

## **The Origin of Meaning or Why the Philosophy of Language is *Not* a Branch of the Philosophy of Mind**

It is generally assumed that intentionality is exhibited, at least, by mind and language. This claim is often followed by another one: the intentionality of language is derived from the intentionality of mind. The aim of this paper is to show that the arguments underpinning this assumption do not withstand careful examination, and hence that this contention should be abandoned. I suggest formulating the thesis of the Derived Intentionality (DI) as follows:

**(DI)** The definition of what it is for language to be intentional has to make reference to the intentionality of mind.

DI has been rarely argued for as a general principle; rather, we encounter particular accounts in which linguistic meaning is derived from such intentional attitudes as intentions and beliefs. Bearing this in mind, I pursue an indirect argumentation, first showing why these accounts are inadequate, and then sketching an alternative approach to language meaning that implies the falsity of DI.

The most influential view implying DI has been the Gricean theory on meaning. According to Grice (1957, 1968, 1969), linguistic meaning is fully determined by speaker meaning, and what a speaker means depends on what kind of intentions he has. Consequently, what a sentence means ultimately derives from what sort of intentions speakers have by using it. Some difficulties with this account include, first, that empirical studies in language acquisition strongly suggest that children master a language long before they attribute propositional attitudes to others, so that recognizing other's intentions cannot be a requirement for learning a language (Garfield *et al.* 2001). Furthermore, the Gricean account is unable to satisfactorily account for the compositionality of language. Finally, as Searle's (1965) famous example of the American soldier reveals, all accounts trying to derive linguistic meaning from speaker meaning leave the essential conventionality of language unexplained.

Nonetheless, accepting that linguistic meaning is the result of conventions is not by itself a rejection of DI. Actually, a theory of convention like that of Lewis (1969, 1975) entails DI. Lewis contends that language meaning originates by conventions, but for a convention to arise participants must have certain kind of beliefs, preferences and knowledge. However, this requirement poses serious problems such as defining the group of participants in the convention (Gilbert 1989), or implying that children and tribesmen do not follow the linguistic convention because they ignore some facts about it. (Burge, 1975)

An account that seems to avoid these shortcomings is Millikan (1984, 2005, 2008). Millikan defines conventions roughly as reproduced patterns, which do not require any kind of special intentional attitudes by the participants. This last feature implies a rejection of DI and makes it possible to avoid Grice's and Lewis' drawbacks. I discuss some objections to this approach and conclude that even if they are right and this conventionalist approach should be amended, DI would not be regained.

Overall, my paper lends support to the rejection of DI, first by pointing at the insufficiencies of theories endorsing it, and secondly by adopting a theory along the lines of Millikan (1984 and subsequent work), which constitutes an alternative account of the origin of meaning that implies the falsity of DI.'