

## REVIEWS

Steven Davis, ed., *Pragmatics: A Reader*. Oxford: At the University Press, 1991, pp. viii + 595.

It is a matter for some surprise that the subdiscipline of linguistics that goes by the name of pragmatics should have taken so long to acquire the normal accoutrements of normal science. Levinson (1983), Green (1989) and more recently Blakemore (1992) can be cited as textbooks, and the *Journal of Pragmatics* can be seen as the trade magazine but this inventory is very small scale indeed when compared with other inquiries, such as syntax, certainly, and to a lesser extent, semantics, which take up *yards* of library self-space. This paucity of usual accoutrements inevitably results in a certain detectable nervousness and insecurity amongst the research population. 'What exactly', we hear them whispering in quiet corners of the corridor, 'is it that we are supposed to be doing?' (cf. Verschueren nd). It is therefore with some gratitude that we turn to Steven Davis for editing a first collection of canonical texts the knowledge of which any self respecting pragmaticist should have, presumably, at his or her fingertips. What, then, is the editor's perspective on this essential knowledge? What are the canonical texts?

Davis has contributed an extremely minimalist 'Introduction' (10 pp) to this otherwise maximalist collection (35 papers over nearly 600 pages). It cannot be said that a clear picture of what he takes pragmatics to be emerges from this discussion. He says 'I shall regard pragmatics as part of a theory of competence and, as such, take it to be psychologically realized' but it is not at all obvious what he means by this especially when on the very next page, with respect to the problem of how words refer to objects in the world, he seems to embrace the Causal Theory of Reference. The Causal Theory argues that reference is effected *without* appeal to the psychological. Another curious juxtaposition is Davis' enthusiasm for competence and the psychological when many of the texts that he has selected make *no* reference at all, not even by implication, to that essentially MIT-inspired argument. *If* such prototypically pragmatic items as felicity conditions, conversational maxims, indexical expressions and whatever else the reader wishes to add to this list, are indeed part of the theory of competence and are therefore assumed to be psychologically real (in some sense, which has never in the history of this discussion been made clear) then it is incumbent upon the editor to explain how they are so. The principal designers of these prototypical items, it must be said, think of them as having to do with the *use* of language and, therefore, pertaining to a theory of *performance*. Davis ducks this obligation to provide an explanation entirely by appealing to the constraint of space limitations. Given these, I shall diplomatically pass over numerous other puzzling statements that are made in these few pages – I refer the reader to Haberland and Mey (1977) for a more considered and cogent overview, to Wilson and Sperber (1984) for a more partisan account, and to Levinson (1983 Chapter 1) for an argument to the effect that pragmatics should not be defined and then done but done and then defined – and move on to the more interesting question of the texts themselves.

The collection is divided into seven sections. These are (i) Speaker Meaning and Speaker Reference; (ii) Indexicals; (iii) Direct and Indirect Speech Acts; (iv) Conversational Implicature and Relevance (v) Presupposition; (vi) Non-Literal Uses of Language: Metaphor and Irony; and (vii) Psychology and Pragmatics.

The first section, 'Speaker Meaning and Speaker Reference', is organised with respect to two central texts. These are Donnellan's 'Reference and Definite Descriptions' and Grice's 'Utterer's Meaning, Sentence-Meaning, and Word-Meaning'. The first of these is a very important paper but as it has been reprinted extensively (Steinberg and Jacobovits 1971; Rosenberg and Travis 1971; Schwarz 1977; Martinich 1985) one wonders whether its inclusion in the present collection is really the best employment of available resources. The second of these is also a popular choice in other collections (most notably in Searle 1971). It has recently