognizably humanlike language skills) and loss" (1997a: 256). The material artifacts discovered from the Paleolithic period, Taylor argues, do not attest to the presence of the first humans in possession of 'language', but rather to the beginning of human material culture, whose practices and reflexive discourse have continued unbroken to the present day. On this view, the Cro-Magnons were not Chomskyan superhominids, in whose brains 'language' originated; however, the cultural practices which began in the Paleolithic period made it possible for a discourse about the origin of language (and languages) to arise in the first place:

> …what, in our late twentieth-century, literate, English-speaking linguistic culture, we call "language" is a metalinguistic illusion. Language-as-we-know-it is the legacy of the ways we talk about the behavioral manifestations of those cognitive and communicational abilities in forms that are recognizable – and whose recognizability we normatively enforce –among members of "our" culture. In other words, recognizably linguistic behaviour is neither the source nor the product of our cognitive and communicational abilities. It is an evaluative criterion by which we, from within "our" culture, typically evaluate possession of those abilities. (Taylor 1997a: 253 – 4)

Viewed from such an angle, generative linguistics is unmasked as a culturally biased enterprise aiming to fit Western linguistic thought into a universal (language- and culture-independent) theory of (the origins of) language. It is an attempt at explaining first-order mental phenomena by means of second-order linguistic concepts originally developed for pedagogical purposes.

Questions for reflection

1. Harris (1996a: 97) argues that human and animal communication differ significantly in matters concerning the temporality of the sign. In fact, throughout the animal kingdom, Harris goes on to claim, "the sign signifies only for as long as the duration of the signal, or, which amounts in practice to the same thing, for as long as the signal is perceived". What kinds of sign, according to this view, are animals unable to cope with?

2. Harris (2009a: 164 – 5) wishes to demythologize the very common notion in philosophy of mind that perception is propositional, hence the notion of “perceptual knowledge”; for Harris, sensory knowledge cannot be passive: in order to count as ‘knowledge’, perception requires an observer’s interpretation, i. e. integration into other patterns of experience. Harris thus suggests to call what we derive from observation “observational knowledge”, i.e. “knowledge created through integrating sensory stimuli with what has been remembered from previous experiences [...] and what might be expected from the present situation”. Harris takes issue with the idea, commonly adhered to by philosophers of mind (see Kim 2006), of an observer being in a certain ‘perceptual state’, which includes what the observer takes the sensory stimuli to ‘mean’. Harris continues as follows:

> According to Kim, my perceptual state in the presence of a horse ‘carries the information “horse” (or “a horse is out there”)’. This kind of ‘perceptual episode’, it seems, does not differ in essentials from those that occur in the life of a frog when it sees a black speck flitting across its visual field and reacts by flicking out a tongue towards it. The frog’s ‘perceptual episodes involving a flitting black speck indicate, or mean, the presence of a fly’ (italics in the original). How it could possibly mean that for the frog it is, pace Kim, difficult to see. Frogs do not have ‘propositional attitudes’. One half-expects Kim to include in the frog’s perceptual state some such meaning as ‘This one will make a tasty snack’. But presumably there are limits to the extent to which even philosophers can plausibly anthropomorphize the behaviour of frogs. (Harris 2009a: 165)

Discuss Harris’ insistence that we need to distinguish between observation and perception, as well as his critique of Kim in light of the latter’s suggestion that the ‘perceptual states’ that a human being and a frog are in are directly comparable.

3. In Elements of Semiology, the semiotician Roland Barthes (1915 – 80) proposed the following (1967: 11):

> In fact, we must now face the possibility of inverting Saussure’s declaration: linguistics is not a part of the general science of signs, even a privileged part, it is semiology which is a part of linguistics.

What would the integrationist say about Barthes’ inversion as well as the latter’s conviction that “semiological knowledge at present can be only a copy of linguistic knowledge” (1967: 11)?

4. What does the following quote (Harris 1996a: 50) tell us about the aims of integrational semiology?

> Interesting as it may be to argue and speculate about [a cat’s] mental world, or whether a hen can take the viewpoint of her chicks, or whether dogs dream, or more generally about how human communication might have evolved from pre-human communication, integrational theory is simply agnostic on such issues. It is not part of the integrationist’s agenda to try to specify what forms of communication only human beings can engage in; nor to identify what forms of communication human beings share with other species.

5. Comment on the two following historical quotes related to the question of ‘language and evolution’:

> “Language is our Rubicon, and no brute will dare to cross it”. (Max Müller 1869: 354)

> “Man is only man through speech, but in order to discover speech he must already be man” (Der Mensch ist nur Mensch durch Sprache; um aber die Sprache zu erfinden, müßte er schon Mensch sein) (Wilhelm von Humboldt, Address to the Berlin Academy, June 20, 1820)

6. On the question of whether an object such as a tool has an intrinsic or essential function associated with it, it is interesting to consider the legal case John Angus Smith v United States (508 U.S. 223, 1993). At issue in that case was an additional penalty for someone convicted of drug trafficking, if the defendant ‘used a firearm’ during or in relation to the crime. The defendant in Smith did not brandish the weapon or use it to threaten; rather he traded it for drugs, using it as an item of monetary value. The United States Supreme Court ruled by a majority of six to three that this did constitute ‘use’ in the relevant sense. Justice Scalia, one of the dissenting minority, rejected the idea that exchanging a firearm for drugs constituted using it:

> To use an instrumentality ordinarily means to use it for its intended purpose. When someone asks “Do you use a cane?” he is not inquiring whether you have your grandfather’s silver handled walking stick on display in the hall; he wants to know whether you walk with a cane. Similarly, to speak of ‘using a firearm’ is to speak of using it for its distinctive purpose, i. e. as a weapon.

Given that integrationists deny that words have ‘core’ meanings and objects have ‘core’ uses (the ‘artificer fallacy’), what would be their comment on this case? (see Hutton 2009: 96 – 9, Hutton 2014)

7. Comment on the following passage by Harris (1999) which was written as part of a review of the book Apes, Language, and the Human Mind (Savage-Rumbaugh, Shanker & Taylor 1998). In it, Harris takes issue with Sue Savage-Rumbaugh’s claim that apes possess both language and a mind:

> What Kanzi and company tell us is not that bonobos too are by nature potential language users “just like us”. On the contrary, it is not until the hapless monkey’s world is artificially restructured by direct human control that the monkey can be made to begin to grasp (in human judgement) some of the rather complex ways it is possible to use vocal sound to integrate other activities. As to what monkeys “think” of this form of oppression, the world is still waiting for a monkey to “say”.

8. The marine biologist Adam Pack tells us that previous “laboratory studies have shown that the dolphin can understand that a symbol can stand for something, can form a mental representation of the item related to the symbol, and can appropriately decode and respond to a human trainer’s symbols” (Pack 2010: 554). Why would an integrationist have reservations about endorsing these ‘empirical’ findings?

2.10 Language and freedom (of speech)

While Noam Chomsky advocates the separation of scientific linguistics (for him formal linguistics) from discourse analysis (as a politically oriented inquiry), Roy Harris has vehemently rejected such a ‘segregational’ approach which treats the study of the human mind as entirely separate (and in principle unrelated) from the study of human conduct. Within orthodox circles, this segregation is

usually not seen as problematic – on the contrary, it is cited as a manifestation of Chomsky's intellectual range. Thus, the generativists Borsley and Newmeyer (1997: 63) regard Chomsky's interest in American political discourse and in grammatical theorizing as "prima facie evidence that the study of formal grammars and their properties complements, rather than challenges, the study of language in its communicative setting". It is 'complementary' because combined these two areas of inquiry are viewed as providing a holistic approach to our species, accounting for both the universal and the culture-specific traits of homo sapiens.

It is interesting to note that both Chomsky and Harris have been concerned with similar socio-political issues in some of their writings, including freedom of speech, freedom of thought, responsibility and education: how the two thinkers approach these issues, and where they see the need for change, however, differs considerably. Let us consider the idea of thought control. In discussing the notion of 'Newspeak' in George Orwell's novel 1984, Harris argues that Orwell's vision of thought manipulation by means of a unified language is so chilling precisely because twentieth-century people already entertained two interdependent ideas regarding the relationship between language and thought:

> One is that human linguistic abilities depend on a language machine in the brain. The other is that once the language machine is programmed in a certain way, the individual is powerless to alter it. The machine restricts the individual's forms of expression and channels the processes of thought. (Harris 1987a: 17–18)

Harris identifies Orwell's nightmare as a 'myth' which, in spite of its mythological character, has deep sociological and psychological repercussions on the human race: in fact, we have come to embrace that myth (i. e. accepted it as true), and proceeded to turn it into reality:

> In other words, many activities traditionally regarded as characteristically human, and hence mechanically inexplicable, will turn out to be at bottom mechanical after all. The idea that this might be true of language is what provides the connecting link with Orwell's prophetic sociology. If what a computer can 'think' is limited by its language, the same may be true of a human being. Hence the notion that a totalitarian government, seeking to control freedom of thought, might achieve that end by standardizing a language which promulgates its ideology. If the basic premisses of that ideology can be written into the rules of Newspeak, and Newspeak is the only language, then insofar as systematic thought is impossible without language, the rules of Newspeak will automatically impose the desired restriction of thought. (Harris 1987a: 21)

Nigel Love (2009: 28) draws a very similar conclusion when it comes to Newspeak as a dystopian conception of 'a language', but at the same time a real one in the imagination of modern man:

> …despite the tendency of Orwell's linguistic nightmare to collapse into incoherence the moment any part of it is brought into focus, the general idea of Newspeak retains its power to horrify. And that can only be because it reflects or projects or at least makes significant contact with the real-world linguistic culture against whose background it was conceived. After all, it is possible to imagine cultures for whose participants Newspeak would fail to make any kind of sense at all, let alone frighten anyone.

According to Love, Orwell's portrayal of Newspeak has several points of contact in common with present-day linguistics, in particular the idealized homogeneous community consisting of native speakers only, as well as the notion of a codified language, in which certain meanings are not

expressible at all. It is important to note on that score that both idealizations are mainstays in Chomsky's linguistic science, namely the ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogenous speech-community, and the idea that words stand for thoughts. As Love (2009: 30) points out,

> ...Orwell might be read as having specified the political circumstances required for Chomsky's linguistic ideal to be realized – or looking at it another way, as having measured the distance between Chomsky's ideal and any possible linguistic reality.

Chomsky, in turn, has made it clear that in his view the real world is far worse than the totalitarian systems imagined by Orwell – precisely because the nightmare of Newspeak is not confined to totalitarian regimes at all. According to Chomsky, the mechanisms of indoctrination are far more subtle in the so-called modern 'democracies' (of the West), where thought-control is being exercised by the intelligentsia on the rest of a slumbering population: hence, if the state propaganda speaks of 'defense' through its official channels, then the thought that the 'defense' may actually be an 'aggression' or 'invasion' becomes unthinkable. In the preface to Knowledge of Language (Chomsky 1986), Chomsky formulates two problems concerning human knowledge: one he terms "Orwell's problem", namely: the problem of explaining why we know and understand so little, given that we have so much evidence. The other, which he calls "Plato's problem", is to explain how we know so much, given that the evidence available to us is so sparse. The first problem has to do with Chomsky's conviction that language and thought stand in a direct relationship: if there is no word underlying a thought, then there can be no thought, or respectively: if a word gets banned (i. e. it is neither used or heard publicly), then the thought underlying that word will eventually disappear altogether as well (which is what happens, according to Chomsky, when propagandists deliberately avoid certain terms and consistently replace them by others). Hence, calling an act a 'defense' precludes one from understanding that it actually is an act of 'invasion', even though to a rational mind (like Chomsky's) it should be fairly obvious what the act 'really' constitutes.

In other words, even though human beings possess an impressive amount of abstract linguistic knowledge (i.e. knowledge to create an infinite number of novel, grammatically correct sentences) – this would be Chomsky's answer to Plato's Problem – most of them only have very little practical (linguistic) knowledge (e. g. knowledge of attaching the 'right' linguistic label to an event belonging to the external world). From this follows that the model to which we should aspire is "the idealized speaker-listener, who knows its language (i. e. grammar) perfectly" rather than the flesh-and-blood human, incapable of grasping the 'true' meanings of words and utterances. That is why Chomsky (1986: xxix) claims that "Plato's problem is deep and intellectually exciting; Orwell's problem, in contrast, seems to me much less so". The reason Chomsky adduces for not discussing Orwell's problem in his book Knowledge of Language is that "the context of an inquiry into the nature of language is perhaps not the appropriate place" (1986: xxviii). Harris, in turn, cannot see why politics should not be part of such an inquiry: this is so because for Harris "languages presuppose communication" (1998: 5).

Both Harris and Chomsky are firm supporters of freedom of expression and strongly oppose censorship, in spite of the consequence, namely, as Chomsky (2005: 167) once conceded, that one may have to vigorously defend the expression of views one personally hates. In an essay in defense of Holocaust-denier Robert Faurisson, Chomsky writes: "It is easy enough to defend free expression for those who require no such defense" (Chomsky 1980). However, the two thinkers differ fundamentally when it comes to the relationship between modern linguistics and freedom of speech. For Harris, in fact, linguistics has adopted a model of speech communication which postulates the legitimacy of abstractions, and in which language is thus decontextualized, thereby "effectively preclud [ing] any possibility of raising issues concerning freedom of speech" (Harris 1990c: 153).

Like Chomsky, Harris has never been shy of expressing his non-mainstream opinions concerning

political or civic topics in public, sometimes also under very difficult circumstances. In this category fall Harris' two papers dating from his years in Hong Kong, both bearing controversial titles: 'The worst English in the world?' (Harris 1989a) and 'English versus Islam' (Harris 1991a). In the latter, Harris insisted (and this became a matter of some controversy) upon giving a paper with this title on Salman Rushdie's novel The Satanic Verses at a Hong Kong University conference devoted to Asian Voices in English. In the paper, Harris (1991a: 87) reminds his audience that "an Asian writer's life is at stake for what he has written, and that cannot be a matter of indifference to a conference devoted to Asian writers". Philosophically speaking, Harris leans on a principle formulated by John Stuart Mill (1806 – 73) in his essay, On Liberty, dating from 1859. According to Harris (1991a: 94), Mill advocates a principle which treats the hypothetical speaker and the hypothetical objector with complete impartiality, i. e. equal obligations are put on both parties. Speaker and objector are required to discern "behaviour which gives offence" from "behaviour which causes harm". The overriding imperative for all human conduct, therefore, is each party's duty to make sure that whatever we will do causes no harm to others. Preventing that harm is inflicted onto others is the only justification for interfering with personal freedom. In other words, our freedom to express our opinion loses its immunity if by expressing it we intimidate others or incite others to violence (such as calling publicly for the assassination of a writer). Harris (1991a: 95) continues as follows:

> Whatever Rushdie may have written, at least he has neither overtly nor implicitly called for anyone's assassination. To argue that one whose work provokes a violent reaction from opponents is ipso facto responsible for the violence that ensues is to stand logic on its head. [...] These are travesties of rational thought about human responsibilities. Only people who advocate or themselves resort to violence can be held responsible for violence.

Concerning the distinction between offence and harm, the philosopher Christopher New, whose comments followed Harris' article on Rushdie in the published volume, countered by imagining the following scenario:

> Suppose Professor Harris had known before, or had very good reason to believe, that his peaceable defence of Rushdie would so provoke a Muslim fundamentalist in his audience that the man (or woman) would lob a grenade into the middle of the auditorium at the end of the paper, killing many innocent and talented people. And suppose Professor Harris had gone ahead with his paper regardless. Could he reasonably claim that, since he had neither advocated nor resorted to violence, he could not be held responsible for the violence at all? I don't think so. Those who know, or have good reason to believe, their work will provoke a violent reaction have a duty to weigh the value they think their work will have against the harm they think it will cause, even if the immediate agent of that harm is not themselves. (New 1991: 98)

Harris' immediate response (attached to the critic's comments) applies Mill's principle in the following way:

> If I knew a terrorist would (try to) blow up my audience, could I disclaim all responsibility for the ensuing carnage? [...] The answer to the question as put is that I would be clearly culpable if I failed (given my prior knowledge) to make the risk clear to the potential audience. [...] To consider a less hypothetical case, why not take the recent bomb threat to a transatlantic flight? The airline – defensibly in my view – proceeded with the flight, having warned all crew and passengers. What more can anyone reasonably want? Mr New seems to be suggesting – but this strikes me as a gross non sequitur – that anyone who 'went ahead' in

> the face of such threats would be at least partly responsible for the harm done. Someone who takes such a view at least incurs the onus of explaining to the rest of the world why that culpability follows. Otherwise Mr New's moral principle seems to be no more than a philosopher's charter for terrorists. For it implies that if we refuse to kowtow to the terrorist, then we immediately share the responsibility for whatever wanton harm the terrorist chooses to perpetrate. I find that an immoral rather than a moral principle, and I feel fairly confident that Mill would not have swallowed it either. (Harris 1991b: 100)

Harris' ideal concerning freedom of speech is an ideal worth dying for. In fact, in a more recent publication, Harris does not conceal his admiration for Socrates, who chose to remain silent (when accused of impiety and for corrupting the youth of Athens) in spite of knowing that by doing so he would sign his own death sentence; at the same time, Harris (2009c: 122) argues, Socrates' case also allows us to reevaluate the notion of education in democracy, which is a topic very dear to Chomsky as well:

> What marks Socrates' thinking is a supreme indifference to society and social values. He just did not care what other people thought of his teachings. [...] And it is typical of the man that he refused to recant – as he easily could have done – and preferred to be put to death. [...] From the 'Socratic' perspective, you can still be an educated individual even if you are constantly at loggerheads with the society in which you happen to live, and with that society's accepted standards. The death of Socrates is one of the great landmarks in intellectual history. He was put to death not by a vindictive tyrant but under a democracy. The democracy decided to deny Socrates any further freedom of speech by the radical means of silencing his voice permanently. Socrates' death teaches the unforgettable lesson that a democracy can be as profoundly mistaken in its judgments as any dictator. The majority is not always right. The death of Socrates also teaches us the lesson that it takes a remarkable individual to value personal intellectual integrity above the dictates of society. (Harris 2009c: 121–122)

Chomsky, in turn, has denounced the educational system in present-day democracies: he sees the schools as indispensable tools of mind-control (Chomsky 2000: 24), and calls for teachers and intellectuals to create an unbiased environment in which their students may discover the truth:

> A good teacher knows that the best way to help students learn is to allow them to find the truth by themselves. [...] True learning comes about through the discovery of truth, not through the imposition of an official truth. That never leads to the development of independent and critical thought. It is the obligation of any teacher to help students discover the truth and not to suppress information and insights that may be embarrassing to the wealthy and powerful people, who create, design, and make policies about schools. (Chomsky 2000: 21)

Chomsky goes on to blame schools for keeping "people from asking questions that matter about important issues that directly affect them and others" (2000: 24); he insists that "real intellectuals have the obligation to seek and tell the truth about things that are important, things that matter" (2000: 26). Ironically, Roy Harris has been objecting to a Chomskyan programme of linguistics precisely on these grounds. According to Harris, these "important questions" are not asked within Chomskyan linguistics: they do not concern "things that matter" because Chomsky's questions about language do not "directly affect" students, in the sense that they have no correspondence with the questions real people ask about themselves, about language and about communication.

Chomsky speaks of “miseducation” in today’s democratic societies, while at the same time upholding with fervour the notion of “objectivity” as the means to pursue the truth (2000: 20): as far as linguistics is concerned, it is precisely this alleged objectivity in studying the cognitive roots of language which dehumanizes language: a linguistics that has stopped being humane, the integrationist is keen on pointing out, is hardly done in the pursuit of “truth”. The paradoxical situation which arises as a consequence has been succinctly captured by Harris (1987a: 173) as follows: “In brief it is a mythology which effectively dehumanizes language at the same time as proclaiming language to be the human capacity par excellence.” For Harris, moreover, the idea of truth is a dangerous one: in fact, the belief in a truth ‘out there’ (scientific or otherwise) precludes one from asking certain questions and therefore prevents ideas from flowing freely and creatively. What individuals need to learn as part of their education is to take responsibility and stand up for their views, while always leaving open the possibility that one might be wrong. This principle must equally guide those who adhere to integrationism: thus, integrational linguistics will hopefully not become “merely another orthodoxy” (Pablé 2012c).

Case studies

Freedom of expression and trademark law (Hutton 2009)

According to the UK Trade Marks Act (1994, Part 1, s. 1), a trademark is “any sign capable of being represented graphically which is capable of distinguishing goods or services of one undertaking from those of other undertakings”. A trademark identifies a product or service with the business that produces it, indicating the commercial origin of a product, and so preventing confusion and fraud by distinguishing the products of one company from those of another. The law seeks to protect the ‘referential link’ between the sign, the product and the business, as a way of protecting both the economic rights producer and consumer, and sees trademarks as fundamental to the operation of a transparent and equitable market. Well-known trademarks are extremely valuable forms of intellectual property, and a single trademark can be worth billions of dollars (e. g. ‘Coca Cola’). The unauthorized use of a trademark, or the attempt to ‘pass off’ one’s goods as being from an established producer by imitating the style of presentation or ‘get-up’, are seen as a form of ‘free-loading’ on the value of the trademark. But if a trademark can be shown to have become the generic or everyday name for a product, then it loses its legal protection.

In his book Linguistic Battles in Trademark Disputes (2002), Roger Shuy lays out a case for protecting popular ownership of language and offers criticism of the operation of trademark law in the United States. Shuy sees large corporations, with the collusion of law, as colonizing what should be the open spaces or public commons of language, and in some instances threatening freedom of expression. Shuy gives the following examples (2002: 2):

> So a restaurant owner named McDonald is prevented from naming his business after himself. Even a hotel company is prohibited from using the patronymic prefix Mc- in the name of its proposed hotel chain, McSleep, since McDonald’s was determined to have the sole legal right to that prefix.

The readiness of McDonald’s to challenge forms like McSleep reflects the horizontal expansion of powerful brand names. Thus a company that dominates in one sector may decide to use its brand visibility in a different economic domain. For example, The Virgin Group Limited, which was originally involved in the music and entertainment business, diversified to include an airline, financial services, and many other activities. Even if it has no plans to expand into a particular sector, a large conglomerate will likely seek to prevent other concerns using its trademark or similar marks there.

Many libertarian, anarchist and populist commentators agree with Shuy, and in particular there is

widespread resentment at the use of trademark law to control public discourse and to silence criticism of companies and their products. Trademark holders are concerned that dictionaries will be cited in evidence that a trademark has lost its distinctiveness. Thus Shuy also alleges that there is pressure on lexicographers to avoid recording generic meanings for trademark terms, arguing that this represents an attempt to control natural linguistic change. Can one, for example, do a 'google' search on Yahoo?

A lot of interesting material and a wide range of opinions can be found on the worldwide web, and providing fascinating insights into questions of ownership, control, freedom of speech and the commodification of language.

Language and liberty (Harris 1990c: 157–159)

In this article, Harris (1990c: 160) condemns a science of linguistics which

> shirk[s] the issue of freedom of speech by perpetuating the convenient theoretical fiction that membership of a (homogeneous) linguistic community automatically confers the same linguistic rights – or none – on all, and attributing any departure from this egalitarian state of affairs to the interference of external, pragmatic forces which are by definition non-linguistic.

By doing so, Harris continues, linguists "idealize the problem out of existence", because that problem conflicts with their own scientific aspirations. The linguist's code-based model of language ultimately comes in handy for politicians who wish to deny others their right to participate. A historical example cited by Harris (1990c: 159) concerns events in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century British politics, when a series of petitions to Parliament were not heard because "not couched in appropriate language". Thus, membership of a linguistic community (e. g. being speakers of 'English') can be extended ad libitum to, say, speakers of 'legal English' as the criterion for the right to have one's views heard. Harris is implicitly suggesting that if linguists ceased to stress (and spread) the view that any language-use is 'regular' (or 'systematic'), and hence amenable to scientific scrutiny, the legitimacy of such legal actions would be automatically undermined. Instead, a view of 'a language' as a means of public communication should be encouraged from within the academic community: a language, therefore, should facilitate communication rather than defeating it; anyone should be able to express his/her assent or dissent in that language, as well as have the possibility of "persuading others to accept or reject or entertain any of a potentially infinite gamut of beliefs or attitudes or courses of action" (1990c: 159). As Harris would point out, codification is not a prerequisite for such a language to exist. On the contrary, to take the example of academia, its jargon has turned out to be problematic for public communication, thus debarring some from exerting their right to listen and understand. When speech is reduced to vocal noise, for whatever reasons, the rights and responsibilities that go with language are no longer binding. Language must remain audible and understandable in any situation, or if it is not, it is the individual's duty to demand that it be. Harris (1990c: 157) points to Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 78) as an early thinker to have realized "that the whole question of liberty and language is bound up with the extent to which a linguistic community is also a communicating society".

Questions for reflection

1. In his defense of authorial freedom based on John Stuart Mill, Harris (1991a: 95) acknowledges that one might be tempted to 'relativize' Mill's principle on the grounds of ethnocentric prejudices running through the latter's treatise. Consider the following quotation from Harris in terms of whether the question of freedom is ultimately a culture-specific question, and whether the Western perspective is to be regarded as no more valuable than non-Western ones:

> It must be conceded that Mill's great principle is itself based on cultural premises rooted in Western rather than Eastern ways of thought. English literature is one of the most copious repositories of those occidental ways of thought. Therefore does it not beg the question to defend one case of authorial freedom [Salman Rushdie's] by relying so heavily on arguments drawn from the same cultural tradition from which the very concept of that freedom comes? This is the Achilles' heel of Mill's argument. Can it be used except within a cultural framework which already validates its presuppositions? What happens when the concept of freedom itself is challenged in the name of a different cultural tradition altogether? Is there then any principled reconciliation possible between an author's right to do what Rushdie has done 'in good faith' and a creed that simply denies that alleged right as belonging to an opposed system of alien values, which it rejects in toto? (Harris 1991a: 95)

2. Comment on the following statement in conjunction with the idea of 'freedom of thought' and the individual's right to subject anything to 'unrestricted critical scrutiny':

> An education which does not afford or cultivate the freedom to cast doubt on its own value is not an education worth having. Failure in education, on this view, is any educational process in which those questions are never raised. (Harris 2009c: 125)

3. Discuss the statements by Chinese artist and activist Ai Weiwei from an integrational perspective. Which ones would the integrationist embrace without reservations, and for which ones would he/she feel compelled to add provisos:

> Liberty is about our rights to question everything.
> Say what you need to say plainly, and then take responsibility for it.
> Creativity is the power to reject the past, to change the status quo and to seek new potential.
> Words can be deleted, but the facts won't be deleted with them.

4. Consider the quotation by Harris below. Can you relate Socrates' refusal to put any of his teachings into writing to the fact that some intellectuals who were criticizing the negative impact of Rushdie's Satanic Verses focused entirely on the book, ceasing to discuss it with direct reference to its author?

> One such implication seems to be that the book is guilty of racism, blasphemy, etc., even if its author is not. Therefore, whatever the author's intentions may have been, the book itself should be banned, withdrawn, not re-issued, etc. The book thus becomes in effect an authorless, decontextualized object, on which society may take appropriate sanitary action. It is no longer a question of opponents muzzling a dangerous person, but of the community's rational and enlightened elimination of a dangerous thing. (Harris 1991a: 88)

5. Speculate on whether Chomsky would welcome the (imagined) critical spirit of students of Harris' (and Chomsky's) generation, who, faced with teachers whose teachings so blatantly clashed with their own communicational experience, were asking themselves the following question as regards language:

> Why isn't language as they say it is? This, in retrospect, seems to me the most obvious, the most basic, the most inevitable question that was bound to emerge from the educational experience of my generation. And that formulation is already more polite than another which

can be readily envisaged as an alternative: i.e. Why aren't they telling us the truth about language? (Harris 1997: 239)

6. A remark made by Constable Michael Sanguinetti, a Toronto police officer, on the occasion of the York University Safety Forum (January 2011) initiated an international movement of rallies known as 'The Slutwalk' protest marches. While addressing the issue of crime prevention, Sanguinetti proposed that "women should avoid dressing like sluts in order not to be victimized". The marches constitute a form of protest "against the belief that any aspect of a woman's appearance might explain or excuse rape" (www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2003380). This, in turn, presupposes that the participants either attribute no meaning to their manner of dressing (and expect others not to attribute any social meaning to it either), or that they do mean something by their way of dressing but no-one has the right to respond to their meaningful acts with sexual harassment or rape. Consider whether 'freedom of attire' is ipso facto part of 'freedom of expression', and whether non-verbal communication is just as context-sensitive as verbal communication.

7. Harris (1983b: 119) has compared Chomsky's homogeneous speech community to a 'fascist' concept of languages (see quote below). Why?

> The typical or "ideal" language-user is conceived of [by the major linguistic theorists] as an insulated monoglot, uncontaminated by linguistic acquaintance with members of any alien group. The "ideal" speech community is "totally homogeneous" (a fascist concept of languages if ever there was one). Here the fervent nationalism which has permeated modern politics exercises its most profound and pernicious influence upon the foundations of what purports to be a humane intellectual discipline.

8. Michael Toolan (1996: 221), discussing the issue concerning what the speaker (or author) intends to make manifest to the addressee, and whether texts themselves manifest certain intentions, takes up Rushdie's Satanic Verses and points out that these questions cannot be answered in vacuo:

> Rushdie will continue to protest that the text makes manifest no such hostility or disrespect, that inferring such is not licensed or reasonable, and that reading his novel as an evaluation of Islam [...] is simply wrong. Part of his defense will be that for a speaker or author to cite, mention, or embed utterances interpretable as contemptuous of or disrespectful to a religion [...] within a novel, particularly when those utterances are explicitly attributed to particular characters, is a very different thing from actually using such utterances. Others will not allow this distinction and will claim that the inference that any mention is a kind of use, however oblique, is reasonable. And so on. (Toolan 1996: 222)

What Toolan alludes to when he distinguishes 'use' from 'mention' in the present context is the fact that (Toolan's) Rushdie will defend himself by arguing that he is only mentioning the prophet, i.e. he is using the prophet's name: in other words, the sentence makes reference to, or 'mentions', the prophet, but it's not the prophet himself – only his name – that appears in the sentence. Discuss the two notions of use and mention in conjunction with the notions of authorial responsibility, authorial control, quoting, the use of graphic devices (in fiction), etc.

3. Discussion Materials

Research questions & methodology

1. In The Language Myth, Harris (1981:163–4) has pleaded for linguistic theorists to adopt "a genuine language user's perspective", which would lead them to ask the following research questions:

> How can we describe systematically what the speaker and hearer have to do in order to integrate speech relevantly into a temporal flow of episodes which they are jointly co-monitoring? To what extent does this integration depend on (i) linguistic and (ii) non-linguistic techniques? How are these two varieties of technique correlated? To what extent are they interdependent? How far does the employment of verbal devices itself depend upon the availability of non-linguistic information? How far do the non-linguistic techniques employed themselves rely on relevant verbalization? How do the integrational techniques, verbal and non-verbal, vary according to such factors as the status and number of the participants involved? What assumptions about the past linguistic and non-linguistic experience of the interlocutors do these techniques presuppose? To what extent do different communicational media and different types of situation affect the language of the participants in systematic ways? In short, how do people actually use words to communicate, and how can this be described in ways which yield statements which both correspond to the language-user's experience and are open to the kinds of verification and disproof characteristic of the empirical sciences?

From an integrational point of view, what do you find striking in the research questions raised in this early integrationist work by Harris? Do you think there is a place for scientific verification and disproof in a linguistics that sees itself as essentially 'lay-oriented'?

2. Analyze Roy Harris' commentary (Harris 2009f) on Adrian Pablé's fieldwork in Bellinzona (Pablé 2009) with a view to its relevance for an integrational epistemology:

> What is at issue here is the whole question of how words relate to the non-linguistic world. Integrationism, I believe, can supply an answer that is more convincing, more relevant to everyday linguistic experience, than any that has hitherto been proposed on the basis of surrogational accounts of language. The way to do this is shown by Adrian Pablé's study of how local people use the names of three landmarks in the town of Bellinzona. This […] study calls in question the orthodox notion of what it is to 'know the name of something'. According to orthodox theorists, knowing the names of places is part of your 'toponymic competence', which in turn is part of your 'linguistic competence'. So names of places belong to a fixed code, just like the rest of your vocabulary. […] The linguistic reality is far more complex. […] The main points to grasp are these. First, there's no question of a simple one-to-one correlation between a given landmark and its name. In Bellinzona, a castle may have – or have had – as many as five different names. Second, acquaintance with these names is not evenly distributed among the local population. Some are currently used more commonly than others. So the situation is tailor-made for sociolinguistic investigation. As Adrian Pablé points out, orthodox sociolinguistics has only one way of accommodating this kind of situation. It

postulates that there are onomastic codes in operation, and accounts for this fact by allocating the different codes to different sub-populations in the linguistic community, according to such social variables as age, length of residence, place of birth and first language. What this approach leaves out of account is precisely what Adrian Pablé and his students were interested in examining; namely, how whatever local knowledge speakers may have gets translated into identifying the relationship between a landmark and one or other of its names. In other words, Pablé's approach stands the orthodox theory of place-names on its head. Instead of taking the toponymic name-relation for granted, it asks how a connexion between name and place is in practice established and maintained. What Pablé's investigation found was that everything depends on the communication situation in question. There is no onomastic code in operation. Had there been a code in operation, the interpretation of any given name ought to have been regular and predictable. In fact, it was anything but predictable. [...] Relevant factors in guiding the answers turned out to be, for example, the exact location where the question was asked, the time of day, and the visitors' facilities available at the castle. Some informants proposed entirely different interpretations of the name they were given; for example, that it was the name of a certain café. These divergences seem to point to a conclusion of wider significance than at first sight appears. When people are presented with a place name and asked for identification of the place, their first reaction is not to treat that as a decontextualized question about some codified inventory of local names, but to form a hypothesis about why this particular questioner is asking this question at this particular time and place. They reply on the basis of that hypothesis. They reinterpret the name in accordance with what they suppose must be the purpose of the question. The answer given is always to a slightly different question that has not been explicitly asked, but which informants assume must be the reason for the inquiry in the first place. In other words, they cast themselves in the role of helpers whose local knowledge is useful only insofar as it bears on the integrational task they have been presented with. To put the point more generally, people assume that a toponymic question is never asked 'for its own sake', i. e. as a disinterested intellectual inquiry; but always with some ulterior end in view. This is what supplies the context required to make sense of the question, and the first task of the informant is to make this effort to contextualize. Once we grasp that point, we see what is question-begging about the whole concept of names as signs in a linguistic code. Codes supply answers to questions presupposed as known in advance. [...] But to conceive of a whole language as a code makes no sense at all, and couldn't make sense unless human knowledge were a closed system in which all possible questions were known and their answers supplied in advance. Adrian Pablé's study in effect explodes the fallacy that place-names are signs in an onomastic code. The responses of his informants show that the whole referential function of a name depends on its being contextualized, i. e. integrated into a certain sequence of activities. And if in the circumstances there are different possibilities for that integration, then the name will be differently interpreted. In short, there is no fixed code in operation. (Harris 2009 f)

3. Dorthe Duncker (2011) states that introspection into one's own behaviour or the inventing of scenarios based on imaginable situations of interaction cannot remain the only 'data' with which the integrational linguist should operate:

> As the analyst is also always a participant in a communication process, it might be suggested that the matter could be solved through invented communicational scenarios or through introspection and speculation. However, this would not only require the analyst to access bodily, i. e. cognitive and physiological, processes most of which are not accessible to conscious reasoning, also an introspective approach would fail entirely to capture the essential socio-dynamic aspects. (Duncker 2011: 541)

If Duncker is right, what is the difference between recollecting/imagining gestures, gaze, attitude, thoughts, etc. and recollecting/imagining, say, the words exchanged as part of a conversation?

According to Duncker, the empirically-oriented analyst has access to sources and data which enable him to understand a socio-culturally significant event or episode much more ‘holistically’ (e.g. by means of consulting online forums and blogs) than if he were to introspect the event or episode based solely on those aspects that he happens to have directly (personally) experienced. Discuss this claim by juxtaposing it to a possible objection that introspection of one’s personal experience is ipso facto introspection of social experience.

The origin of language

4. The topic of the origin of language was for many decades confined to the margins of linguistics or discussed in terms of debates in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However the rise of evolutionary and biolinguistics has brought this topic back into the centre of interest, particular in relation to Noam Chomsky’s theories. Nigel Love has offered this set of philosophical reflections on the origin of language (1990: 107–108):

> However deep our ignorance about the origin of language, there are certain things one can reasonably say about it which do not depend on access to unavailable historical information. For instance, it can reasonably be said that language must have started when a primordial A first spoke, and a primordial B understood. There is no question of B understanding A’s utterance in virtue of being able to relate it to antecedently given abstract units, because there could not have been any such things. The first utterance logically cannot have been the utterance of something antecedently given.
>
> So what can ‘understanding’, at this stage, mean? It means, perhaps, that A’s vocal noise elicited from B behaviour that suggested to both A and B that associations (images, memories, etc.) somehow evoked in B by A’s noise were similar to the associations of the noise for A.
>
> Now all that happened, on the phenomenal level, is that a noise was made and certain behaviour ensued. And, in a sense, that is the beginning and the end of the story of spoken language: ever since, all that has ever happened is that noises have been made and behaviour has ensued.
>
> But there is more to be said than that. The origin of language cannot have antedated the capacity in humans for reflecting on their experience. If using language is anything at all beyond making noises, language-use presupposes that capacity. And there is no reason to doubt that A and B will have reflected rather furiously on this utterly novel experience. Thus the birth of language as an object of contemplation follows hard on the heels of the birth of language itself.
>
> It is not a necessary feature of this account that A intended his noise to have the effect it had. In fact, it is hard to imagine how he could have, since there was ex hypothesi no established practice of eliciting certain behaviour from others by making vocal noises. But it is no less hard to imagine how even primitive man could have failed to entertain the notion – and sooner rather than later – that behaviour-eliciting vocal noises might be made on purpose. The obvious way to test this possibility would be to make a second, similar noise and see if it elicited a similar response.
>
> Now there was no fixed criterion for deciding what might count as a ‘similar’ noise. (Nor has there subsequently ever been.) Nonetheless, if a range of similar noises was tried out and the predicted response, or type of response, was forthcoming, it is hard, again, to see how even

> primitive man could fail to entertain the idea of a class of noises, or type of noise, which would regularly elicit a class of responses, or type of response. Thus was the first utterance-type invented. The defining characters of this type were not fixed, and never would or could be. Nonetheless, the basic idea of an invariant abstraction – a class or a type – underlying utterances is a necessary feature of any attempt to make sense of even the most primitive linguistic event. If, as will be argued below, the essence of the concept of 'a language', as distinct from 'language', is the idea that there are things which utterances are utterances of, that idea is bound to arise as a result of no more than the human capacity for reflecting on experience, generalizing about it, and purposefully attempting to renew it.
>
> This is one reason why the alternative to a linguistics based on languages as determinate sets of abstractions cannot be a linguistics of individual utterances themselves. That would leave out of account the fact that for language-users, utterances are utterances of things. The problem is not the idea of abstractions underlying speech, but the idea of determinate systems of abstractions underlying speech. Where does this idea come from?

What are the essential points that Nigel Love is making about the origin and nature of language?

Alternative frameworks

5. One important debate with which integrationism is implicated is the status of what Harris terms 'vulgar mindspeak' (2008: 2 ff.). This involves familiar phrases such as 'to make up one's mind', 'to change one's mind', 'to keep something in mind', 'to be of the same mind', 'to be unable get an idea into one's head', and so on: "Vulgar mindspeak allows one to talk, in short, as if there were no doubt whatever that all human beings had minds, and that minds were where most of human thinking was done" (Harris 2008: 2). Advocates of a view of mind termed 'distributed cognition' tend to reject the relevance of vulgar mindspeak, and dispute the analogous idea within cognitivism that the individual brain is the locus of thinking or other mental processes, including linguistic ones. They see cognition as 'distributed' across tools, other interactants, and unfolding in context, rather than as an autonomous internal process (for an integrational point of view, see Orman 2015). Sutton (2004: 505) argues that "we are intricately psychologically tangled with, and our minds projected out into, a range of cognitive objects such as instruments, media, and other people". He cites Andy Clark as follows (Sutton 2004: 505, Clark 2003: 198): "it is our basic human nature to annex, exploit and incorporate nonbiological stuff deep into our mental profiles". This is how Love summarizes Clark's position (Love 2004: 527):

> there is no neatly compartmentalised domain of the 'mental', and the mind is not the passive repository of an overarching world-view. Rather, the mental is inextricably interwoven with body, world and action: the mind consists of structures that operate on the world via their role in determining action. Reasoning is situated, carried out by embodied beings acting in a particular physical environment. Minds evolved to make things happen: the mind is an organ for online control of the human body in the here and now.

The philosopher Alva Noë concurs (2009: 82):

> there is no principled reason not to think of the wristwatch, the landmarks, the pen and paper, the linguistic community, as belonging to my mind. The causal processes are not confined to what is going on in our skulls. But that is just a way of saying that the machinery of the mind itself is not confined to the skull.

However, Harris has taken issue with the idea that mind can be understood as distributed:

> When, for instance, I use a pocket calculator I feel no temptation to say Ah! The machine is doing my thinking for me. Or: Part of my mind is now in the machine. Because it patently is not the case. How do I know? Because whatever is going on inside the machine, it is not part of me. It is not at all like saying 'The dishwasher is doing the washing-up for me' (which I suspect may be the underlying analogy), because doing the washing-up was always something I had to do by physical manipulation of physical objects. Thinking is not like that. (Harris 2004b: 728–729)

This is not intended by its proponents as a metaphor (Harris 2004b: 729):

> So is my pocket calculator, given the right circumstances, my mind or part thereof? No, I don't think so. I am no more convinced that using my pocket calculator is an extended form of thinking than that riding a bicycle is an extended form of walking, or driving a motor car an extended form of riding on horseback. Thinking by proxy makes no more sense than being happy or sad by proxy. The black tie I wear at the funeral is not doing my grieving for me. Nor is it a bit of grief that somehow escaped from inside me and got distributed.

Vulgar mindspeak, for Harris, cannot be circumvented, since it is inextricably bound up with personal experience: "I have said many times that for me the main point of developing an integrationist perspective is to make sense of one's own communicational experience" (2004b: 735).

Stephen Cowley sees Harris as setting commonsense as a boundary beyond which science cannot pass (Cowley 2007: 575): "Harris regards common sense as setting limits on what can be thought. Like language, mind is shaped by experience and, he implies, is bound to elude science." Against this, Cowley argues that the distributed cognition approach, in "moving beyond symbolic models of mind and language", can "breathe new life into the language sciences" (Cowley 2007: 574). A distributed view of mind can lead "beyond standard views of both codes and communication. Instead of focusing on mental states and linguistic forms, we can focus on coupling between brains, bodies and the world." For Cowley, there is a scientific point of view which can stand as a corrective both to vulgar mindspeak and to academic cognitivism, whereas for Harris it is unclear whether we can go beyond the limits of the concepts and frameworks offered by everyday mindspeak and by our personal experience.

Drawing on a suggestion from Nigel Love, Harris (2004b: 738) proposes that the term 'distributed' should be replaced by 'integrated' and that this would bring out the parallels between the two approaches: "That might remove some of the potential misunderstandings and obstacles to co-operation. For the notion that one's mental activities are indeed jointly integrated with one's bodily activities and one's environment is at the core of the integrationist approach." He continues (Harris 2004b: 738):

> If we speak of an 'integrating mind', the rationale of the term integrating is that in order to explain how different types of signs are created we have to attribute to the mind the ability to integrate a whole range of biomechanically, macrosocially and circumstantially diverse activities. If we speak of an 'integrated' mind, the rationale of the term integrated is that we conceive of our mental activities as part and parcel of being a creature with a body as well as a mind, functioning biomechanically, macrosocially and circumstantially in the context of a range of local environments.

If we take a step back from the immediate context of this debate between Harris and advocates of distributed cognition, one can conclude that the idea of distributed mind has been integral to semiotics from its modern beginnings. Not only does Peirce rule out any clear ontological distinction between mind and world, but Uexküll's idea of species-specific coupling between Innenwelt and Umwelt likewise makes any reduction of mind to autonomous inner cognition nonsensical. In Gregory Bateson's notion of 'ecology of mind', the idea of 'ecology' is a distributed one, or at least the notion of 'mind' is expanded to include natural and technological ecologies (Bateson 1972, 1979). In this broad sense, one can see both the essays in Social Brain, Distributed Mind (Dunbar 2010) and Bruno Latour's ethnographic analysis of the French administrative court, the Conseil d'Etat, which he presents as a complex, multidimensional system of information flows (Latour 2009), as part of this wider tradition. The papers in the collection The Extended Mind (Menary 2010) give the misleading impression that the idea of extended mind is a recent intellectual innovation. That said, the notion of extended /integrated mind is one where a more detailed exchange between semiotics and integrationism would clearly be of value.

(i) Sutton (2004: 506) remarks that "[i]n certain circumstances, artefacts and other external structures are literally cognitive". Examples would be "notebooks, incised sticks, slide-rules, computer control-sticks, software agents, fingers, knots, rituals, monuments, roads, roadsigns, and landscapes." Explain what is being asserted here and evaluate Harris' objection.
(ii) Harris seems to rely on a commonsense or 'ordinary language' style of arguing, in which propositions are tested against our everyday linguistic usage. Is that an accurate assessment of his position? How, if at all, can this debate about the status and value of 'vulgar mindspeak' be resolved?
(iii) Sutton (2004: 511) concludes that, by contrast to integrationism, "distributed cognition still allows the brain to have a style of storage and computation". Summarize and evaluate the debate between integrationism and the distributed position on this and other points.

6. In their discussion of the areas of concern for a folk linguistics and its place in the general study of language, Niedzielski and Preston (2000: 25–27) argue for the necessity of distinguishing between 'what people say' on the one hand, i. e. the first-order communication which is the domain of linguistics proper, and 'how people react to what is said' on the other hand, as well as 'what people say about what people say and about how people react to what is said', including the shared beliefs and attitudes ascribed to the people one is commenting on and has knowledge about: the latter, the two authors argue, constitute the domain of 'folk linguistics'.

One of the examples in the discipline's foundational paper by Henry Hoenigswald (1966) regarding 'how people react to what is said' was that of "being put off". Niedzielski and Preston, in turn, specify that 'being put off' can equally pertain to the level of 'what people say': to illustrate this, they imagine the following three situations:

> Imagine that on their first date Josie observes casually to Serge that "Some yahoo who believes the earth is flat came into the office today". This romance is nipped in the bud, for, as it turns out, Serge is president of the local Flat Earth Society. (Niedzielski & Preston 2000: 25)
> We can imagine another putting off, however, which is clearly a reaction. Hannah has spotted Daniel at a party and finds him more than a little attractive; she sets out to seduce him [...] Hannah is no slouch at seduction; she has a repertoire of illocutionary acts (and non-linguistic behaviors) which should effectively lead Daniel into the correct perlocutionary uptake [...] Unluckily for Hannah, however, she is a low-front vowel raiser, and Daniel finds that vowel positioning debilitating in romantic relationships. Although he has the correct perlocutionary uptake (understanding that he is being seduced), the Hannah-Daniel romance goes no further than the Serge-Josie one, but for reasons of what we shall refer to as language attitude.

(Niedzielski & Preston 2000: 27)

> We can imagine yet another scenario [...] Hannah pops into Daniel's field of awareness with "Hi, haven't we met before?". Unluckily, the second word contains an exemplar of the offensive low-front-vowel, raised considerably in Hannah's performance. In this case Daniel's eventual rebuff of Hannah is perhaps even more puzzling to her, for she senses that her seduction [...] is not even being understood. Indeed, it is not. It is inconceivable to Daniel that any person with such a debilitating linguistic feature as low-front vowel raising could even enter the romantic fray... (Niedzielski & Preston 2000: 27)

The first scenario is taken to illustrate that the effect that Josie's casual remark has on Serge, i. e. him no longer being interested in her, is not shaped by how Serge 'reacts to what Josie said', but by 'what Josie said'; on the other hand, Daniel's disinterest in Hannah is influenced by how he reacts to Hannah's accent, his reaction being a consequence of his language attitude. In the third hypothetical example, Daniel does not even understand that Hannah is trying to seduce him. He thinks that she is merely chit-chatting with him: Hannah's accent strikes Daniel with such immediacy and vehemence that he becomes impervious to the subtle psychological 'realities' of the encounter.

(i) What is striking, from an integrational point of view, about the perspective taken in these three imagined scenarios?

(ii) Why do Niedzielski and Preston wish to emphasize that, unlike the Hannah-Daniel episodes, the Josie-Serge episode does not concern the level of 'how people react to what people say'? What does that tell us about the areas of interest carved out for a folk linguistics?

(iii) Why can Niedzielski and Preston afford to leave out any information concerning Josie's accent or Serge's awareness of it, whereas in the Hannah-Daniel episodes accent and awareness are crucial to the understanding of what is going on at all?

(iv) Is reporting/imitating 'what people say' automatically of interest to folklinguists like Niedzielski and Preston?

Saussure: code and communication

7. The Saussurean 'speech circuit': one of the key passages of the Course in General Linguistics ([1916], Harris 1983a) concerns the so-called 'speech circuit'. Here is how the Course describes the process (Harris 1983a: 28–29):

> The starting point of the circuit is the brain of one individual, for instance A, where facts of consciousness which we shall call concepts are associated with representations of linguistic signs or sound patterns by means of which they may be expressed. Let us suppose that a given concept triggers in the brain a corresponding sound pattern. This is an entirely psychological phenomenon, followed in turn by a physiological process: the brain transmits to the organs of phonation an impulse corresponding to the pattern. Then sound waves are sent from A's mouth to B's ear: a purely physical process. Next, the circuit continues in B in the opposite order: from ear to brain, the physiological transmission of the sound pattern; in the brain, the psychological association of this pattern with the corresponding concept.

The 'speech circuit' is illustrated by a drawing of two disembodied 'talking heads', A and B, and is intended to illustrate how speech (parole) enacts the relationships established by the language system (langue). Following the picture of the 'talking heads' there is a second diagram which

suggests a visual analogy between the process of speech production and reception, and the electric circuit. There is a complex debate within the history of linguistics about the role of the editors, Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, in the shaping of the posthumously published work, and in particular in relation to this section, but for our purposes we can treat the Course in General Linguistics, as established by these editors, as a unitary text which we are seeking to interpret (see discussion in Toolan 1997: 80 ff.).

In Harris (1987a), there is an epilogue entitled "Saying Nothing". This is written in the form of a philosophical dialogue (1987a: 163–174), albeit a comic one. Harris imagines a series of exchanges between the disembodied heads that are depicted in the Course (Harris 1983a: 27). A and B argue about the merits of their assigned role within the Course, and the implications of the image in which they appear. Of the two, B is the much more sceptical voice, complaining that the role of 'talking head' with nothing in particular to say is vacuous. B's point is that the abstraction and generality of the 'talking heads' image marginalizes or omits entirely the most important features of language and communication. A occupies a more orthodox position, accusing B at points of 'perversity'.

(i) Read the following extract from the Epilogue to The Language Machine (Harris 1987a: 163–165):

> 'Good morning, B.'
> 'Good morning, A.'
> 'What shall we talk about today, B?'
> 'I've forgotten what it was we were talking about yesterday. But I expect it was the same old grouse. You mean this rotten job we've got?'
> 'Precisely. Here we are with absolutely no retirement prospects, condemned to appear for ever on page 27 of the Cours de linguistique générale, saying nothing.'
> 'Come now, B. I see you are in a bad mood today. I quite agree that being stuck here until kingdom come isn't funny. But why do you say "saying nothing"?'
> 'Why? Because that's exactly the job description. Or are you going to try to be clever in the way philosophers are and tell me that saying nothing might itself be saying something? Some zero morphemes full of sound and fury, perhaps? Or just the inaudible product of a few deletion rules?'
> 'Well, B, admittedly there's nothing on page 27 of the Cours for us to say. But there's something for us to show. Isn't our diagram really a way of showing that we can talk about everything? '
> 'Is there a difference, then, between talking about everything and saying nothing?'
> 'Really, B! That's pretty close to linguistic heresy. Are you trying to get us the sack? We of all people know there must be a difference. After all, the word nothing isn't the same as the word something. That's a fact guaranteed by the linguistic code.'
> 'But it just isn't true that we can talk about everything. We can only talk about what the linguistic code allows us to talk about.'
> 'But that's fairly extensive, you must admit.'
> 'That's not the point. The scope a linguistic code affords us is merely contingent. A code as such can be quite restrictive.'
> 'I've never felt bothered by that myself.'
> 'All the same, I wish Bally and Sechehaye have given us something to say on page 27.'
> 'You wish they had provided us with a script?'
> 'Well, at least it would have been something.'
> 'My dear B, that is an absolutely absurd suggestion, if I may say so. I think the job must be getting you down after all these years. I know we've been doing it now ever since 1916 without reprieve. But can't you see how much worse it would be if we had a script? We should be condemned to repeat the same thing for ever and ever. Personally, I'd much rather be

saying nothing, as you put it, than have what I am to say dictated by a script.'

'So you object to dictation by a script, but not to dictation by a code. I suppose that shows something at least about the way you imagine language works. But you are probably right: a script would get terribly monotonous.'

'It's not just the monotony, B. Don't you see that a script would defeat the whole point of our job?'

'I'm not sure I follow.'

'Now B, when you talk like that you make me wonder whether you have really understood what our job is.'

'All right, A. I have a feeling you're going to tell me.'

'You and I have been appointed to this very important and highly responsible position of acting as linguistic representatives for the whole of humanity.'

'Is that why we have to wear these vacant expressions on our faces?'

'Now don't be perverse, B. We certainly weren't selected just because we happen to look like shop-window dummies.'

'Nor because we happen to be white, male, clean-shaven and have neat haircuts?'

'Of course not. You must try to put thoughts like that out of your mind.'

'Then why were we selected as linguistic representatives for the whole of humanity?'

'You know that as well as I do, B. We were the only two people Bally and Sechehaye could find who spoke exactly the same language.'

'But if that is so rare, how does it qualify us to represent all humanity? Aren't we just freaks? Surely it would have been more representative to find two people who did not speak exactly the same language?'

'Dear me, B. Sometimes I have doubts about your education. Our business is linguistic science, not social sampling. Didn't anyone ever teach you anything about the scientific role of idealization?'

'Yes, I seem to remember they did – but I could never quite grasp it.'

'It's very simple really. This is a ramshackle old universe in which things never actually work as they should. So in order to understand it, scientists have to imagine that everything is working perfectly. That's idealisation.'

'So you are saying that because we happen to speak exactly the same language we embody the ideal conditions for a scientific understanding of language?'

'Exactly!'

'Precisely because that is not how language actually works for most people, but how it ought to?'

'Now don't twist my words, B.'

'I thought the linguistic code made word-twisting impossible.'

(i) The dialogue talks about the difference between 'talking about everything' and 'saying nothing', and also considers the difference between the diagram as it appears in the text of the Course in General Linguistics and a possible diagram with a 'script', that is the same diagram, only one where the talking heads actually are given something to say. Can you explain the distinction? What do you think is the point that Harris is trying to make here?

(ii) A is very proud that he and B have been appointed as the 'linguistic representatives for the whole of humanity'. B is more sceptical. Explain and comment their different points of view. What argument is Harris making in presenting these two points of view?

(iii) Harris writes (1987b: 25) that "by taking the speech-circuit model with its two talking heads as basic, Saussure makes it clear that la langue [the linguistic system] is a system which assumes face-to-face communication". Harris notes that writing is "archetypally, a system which makes the

opposite assumption (that is, that the sender and recipient of the message are not in a face-to-face situation)". Do you agree that the talking heads model correlates the linguistic system of language with the idea of spoken, face-to-face communication?

(iv) Harris (1996b) argues that "it is evident that, in order to provide an effective means of communication, the "speech circuit" demands adherence to a fixed code". The idea that communication proceeds by a process of 'telementation', that is by the transference of thoughts from one person's mind to another via the fixed code, and the assumption that A and B must both be speaking the same language have been identified by Harris as key ideas inherent in Saussure's speech circuit and in the language myth. But critics have argued that Harris is overreading this passage. Joseph (1997: 28–9) denies that Saussure had any kind of theory of communication at all. For Joseph, "Saussure is simply not interested in communication", but rather with the possibility of describing an object of study, langue. Thibault (1997: 133) denies that Saussure "offers a conduit model of 'thoughts', 'concepts', 'ideas' and so on which are 'transmitted' from a sender to a receiver", since what is actually transmitted according to Saussure is merely an acoustic signal.

Is it correct to say that Saussure's model of the speech circuit is not intended to speak to a theory of communication? Is Thibault not correct to say that, strictly according to Saussure, nothing is transmitted, and therefore this model is not 'telementational,' since the concepts are already present in the minds of both interactants?

8. Dialogue on project research

The dialogue form is associated in the Western tradition with Greek philosophy and the dialogues of Socrates and Plato. Of course, a philosophical dialogue is rarely offered or only fictionally presented as an actual or edited record of a real discussion. It is a mode of presentation which is designed to test our understanding of the foundations of knowledge, frequently in order to deal with issues raised by the sceptic. However the philosophical dialogue is not recognized as a major scholarly genre in the modern academic writing, even though the intellectual merits of dialogue and 'dialogism' have been much discussed (Bohm 1996). The currently fashionable use of 'bullet points' in power point and lecture handouts represents a radically different mode of presentation, where key words and formulations, headings and sub-headings, demonstrate the extent or structure of an intellectual or factual domain. While this may include 'for' and 'against' sub-sections, these are generally juxtaposed or merely listed.

A philosophical dialogue is intended to demonstrate interwoven structures of argument and dispute, dialectical relationships, and hidden interdependencies, rhetorical strategies, and so on, often seeking to bring out the agreement that may underlie apparent disagreement, or show how a consensus actually masks contradictory beliefs, or how confusion and contradiction may lurk below the surface of confident assertion. Harris (1996b: xviii) quotes Leonard Woolf on the importance within Western philosophy of the question "What do you mean by that?", arguing that this question ("a metalinguistic question if ever there was one") offers a way of "probing Western metalinguistic discourse itself ".

The following dialogue imagines objections from a sceptical student who is given the task of writing a research project following the principles of integrationism.

A:	Ok, I think I get it now, I understand the basics of integrationism, that there is no fixed code, there are no language systems, no fixed reference points, and so on, but how am I supposed to do a project? I'm very busy. What is there to study? What methods can I use?
B:	Well on the one hand integrationism is highly philosophical, but it also recognizes that we are all experts on language, in the sense that we are able to comment on and talk about it in many different and complex ways. You can use that for your project.
A:	OK, so I'm an expert, great, but I don't feel much better. How?

B: One way is to study metalinguistic discourse, that is, the way we talk about language, and try to make it something graspable. In so doing, we often present an ideal of what we think language is like, or reveal underlying theories about how language works.

A: Where can I find it? I know it's everywhere but where in particular?

B: In public debates about language and meaning, swearing, politics, gossip in daily life for example. What kinds of arguments do people use, what authorities

do they appeal to? Or in a chatroom, for example – people make comments about the roles people take up or the language other people are using, or the way they are talking. You could study that.

A: What does study mean? Surely you are not asking me to find categories of meta-language?

B: There is no law against making categories, but you need to be aware that you are imposing a set of second-order labels onto the stream of discourse. You are creating and defining the categories. That means, you don't start assuming that those categories are 'inside' the discourse, and you are aware of the process of simplification or decontextualization that you go through. Then you consider why these categories are interesting or useful, if at all. If you are reflexive about it, then there's no problem.

B: So I can do anything I like so long as I am reflexive.

A: I guess, but being reflexive also includes linking your research to integrationism.

A: I don't like swearing or chatrooms. Any other ideas?

B: How about keeping a language diary?

A: What is that?

B: A record of a day, in which you record aspects of language/signs that strike you, and you then consider why certain things were noticeable, and reflect on the process of heightening your language awareness.

A: That sounds random and unstructured.

B: Yes, but that reflects aspects of our linguistic experience. We have a tendency to use categories in such a way that we stop thinking about the dense nature of our experience. We look for the protection that categories provide.

A: So how can I observe or experience that there is no fixed code.

B: Now that is a really excellent question. Why don't you write an essay about that?

A: On what basis?

B: Either a theoretical discussion considering the role of observation and experience, or using your linguistic experience as a guide.

A: How can I tell that writing is not a representation of speech? You can read it out! C-A-T spells cat.

B: Good point. Why don't you write an essay about that?

A: Based on what? Experience? My experience is that you can read texts out aloud.

B: All texts?

A: If you know the language and the writing system…

B: Aha – the language myth.

A: It doesn't seem like a myth to me.

B: Write an essay about that then.

A: Based on what? I know, on my linguistic experience. It's easy for you to talk about linguistic experience, but plenty of people have criticized integrationism for being negative and for not providing any methodology for studying language.

B: Well, it's true that integrationism doesn't provide a methodology. Sorry about that, I know it's a pain in the neck. But it opens up other ways of writing about language, including personal observation, reflections and commentaries.

A: Yes, you already said that. But you like to jump on anyone who writes about language and criticize them. I'm afraid my study will be condemned as segregationalist, subscribing to the language myth and the fixed code hypothesis and so on. Any more examples? I like questionnaires…

B: Integrationism is sceptical about questionnaires…

A: See…!

B: I haven't finished. Especially if they are understood as allowing the researcher to discover pre-existing social facts. Data doesn't lie around waiting to be picked up. But a good way to think through the issues is to do a sociolinguistic study yourself, and then consider the integrational arguments in relation to that. Questionnaires create meanings. So how what kinds of meanings did your questionnaire create?

A: Thanks – any other suggestions?

B: How about writing a dialogue between an integrationist and a segregationalist?

4. Conclusion

Integrationism begins with a critique of academic linguistics and its key tenets have been shaped by the rejection of linguistics' foundational assumptions. Indeed integrationism started life as integrational linguistics and one might even speak tentatively of an integrational semiology. Semiotics, by contrast, begins with the sign. For semioticians, the linguistic sign is just one among many semiotic phenomena; language, while important, is not the paradigm case for the understanding of sign systems, and many semioticians would argue that the narrow focus on language has distorted our understanding of semiotic processes. Like semiotics, integrationism rejects the idea that language is an autonomous faculty, yet its primary focus has been upon language and on sign-systems with which language is closely intertwined, in particular writing.

Integrationism, with its stress on the individual's experience and the mundane yet highly sophisticated reflexivity that 'language-makers' bring to bear on communication, seems to operate within a fairly narrow spectrum of experience, defined in the first instance by the integrational capacities of the individual sign-user. Semiotics by contrast has been much more willing to leave this realm and to theorize globally about signs and sign-systems, including those which operate without reference to individual human subjectivity. In this sense, integrationism and semiotics reflect their different origins in the works of Saussure and Peirce respectively. Integrationism seeks to 're-humanize' linguistics, to reconnect the academic study of language with all those domains bracketed out by the Course in General Linguistics. Semiotics moves dialectically between the individual as situated sign-maker / interpreter and the sign-system. For theories of semiotics inflected through Freudian theory or Marxism, individual experience is an unreliable basis on which to build a theory of the sign. Integrationism focusses on the individual act of meaning creation; semiotics includes cybernetics, systems theory in its various forms, and ecological and evolutionary theories of communication which are intellectually much more wide-ranging and eclectic. In these frameworks what is important is the system-level order or 'autopoiesis' that is established and maintained. Communication within such systems is of a totally different order to the face-to-face human interactions which are the principal framework for integrationism: "Rocks communicate. Stars communicate. Plants communicate. Plants and animals communicate. Animals and animals communicate. Communication is as about a universal a phenomenon as you can get" (Deely 2009: 155). Semiotics explores the boundary between humanism and posthumanism, whereas integrationism in its current form is grounded in the autonomous human self and the terra firma of individual experience.

To put the contrast in simple terms, it might seem that semiotics seeks to liberate the study of signs from the limitations that integrationism embraces. But this would be to draw the distinction too starkly. If indeed "everybody is a linguist" (Harris 1998: 20), then for Sebeok everyone likewise is a semiotician. As Sebeok says, there are only two kinds of people: "Those who are doing semiotics and know it, and those who are doing semiotics but have not yet become aware of the fact" (cited in Deely 2009: 134). Both integrationism and semiotics share a critique of the Saussurean theory of the sign. Even though integrationism begins with individual experience, it is not committed to any methodological or philosophical limitations, beyond its understanding of the indeterminacy of sign. Semiotics, with its emphasis on the interpretant and the unfolding over time of sign-processes, is also grounded in the recognition of indeterminacy and the importance of dynamically changing point(s) of view. Like semiotics, integrationism is open to new understandings of human identity, and does not see 'language' and 'communication' as ahistorical terms with fixed meanings.

What we hope to have achieved in this book is a clear explanation of integrationism and the ways

in which both integrationism and semiotics are shaped by their intellectual origins. We believe that there is much to be gained by increased intellectual interaction between these approaches to the study of the sign. Integrationism is intended to open up new areas of inquiry, not to foreclose on them. On this optimistic note, we would like to finish with these words from Roy Harris:

> The intellectual biases built into an academic discipline are most clearly revealed by considering not what range of explanations it makes available for the phenomena falling within its domain but rather what questions pertaining to those phenomena cannot be raised within the theoretical framework it provides. (Harris 1990c: 153)

Further Readings

Earlier writings by Harris are collected in The Foundations of Linguistic Theory (ed. N. Love, London: Routledge, 1990). Harris has also edited a number of collections of integrational writings, including Linguistic Thought in England (Duckworth: London, 1988), The Language Myth in Western Culture (London: Curzon, 2002), and with T.J. Taylor a reader entitled Landmarks in Linguistic Thought (London: Routledge, 1989). Further edited volumes with integrational themes are: Redefining Linguistics (eds. H. Davis and T. J. Taylor, London: Routledge, 1990), New Departures in Linguistics (ed. G. Wolf, New York: Garland, 1992) and Language and History (ed. N. Love, London: Routledge, 2004), Language Teaching (ed. M. Toolan, London: Routledge, 2009). Integrational papers are collected in Integrational Linguistics: A First Reader (R. Harris and G. Wolf, eds. (Oxford: Pergamon, 1998). Other volumes of interest include: 'Why brains matter: an integrational perspective on The Symbolic Species', ed. Stephen J. Cowley in Language Sciences (24/1 2002); 'Distributed cognition and integrational linguistics', edited by David Spurrett (Language Sciences 26/6, 2004). A special issue of the journal Language Sciences (33/4), a festschrift in honour of the 80th birthday of Roy Harris, appeared in 2011 entitled: 'Linguistics out of bounds: explorations in integrational linguistics', edited by David Bade and Adrian Pablé. Discussions of integrational theory can be found in the journals Language and Communication and Language Sciences. A critical appraisal of Harris' work by different linguists can be found in Linguistics Inside Out: Roy Harris and His Critics (eds. G. Wolf and N. Love, John Benjamins, 1997). Moreover, the Danish journal RASK has recently issued a volume featuring an extensive critique of Harris's integrational linguistics written by Søren Lund (Lund 2012) followed by a reply written by David Bade and Adrian Pablé (Bade and Pablé 2012).

For further information on integrationism, see Roy Harris' personal website: www.royharrisonline.com, and that of The International Association for the Integrational Study of Language and Communication: www.integrationists.com. Harris has published six sets of Integrationist Notes and Papers (2003– 2005, 2006–2008, 2009–2011, 2012, 2013, 2014).

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Index

affordance, 1
Ai Weiwei, 1
American English, 1
anecdote, status of within integrationism, 1–2
animals and language, 1 – 2
anthropic language, 1
anthropocentrism, 1, 2, 3, 4
anthropomorphism, 1, 2, 3
applied integrationism, 1
arbitrary nature of the sign, 1
Aristotelianism, 1, 2, 3 – 4
artificer fallacy, 1, 2
Asperger's syndrome, 1
Augustine, St., 1, 2
autism, 1 – 2
autoglottic space, 1 – 2
autopoiesis, 1
Austin, J. L., 1, 2
axioms of integrationism, 1
Ayer, A. J., 1

Bacon, F., 1
Bade, D., 1, 2, 3, 4 – 5
Bakhtin, M., 1
Bally, C., 1
Barthes, R., 1, 2, 3
Bateson, G., 1, 2
Bertalanffy, L. von, 1
biosemiotics, 1, 2
Bisgaard Nielsen, C., 1 – 2
bonobos and language, 1 – 2, 3
Borsley R., and Newmeyer, F., 1
Brier, S., 1
Bucholtz, M. and Hall, K., 1, 2

Carnap, R., 1
Carroll, L. and Alice Through the Looking Glass, 1 – 2
Cartesianism, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
categorization, 1
Cheung, T., 1 – 2
Chapman, S., 1 – 2
Chomsky, N., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14
– on freedom of speech, 1 – 2, 3 – 4
Chomskyan revolution, 1
Christe, N., 1, 2

Cobley, P., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
– and modeling, 1, 2
code view of language and signs, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 – 6, 7, 8, 9 – 10, 11 – 12
cognitive linguistics, 1 – 2
cognitive science, 1 – 2
– and machine metaphor, 1 – 2
commonsense, 1, 2, 3
communication
– and debate over the speech circuit model, 1
– as an integrational process, 1, 2, 3 – 4
– as creative, 1
– as initiative and sequel, 1, 2 – 3, 4 – 5
– as not involving the exchange of thoughts, 1
– as the reaching of agreement by verbal signs, 1
– as product of human agency, 1
– human vs animal, 1 – 2
– John Deely's view of as universal, 1
– mainstream theories of, 1
– Saussurean model of, 1
– where nothing is given in advance, 1
competence and performance, 1, 2, 3, 4
– moral competence, 1 – 2
context, 1, 2
– and names, 1 – 2
– as constraining interpretation, 1
– emphasis on within integrationism, 1
contextualization and recontextualization, 1, 2, 3, 4 – 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
– and autism, 1 – 2
– and names, 1
core meaning, 1
Corrington, R., 1 – 2
cotemporality, principle of, 1 – 2, 3
Coulter, J., 1 – 2, 3
Cowley, S., 1, 2
Cristaudo, W., 1
critical discourse analysis (CDA), 1
cybernetics, 1, 2
cybersemiotics, 1 – 2
cyberspace, 1 – 2

Damasio, A., 1
Darwinism
– and Chomsky, 1
data, category of, 1 – 2, 3
Davis, D. R., 1, 2
Davis, H., 1 – 2
Dawkins, R., 1 – 2
Deely, J., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Derrida, J., 1
dialect myth, 1 – 2
dialectology, 1 – 2, 3
disintegration, 1, 2

distributed cognition, 1, 2 – 3
– proposal to replace by integrated cognition, 1– 2
Duncker, D., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Eco, U., 1 – 2
embodied mind, 1
epistemology, 1, 2, 3 – 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
ethnomethodology, 1, 2 – 3, 4 – 5
etymology, 1, 2 – 3
extended mind, 1, 2 – 3
extra-anthropic, 1

Farrow, S., 1, 2
first-order and second-order, 1, 2 – 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
Firth, J.R., 1
fixed code, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
fixed code fallacy, 1
folk etymology, 1 – 2
folk linguistics, 1, 2, 3 – 4
folk versus scientific view of language, 1 – 2, 3, 4 – 5
foul language, 1 – 2
freedom of speech, 1 – 2
– and trademark law, 1 – 2
Freudian theory, 1, 2

Garfinkel, H., 1
General Semantics, 1
Gethin, A., 1, 2
Gipper, H., 1 – 2

Haas, M., 1
Halliday, M., 1
Harré, R., 1
Harris, R.
– After Epistemology, 1, 2 – 3, 4
– and dialect myth, 1 – 2
– and Dogon folk-linguistics, 1 – 2
– and language teaching, 1
– and Magritte, 1 – 2
– and origin of language debate, 1
– and self-knowledge, 1, 2
– and supercategories, 1
– and truth-conditional semantics, 1 – 2
– Chomsky, and freedom of speech, 1 – 2
– concept of a language, 1
– critique of Chomsky's view of homogenous speech community, 1
– dictum that 'all linguistics is folk-linguistics', 1
– dictum that 'everybody is a linguist', 1 – 2
– distinction between observation and perception, 1
– inaugural lecture at the University of Hong Kong, 1, 2 – 3
– Introduction to Integrational Linguistics, 1
– 'Must monkeys mean?', 1 – 2

– notion of linguistic inheritance, 1
– notion of real name, 1 – 2
– on Alexander Luria, 1 – 2
– on distinction between knowledge and information, 1
– on the Saussurean talking heads, 1 – 2
– Rethinking Writing, 1
– Rationality and the Literate Mind, 1 – 2
– Signs, Language and Communication, 1
– The Language Connection, 1 – 2
– The Language Machine, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 – 9
– The Language Myth, 1
– The Origin of Writing, 1
– The Semantics of Science, 1, 2
– view of applied linguistics, 1 – 2
– view of extended mind, 1 – 2
– view of grammar and formal logic, 1
– view of Adrian Pablé’s fieldwork, 1 – 2
Hayakawa, S., 1
Hermann, J., 1 – 2, 3
Hollnagel, E., 1 – 2, 3 – 4,
Honey, J., 1
Hoyois, L., 1 – 2
humans and animals in relation to language, 1 – 2
Humpty-Dumptyism, 1 – 2
Hutton, C., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

ideal speaker-hearer, 1, 2
identity, 1, 2 – 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
indeterminacy, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 – 6, 7, 8 – 9, 10
– and contextualization, 1
individual sign-user, 1
– agency of, 1, 2
– experience of, 1, 2, 3
informants
– ethnographic considerations, 1 – 2
– selection of, 1, 2, 3 – 4
Innenwelt, 1, 2, 3
instrumentalism, 1, 2, 3
intention, 1
– discussion by George Wolf, 1 – 2
Michael Toolan on authorial intention, 1
integration
– as communication, 1
– as survival, 1, 2 – 3, 4
– of language and practical action, 1 – 2
– types of, 1 – 2
integrationism
– aims of, 1 – 2
– and railway accidents, 1 – 2
– and applied integrationism, 1
– and communication, 1, 2 – 3
– and cotemporality, 1

– and humanism, 1, 2, 3, 4 – 5
– and individual experience, 1 – 2
– and integration, 1 – 2
– and knowledge, 1 – 2
– and names, 1 – 2
– and project writing, 1 – 2
– and reality, 1 – 2
– and relativism, 1 – 2
– and responsibility, 1, 2, 3 – 4, 5
– and segregationalism, 1
– and semiotics, 1, 2 – 3
– and sequential nature of interaction, 1 – 2
– and surrogationalism, 1 – 2
– and the anecdote, 1 – 2
– and the politics of language, 1
– and the sign, 1
– and the three parameters, 1
– and the semiology of time, 1 – 2
– and Uexküll's view of Umwelt, 1
– and writing, 1 – 2
– as a response to modern linguistics, 1, 2–3
– as an epistemology, 1 – 2
– as anti-foundational, 1
– as anti-realist, 1
– as promoting an ethical conception of language, 1 – 2
– attitude to linguistic terminology, 1 – 2
– axioms of, 1
– claim to authority, 1
– denial of neutral vantage point, 1
intellectual background, 1
– lay orientation of, 1, 2, 3, 4 – 5, 6
– not a method, 1
– not anti-intellectual, 1
– rejection of reification, 1
– summary of, 1 – 2
– view of status of data, 1
– view of the history of linguistics, 1
interpretation
– as lacking any prior limit, 1
– as lacking fixed reference points, 1
– no purely linguistic questions at stake, 1
– of individual utterances, 1 – 2
introspection, discussion by Dorthe Duncker, 1

Jakobson, R., 1
James, W., 1
Jaworski, A., 1
John Angus Smith v United States, 1
Jones, P., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 – 7
Joseph, J., 1, 2, 3, 4,

Kant, I., 1

Korzybski, A., 1
Knowledge
– notion of within integrationism, 1, 2 – 3, 4
– as a creative process, 1
– of geography, 1
Kull, K., 1, 2,

Labov, W., 1
language, a
– as presupposing communication, 1, 2, 3, 4
– as second-order category, 1
– status of, 1 – 2
language
– countable vs. uncountable, 1
language makers, 1, 2 – 3, 4, 5
– vs language masters, 1 – 2
– in relation to names, 1
language myth, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
languaging, 1, 2, 3
langue, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Latour, B., 1
law and sponsorship, 1
lay speaker, category of, 1 – 2
Lévi-Strauss, C., 1
Linell, P,. 1
linguistic change, 1
linguistic code, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 – 6
linguistic creativity, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,
linguistic experience, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
linguistic expertise, 1, 2 – 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 – 8, 9 – 10, 11 – 12, 13
linguistic knowledge, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
linguistic responsibility, 1, 2
linguistics
– as taught in a reductionist manner, 1
– metalanguage of, 1
– notion of fixed code, 1, 2, 3
– orthodox, 1 – 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
Lorenz, K., 1
Love, N., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
Luhmann, N., 1
Lund, S., 1
Luria, A., 1 – 2

machine as metaphor, 1
Magritte, R., 1 – 2
Makoni, S., 1, 2, 3
Malinowski, B., 1
Marxism, 1
Maturana, H., 1, 2, 3
Mead, G. H., 1
meaning
– and fixed-code, 1, 2, 3

– and lexicography, 1, 2 – 3
– as always now, 1
– of hamburger, 1
– plain meaning, 1
mental representations, 1 – 2
metalinguistic knowledge, 1 – 2
Mikhail, J., 1 – 2
Mill, J. S., 1 – 2
Miller, A., 1, 2
mind
– understood as a computer, 1
– and distributed view, 1 – 2
modeling, 1, 2, 3, 4
Moore, G. E., 1
moral faculty, 1 – 2
morphology, 1
Morris, C., 1
myth of reference, 1

Nagel, T., 1
names
– and Arthur Miller's The Crucible, 1
– and artworks, 1 – 2
– and castles of Bellinzona, 1 – 2
– as learned by infants, 1 – 2
– in intercultural communication, 1 – 2
myth of, 1 – 2
– true and false names, 1, 2, 3 – 4
Naur, P., 1 – 2
New, C., 1 – 2
Newspeak, 1 – 2
Niedzielski, N. and Preston, D., 1 – 2
Noë, A., 1
nomenclature, 1
nonverbal communication, 1

objective knowledge, 1
Ong, W., 1
ordinary language, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
ordinary language philosophy, 1, 2, 3
origin of language debate, 1 – 2, 3 – 4
Orman, J., 1, 2, 3
Orwell, G., 1, 2 – 3

Pablé, A., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 – 9, 10, 11, 12 – 13, 14, 15 – 16, 17, 18 – 19, 20, 21, 22
parameters (biomechanical, macrosocial and circumstantial), 1 – 2, 3 – 4, 5
parole, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Peirce, C. S., 1
– anti-Cartesianism, 1 – 2, 3 – 4
– theory of the sign, 1, 2, 3
– and the Peircean tradition, 1
– and the type-token relation, 1

Petrilli, S., 1, 2, 3
philosophical dialogue, 1 – 2
phonetics, 1
phonology, 1
Plato, 1, 2, 3 – 4, 5
Ponzio, A., 1
polylanguaging, critique of, 1
posthumanism, 1, 2
Praetorius, N., 1 – 2
pragmatics, 1, 2, 3
primates, 1, 2 – 3, 4
Puritanism, 1
Pryor, S., 1 – 2
psychoanalysis, 1, 2, 3, 4
psychocentric surrogationalism, 1, 2, 3

qualia, 1 – 2

railway accidents, 1 – 2
rationality, 1, 2 – 3, 4, 5
Real Reason, US non-profit, 1 – 2
reality
– as discursively constructed, 1
– integration of, 1 – 2
recognition
– as integration, 1 – 2, 3 – 4
reflexivity, 1, 2, 3
– and language learning, 1
– in semiotic theory, 1
– metalinguistic reflexivity, 1
– of lay speakers, 1
of observer, 1
relativism, 1, 2
religious belief and science, 1 – 2
reocentric surrogationalism, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
repetition, 1 – 2
Rosenstock-Huessy, E., 1 – 2
Rushdie, S., 1, 2 – 3
Ryle, G., 1, 2

Saussure, F. de, 1, 2, 3 – 4, 5, 6
– and integrational notion of expertise, 1
– and language change, 1
– and speech circuit, 1, 2 – 3, 4
– and talking heads model, 1
– arbitrary nature of the sign, 1
– concept of langue, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
– concept of parole, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
– concept of sign as two-dimensional, 1
– framing the object of study, 1
– language as social contract, 1, 2
– linguistics and semiology, 1

– model of communication, 1, 2, 3
– prioritization of speech over writing, 1
sign system, eludes control by the speaker, 1
structuralis, 1, 2 – 3
Savage-Rumbaugh, S., 1, 2
scriptism, 1, 2 – 3
Searle, J, 1, 2
Sebeok, T., 1, 2, 3, 4
– view that everyone is a semiotician, 1
Sechehaye, A., 1
second-order and first-order, 1, 2 – 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
– data as second-order category, 1
segregationalism, 1, 2, 3, 4
self
– agency of, 1 – 2, 3 – 4
– in integrationism, 1, 2
– in semiotics, 1
– as macrosocially conditioned, 1 – 2
– religious concept of, 1
self-communication, 1, 2
semantics, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,
semioethics, 1
semiotics
– and evolutionary theory, 1, 2
– and humanism, 1, 2
– and integrationism, 1, 2, 3 – 4
– and our knowledge of the external world, 1
– and linguistics, 1
– and second-order categories, 1
– and systems theory, 1
– and unlimited semiosis, 1
– as a diverse domain of inquiry, 1, 2
– as the study of the difference between illusion and reality, 1
– contrast with integrational theory, 1
– history of, 1
– notion of self, 1
– view of repetition, 1 – 2
– vision of individual self, species and environment, 1 – 2, 3
Sharrock, W. and Coulter, J., critique of After Epistemology, 1 – 2
Shuy, R., 1 – 2
sign
– and sign-making in context, 1, 2
– as created in the here-and-now, 1
– as three-dimensional, 1
– indeterminacy of, 1 – 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
– as (not) standing for something else, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,
– as three-dimensional in integrationalism, 1
slutwork protests, 1 – 2
social constructionism, 1, 2, 3
social order
– maintenance of, 1
sociolinguistics, 1, 2, 3 – 4

– critique of by Pablé, 1
– reflexive turn, 1
Socrates, 1, 2, 3
– views of teaching, 1
speech circuit, 1, 2, 3, 4 – 5
sponsorship of language, 1 – 2
structuralism, 1 – 2
subanthropic, 1
superhominid and Chomskyan linguistics, 1 – 2, 3
swearing, 1 – 2, 3
surrogationalism, 1 – 2
– and names, 1
Sutton, J., 1, 2
syllogism, 1, 2 – 3
syntax, 1

talking heads in Saussure's Course, 1, 2, 3 –4
Tam, M., 1 – 2
Tao, K., 1 – 2
Taylor, T. J., 1, 2, 3, 4 – 5, 6 – 7, 8
– on the origin of language, 1 – 2
telementation, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,
Teubert, W., 1, 2, 3
– critique of After Epistemology, 1 – 2
Thibault, P., 1, 2
Tinbergen, N., 1
Toolan, M., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Trademark law, 1 – 2
true
– the word, 1
truth, 1 – 2, 3 – 4
truth-conditional semantics, 1 – 2
type-token relation, 1, 2 – 3

Uexküll, J. von, 1, 2, 3, 4 – 5, 6
– concept of Ich-Ton, 1
– concept of Innenwelt, 1, 2, 3
– concept of Umwelt, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

variationism, 1
vulgar mindspeak, 1, 2, 3
vulgar selfspeak, 1

Wawrzyniak, J., 1 – 2, 3
Welby, Lady V., 1
Wierzbicka, A., 1
Wittgenstein, L., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
– builder's language, 1, 2
Wolf, G., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Wong, T. H., 1 – 2
Woolf, L., 1
writing, 1 – 2

– and the restructuring of thought, 1 – 2
– relationship to speech, 1 – 2, 3 – 4, 5 – 6, 7

Zhang, R., 1
Zhang, S., 1 – 2
Zhou, F., 1 – 2
zoosemiotics, 1