On relevance again:
From philosophy of language across
'Pragmatics and power' to global relevance[☆]

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Abstract

This paper, largely motivated by Harris (1995), revisits the issue of the Cooperative Principle and, in particular, relevance. I would, firstly, like to note that even before the emergence of empirical pragmatics and critical discourse analysis there had been raised, albeit within a philosophical perspective, some questions relating to language and power and the universality across discourses of the CP. Secondly, I would like to draw attention to the pervasive nature of the maxim of relevance, which, however, needs to be seen at a global level as a forceful social parameter governing linguistic communication or 'transaction' and as contingent on typifications of social situations described in terms of cognitive knowledge structures. It is claimed that, just as language is firmly placed within structured social domains or events, so too linguistic behaviour within them is structured and largely predictable as enjoined by the structure of those events and domains, represented in our conceptual world. The paper argues for the postulation of a socially determined supermaxim of Global Relevance, embedded within the actional structure of representations of events. As a consequence, a more complete account of what has been called the Cooperative Principle has to lie at the intersection of a cognitive theory and a social theory of language use. © 1999 Elsevier Science B.V. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

The title of the paper is intended to reflect an itinerary I propose to make regarding the universality of the Cooperative Principle (CP) across discourses: from earlier days in the philosophy of language through topoi of empirical pragmatics, and in

particular Harris's (1995) as well as Sarangi and Slembrouck's (1992) articles in this journal; it also reflects its concentration on the issue of Relevance again, which is, however, viewed within what could be called actional pragmatics or pragmatics in praxis.[1] I propose that the motivating force in this domain is what can be called global or scripted relevance under whose scope CP would have to fall. But I first turn to a consideration of Harris's problem, since her examination of the efficacy of CP was the motivation for the present paper.

2. Harris's problem with CP

In her paper 'Pragmatics and power' (1995), Sandra Harris sets out, as she writes, "to ascertain on the basis of actual language behaviour whether 'universal pragmatics', especially Grice's maxims and Habermas's validity claims, can provide a sustainable conceptual framework for understanding the relationship between pragmatics and power" (1995: 117). More specifically, Harris concentrates on the work of Grice and his Cooperative Principle (CP), as the most influential work on linguistics and, on the other hand, on Habermas's validity claims. In this paper, I will be concerned with the former part of Harris's analysis, i.e. with her consideration of Grice's CP and the problems she identified in its application with relation to power structures.[2]

Harris's problem with the CP and its maxims has to do with Grice's inattention to 'the social and political dimension'. More specifically, neither Grice's concept of rationality with "its prescriptive and moral overtones" (1995: 118) nor his concept of Cooperation can be the sole underlying principle of communication. She argues that the CP does not provide a framework for incorporating "a social and political dimension, since it is far from certain whether what counts as true, sufficient, relevant and clear (Gricean maxims) can be meaningful apart from the social and political contexts of particular speech acts" (1995: 118).[3]

3. Holdcroft's proposal

While I would not like to dispute the usefulness of Harris's method in trying to prove her thesis, that is, testing Grice's CP and its maxims against a corpus of empirical data – a method that has come to gain wide coinage in our day and time – I[4] would nevertheless like to draw attention to a similar problematic and work done in this direction, albeit not by way of examining data, but within the traditional framework of philosophy of language, back in 1979. Indeed, Holdcroft (1979) identifies

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[1] The duplication of meaning need not irritate as terms such as 'pragmatics' get desemanticized, too.
[2] For a recent critique – from a similar point of view – and reformulation of Habermas's theory see Cooke (1994).
[3] Sarangi and Slembrouck (1992) also raise the question "whether institutional discourse conforms to Gricean predictions" (1992: 126).
[4] Indeed, Koutoupis-Kitis (1982) was closely attuned to data.

different 'discourse-types' in which sequences of speech acts could be classified. The question he raises is whether Grice's CP and its maxims are equally applicable in all these discourse types.[5]

Within the class of those speech acts in which the role of speaker and addressee is interchangeable, Holdcroft distinguishes, and finds most interesting, those discourses in which the participants do not have equal rights:

"Discourse rights can be unequal because the participation of one party, but not the other, is not volun-tary, or because one party, but not the other, has no say in the choice of subject matter, or because one party, but not the other, has no right to terminate the discourse, etc. For example, if A cross-examines B in a court of law, B may have no option but to answer A's questions; moreover, he may be prohibited from doing more than this." (Holdcroft, 1979: 133)

Holdcroft stresses that the interests of the participants in such discourses could be 'very strongly opposed', and this raises problems with the form of cooperation[6] that could obtain in such cases. In a rather comprehensive table of discourse types he offers, speech acts appearing in the discourse type exhibiting participants' unequal discourse rights include: *cross-examine, interrogate, interview, question, catechize, examine, grill* and *pump* (1979: 132).

All Harris's data fall within this discourse type, as identified by Holdcroft (1979). She writes: "the prototypical pattern of speech acts in court is the question/answer sequence, which is indeed common to much institutional discourse" (Harris, 1995: 122).

What about the viability of a cooperative frame within which such discourses take place as claimed by Grice? Holdcroft argues that we understand such discourses institutionally, in which the CP, or some form of it, still applies, since its operation is implicit in the institution. So the validity of the CP is tantamount to the validity of an accepted institution. If interrogation by an authority is a social institutionalized activity, then the CP and its maxims must still be seen as obtaining, even if in a rather attenuated form: that is, the interrogee, as an active member of the specific society, has, previous to his/her participation in the particular discourse, even if implicitly, submitted to the validity of such institutional discourse types. "The point is", writes Holdcroft, "a familiar one; one may have good reasons for approving the purposes of an institution the workings of which may, on particular occasions, be to one's disadvantage". (1979: 136).

Levinson (1981) also points up different kinds of 'goal-interlock' and different degrees of cooperation. He argues that *interactants* who have conflicting goals on a higher level can still cooperate on lower-order goals. The example he cites is again from a judicial setting:

Q1: You saw all the papers that were being reviewed, did you not?

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[5] For a recent discussion of Holdcroft (1979) and similar issues, see Attardo (1997).

[6] The type of cooperation discussed here, as indeed in Grice, is social in nature, but manifested in (non-trivially) linguistic terms. So, I do not distinguish between two levels of cooperation (for example, social and linguistic).

A1: Not all the working papers of the committee. I saw the recommendations that went to the president.

Q2: Did you read the recommendations that went to the president?

A2: I am not sure I did or not. If I did it was not in any detail.

(The Watergate hearings, New York Times, 1973: 577, cited in Levinson, 1981: 113)

In order to cover such discourse types, Holdcroft (1979) proposes a more generalized version of the CP:

"Make your contribution to the discourse such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the purposes you have in entering into, or which you have accepted as the purposes of, or which are the generally accepted purposes of, the discourse in which you are a participant." (1979: 139)

And he claims that we have to accept that at least some of the maxims apply and that the nature of Cooperation involved is defined in terms of the maxims that apply, in any given case:

"The tentative conclusions reached are that CP as it stands certainly is not universally applicable ... If it is to apply to all talk exchanges, we must at least allow an accepted purpose, that is a purpose of a generally agreed procedure, which one or other of the participants may, at a given time, *have little or no option but to participate in*. Even then CP clearly does not apply to all discourses though it seems as though a rather clumsily generalized version of it has a surprisingly wide range of application." (Holdcroft, 1978: 140, my emphasis)

4. Relevance as a supermaxim

While Holdcroft notes that "one would expect MR [Relation] to be weighted at least as highly as any other maxim" (1979: 134), neither he nor Levinson points out its primacy in relation to other maxims. On the contrary, both seem to place more weight on the maxim of Quantity. Levinson, in particular, thinks that this maxim is most crucial since "it seems of all of them [maxims] to do the most work".[7]

However, around the same time, I argued that the maxim of Relation, i.e. Relevance, must be seen as the supermaxim under whose scope the remaining maxims would of necessity have to fall. Discussing genuine or bogus cases of what has been called in the literature 'Conversational Implicature', I argue (Koutoupis-Kitis, 1982) that the maxim of Relation is the weightiest of all, as the other maxims are not operational without prior appeal to Relevance. This claim stood vis-à-vis Grice's that the maxim of Quality is the most important one for the scheme he constructs, since "other maxims come into operation only on the assumption that this maxim of Quality is satisfied" (Grice, 1975: 46). Thus, Relevance in this approach (Koutoupis-Kitis, 1982) seems to have a regulatory function on the basis of which both the structure of conversation can be explicated and its interpretation construed.

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[7] This view appears in the second draft (1978) of Levinson (1981). In its published version, however, Levinson does not seem to place a premium on any particular maxim.

4.1. Global Relevance as a social maxim

Relevance in Koutoupis-Kitis (1982), *contra* Sperber and Wilson (1986), was seen as a forceful social parameter determining the process of conversation.[8] Focusing on the generation of conversational implicature, it was argued that context, both linguistic and situational in the form of specifications of situational domains, is of paramount importance; particularized conversational implicature, which was Grice's main concern, it was argued, primarily figures in adjacency pairs, as these constitute the minimal formulation of interactional speech activities. As was argued in Koutoupis-Kitis (1982)[9] and as is now well acknowledged, adjacency sequences, which are the minimal societal units of verbal interaction, give rise to certain expectancies in relation to what comes next which can be thought of as part of the domain of the maxim of Relevance. This conception of Relevance needs to be defined in social, rather than cognitive, terms. Indeed, Grice alludes to the social nature of this type of relevance when he writes that

"... its formulation conceals a number of problems which exercise me a good deal; questions about what different kinds and foci of relevance there may be, how these shift in the course of a talk exchange, how to allow for the fact that subjects of conversation are legitimately changed and so on." (1975: 46)[10]

Grice also notes that a specification of the nature of conversation depends in a large measure on the specification of "the nature of Relevance and of the circumstances in which it is required" (1975: 49). The social nature of this problematic is implicit here, too.

While acknowledging the significance of this maxim, Grice does not seem to think that it is weightier than the rest. On the contrary, he stresses the supremacy of the maxim of Quality, as we have seen. He does not propose a hierarchy of the maxims though, partly because of the equal role they seem to play in the generation of implicatures in his view (but see Koutoupis-Kitis, 1982, for criticism).

Likewise, while acknowledging the power structures behind social and political norms exerting considerable control "over the pragmatic definition of 'truth'" (Harris, 1995: 129), Harris (1995) nevertheless seems to place more weight on formulations of 'truth' and hence on the maxim of Truth (M. Qual.) rather than on Relevance. She does not seem to contemplate the prospect that these formulations of 'truth' might indeed be, contingent as they are in a large measure on relational parameters, predictable and specifiable in a systematic way within differentially structured situational domains.

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[8] For a critique of types of relevance, see Berg (1991) and Holdcroft (1987). Also see Koutoupis-Kitis (1982) for criticism of semantic relevance (Dascal, 1977) and 'lexical-cohesion' relevance (Halliday, 1967).

[9] "... sequencing rules, as developed by ethnomethodologists, can be subsumed under the domain of the maxim of Relevance, though this maxim should embrace many more issues than just sequencing rules." (Koutoupis-Kitis, 1982: 235)

[10] Proof of the social nature of this problematic is found in the fact that many of these questions have been taken up by workers in ethnomethodology.

Although the social nature of the maxims and the CP was alluded to even in Grice, with the notable exception of Levinson, there was hardly any explicit proposal in those early days of a focused elaboration of the notion of context as the social structure within which discourse types would be not just embedded, but primarily predicted. Consequently, there was hardly any suggestion regarding the possibility of collapsing the CP in such individuated social domains.

However, as was suggested in Koutoupis-Kitis (1982), a social formulation of the maxim of Relevance as a supermaxim will go some way towards explaining the structure of conversation as well as other issues such as unequal conversational rights and humorous effects; the latter cannot find a ready explanation on the assumption that all maxims play an equal role, or if Relevance is defined in local terms (see below). For the most persistent question, as Haberland and Mey (1977) stress, is not "What does an utterance mean? But: How did this utterance *come to be produced?*" (1977: 8, my emphasis). In other words, how does this utterance relate to the situation in which it is produced? What are the conditions of its production and consumption? What significance does it derive from its occurrence in specific contexts? How does it interact with both linguistic and societal context to generate meaning? I will argue for the necessity to postulate a maxim of Relevance socially defined and operating at a global level (Global Relevance), that is, incorporated within the very structure of the situation, as bounded domains or events, in which language occurs; it will be argued that not only the other maxims seem to be governed by the maxim of Relevance, but that they do not come into play unless the regulatory role of a socially defined Relevance maxim is sufficiently evident.

Far from claiming that the maxim of Relevance is prevalent only, or primarily, in institutional discourse, one can indeed maintain that it is this maxim that governs formulations of 'truth' in everyday casual discourse, too. The maxim of Quality, for instance, enjoins truth in our everyday conversational transactions, but it is a patent truth that this is not so (O'Hair, 1969; Sacks, 1975; Heritage, 1978). Whether our conversational contributions should be true depends, to a great extent, on relational parameters that would belong to the domain of the maxim of Relevance. Global Relevance, defined primarily in social terms, would settle such questions constraining our linguistic contributions: Whom are they (linguistic contributions) addressed to? What are the speaker's presumed background assumptions? What is the relevant focus of conversation at the moment of our contributions? What is the overall conversational goal? Or what do we take the local intentions of the other party to be in relation to our talk-exchange or his/her utterance? In short, what is the speech situation, how is it defined, what is expected of the participants in terms of verbal behaviour? For example, as shown in Sacks (1975), our answer to a 'How are you?' is often determined in relation to who the recipient is. To one we may answer with a 'Fine', to another with a 'Lousy', and this is why, as Heritage points out,

"the milkman remains untroubled by the endless round of 'Fines' in response to his daily queries. He does not assume the universal felicity of his customers because he is not oriented to the truth content of their response but rather to the sequential implicativeness of those responses, to the fact that they do not project the *relevance* of any further enquiries." (1978: 19, my emphasis)

Can we then define Relevance in terms of sequential implicativeness? Hardly so. Indeed, at a local level sequential implicativeness seems to provide a platform for explaining next conditionally relevant contribution. For example, funny situations are often engendered when relevance is observed at the local level of sequentiality, but is flouted at a global level, as in the following examples:

(Scene in a reputable restaurant, where a patron all of a sudden starts stripping off. Waitress cautioning him)

Waitress: Please, Sir, remember where you are.
Patron: I know very well where I am, at the Barn Restaurant.

(A asking B the reason for her visit to Chicago)
A: What brought you from Finley to Chicago?
B: A plane.

(Similar talk-exchange set in the stereotypical frame of a doctor-patient interview)
D: What brought you here?
P: A taxi.

(Ex-army officer opens a trunk full of rifles at his house and in the presence of a friend, B, picks up one, and, apparently intending to tell a story, assumes an appropriately mysterious expression and asks B:)

A: Do you know what these are?
B: (looking at A nonchalantly) Rifles?

All these funny situations depend on some form of failure in making our response relevant to the previous speech act: either (a) by way of ignoring the other party's intention and purpose in issuing his/her utterance, (as when we [deliberately?] mistake one illocutionary force for another – when we make our response relevant to the secondary rather than the primary illocutionary force of the previous speech act, Searle, 1975), or (b) by way of bypassing the relevant societal role enacted by the other party (waitress cautioning, doctor examining), or (c) by failing to take into account the presumed common assumptions pertaining to the speech activity (i.e. we all know and we know that we know that they are rifles) (cf. Dascal, 1985).[11]

It need not be pointed out, though, that they are all truthful responses, and hence the maxim of Quality can be said to be therein observed. Besides, there is no obvi-

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[11] In particular, in the last case B exhibits lack of conversational competence since he (apparently intentionally) bypasses the function of A's utterance as a story entry device (Jefferson, 1978).

   Moreover, it should be noticed that these examples support the claim (cf. Levinson, 1979) that utterances exhibiting various levels of intentions do not always stand to a one-to-one relationship with illocutionary forces. Incidentally, on this score, too, Searle's theory of speech acts does not provide an adequate account.

ous way in which it could be plausibly claimed that 'M. Quant.' is at fault ('vio-
lated', 'flouted', 'infringed'; Grice's use of these terms is rather indiscriminate and
vague, but see Thomas, 1995) without having to appeal to some notion of the maxim
of Relevance understood globally in its social dimension first. Sperber and Wilson's
(1986) theory of Relevance, as it stands, is not capable of accounting for the sup-
posedly discursive malformedness of all the above cases that is the source of
humour. Neither could it, therefore, explain the humourous effect in some of them.
Although the maxim of Relevance is observed at the local level of sequential
implicativeness in all the above talk-exchanges, we cannot account for the funny (or
tragic) situations engendered unless we allow for a global formulation of the maxim
of Relevance.

However, the question that is raised is the following: How does Relevance func-
tion at a global level? At what level can one identify 'globality'? Relevance needs
to be contextualized. But what is context? Culler (1988: xiv) writes that "contexts
are just as much in need of elucidation as events and the meaning of a context is
determined by events" (also see Goodwin and Duranti, 1992). The notion of 'glob-
ality', then, takes on board the frame of the instantiated type of event. And Rele-
vance needs to be defined as interlocking with the basic structure of the social event
or domain. Thus formulated, Relevance will ground the talk-exchanges in an inter-
active mode within the delimited (even if a bit fuzzy) confines of specifiable
bounded events. Such a formulation of the maxim of Relevance will then allow for
specific formulations and activations of other sub-maxims; for example, in the con-
text of a doctor–patient interview the maxim of Relevance will define short-term as
well as long-term participant goals to which speech-acts (and consequently, illocu-
tionary forces) seem to be attuned. The maxim of Relevance, therefore, will relate
(linguistic) action to layered goals, which in their turn are variously related to typi-
cality features of events. It is within the frame of this processual relation that other
maxims are activated and enforced to various degrees.

However, apart from positing Relevance as the supermaxim that relates (non-triv-
ial) linguistic behaviour to types of event, I do not wish to claim that there is a spe-
cific hierarchy in which further maxims are activated. As will become clear below,
activation as well as (partial or perfunctory) observation of other maxims is
'inscribed', so to speak, within the *actional structure* of events and social domains in
archetypal forms. Competent event participants have (or are supposed to have)
knowledge of this actional structure and orient their linguistic (as well as more gen-
erally social) behaviour towards the main features of this structure. What is signifi-
cant to acknowledge, though, is the superordinate nature of Relevance.

Lodge (1962: 77) provides another example, demonstrating the need to define
Relevance at the global level of the actional structure of the instantiated situation:

(Sergeant and Corporal):
'One *what?*' exclaimed Ludlow.
'One egg-poacher'
'What the fugg's that for?' (i)
'For poaching eggs' (ii)

'I *know* its for poaching eggs you funny bastard.
What's it doing in the P.R.I. cupboard?'

This discourse, undoubtedly, exhibits inattention to the social situation and its
demands (upper-level goals or global goals) as well as to the other party's presumed
factual knowledge, Yet, not only is (ii) a truthful response, but it is also in confor-
mity with the maxim of Quantity, and the maxim of Relevance as defined in terms
of sequential implicativeness at a local level of discourse. Nevertheless, it is irrele-
vant to (i) in respect of the demands set within the specific broader situation, and
hence infuriating for the other party (the Sergeant).

    Moreover, the speaker's intentions, i.e. local or global goals, often determine
whether, or to what extent, s/he should observe 'M. Qual.' The truth quality of our
utterances may be geared to the perlocutionary effect we want to achieve, rather than
to what we believe to be true. As for the role of scruples, it often seems to be
insignificant. Recall Anthony's speech to the mob and the repetitions of what he
believed to be untruths:

I do desire no more.
And Brutus is an honourable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke.

Anthony's utterances, being governed and shaped by his global goal, leave little
room for truthfulness. His intention is determined globally in the frame of his over-
all speech as a type of discourse embedded within political action. It is not doubted
that there is a maxim enjoining that our utterances be truthful. But what needs to be
included in a conceptual framework is the condition that such a maxim be subordi-
nated to other considerations relating to Relevance defined globally, rather than
locally, within situational domains and types of event. Relational parameters, like
rank, office and status of the parties involved in a talk-exchange also seem to out-
weigh maxims of Quality. An example of institutional discourse is to be found again
in Lodge (1962: 58-59):

It was the special delight of the N.C.O.s to ask questions which could only be answered to
one's disadvantage within the framework of military discipline. In the following illustration
the words in italics represent possible truthful replies which had to be suppressed for obvious
reasons.
'Whats all this shit?'
'I don't see any shit.'
'I don't know, Sergeant.'
'Well, I'm telling you, it's shit. See?'
'No.'
'Yes, Sergeant.'
'Did you clean your kit last night?'
'Of course I did as you very well know.'
'Yes, Sergeant.'
'Well, you didn't clean it properly, did you?'
'Yes.'

'No, Sergeant.'
'Why not?'
'Firstly, I don't accept that my equipment isn't properly cleaned. Secondly, if it isn't cleaned to your satisfaction, that's because you are not to be satisfied. Thirdly, you know and I know that it's a question of no importance, that you have to pick on something to establish your authority, and that we are going through an elaborate and meaningless ritual to create the illusion that I am being made a soldier of.
'I don't know, Sergeant.'
'...What are you?'
'A bloody sight more intelligent than you, for a start,
'Idle, Sergeant.'

As I have shown, not only in institutional discourse (Harris's (1995), Sarangi and Slembrouck's (1992) data), but also in everyday communication and transaction, other maxims such as Quantity and Quality are second order maxims coming into operation 'at the injunction', so to speak, of the maxim of Relevance. Relevance, not only relates, but also enjoins the degree to which the other maxims will be enforced by rendering them operational in specific ways as determined by types of discourse. Global Relevance relates first the discourse type to the social event (or domain) and only then are (aspects of) other maxims made contingent. For instance, as we have seen and has been made abundantly clear in the literature, political discourse as embedded in the social domain of politics, will include in its archetypal form goals enacting perlocutionary intents[12] which are forcefully pivotal for the conduct of subsequent discourse (Kitis and Milapides, 1997).

By focusing on the maxim of Relevance one must not be misled into thinking that the rest of the maxims are unproblematic. For example, one of the submaxims of Manner instructs: 'Avoid ambiguity'. Yet, there are instances in which we deliberately build our utterances ambiguously without intending the addressee to perceive the ambiguity, and hence without implicating something or other thereby (Leech, 1983; Hickey, 1986). Another submaxim instructs: 'Be brief'. But, as is widely acknowledged now, often brevity is sacrificed in the name of politeness (Leech, 1983), chivalry, or prudence (R. Lakoff, 1973). But these issues, too, seem to be governed by such factors as attention to social setting, or status of addressee, or relationship between the parties involved. In other words, we can see the maxim of Relevance 'raising its ugly head', as Kempson (1975) put it so succinctly. But even when relational parameters do not seem to affect other maxims, we do not understand why someone who has said 'She has gone to her final rest', thereby breaching the maxim 'Be brief', does not implicate anything (Holdcroft, 1976), whereas someone who has said "Miss X produced a series of sounds which corresponded closely with the score of 'Home Sweet Home'" (Grice, 1975) has thereby generated an implicature.[13]

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[12] See Castelfranchi and Poggi (1987) on why perlocutionary intent needs to be embedded in goal structure.
[13] Perhaps, a relational parameter might provide for a non-implicature generating utterance of the former within the acknowledged social domain of death exorcizing (death naming = death provoking),

4.2. Relevance as a form of 'limited Cooperation'

It should be recalled that Kasher (1976) dispensed with the CP, as described in Grice (1975), and instead saw the conversational maxims as deriving directly from a rationality principle:[14]

(R)　Given a desired end, one is to choose that action which most effectively, and at least cost, attains that end, *ceteris paribus*. (Kasher, 1976: 205)

(R), he claims, is in Grice's spirit (cf. Grice, 1975: 47). By disposing of a mediatory, general cooperative principle of linguistic action, the advantages accrued are that the maxims "do not presume the existence of mutual ends for talk-exchanges, but merely the existence of an advantage for *limited cooperation* in favor of each of the participants according to his own ends" (Kasher, 1976: 210, my emphasis). Rationality, as applied to the domain of communicative action, is normative (Elster, 1986), and it is this characteristic in 'communicative' social transactions that constitutes the basis for relevant (linguistic) action.

This approach seems to solve the problem raised with the notion of cooperation concerning our linguistic acts in certain situations, such as in courtroom discourse (Holdcroft, 1979; Harris, 1995), jural interrogations (Levinson, 1981; Lauerbach, 1993), or job interviews (Hickey, 1986). The two parties' (defence–prosecution, etc.) incompatible goals in their speech acts can be viewed as conforming to some form of a general rationality principle, rather than to a cooperative principle (cf. Pavlidou's, 1991, notion of formal cooperation).

However, 'limited cooperation' or any principle of rationality can have explanatory power within a framework of Global Relevance. 'Limited cooperation' is 'institutional cooperation', as this becomes contingent on, or relevant to, institutional discourse. Relevance in such settings primarily, i.e. in well defined institutional settings, is normative and not just interpretative as in Sperber and Wilson's paradigm (see below). In other words, Global Relevance is at the root of the social setting or event, integrated within its actional structure, 'dictating' not only the type of discourse incumbent but also its structure and other matters relating to asymmetry and power relations; these issues in their turn determine the (degree of) enforcement of other maxims.

Verbal 'contributions' to such types of situation become as relevant as, even if quite often undesirably, inescapably contingent. That is why in the majority of Harris's data "both the maxims of Quality and Quantity appear to be suspended ... Neither the police constable", writes Harris, "nor the suspect is committed to telling either *what* he knows or, equally important, *how much* he knows. Both participants

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whereas for the latter utterance no such acknowledged context exists. So relevance takes both positive values when it interacts with contributions to regulate their form, but it can also be assigned a neutral value when it does not have any regulatory role to play.

[14]　It is regrettable that much work in the area nowadays does not incorporate Kasher's (1976) insights: Pavlidou, 1991; Sarangi and Slembrouck, 1992; Harris, 1995. But see Ziv (1988).

are aware that the other may not be telling the truth or may be telling only a part of the truth" (Harris, 1995: 126).

The determining factor in this type of discourse is an orientation towards *sequential implicativeness*, that is, towards an attenuated form, at least as concerns the suspect, of a rationality principle which enjoins observance of the maxim of Relevance at a local level: (a) Do not opt out (You cannot afford to, power relations), (b) Make your contribution appear *relevant* to the conversational demands made by prior speaker's utterance.

However, the local character of *in situ* Relevance realized in terms of sequential implicativeness is determined within the broader frame of Relevance operating at the global level of the whole situation, as the latter is defined and perceived in terms of coherent but discernible social domains or events. The force of this claim is brought out clearly if we consider semantically similar talk-exchanges within the instantiation of socially distinct event-types:

(a) Husband: Where were you when this happened?
    Wife: I don't have to answer this/Why should I answer this?
              That's a silly question/I don't like the tone of your voice.
(b) Prosecutor: Where were you at the time of the accident/murder etc.?
    Defendant: *I don't have to answer this/*Why should I answer this?
             *That's a silly question/*I don't like the tone of your voice.
             (Notice that semantic precision requires the elimination of deictics in b).

It seems that 'communicative action' is soaked up by 'strategic action' at least in institutional contexts.

If one then wants to adopt Searle's (1992: 22) metaphor of conversation – 'shared intentionality' or 'shared collective behavior' – as a coordinated joint pushing of a car, one will have to extend it and, indeed, allow for cases in which one party *thinks* that the other is pushing equally 'intently'; or even allow for cases in which both parties *appear* to be pushing in a coordinated action. For it is not necessarily the case that "the point of a statement is to represent how things are in the world" (Searle, 1992: 20), but rather to respond to the conversational – or rather socio-interactional – demand thrust upon one at as minimal cost as possible; in other words, to 'get off the interactional hook' with as minimal losses as allowed. Indeed, Holdcroft (1992: 70), commenting on Searle (1992), writes: "I agree with Searle that 'It is a constitutive rule of statement-making that the statement commits the speaker to the truth of the statement expressed' (12). But I am not clear that that commitment must have been amongst his aims, since he is held to be so committed whatever they are". So, although the prototypical point of a statement may very well be as described by Searle, one must allow for a variability of formulations of truth as prescribed by relational parameters.

What becomes evident is the need to distinguish various levels of participant goals and overall interactional ones. Moreover, there must be a distinction between constitutive speech acts and the way these are organized, or need to be organized, within

typical conversational structures, as specified within the context of determinate social domains.

Searle's metaphor, as it has been extended or even distorted here, is by no means applicable only to institutional discourse, although it is primarily prevalent in such contexts.[15] It may even apply to a fair amount of casual conversation or, to use Jucker's (1992) term, process oriented conversation. What is needed, however, is the construction of a typology of various discourse types related to situational domains, and most specifically of institutional discourse types, since relevant parameters determining institutional discourse can be more easily typified in typologies. While, however, Levinson proposes the organization of activity types around a dominant goal, I would instead suggest the structuration of event models around their typicality conditions (including various levels of goals), and regard speech activity as *relevant to* those features. This approach would view relevance at a global level, its globality being limited by the specifications of the particular event model. In other words, this type of relevance will have to be scripted.[16]

Moreover, it is suggested that institutional discourse is more amenable to an initial description as it is embedded in events which are rather procedural; besides, the course of such events seems to be less unpredictable, since their typicality features are more easily identifiable prior to their instantiation. For example, the precision with which language has to be used in courtroom situations, in which there are conflicting goals, is, but one characteristic.[17] Formulations and enforcement of the maxim of Manner are attuned to the necessities of the stereotypicality of the event at least in its archetypal form. The following fragment from Pollner (1979: 232) illustrates the demand for linguistic precision in court:

Judge: How do you plead?
Defendant: Well, I guess guilty.
Judge: Well, is it guilty?
Defendant: Yes, guilty ...[18]

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[15]   Leo Hickey (personal communication) supplied me with the information that a very basic rule of advocacy is that an advocate (in court) should never ask a question to which s/he does not already know the answer.

[16]   This might not be a too inopportune time to point out that Levinson's (1995) Q2 generalized implicatures are attuned to stereotypes. Levinson was one of the first workers in linguistics to adopt, and adapt for his own purposes, as I pointed out in 1982, concepts deriving from cognitive science. For discussion, see Kitis (1982, forthcoming b).

[17]   Another characteristic of courtroom language is a strict turn-taking pre-allocation system (cf. Sacks et al., 1974, on turn-taking systems, and Atkinson, 1979, on noticeable features of language use in court).

[18]   The demand for linguistic precision is often characteristic of young children who have not yet built up an adequate body of factual knowledge to back up language use and understanding. An example is provided below by a six-year-old boy who has just watched 'Snow-white' on TV:

Boy: Mummy, was it naughty that Snow-white ate the dwarfs' food?
Mummy: Well, she had been wandering in the woods all day, and she was tired and...
Boy: (impatiently interrupting) [Look, mummy, was it or was it not naughty? (real data)

Another example illustrating the manipulation of imprecise language to the disadvantage of the defendant would be the following:

Prosecutor: Were you upstairs or downstairs when your father came in?
Defendant: I think I was upstairs.
Prosecutor: (addressing the jury) She *thinks* she was upstairs...

In conclusion, rather than viewing conversational maxims in isolation (Kempson, 1975; Gazdar, 1979; Levinson, 1983; Harris, 1995), it seems desirable that we examine them in a unitary perspective; that is, it is best to view them as deriving from a broader principle of rationality, embedded in the actional structure of events and social domains, rather than as deriving from a cooperative principle. Or, redefining cooperation, one must stress that cooperative behaviour, as an evolutionary stable optimal behaviour pattern, must be seen as a form of rational strategy (Barrow, 1995). This proposal would be congruent with the view that language be seen within an interactional framework as part of a theory of action.

4.3. Scripted CP: Relevance and stereotyped social domains

It has been claimed here that the maxim of Relevance is the most powerful maxim in the domain of linguistic activity. Not only does it provide for the coherence of utterances (Sperber and Wilson, 1986), but it also has to account for ways speech events relate to situations, and how the latter determine the various forms in which linguistic acts are to be understood and meanings negotiated. These interrelationships are complicated, and work that has been done within a cognitive framework offers limited help in the area to unravel the intricacies involved. Relational parameters are often determinate and constitute tightly structured stereotypical sets, as in all the cases Harris examines.

The type of relevance argued for here is contrasted to Sperber and Wilson's (1986) type of relevance; the latter is designed to deal with coherence relations at a local level 'spreading' from the utterance towards layers of contextual information (the situation and background knowledge). In this respect relevance is utterancentric (utterance-centric).[19] The type of relevance adumbrated here is a rather theoretical construct that can be said to have a distinctly predictive function stemming from a different orientation. Global relevance proceeds from social domains and events to discourse archetypes, to speech-act archetypes down to utterance; it is situation-centric. The relevance in Sperber and Wilson (S&W) can be said to be a 'bottom-up' relevance, as it departs from the utterance proceeding to its interpretation within its environment; the one proposed here can be called a 'top-down' relevance, as its departing point is the archetypally structured situation rather than the utterance.

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[19]   Mey and Talbot (1988: 783) write that "the linguistics SW [Sperber and Wilson, 1986] practice ... is a sentence-based and sentence-oriented linguistics, in which more text-oriented developments will never find a suitable niche".

Moreover, Sperber and Wilson's relevance is interpretative in character whereas the proposed relevance can be said to be normative. As it is defined globally at the level of social domain, this type of relevance is normative in character and lies in the realm of language production rather than interpretation; it has, therefore, not only explanatory, but primarily regulative power in contrast to Sperber and Wilson's relevance, which seems to have an epiphenomenal character (Grundy, 1995: 65) Diagrammatically the two types can be represented as follows:

S&W: utterance > context > background knowledge (> social domain)
Global Relevance: social domain (event) > discourse type > context > utterance

Global Relevance, therefore, as the most dominant social supermaxim, needs to be seen as interacting primarily between social domains or events and linguistic formations; in other words, it must be seen as interacting between types of situation, on the one hand, and the linguistic behaviour that is *enjoined* within such structures as default archetypes of discourse, on the other. Power relations manifested in linguistic behaviour will be inscribed within these default discourse types in the form of both structures and linguistic items. Prior delineation and specification, even if skeletal, of types of structured situation and domain will predict discourse types that will be incumbent upon the instantiation of such identifiable structures. Activation of these structures will have a predictive function and is expected to inform our data analysis.

Parenthetically, it is worth recalling that the event or the social domain is the basic organizational unit of memory and as such it is the higher level structure within which discourse types are embedded. The latter are lower level structures, a fact that must not escape our notice in our analyses. As such, they are relativized and embedded within their first order structures, the bounded events. These events are the structures within which young children and adults place language, thus ensuring its acquisition (Nelson, 1996). Language acquisition, as can be well appreciated, does not reach its endpoint before a speaker has acquired types of language embedded in institutional social events. Members of a society need to gain prior understanding of the structures of social events and domains, as well as of the interactional strategies therein involved, before they participate linguistically competently in them. In short, linguistic development does not occur irrespective of the social development within which it is grounded. A diagrammatic representation of what is claimed here would look like this:

Language acquisition: Development of social domain > Event > Discourse type

This process, although largely representative of what really happens, is, of course, not strictly unidirectional as is to some extent falsely portrayed here, for there are cases, not necessarily clearly institutional, in which the use of language enforces the definitional structuration of types of social domains.

However, highly structured situations in which institutional discourse is in order need not be confined to the range of discourse types examined in Harris (1995).

Indeed, Grice's famous example of the professor writing a reference letter for a candidate student in philosophy is a case in point. As was claimed in Koutoupis-Kitis (1982), *contra* Grice, who argues that the particularized conversational implicature is generated in virtue of the violation of the maxim of Quantity, it is the maxim of Relevance that is infringed thereby generating the implicatures as to the candidate's lack of academic potential.[20] Had the professor been in a position to have said that X is either good or bad at philosophy, nobody would have required the information he actually gave about the candidate's regular attendance and his proficiency in English. So the pivotal maxim here, too, is not that of Quantity, as Grice claims, but that of Relevance. Indeed, as I claimed then (Koutoupis-Kitis, 1982), all particularized conversational implicatures owe their generation primarily to an infringement of the maxim of Relevance. However, this maxim rules supreme on account of the typicality inherent in the social structure of the specific situation (reference letter writing) that makes specific demands as to how each participant's contribution relate to it. Any deviation from these relational parameters – one might call them default parameters – is noticed and, therefore, needs to be accounted for.

Moreover, the maxim of Relevance is so forceful that communicative competence is not just the "ability to select, from the totality of grammatically correct expressions available to him [speaker], forms which appropriately reflect the social norms governing behaviour in specific encounters" (Gumperz, 1972: 205, cited in Harris, 1995), but rather the situation-specific compelling knowledge that s/he conform to the rather limited *relevant* range of available selections that can be each time assigned to the role s/he enacts. The norms in each situation, therefore, are the norms that are relevant to the type of situation and which cannot be contravened without cost.

Indeed, Sarangi and Slembrouck (1992: 131) write that "the values which go together with the Gricean maxims in actual contexts are *dependent on* the social position and background knowledge of the communicators *in relation to* the topic talked about. They are context-dependent, and need not be symmetrical" (my emphasis). And further down they note that definitions of truth are socially relevant.

Holdcroft (1979), realizing that different maxims are each time relevant to different discourse types, writes:

"The claim that acceptance of CP and of its generalized version can involve the acceptance of different sets of maxims in different discourse-types, and even within different discourses of the same type carried on with rather different ends in view, is plausible, but frustrating." (1979: 141)

However, the frustration, I think, originates from the lack of a typology of discourse types anchored in social domains. But this need not be so in theory.

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[20] The reference letter reads: 'Dear Sir, Mr. X's command of English is excellent, and his attendance at tutorials has been regular. Yours, etc.' (Gloss: A cannot be opting out, since if he wished to be uncooperative, why write at all? He cannot be unable through ignorance, to say more, since the man is his pupil; moreover, he knows that more information than this is wanted [or: is relevant]. He must, therefore, be wishing to impart information that he is reluctant to write down. This supposition is tenable only on the assumption that he thinks Mr. X is no good at philosophy. This, then, is what he is implicating.) (A flouting of the first maxim of Quantity) (Grice, 1975: 52).

The view taken here, then, that we need to proceed from the structured situation to the language used therein, as enjoined primarily by considerations enforced by the maxim of Relevance (which dominates and governs subsidiary maxims [maxims of Quality, Quantity and Manner]) is in harmony with the view of language study proclaimed by Haberland and Mey in their *Journal of Pragmatics* (1977) editorial; they write:

"If, to paraphrase Austin, language is a way of *doing* things, then naturally the 'doing' context in which one learns to use language is prior (logically, not only ontologically) to the linguistic context. Asking for a sentence's context is then a typical case of putting the cart before the mule; the correct question should be: what sentence, what language fits a particular action? If the action is restricted, so is the language; we have the language we need in order to act, since language, like human consciousness as a whole, is *functional*. The investigation of sentences-cum-context, as practised in much of contemporary sociolinguistics is based on the mystifying assumption that what we really do is to use language *about* things, and not *fit* our language *to suit* the reality that we live in." (1977: 10)

5. Models and idealization: At the intersection of 'the cognitive' and 'the social'

I will now address an additional problem that impinges on the theorization of the CP model constructed. Sarangi and Slembrouck (1992: 124), considering the risk of idealization with regard to CP, pose the question of "What should we take 'unmarked communicative context' to mean?". They offer three options: (a) 'under normal circumstances' (Gricean), (b) 'only under special circumstances', and (c) 'what theorists invent to account for the real'. They opt for the third answer as it sounds more realistic – which, however, seems to be a consequence of (a) – but then they wonder about the meaning of 'presumptiveness' in communicative contexts as a reality.

However, if we desire any analytical rigour for our theories, that is predictive power, the concept of idealization is equivalent to the concept of a theoretical model. But this model need not be constructed in labs or armchair philosophizing. Indeed, the discourse-analytic methodology within a framework of empirical pragmatics (Sarangi and Slembrouck, 1992; Harris, 1995; Kitis and Milapides, 1997, amongst others) will accrue valuable insights into real language use. These insights can be utilized to enrich and inform intelligent theoretical models, which will have to be idealizations, that is, language use models within 'unmarked communicative contexts'.

That such contexts never, or very seldom, really exist need not bother us at this stage, because language and situation understanding is, indeed, based on such conceptual models. And this is why we can recognize and appreciate deviations from such models as 'marked cases'. Indeed, as has already been claimed, many jokes depend on the interaction, or clash, between linguistic utterances and the typicality features of specific situational domains (understood in terms of scripts, Schank and Abelson, 1977, or activity types, Levinson, 1979) (Kitis 1982, forthcoming a,b); as, for example, when an utterance that would be *relevant* to (would fit in) a different

event type is made in the context of another. An example of an 'ill-fitted' utterance is provided in the following talk-exchange taking place in the event-context of a pet shop transaction, where A is the shopkeeper and B a customer apparently interested in buying a pet (who is not a zoophile, though):

A: How about rabbits?
B: Nice in a stew, aren't they?

However, this talk-exchange would not be funny in the context of a butcher's shop, because it would be predicted as relevant to the situation type.

Moreover, Searle's (1975) long inventory of inferencing steps in working out indirect illocutionary force can be collapsed in the form of rules within stereotypes of situational domains. He writes:

"The question, How do I know he has made a request when he only asked me a question about my abilities? may be like the question, How do I know it was a car when all I perceived was a flash going past me on the highway?" (Searle, 1975: 82)

Implicit in this quotation is our appeal to stereotypes of knowledge, rather than to 'sets of axioms' as Searle suggests. For example, we do not expect to see a star flashing along a motorway, though if we perceived the same flash in the sky, we would be inclined to say that we had seen a UFO rather than a car. The incidents of the flash on the motorway and of the flash in the sky channel into stereotypes, which have been well learned and are embedded in our conceptual world. The parallel in language use and understanding is rather obvious (Koutoupis-Kitis, 1982).

Stereotypes help us to perceive such utterances as (i) 'Can you pass me the salt?' as indirect speech acts, when these are made in the context of a script or activity type that would allow (i) as relevant to, or contingent on, its instantiation. But if (i) is thrown at me while waiting for my bus at the bus stop, i.e., within a 'bus-waiting / bus riding' script, I would start wondering about my interlocutor's sanity.[21]

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[21] For the computation of the indirect request of (i), Searle lays out no less than ten inferential steps; however, there are three determinants generating indirection that need to be co-present: (a) the propositional content couched in (b) the conventionalized formula 'Can you ...?' occurring within (c) the script of 'having dinner', are all consequential for the computation of the "additional SPEAKER meaning" (Searle, 1975: 70). Different propositional content within the same formula, occurring within the 'dinner-having' script, would not generate any indirection (speaker meaning), at least not any conventionalized one: 'Can you ride the bicycle?' Yet, the consequential nature of the script for the generation of 'conventionalized' speaker meanings or indirect speech acts is not acknowledged by Searle; moreover, the notion of 'background knowledge' does not appear until step 8 in Searle's list of inferential steps, and when it does it is accorded equal status among ten inferential steps (1975: 73–74). Kasher (1991: 395) also writes in this respect "...exceeding the literal meaning does not necessarily mean first of all computing the literal meaning and then, as a result of some evaluation, making an attempt to identify the 'intended' meaning. It may well be the case that the need to go beyond the literal meaning is detected without a complete representation of the literal meaning being computed" (Also see Koutoupis-Kitis, 1982).

What becomes evident, not only from both Harris's (1995) and Sarangi and Slem-brouck's (1992) data and conclusions, but also from the ones examined here, is the determining force of the interplay of language and specific contexts. This interplay is part of our knowledge, but this knowledge is not just linguistic knowledge. It is social knowledge modelled in cognitive terms. In constructing language-understand-ing programmes, Schank and Abelson (1977) used both specific and general knowl-edge-systems. 'What we need', they write, 'is knowledge of the social world rather than the physical world' (1977: 32); and it goes without saying that, due to the 'con-stitutive' role of language in social reality (Habermas, 1984), the 'social world' is very much manifest in the 'linguistic world', the one feeding into the other, both shaping and reshaping each other (Fairclough, 1992). However, the emphasis needs to be shifted on the construction of a cognitive theory of social interaction in which language is embedded. As van Dijk (1995, 1998) stressed, we need models to model our contexts; we need, not only theories of context, but also theories of context models we construct (social cognition), because understanding a text is tantamount to constructing a model for it.[22]

As an illustrative example of the orientation proposed here, one could consider how discourse types, and further linguistic acts, can be included within such a cog-nitive model. Both language understanding and verbal behaviour are knowledge-based, and it is well known that a great deal of research within cognitive science is geared toward a typology of our knowledge of social contexts within which lan-guage occurs. SAM (Cullingford, 1986), for example, a system of computer pro-grammes based on scripts of varying degrees of complexity written to investigate how knowledge of context can be used to aid in understanding stories, is equipped with a 'Rolefit' process. This is the general process of fitting variables to Picture Producer-Memory (PP). "Rolefit", writes Cullingford, "involves an intersection of the conceptual class markers of PP and token, and a check that the *function* speci-fied by the variable can be performed by the PP ... One feature of each class is that the indicators of function it may contain are to some extent unique to the class. For people, a title or occupation marker strongly suggests the function the person will have in a context" (1986: 647). It does not sound unreasonable then to suggest that a specification of title or occupation within specific situation domains predict not only the functions the person will have in that context (as indeed it does), but also the type of language in which these functions will be realized, as well as the enforcement of subsidiary maxims that need to be observed. It will also partially predict matters of societal power and interactional asymmetries; for example, the role of judge will automatically be defined as the locus of relevance of subsequent utterances (cf. Mey, 1987), as well as enforcing the allocation of a strict adjacency pair system. Adoption of this proposal will result in augmentation of programmes by specifications of discourse types within which are embedded predictable language functions and contingent speech acts. The latter are made relevant by initial (pre-

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[22] However, I think that my proposal is accommodated at the level of what van Dijk would call event models (1998).

ceding) predictions of roles within contexts, as these roles hinge on the activation of such cognitive models.

The maxim of Global Relevance, therefore, will be a predictive and controlling mechanism operating within specific event models; it must be designed in a manner reflecting the actual participant's experiential knowledge of the permissible, contingent or required range of his/her and others' (socio)linguistic behaviour in those contexts. It is this maxim, then, that regulates all other subsidiary maxims.

Future research within the framework of cognitive science will have to treat such *socio-linguistic* problems. This perspective, I believe, would give a partial solution to Sarangi and Slembrouck's problem: "The main problem, as we see it, is how to link successfully together the broader macrosociological context with the micro-analysis of situated discourse" (1992: 142). It would also be oriented towards systematizing questions raised in Haberland and Mey (1977), as well as in Mey (1987). However, it deviates from the view taken in Haberland and Mey, inasmuch as it posits the need for the construction of conceptual models of our 'pragmatic' competence. For the '*one* pragmatics' (Haberland and Mey, 1977: 6) needs a cognitive interface at the crossroads between social structures and verbal partial renditions or enactments of them. This perspective, not only acknowledges, but also pays due attention to the significance of both pre-linguistic and non-linguistic dimensions of social structures as cognitive models of human activity, knowledge and experience.

For the time being, though, the linguist is firmly oriented towards as detailed and insightful specifications and descriptions of language use in specific social contexts as made available within a framework of empirical pragmatics and critical discourse analysis. As Haberland and Mey write, "he [the linguist] does not describe an abstract language competence, but a concrete language performance. The conditions for such a performance are established in and by society" (1977: 6). These insights have been, and will be, valuable for constructing systematic models partially reflecting our multi-faceted competence as interactants within the broader domain of 'linguistic communication'. In actual fact, 'idealizations' of theoretical models get diminished as these models are fed and informed by recourse to empirical findings in communicative practice. So, there is, or there must be, a dynamic circuit between actual communicative situations and the theoretical building of types of situation. Information trafficking between the exigencies of the real situation and the progressive construction of its type will aim at reducing gradually the distance between them by fleshing out the model with empirical content.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, I did not so much intend to challenge Harris's analysis as to propose a shift of its focus from a presumed isomeric and *equi-valent* operation of the various maxims of the CP to the dominant role of the maxim of Relevance defined at the global level of the actional structure of discernible, coherent events and social domains. Such coherent events and social domains have been variously represented at a more abstract level in terms of scripts (Schank and Abelson, 1977) and frames

(Minsky, 1975), the latter being rather static, compared to the dynamic procedural character of the former.[23] These structures are 'outgrowths' of more specific, individualized event models. In fact, such event models are the 'objective', skeletal, but fundamental, configuration of aggregates of subjective personal experiential models.

I have suggested that the CP can, indeed, be scripted, that is, forms of the CP can be incorporated within the structure of event models with a view to systematizing the eclectic implementation of maxims within rather concrete contexts, which can be defined both socially and politically. In our analyses, we need to be oriented towards a greater appreciation of the overpowering maxim of Relevance, a relevance that represses, allocates and constrains the (degree of) activation of other maxims in configurations determining discursive formations. We need to be more attentive to the normative and constraining character of the Relevance of discursive formations to the social rules partly constituting these contexts. Indeed, corroboration for the adoption of this perspective is provided by Harris (1995), Sarangi and Slembrouck (1992) and Lauerbach (1993) amongst others. This perspective will orient us towards a first level of analysis of data by providing a first-order navigational map, so to speak, within which we assume that people initially accommodate their linguistic actions and interpretations.[24]

Thus, this suggestion offers a promising prospect for at least a partial solution to Harris's problem that "it is far from certain whether what counts as true, sufficient, relevant and clear (Gricean maxims) can be meaningful apart from the social and political contexts of particular speech acts" (1995: 118). Moreover, particular speech acts within this frame will depend on broader conceptions of discourse types, instantiations of which will be predicted in terms of their theoretical archetypes. Discourses as archetypes, or 'irreducible gestalts', are expressed in several distinct domains, each of which is precisely delineated in space, time and by level. Not surprisingly, a complicated regulatory apparatus is needed to exert this degree of control.

Besides, discourse types and, in particular speech acts, will be related and regulated by participant goals as these are specified within event types. Rather than favouring "partial patch-work, *ad hoc* models, or theories starting from limited points of view" (Castelfranchi and Poggi, 1987: 241), this programmatic approach would have to fall in with a general theory of social interaction as a goal-directed activity provided by the collaboration of psychology, cognitive science and linguistic pragmatics. One, however, must be aware that this approach offers only an initial and rather limited navigational orientation as events are not fully, or even correctly, represented in fossilized, static, abstracted, generalized and socially normalized models, but are also dynamically adapted to individualized cognitive interfaces (see van Dijk, 1998).

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[23] For an application of the notion of frame to lexical semantics see, apart from Fillmore's work, also Metzing (1981). Wierzbicka's (1994) use of 'cultural script' seems to be a derived version.

[24] For the significance of positing a 'principle of relevance' with respect to lexical analyses, too, see Ballmer and Brennenstuhl (1981a,b).

Far from having a dispute with Harris (1995), therefore, over the reification of ideological frameworks in terms of definitions of 'appropriacy' as 'competence',[25] I would, nevertheless, like to stress that it is the community speakers' almost compulsive, albeit implicit or unacknowledged, knowledge of the need, or propensity, to observe, or conform to, stereotyped, relevant norms and roles pertaining to specific situations, as enjoined by the maxim of Relevance, that is tapped in the process. Indeed, Grice's statement regarding the maxim of Quality that its importance "is such that it should not be included in a scheme of the kind [he was] constructing", and that "other maxims come into operation only on the assumption that this maxim of Quality is satisfied" (Grice, 1975: 46) should be restated, substituting Global Relevance for the maxim of Quality.

7. Epilogue

In Koutoupis-Kitis (1982), after a consideration of Levinson's notion of activity type – an approximation to the cognitive scientist's 'script' – and speculation on the applicability of scripts and frames in a theory of communication, I wrote:

"If activity types or scripts are further studied and their structure is rigorously analyzed, it is conceivable that parts of Grice's maxims can be collapsed into rules or expectancies therein described. One, of course, can argue that were something like this to happen, it would result in a deplorable state of affairs, since general principles applying to all linguistic activities might be lost into idiosyncratically defined particularized activities. This need not be so, though. Since such rationality principles, as the CP offered by Grice, describe, or prescribe, man's linguistic conduct, and since activities or scripts are related to man's linguistic conduct, these principles cannot lose their general import. Besides, the content of these conversational rules is too general and totally unrelated to other parameters, at the present stage of research, to effectively constrain linguistic behaviour." (1982: 275)

The proposal put forward at the time was that we need to start "cutting through the jungle of language interaction with bodies of knowledge" (1982: 276). Some fifteen years later, this proposal, I think, is still very much in need of serious consideration. However, if pragmatics is to provide a theoretical edge and not just an interpretative framework, we need to 'reconcile', or combine, 'the social' with 'the cognitive' (cf. van Dijk, 1995, 1998; Kitis, 1995, forthcoming b), because our knowledge of social domains, largely constituted in language, is filtered through cognitive models in which such knowledge is stored.

The objective of the present paper has been theoretical and rather modest. It consisted in underlining the need for viewing speech activity, and in particular institu-

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[25] Indeed, see Kitis (1995, 1997), Kitis and Milapides (1997), Kontouli and Kitis (forthcoming). However, in this paper the orientation was not so much towards identifying or disputing power relations internalized in terms of appropriacy conditions, or linguistic competence, as towards underlining the need for constructing dynamic event models reflecting the typicality conditions of bounded social events in which language is embedded. The dangers involved in such an enterprise are well appreciated (in particular, see Fairclough, 1995, ch. 10, *The appropriacy of 'appropriateness'*), but, within the line of thought taken here, imposition practices will have to be conceded in the faith that comprehension and analytical mastery of practices must be presupposed by attempts at subverting them.

tional discourse, within its natural habitat, which, however, needs to be represented in cognitive models. It has been suggested that the maxim of Global Relevance should be the pivotal controlling mechanism is such models.

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