Gibt es eine Rettung vor ‘pragmantics’?

Johannes Dölling

Abstract

One response to the contextual influence on utterance interpretation is to take it as evidence against the possibility of any principled distinction between semantics and pragmatics and, thus, for what Levinson (2000) calls “pragmantics, a horrid cocktail of semantics and pragmatics”. Because often the meanings of individual expressions can be fitted together only by undergoing a process of adjustment its advocates view especially the standard principle of semantic compositionality as an assumption that has to be weakened or in fact given up. Instead, procedures called enriched composition, co-compositional coercion oder non-compositional reinterpretation have been proposed, making semantic composition to a fundamental pragmatic process. In my talk, I will argue against such an approach in a constructive way. As I will show, ‘pragmantics’ can be avoided if we take an account for pragmatic effects while maintaining the modularity of semantics and pragmatics. Following Carston (2004) and Recanati (2004), it is strictly distinguished between the semantic composition of a radically underspecified, merely formal meaning of an utterance and the elaboration of its propositional content by pragmatic enrichment. Essentially, in this framework I offer a solution of the problem of deviating interpretations. My basic assumption is that in the process of compositional derivation several parameters are introduced by obligatory insertion of general schemata. Those parameters are available to a contextual fixation by means of which a suitable meaning transfer of the respective expressions can be realized.