Normativity and interaction: from ethics to semantics

MSc Thesis (*Afstudeerscriptie*)

written by

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Abstract

Judgments about semantic (in)correctness in natural language occur in our daily conversations. Regarding a speaker or interpreter, we can make an assessment of her use or interpretation of an expression with respect to that expression's linguistic meaning. Judgments about semantic (in)correctness steer our behaviour in conversations. An interpreter who considers that the speaker has made a semantic mistake, or who doubts whether she understands the speaker properly, can indicate her hesitation, make a polite comment or simply protest. The same can happen with a speaker who regards the interpreter's understanding of her utterance as faulty. A witness can also interrupt a conversation to warn the participants about the blunder.

Judgments about semantic (in)correctness stand in need of justification. Anyone, witness or participant of the dialogue, has a right to ask for reasons supporting the (dis)approval of the speaker's or the interpreter's behaviour. This thesis is motivated by the seeming unclarity of what can count as a good answer. A certain irresoluteness in the discussion of the subject in the recent academic literature leaves this worry unaddressed, and this fact motivates our interrogation.

In this thesis we try to characterize what can provide reasons which adequately justify our judgments of semantic (in)correctness. For this, we follow this methodological strategy. First we present conditions of material adequacy; evidence of judgments of semantic (in)correctness constitute data that candidate sources should accommodate. Next, we give general conditions on the source of semantic normativity and its reasons. These broad constraints are central but they do not suffice to identify what can be such a source.

Further requisites are obtained by looking at the possible sources for reasons in other normative judgments. In particular, we employ Korsgaard (1996)'s systematic examination of the sources of ethical normativity as a scaffold to approach the normative question in semantics. We study the transposition of Korsgaard's requirements for ethical normativity onto the justification of semantic judgments, and we propose and discuss candidate sources for the normativity of meaning analogous to those she considers for ethics.

The results of the discussion will allow us to re-focus on the recent literature with a sharper perspective on what can settle their debate. Moreover, they reveal a certain connection between between (meta)semantics and (meta)ethics. Finally, they raise certain issues to which disciplines within semantics, such as formal semantics, have to attend.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis is concerned with the issue of the justification of judgments about semantic (in)correctness in natural language. When we use a word or expression and when we interpret an agent's (even our own) use of words or expressions in an utterance, our performance is liable to evaluations of many sorts, e.g., is the utterance or written piece audible/legible? Is the pronunciation/spelling correct? Is the tone or register adequate? We focus in this thesis on the justification of the following two forms of appraisal:

a) Regarding a speaker, we can make an assessment of her use of an expression with respect to that expression's linguistic meaning.

b) As to the interpreter, we can make an evaluation of her understanding of the speaker's use of that word or expression with respect to that expression's linguistic meaning.

The assessments in (a) and (b) give a judgment or appreciation which affects the following moves of the agent who makes it. Semantic judgments are not always uttered but they certainly steer the behaviour of the speaker, the hearer or a witness of a conversation. For instance, if a hearer considers that the speaker has not been clear or has made a mistake, of if she doubts whether she understands the speaker properly, she might indicate her hesitation, try to re-express her idea or simply protest. The same can happen with a speaker who regards the interpreter's understanding of her utterance as faulty, and a witness might also interrupt a conversation to warn the participants about the blunder. In many cases such an abrupt or overt signaling is not given, e.g., if the parties prioritize the continuation of the dialogue. Yet the judgment made by the speaker, the hearer or a witness indeed modifies the agent's possible future behaviour within or outside the discussion.

The normative dimension of language concerning (a) and (b) pertains to semantics. We regard semantics as an area or a family of disciplines in linguistics which undertakes a systematic study of meaning as carried by lexical units, phrases, sentences, parts of discourses and discourses themselves, and the relations between these levels in the (de)codification. We consider meaning or sense to be the outcome of interpretation; hence the object of semantics is located *in* experience and not prior to it — although it is underdetermined by empirical

reality.[1] This places pragmatics in inseparable relation with semantics, a bond which by-passes the Carnapian division of labour. This work focuses on the normativity of meaning in natural languages and not in formal languages. Formal languages also carry a normative breadth and although its relationship with that of natural language is a complex and interesting issue. Here we will only consider how formal languages model normativity of meaning in natural language, and not the normativity of meaning in formal languages themselves.

Judgments resulting from (a) and (b) stand in need of justification. Anyone, witness or participant of the dialogue, has a right to ask for reasons supporting the (dis)approval of the speaker's or the interpreter's behaviour. Anyone can rightly ask: "Why may/should the speaker, interpreter or witness (not) use/interpret a sentence S to mean f?' As a general Why-question, this is not an inquiry about particular reasons justifying a specific situation but rather about the kind and the provenance of reasons in a specific situation: What provides reasons which adequately justify those judgments of semantic (in)correctness? This implies that an answer to the general Why-question cannot run against what is admissible in the particular case.

These questions ponder over the source of semantic normativity. The intriguing difficulty they pose for us is the seeming unclarity of what can count as a good answer. What can support the meaningfulness of asking for such reasons? A certain irresoluteness in the discussion of the subject in the recent academic literature turns this into an urgent and motivated interrogation. The philosophical issue we want to deal with in this thesis is: What *can be* a source of semantic normativity? What can provide reasons which adequately justify our judgments of semantic (in)correctness? Answers are expected to illuminate the conditions for a candidate source thereby setting some constraints on what can justify judgments such as those in (a) and (b).

Given the depth and breadth of the philosophical issue, the reach of our attempt has to be structured so as to undertake a modest and productive task. We propose to restrict our investigation by means of a precise methodological strategy. We argue and show here that to understand what can be a source of semantic normativity it is possible and profitable to observe the kind of conditions imposed on sources permitting the justification of other normative phenomena. In particular, we employ Korsgaard (1996)'s systematic examination of the sources of ethical normativity as a platform to approach the normative question in semantics. Thus, the specific goals of this thesis are: To study the transposition of Korsgaard's requirements for ethical normativity onto the justification of semantic judgments, and to propose and discuss candidate sources for the normativity of meaning analogous to those she considers for ethics.

Admittedly, as we gain in specificity we lose in generality. We will not argue here whether the conditions obtained by this methodological plan are sufficient

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[1] Cf. Stokhof (2007), p. 2.

or that they are the only necessary ones. And as we will indicate, the requisites and sources discussed are only claimed to work for literal use/interpretation. Yet given the lack of attention to this issue in the academic literature, to provide *some* conditions is a small but concrete contribution towards the systematic characterization of what can be a source of semantic normativity.

The main motivation for this investigation is a long term goal, to try to understand what are particular sources semantic normativity. Our present propaedeutic effort, however, does not aim at attaining such particular answers but rather examines what can be a proper answer. Therefore, specific sources considered here play an instructive role as illustrations of what can be (in)admissible under the requisites we will argue for, they are not intended as definitive answers. Those which better fulfill the proposed requirements will become more promising but we do not purport here to give a defense of their actuality.

The results of the discussion will allow us to re-focus the discussion of the subject in the recent literature. We will be able to see what can settle their conclusions and we will be able to assess their alleged generality. We will acknowledge that our methodology has some significance on how we conceive of the relationship between ethical and semantic normativity. Furthermore we will argue that the conditions for a source have a certain bearing on the family of disciplines in semantics: in particular, we will indicate why theories in formal semantics should give some attention to how they model the justification of interpretation. Formal semantics by which we broadly term the tradition initiated by Montague, Davidson, Lewis and Hintikka, tries to formulate mathematically developed theories of natural language meaning (although some theories do not have a descriptive goal).[2] Theories modeling agents' justification of their use/interpretation will have to properly represent, or at least not misrepresent the source of the reasons these agents can give.

The thesis is organized as follows: In chapter 2, we refer to the distinction between the normativity of linguistic meaning and of semantic content, and give reasons why we concentrate on the former. We briefly present the main positions and conclusions in the recent literature debating over semantic normativity. We then argue why the significance of their upshots hangs on a systematic examination of what can be a source of such normativity. A short reference to actual semantic judgments will give evidence against complete normative skepticism, it will establish that reasons are expected to both explain and justify our behaviour, and it will also provide conditions of material adequacy that possible sources should account for. We also display some general requirements that the source and reasons for judgments of semantic (in)correctness should meet.

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[2] Although this tradition commenced with the goal of providing mathematical theories for the truth-conditions of sentences, nowadays theories in formal semantics have doubly surpassed such goal. The unit of study has reached the level of the discourse, and truth-conditions are one among other carriers of meaning. Cf. also Kamp and Stokhof (2008).

Chapter 1.

Chapter 3 presents Korsgaard's conditions for a normative theory for ethics, and her evaluation of different candidate sources of ethical normativity. We display her argument for a 1$^{\text{st}}$–person centered formulation of the normative question, her requirement of transparency — epistemic accessibility — and the condition about the appeal to our practical identity. Then we reconstruct her picture and evaluation of voluntarism, realism, Humean reflective endorsement and the appeal to autonomy — her favoured candidate — as possible sources for ethical normativity. This chapter is mainly instrumental in view of the methodological strategy we have adopted.

In chapter 4, we employ Korsgaard's discussion about the requirements and possible sources of ethical normativity in order to give some structure to the normative question in semantics. First the perspective from which the question should be posed — 1$^{\text{st}}$–, 2$^{\text{nd}}$– and/or 3$^{\text{rd}}$–person stance — is considered, i.e., who should be addressed by the reasons which can justify judgments of semantic (in)correctness. We explore the possibilities of the requirement of transparency, of epistemic accessibility to the source and its reasons. It is also argued why any agent's practical identity is related to the kind of sources we can propose. Then four candidates analogous to those examined by Korsgaard are presented. We will suggest an illustration of voluntarism, realism, reflective endorsement and the appeal to autonomy as sources for semantic normativity to ponder how they might work in the setting given by the conditions. The last alternative will turn out to be not only satisfactory but actually promising, in consonance with Korsgaard's evaluation of the appeal to autonomy in ethics.

In chapter 5, we try to assess the results of our methodological strategy. We consider the outcome of chapter 4 with respect to the upshots of the discussion in the literature presented in chapter 2. Then we ponder the import of our exercise with respect to how we conceive of the relation between the normativity of ethic and semantic judgments. Next, we inspect how a particular theory in formal semantics/pragmatics — **Inquisitive Semantics and Pragmatics** — stands with respect to the conclusions of chapter 4. Finally, we briefly touch upon the interpretation of metaphors and argue why it lies outside the scope of the conditions for the source of normativity as discussed in chapter 4, leaving the normativity involved in non-literal interpretation outside of the reach of our conclusions.

Chapter 2

Priority of questions about the source

In the last few years, the issue of whether meaning is normative has generated an active and lively debate. Although it is an interesting contention, and even if it yields some meaningful conclusions, it apparently jumps over an important issue: none of the parties in the dispute critically examines what can be a source of semantic normativity in natural language. In this chapter we argue that the significance of this debate depends on a proper formulation and response to this unanswered question, highlighting the priority and relevance of the issue of the source. Some examples of actual judgments are presented, both to deter complete skepticism about semantic normativity and to set material and formal requirements for possible candidate sources. This will emphasize the need to understand and answer this question. We will close these notes with an outline of our methodological strategy for posing and addressing it.

We start with some preliminary considerations to draw the boundaries between normativity of semantic content and of linguistic meaning, and to state our reasons for focusing on the latter. We then sketch a succinct characterization of the positions in the literature discussing semantic normativity as found in Glüer (1999); Glüer and Wikforss (2009a); Hattiangadi (2006); Whiting (2007, 2008); Wikforss (2001). We will see how this debate does not adjudicate the dispute between the normativist and his objector but instead lays down conclusions in the form of implications concerning particular formulations of the normativist position. We will note that in this contention there is no systematic study of what can give us acceptable reasons for our judgments of semantic (in)correctness. Our main argument maintains that if we do not discern what can be a source of semantic normativity, we cannot establish the antecedents or presuppositions of the conclusions, and hence their force remains unsettled.

Actual cases in which we recognize linguistic errors and misinterpretation will give enough evidence to secure some of the basic normative phenomena that need to be accounted for. Since normative skeptics consider interpretation as only in need of explanation and not of justification, they do not seem to accommodate these phenomena. Some general constraints will be presented, general observations mainly coming from philosophy of language. While these observations give basic adequacy conditions for whatever gives us reasons to justify our semantic action, it does not yet settle the conclusions of the debate.

We conclude with a brief sketch of an approach to the formulation and response to the normative question in semantics. Korsgaard (1996)'s requirements

for a normative theory for ethics can illuminate what should hold in the case of semantics, and her evaluation of different candidate sources of ethical normativity can be informative when these are regarded as possible sources of reasons for semantic judgments.

2.1 Drawing boundaries: normativity, linguistic meaning, semantic content

Certain conceptual differentiations and restrictions should be made at the outset. Meaning and content are aspects of the expressive potential of expressions which have to be distinguished when one considers the semantics of natural language. Normativity can become a philosophical issue with respect to both. For all their interdependence, it is necessary to narrow down the scope of this investigation. Here we will briefly define the reach of these concepts, sketch the normativity claims with respect each, and define the perimeter of our study in view of their complex interrelation. We will give reasons for focusing on the normativity of linguistic meaning in natural languages in view the our assumption of an interpretive view on meaning we will elicit below.

When faced with the difference between type and token as evinced e.g., by indexicals and other kinds of expressions in natural language, it is generally accepted that a distinction between meaning and content has to be made. Meaning is thus understood as a property of expressions or sentences, of types (sentences) rather than tokens (utterances). The linguistic meaning of a sentence, together with elements of its specific context, determine the informational weight or content of an utterance. Content is a property of individual utterances uniquely instantiated in certain spatiotemporal co-ordinates.

On the one hand, semantic normativity as pertaining to linguistic meaning concerns the relation between the linguistic meaning of an expression and its use. Two possibly interdependent sides to this position are held:

a) It can be argued that meaning has normative consequences for the use of expressions as it implies norms that have to be observed for an utterance to express the content given by the meaning in question.

b) Or the claim might be that meaning itself is determined normatively by norms of some sort.

As for the normativity of semantic content, a claim that some take to be a revamped version of the claim about linguistic meaning,[1] there are also two sides to it:

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[1] Cf. Glüer and Wikforss (2009a).

c) Content might be seen to have normative consequences, i.e., that certain 'oughts' can be derived from it.

d) Or content might be seen as determined by rules or other norms in the first place.

A fair presentation of all the tenable positions into which (a)–(d) can be combined into is obviously not achievable here.[2] Let us then justify why we will focus, in the following, just on (a) and (b).

We assume here as basic a broadly use-based, interpretive view on what we generally understand by meaning. A radical interpreter such as Davidson (1973)'s seems not to have further elements than his own (possibly partial) knowledge and contact with language and the world, and with the circumstance in which he has to perform his task.[3] Davidson's argument implies that meaning, understood as something which lies prior, above or below interpretation, becomes quite inoperative or stunningly useless. Linguistic meaning is therefore conceived of as the outcome and not the toolkit for interpretation:[4] it does not pre-exist in the agents' minds.

This assumption would restrict the array of tenable positions into which (a)–(d) can be combined. The remaining cases, however, would still be too numerous. Let us then justify why we will focus in the following just on (a) and (b). Note that for a simple externalist perspective on semantic content — one is certainly compatible with our broadly interpretive view of meaning — the representational content of an intentional state depends on a natural and social reality. This external source lies outside the subject of such a state, a reality wherein meaning and interpretation belong. Let us adopt such a position: such form of externalism need not take the form of Davidson's claim for a *causal* role of the world on our beliefs, a position we do not want to support.[5] Having adopted this position, if we wanted to account for (c) and (d) we would have to understand (a) and (b) first. An account of the normativity of content requires understanding the normative effect of our experience and the possibly prescriptive role of linguistic meaning on content. Thus (a) and (b) become a priority.

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[2] A claim for the normative determination or the prescriptive consequences of linguistic meaning has a bearing on claims for the normative determination or the prescriptive consequences of semantic content, and/or vice-versa.

[3] Radical interpretation as discussed in Davidson (1973) finds its origin as an extension of Quine (1960)'s, chapt. 2 thought experiment of radical translation. For reasons of space, we presuppose the reader is familiar with Davidson's argument. In any case, we will refer later to this theoretical experiment with examples that at least will illustrate the core idea of the argument.

[4] Stokhof (2002, 2007) also acknowledges this lesson extracted from Davidson's theoretical experiment.

[5] If one endorses an internalistic view on semantic content instead, and one claims that the identification of a belief entirely relies on other propositional facts, then indeed (c) and (d) could be a priority for our enquiry.

Our interpretive view on meaning entails the conflation of the claim for the normative determination and the normative consequences of linguistic meaning, since it is how the expression should be used what determines its meaning, whereby an expression's meaning at the same time determines how it should be used. Reasons for semantic judgments have to support the normative determination and the prescriptive consequences of the linguistic meanings being assessed.

Thus in the following we focus on the normativity of linguistic meaning as the interpretive approach enforces it, as a two way path of normative determination and consequences lying in our interpretive interaction wherein linguistic meaning comes to be determined. Despite its entrenchment in the normativity of semantic content, the normativity of linguistic meaning as a philosophical issue stands in a certain priority given our basic assumptions about meaning and semantic content. Therefore the debate's ramifications on the normativity of semantic content will not occupy us henceforth.[6]

2.2   Current debate on semantic normativity

2.2.1   Normativity as **Prescriptivism**

A heated debate around semantic normativity has been primarily whetted by the reception of Kripke (1982)'s arguable appraisal of Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations (Wittgenstein (1958) §§138–242). There are certainly some interesting points in his account of what he deems Wittgenstein's 'sceptical solution' *d'après* Hume's sceptical solution to the problem of causality, in which it is a defining characteristic of causation that in cannot be considered with respect to a singular event. As causation requires more than one event, meaning requires more than one competent user. A different important parallelism is that causation as well as meaning stand for us in need of justification (neither causality nor meaning are a *given* or *a fact*, or whatever metaphysical subsistence one defends).

Glüer (1999); Glüer and Wikforss (2009a); Hattiangadi (2006); Wikforss (2001) have strongly focused on Kripke's discussion around normativity in the case of the semantics of the plus ('+') sign. Note that his observations on this example appear in the context of his arguments against dispositionalism. Partly motivated by their desire to rehabilitate dispositionalism, or to secure naturalistic approaches to meaning, the authors in the recent literature set their objections against semantic normativity characterized as Prescriptivism. Let us briefly reconstruct the main lines of this picture of normativity, around which the debate will pivot.

Prescriptivism takes the general case of a semantic norm to be exemplified in the constraints that operate when we compute with mathematical functions. Prescriptivism claims that meaning is normative because when we use S to mean

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[6] Cf. e.g., Glüer and Wikforss (2009a).

f, like when we (explicitly) follow the rules of addition, we should do so only if it is correct that S means f. There are rules to follow, rules which dictate what we ought to do with our expressions, rules which derive from terms' or expressions' correctness conditions.[7] More explicitly,

> The idea is that in using my words I must be guided by a general rule, an 'inner instruction', telling me how to apply the word in the particular case. Kripke says for instance that the meaning fact "should tell me what I ought to do in each new instance". (Wikforss (2001))[8]

A general and somewhat ambiguous slogan for this position is: 'means implies ought'.[9] In a weak formulation of Prescriptivism, this is interpreted as a claim that use ought to abide by rules that depend on correct use.[10] A stronger formulation of Prescriptivism is the essentialist or intrinsicalist one, arguing that these rules are semantic, they are implied by 'meaning itself'. Strong prescriptivists assert that "[t]he normative force of such rules thus is essentially linguistic in nature." (Glüer (1999)). Correctness conditions are a normative matter involving 'genuine oughts' which determine meaning by way of such prescriptions guiding future action.[11] Rules are not merely constitutive but also prescriptive of meaning. Constitutive rules cannot, apparently, guide speakers to perform a certain action, they do not have the force of a command.[12]

We will not discuss here the extent to which normativity as Prescriptivism is rightly attributable to Kripke. But we do feel compelled to remark that to take Prescriptivism to be the upshot of Wittgenstein (1958) §§138–242 goes amiss, and we make a short digression to explain this.[13] These paragraphs point at a deep flaw of the example of rule-following as modeled by mathematical operations to be a good general model of semantic normativity. Yet the flaw that is shown is not claimed to lie in the example itself — mathematical computation is indeed a good

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[7] For instance, Hattiangadi (2006)'s normativist as characterized by *Prescriptivity** uses her expressions only if the expressions are correct.

[8] Cf. also Glüer (1999); Hattiangadi (2006).

[9] Despite the frequency with which this quote is found, its interpretations are not univocal. For instance, some even take it as claiming that "statements that say what someone means by a term, then, entail normative *statements*." Gibbard (1994) (Emphasis added.) Note that here there is a trade with the linguistic expression of normative consequences and not only their implication. We will not pursue this line further, we just note here this possible version of Prescriptivism.

[10] "In a nutshell: no meaning without correctness conditions and no correctness conditions without direct normative consequences." Glüer and Wikforss (2009b).

[11] Cf. Glüer (1999).

[12] While regulative rules involve the (un)conditional performance of an action (e.g.,: 'Close the door!' or 'If you want to enter the building, you should come after 8.30.'), constitutive rules lay down what counts as doing something, an 'internal relation'. Cf. Wittgenstein's 'Some Remarks on Logical Form' in Klagge and Nordmann (1993).

[13] Although this is not something suggested directly in the debate, we believe it's nonetheless a point worth making.

depiction of a certain kind of rule-following —, but in the way we are tempted to use it. These paragraphs make plain that we can only say that there is *a* rule being followed because there is a practice against which the prescription — either an obligation or a permission — can be defined (and this is something that Kripke actually considers in his exposition). Prescriptivism precisely asserts that semantic normativity lies in the fact that there are rules deriving from the correctness conditions of S that we should follow in order to mean f by S. Prescriptivism identifies semantic normativity with the following of rules provided by correctness conditions of S that we should follow in order to mean f by S. Therefore, it puts forward a conclusion that can hardly be a correct gloss of these paragraphs. End of our digression.

These forms of Prescriptivism seem to run against dispositionalist or naturalist accounts of linguistic meaning. The weak form of Prescriptivism immediately obstructs dispositionalist, pure-use or descriptive theories of meaning. The strong form of Prescriptivism claims that meaning is irreducibly normative. This casts off naturalistic accounts of meaning seeking to explain what it is for someone to mean something by a term without making further appeal to normative, semantic or intentional facts. The insurmountable gap between two distinct spaces, the normative space of reasons and the causal space of nature (McDowell (1998); Sellars (1956)) implies that if the strong form of Prescriptivism holds, naturalism is blocked.

2.2.2 Anti-normativist objections

These repercussions of Prescriptivism partly motivate the anti-normativist raise. On the one hand objections are given in order to rehabilitate dispositionalist, pure-use or descriptive theories of meaning. On the other hand, defendants of naturalism give counterarguments to undermine the threat posed by the strong form of Prescriptivism. Note that on the one hand they presuppose that in order to rehabilitate dispositionalism or pure-use theories, it is sufficient to reject Prescriptivism. On the other hand, they believe that the additional cue in the strong prescriptivist claim (that correctness conditions are intrinsically normative) indeed poses a threat to naturalistic theories of meaning. In either case, the objectors align themselves under the label of anti-normativists, thus implying that their reaction amounts to an attack to semantic normativity *in general* and not only to Prescriptivism. For now, we will elicit this observation in the conclusions that anti-normativists draw. This will be a prominent point in the forthcoming.

A first objection reduces Prescriptivism to this definition:

Definition *(Prescriptivism, first attempt)*
A means f by $S \rightarrow$ For all x [A ought (to apply S to $x \leftrightarrow x$ is f)]

(where A is a speaker, S a statement or word — an expression — and f is its linguistic meaning). Then it is noted that in this case, normativist requirement is simply false: meaning in fact is not prescriptive in this sense, as x might be f but A may not know it, or A might not be in a position to account for such a fact. This leads to an alternative formulation of this position:

Definition *(Prescriptivism, second attempt)*
A means f by $S \to A$ ought [For all x (A applies S to $x \leftrightarrow x$ is f)]

where 'applies' is the tag name for the semantic relation that one is willing to take as primitive — truth, satisfaction, warranted assertibility, etc. — to give the correctness conditions of the expressions in the language.[14] However, a first anti-normativist objection argues that correctness in use is not mandatory but rather constitutive of rational exchanges, where constitutivity is understood as an 'internal relation'.[15] Therefore a description and not a prescription is ensued by those conditions. This objection against Prescriptivism amounts to this:

  i) If the rules provided by correctness conditions are constitutive of meaning, then semantic normativity *in general* is countered.

If correct use is identified with true or warranted *uses*, an expression is used incorrectly if and only if it is applied to an object it does not truly or warrantedly apply to. This unfortunately erases the basic (and problematic) distinction between linguistic and empirical mistakes, a disastrous consequence for semantics.[16] Therefore, the general insight is:

  ii) If the rules provided by correctness conditions (or correctness conditions themselves) should be identified with true or warranted uses, then empirical and linguistic mistakes are conflated, and semantic normativity *in general* becomes untenable.

Still, the anti-normativist argues, if meaning is not tied to *uses* but to how an expression *can be used*, the existence of non-normative uses of 'correctness' appears to undermine semantic normativity. 'Correctness', it is argued, may only amount to the existence of a categorization, and since some categorizations do not come with or directly imply a prescription, the objectors claim that "[c]orrectness cannot simply be taken for an intrinsically prescriptive notion." (Glüer (1999))[17] Hence, the anti-normativist conclusion is:

  iii) If the categorization induced by correct uses does not come with a direct prescription, then semantic normativity *in general* is lost.

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[14] Cf. Hattiangadi (2006)'s *Prescriptivity* and *Prescriptivity**.
[15] Cf. note 12 in 2.2.1 above.
[16] Cf. Glüer (1999).
[17] Cf. also Glüer and Wikforss (2009b); Hattiangadi (2006).

Let us note immediately the inconclusiveness of this objection: what is the difference between categorizations that directly imply normative consequences from those that imply them indirectly? When semantic categorization is compared to sorting objects into tables and non-tables, followed by the claim that "no immediate normative consequences ensue",[18] it is completely unclear how it is determined that normative consequences immediately or indirectly ensue. What would be an example of a categorization that *directly* implies normative consequences? Just as it seems to us that normative consequences can be derived from any categorization, it also seems that if a clear-cut distinction between direct and indirect derivations is invoked, it should be properly defined if it is to be informative at all.

A related set of objections denies that truth, warranted assertibility, or any other primitive semantic notion that is taken to be the counterpart of correctness, is normative *per se*. If the obligation to speak correctly is to be truthful, this can be deemed to be an epistemic or moral obligation, which amounts to abandoning the intrinsicalist approach to Prescriptivism as the normativity in question is not semantic in kind.[19] If instead truth is not an obligation but something we should desire in order to use language according to its correctness conditions, it is argued that Prescriptivism is lost because something depending on a desire is not binding.[20] The anti-normativist further objects that Prescriptivism is lost if it is required that correctness conditions be supported by the speaker's intention to speak the truth in order for there to be an appropriate 'should'. If our intentions are among the many of the relevant factors for the truth of norms concerning how we ought to use expressions, Prescriptivism is lost, and the same point can be made for warranted or justified assertibility conditions.[21] Another objection indicates that under some circumstances, we might be forced to tell a lie or to make a prediction or some other assertion for which assertibility conditions do not fully obtain, which does not imply that a non-standard meaning should be interpreted.[22] We gather these objections in the following anti-normativist conclusion:

iv) If the rules provided by correctness conditions (or correctness conditions themselves) depend upon an epistemic or moral obligation, an intention, a desire or any non-semantic condition, then semantic normativity *in general* is lost.

These counter-arguments and complaints have prompted reactions against these objections which we briefly present.

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[18] As in Glüer and Wikforss (2009b).
[19] Cf. Wikforss (2001).
[20] Cf. Hattiangadi (2006); Glüer (1999).
[21] Cf. Wikforss (2001).
[22] Cf. Hattiangadi (2006).

2.2.3 Reactions to anti-normativism

The arguments we have condensed in the anti-normativist conditionals (i)–(iv) motivate reactions which, like Whiting (2007, 2008), do not account for the nature of semantic obligations but instead addresses the anti-normativist reasoning.[23] He argues that the alleged existence of non deontological uses of 'correctness' and the fact that such a term may only induce a categorization without having direct normative consequences at best proves that 'correctness' is not intrinsically normative, rather than that its role in meaning is not prescriptive.[24]

v) If the rules provided by correctness conditions are non-semantic, then semantic normativity is not lost. It is just discarded that it is intrinsic. Semantic normativity *in general* should not be identified with strong Prescriptivism.

Moreover, it is claimed that the question of whether a certain use of a term or an expression in fact meets a certain standard is clearly a normative issue; "in addition to the descriptive statement it also immediately implies a statement about what one ought to or may do." (Whiting (2007)) The conditions for correct application implied by the meaning of a statement indeed have implications for whether it may be or should be used in certain ways.[25] Furthermore, where the anti-normativist points at the difficulty for correctness rules to be genuinely 'oughty', the defense shows that not only might a normative statement tell us what to do, but also what we may or may not do: in all these respects normative statements are action-guiding.[26]

vi) The categorization induced by correct uses might not come with a direct prescription, but this does not make it non-normative. Prescriptions can come as obligations or as permissions.

Although we do not defend or deny here the truth of (vi), we do endorse the observation made by Whiting. Permissions and obligations both fall under the deontic modality, either considered as statements or as regards their content. Statements and norms that permit are directive and normative as obligations are, as they state a requirement of conformity that constrains and produces future behaviour.

A different rebuttal concerns the role of desires: does correct use depend on an individual's desires? The defense does not provide arguments but rather denies this claim stating instead that semantic obligations are *prima facie. Prima facie*

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[23] Another reaction to anti-normativism is found in Buleandra (2008).
[24] Whiting (2007).
[25] Cf. Whiting (2007, 2008).
[26] Cf. Whiting (2007).

obligations can be trumped by other — moral, epistemic, prudential — obligations, but not by individual's desires. The fact that the norm for an expression is not trumped by an individual's desire ("because I do not feel like doing so") precisely shows and presupposes that a norm is in force.[27]

vii) The rules provided by correctness conditions do not depend on desires, they are *prima facie*: they might be overridden by other obligations. Hence, semantic normativity *in general* is not lost.

Thus it is posited that appearances strongly suggest that semantic prescriptions are not contingent upon mere desires, and even if they were, this cannot amount to a case of complete linguistic anomaly. If a case of incorrect use can still be interpreted, some rule must be in force for the interpreter.[28]

So far, we have obtained (i)–(vii) as the conclusions of the arguments in the debate we have reconstructed. We note below that this is a somewhat meager payoff, given that there is no argumentation as to whether the antecedents of these claims indeed obtain.

2.2.4 Unsettled conclusions

It is necessary to note that the participants of this debate do not prove the antecedents or embedded claims in their conclusions. Since the following statements are not proved, neither the anti-normativist nor those who react against them have yet made a concrete case for their plea. The following statements presupposed by (i)–(vii) are not proven:

i.a) The rules provided by correctness conditions are constitutive of meaning. Conditions of correctness just provide constitutive rules: they determine what counts as doing something; they do not involve the performance of any action.

ii.a) The rules provided by correctness conditions (or correctness conditions themselves) should be identified with true or warranted uses.

iii.a) The categorization induced by correct uses does not come with a direct prescription.

iv.a) The rules provided by correctness conditions (or correctness conditions themselves) depend upon an epistemic or moral obligation, an intention, a desire or any non-semantic condition.

v.a) Semantic normativity *in general* may be non-intrinsic, i.e., not all norms should be semantic.

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[27] Cf. Whiting (2007, 2008).
[28] Cf. Whiting (2007, 2008).

vi.a) The categorization induced by correct uses might not come with a direct prescription, and this does not make it non-normative.

vii.a) The rules provided by correctness conditions do not depend on desires, they are *prima facie*.

So far, we have presented a compact overview of the state of the debate around semantic normativity. Kripke's account of his idea about Wittgenstein's 'sceptical solution' to the problem of private language has led to an interpretation of normativity as Prescriptivism. According to this position, meaning yields rules that guide speakers to future action, rules which are identified with, or seen to derive from, the correctness conditions implied by the meaning of a term or expression. Objections to Prescriptivism and rebuttals to these present a number of conclusions. As we have highlighted here, the debate's upshots remain conditional since their antecedents or presuppositions (i.a)–(vii.a) are not settled. What does it take to try to establish them?

2.3 A prior, unanswered, concrete and constrained question

We argue now that while the contention does not examine what can be a source of semantic normativity, the antecedents of (i)–(vii) depend on such query. And most crucially, without an idea of what can be the source of semantic normativity, the generality of Prescriptivism as assumed by the anti-normativists remains unproven. Thus the force of the conclusions remains unsettled, dependent upon a question which presents a number of constraints that should be observed. Furthermore, the debate does not establish complete normative skepticism: actual judgments of semantic incorrectness provide the evidence and some material requirements for the possible sources. Some general and central constraints to the reasons and the source will be presented, yet they will not suffice to establish the conclusions of the debate.

2.3.1 A prior and unanswered question

In order to settle the antecedents and presuppositions (i.a)–(vii.a) to (i)–(vii), a systematic inspection of what can provide reasons for why S may or should be use/interpreted to mean f should be undertaken. If we do not understand what can provide reasons for judgments of semantic (in)correctness, we cannot establish (i.a)–(vii.a) because we cannot answer whether all reasons should be (non) semantic, hypothetical or categorical, hypothetical, or *prima facie* obligatory, dependent upon epistemic or moral obligation, an intention, a desire, constitutive, etc. And if the antecedents are not established, it is unclear how the debate

between the anti-normativist and his objectors could be adjudicated or what is the actual value of the arguments put forward in its course.

More centrally, the significance of (i)–(vii) appears to lie in these statements themselves. As we have noted (Cf. 2.2.2 above), anti-normativists draw conclusions with respect to semantic normativity *in general* (hence their label, 'anti-normativists'). The fact that they do not prove their antecedents and presuppositions strengthens the observation that, apparently, the interest actually lies in merely drawing these conclusions, and not in proving them. However, the real difficulty with the reach and significance of their conclusions is implied by the lack of arguments settling whether semantic normativity as described by Prescriptivism can be a complete characterization of semantic normativity. The whole generality of their argumentation depends on having a good idea of what can be a source of semantic normativity. This can give evidence of the strength of these upshots, as it would illuminate the need or convenience of characterizing semantic normativity *in general* as Prescriptivism.

Should (some) norms or reasons be rules implied by correctness conditions? Should (some) norms giving reasons for correct use constitutive of meaning? Should the categorization induced by correct uses not come with a direct prescription? Should (some) norms justifying correct use/interpretation depend upon an epistemic or moral obligation, on an intention, desire or a non-semantic condition, or on prima facie conditions? This series of very general questions generalizes over the aspects of Prescriptivism. Possible sources of semantic normativity might not necessarily fit in with the description of normativism as Prescriptivism, as it appears in the debate. If it turned out that the requirements for a source of semantic normativity are incompatible with Prescriptivism, then the upshots of the discussion might turn out to be either idle or just too particular to become as a rebuttal of semantic normativity. The following statements are not proved:

i.b) Semantic normativity *in general*, and not only Prescriptivism, requires that norms or reasons involve the (un)conditional performance of an action.

ii.b) Semantic normativity *in general*, and not only Prescriptivism, requires that the rules (or the correctness conditions themselves) be provided by correctness conditions which should be identified with true or warranted uses.

iii.b) Semantic normativity *in general*, and not only Prescriptivism, requires that the categorization be induced by correct uses (which *actually* do not come with a direct prescription).

iv.b) Semantic normativity *in general*, and not only Prescriptivism, requires that the rules (or the correctness conditions themselves) be provided by correctness conditions which *actually* depend upon an epistemic or moral obligation, an intention, a desire or any non-semantic condition.

v.b) Semantic normativity *in general* may be non-intrinsic, i.e., not all norms should be semantic.

vi.b) Semantic normativity *in general* may be given by obligations and permissions.

vii.b) Semantic normativity *in general* may be given by *prima facie* obligations.

At the moment, neither can the anti-normativist settle his defense of naturalism or descriptivism, nor can the defendants actually put forward their rebuttals. More importantly, the significance of a rejection of Prescriptivism cannot be pondered as it is not clear how general it is as a characterization of semantic normativity.

As a consequence, and this is the main point of these remarks, the debate does not eliminate but rather motivates asking what can be the source of semantic normativity. We have noted the lack of arguments in support or refutation of (i.a)–(vii.a) and (i.b)–(vii.b). These claims, as we indicated, depend on the question about what can be the source of semantic normativity. Since the success of any party in the discussion and the significance of their claims depend on these settling (i.a)–(vii.a) and (i.b)–(vii.b), the question about the source becomes a visible priority.

Let us make a point clear now: the contention does not prove complete normative skepticism. We argue next that the fact that we actually recognize linguistic errors and misinterpretation gives enough evidence to prove that basic normative phenomena have to be accounted for, no matter what the outcome of the debate might be.

2.3.2 A concrete question

We have already seen that the current debate on semantic normativity hinges on having answers to the issue raised by the normative question. However, the threat of complete normative skepticism — the claim that there are no 'oughts' and 'mays' related to the sense of expressions in a language — has to be dismantled or the whole point of inquiring about the source of semantic normativity would be futile.

We will argue that the fact that we recognize linguistic errors and misinterpretations sets both a requirement and a bottomline for admissible characterizations of the sources of semantic normativity. As they regard interpretation as just standing in need of explanation and not of justification, normative skeptics do not seem to accommodate these phenomena. However, while this minimal position is the lowest starting point to see we that we *actually* make normative judgments, it is still too general to characterize what can give reasons to justify such judgments, and hence (i.a)–(vii.a) and (i.b)–(vii.b) still stand.

Mistakes in linguistic meaning

What is a mistake in linguistic meaning? It is a kind of mismatch. But many sorts of mistakes in general are mismatches. When *A* writes 'Rrome' instead of 'Rome', there is a spelling mistake (a typo or a writer with little knowledge about English names for cities). Unlike disfluencies, misspellings, wrong word orderings or omissions, errors with respect to linguistic meaning are generally not detectable at a syntactic level (spelling or grammar).

Partial or wrong assignment of meanings (also called 'idiolect-meanings') and false or incorrect semantic knowledge are forms of deviance in the use and interpretation of a word or expression. A renowned example[29] is Burge (1979)'s 'arthritis'/'tharthritis'. Consider a patient who goes to see his doctor, and tells his doctor that he has arthritis in the thigh. According to Burge's story, the patient believes that he has arthritis in the thigh (a belief that is false, since one cannot have arthritis in the thigh, by definition). This patient ignores the fact that arthritis does not apply to ailments outside the joints. The patient has made a mistake but not merely one in application. If we are to report the patient's belief, argues Burge, we would need to coin a term that reflects this usage of 'arthritis' and say that he believes he has tharthritis in his thigh. These 'idiolect-meanings' signal a mistake which is not a case of misapplication.

An error in meaning need not evince in every application — a use or an interpretation —, and an incorrect application need not imply a linguistic mistake. A linguistic mistake may not be easily distinguishable from an empirical one, and yet they are non-reducible. Admittedly, a mistake in meaning *shows* in application. Since meaning is the outcome of interpretation, an error in meaning — in the use or the interpretation of an expression — is a public event and not a private affair that appears instantiated in utterances. But in the case of the patient who utters "I have arthritis in my thigh", his error is not merely a case of wrong denotation since his regular use deviates from that recognized by the actual medical community, given that 'arthritis' does not apply to ailments outside the joints. However, if he had instead referred to another ailment in a part of her body other than a joint, the linguistic error would not have shown, which doesn't mean that in this case the patient's competence on how to use 'arthritis' is acceptable.

Sometimes slips of tongue can be examples of semantic mistakes: Freud cited as an example of parapraxis the case of a president of the lower house of the parliament in Vienna, who opened a session by declaring it closed.[30] Another

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[29] Burge (1979) uses this example to prove that the patient's thought contents depend on the conventional meanings as determined by the linguistic community. Here we do not want to endorse or support that conclusion, we just make use of his story.

[30] "El Presidente de la Cámara de Diputados austrohúngara, al abrir la sesión, comprueba con enfado que faltan muchos diputados y dice: "señores diputados, hecho el recuento de los presentes y habiendo suficiente número, se *levanta* la sesión" (debería haber dicho: se inicia la sesión)" Freud (1917), part I, Lesson 2. Slips of tongue are generally associated with a situation

piece of evidence is provided by simple syntagmatic ($Merry \rightarrow Christmas$) or paradigmatic ($Father \rightarrow Son$) mistakes which are pervasive in the speech of a speaker with impaired semantic memory.[31] Consider common kind of mistakes:

- (The discourse was too long.) The discourse was too short — long!

- (...before the place opens.) ... before the place closes — opens!

- (To work with George.) To work with Steve — George!

In these examples, a correction does not come after the speaker notices a syntactic or grammatical mistake, and generally they do not require us to thoroughly inspect the facts of the matter immediately surrounding the utterance in order to judge whether something has gone wrong.

Impairments in semantic memory[32]

Psycholinguistics can give further evidence of basic normative aspects of linguistic meaning if we consider that semantic disorders are listed among the speech-related cognitive impairments. Semantic memory disorders such as those concomitant with Alzheimer disease comprise semantic category specific impairments and modality specific impairments. On the other hand, a symptom in aphasic patients is the production of semantic errors. These are typically the replacement of a word by another with a different but similar meaning, as it happens when in a patient utters 'dog' in reference to a 'cat' (semantic paraphasia), or as it happens when a patient reads 'dog' where is writing 'cat' (semantic paralexia), as well as word repetition in writing.

With this, we do not claim that someone suffering from a cognitive impairment is to blame (or not to blame) for the semantic mistakes mistakes she makes, but rather to show how semantic mistakes are part and parcel of language that we even typify neuropsycholinguistic disorders regarding the kinds of wrong uses a subject is prone to make.

Misinterpretations (a radical case)

Another kind of evidence of basic normative aspects of linguistic meaning is given by wrong or misinterpretations. In a pretty extreme setting, a radical interpreter's one, you can imagine the following scene. Alf and Bea do not speak the same language. Neither of them speak a language already known to the other (L_A and

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in which honest thoughts are involuntarily expressed. This should not suggest, however, that a distinguishable (and surprising, antagonistic or embarassing) communicative intention should underlie the confusion.

[31] Cf. Valle-Arroyo (1992). Actually, these mistakes can show both in spoken language or in simultaneous writing/speaking tests.

[32] Cf. Cuetos (1999).

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L_B, respectively). They are sitting near a bush, when a rabbit runs past and hides behind it. People in Bea's community usually hunt to get their food, and they worship certain creatures. Bea says "Gavagai!", which means in L_B "Sacred creature, do not disturb it." Alf tries to interpret what Bea means. He thinks that in L_B, "Gavagai!" means "Let's catch the rabbit!" Accordingly, he rises on his feet and notes that Bea has not moved, and that she's staring at him. Bea thinks Alf interpreted her wrongly. We think Alf interpreted Bea wrongly. Alf might discover later that he interpreted Bea wrongly.

Yes/No vs. Alternative questions

An example inspiring formal semanticists comes from the interpretation of disjunctive questions as either a disjunctive or an alternative question:

I) Will Alf or Bea go to the party?

It is generally acknowledged that the interrogative in (I) has different intonation patterns. For one pattern, the two responses in (II) are the most compliant.

II.a) Yes. Alf or Bea will go to the party.

II.b) No. Neither of them will go.

With another intonation pattern, perhaps a more common one, (I) is not a yes/no-question, but has an alternative interpretation, which has two different most compliant responses, one of which is (III).

III) Bea will go.

Inquisitive Semantics and Pragmatics is a program devoted to constructing a formal semantics and pragmatics that can deliver a logic by which an agent in a dialogue *has to* go by either (II) or (III).[33] Part and parcel of this enterprise is the observation that at least in English, a certain context for a conversation in which the question arises deems *one* of these interpretations most appropriate or expected. This is a clearly normative phenomenon of natural language that Inquisitive Semantics and Pragmatics intends to model as a theory. The logic tries to articulate how the dynamics of information and inquisition in a cooperative conversation can provide the required standard. This theory precisely tries to give a formal model of how one of the possible outcomes of interpretation is more preferable, more correct than the other one.

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[33] Cf. Groenendijk (2009). We will give some more references and remarks about the representation of normativity in Inquisitive Semantics and Pragmatics in 5.3 below.

Idioms

Another kind of misinterpretation can arise when idiomatic expressions are used. Consider Alf, a novice or overly literal English interpreter, who does not recognize the fixed expression "to hit the books", so he would probably think Bea below is mentally insane or has very peculiar rites.

Alf: Do you want to come to the cinema in the evening?

Bea: Oh, I'd love to but I really need to hit the books before my entry exam.

Interpretation of idiomatic expressions can be missed solely through lack of contact with this as a fixed expression. As a speech form that is peculiar to itself grammatically, a novice to a language might ignore the figurative sense of the expression even though the statement is meaningful (even if it yields an awkward or unexpected statement).

What does all this show?

What do these examples have in common? 'Idiolect-meanings', a radical interpreter's failed attempt at understanding what the speaker said, the two different readings of a disjunctive question and the literal reading of idiomatic expressions show or leave open the possibility of discrepant readings of the sense of an expression. The patient with 'tharthritis' does not merely misapply 'arthritis' upon one occasion of use. A wrong radical interpretation is an understandable blunder of a hearer who has little evidence to rely on when carrying out his hermeneutic task. The two possible readings of a disjunctive question receive answers that do not convey the same information; thus a speaker or message-sender can feel unsatisfied with the hearer's response as a sign of a misunderstanding. Idiomatic expressions usually convey a sense that is different but is diachronically relatable to the literal expression's, and an unwarned interpreter might fail to recognize this peculiar uses. In the above cases, it is shown that alternative versions compete. While it is argued that in each case a decision can be taken which implies different consequences related to the information conveyed, it is not very clear what can justify such decision.

The interest in these phenomena is not, we should note, to extract a classification of right and wrong uses that we could categorically determine. There is nothing wrong with the expressions *per se*, and the contextual component of a particular instantiation in which a mistake shows up makes it hard to generalize. The point is rather that in all these cases, we can rationalize the producer's behaviour but nevertheless claim they are making a wrong use of words or expressions. We can even lay down translation hypotheses for some systematic mistakes but this does not express that A's speech behaviour is deviant, while we actually deem it thus. Explaining away a blunder does not legitimize a deviant use but does not characterize it as such either.

Normative skeptics typically provide or demand semantic explanations that do not justify. They deliberately deny that semantic reasoning needs to account for why a certain interpretation or use is more or less (un)warranted than another. We have tried to make it clear here that our semantic behaviour actually sometimes calls for justificatory and not only explanatory reason. We appraise certain uses or interpretations as incorrect, not merely as equally admissible. Since skepticism asserts that explanations suffice, it turns out that this kind of nihilism fails to account for the negative assessments that we can make, evaluations which do not merely acknowledge a misapplication. These cases of mistakes and misinterpretations constitute data that needs to be accounted for and which is simply dismissed by the normative skeptic.

The minimal position implied by these examples requires living up to the evidence that linguistic mistakes happen. It says that it is sound and sometimes desirable to admit that one can be misinterpreted or be a poor interpreter, that one can make a wrong use of a word or one can sometimes say that someone has not used an expression as it may be used. It is necessary to note, however, that experience shows that although a production or interpretation can a carry a mistake, this does not mean that interpretation or production entirely fails. For sure, the interlocutor may not notice the mistake, and more commonly, even if a confusion or error occurs, interpretation often involves 'tinkering' and mending along the course of the dialogue. More often than not, communication succeeds despite someone's mistake. But this is precisely to note that extra work is done in these cases requiring tinkering.

The step we have described here is so small that it seems trivial. Just observing that we see ourselves as something other than Skinnerian linguistic agents, we see that we can actually ponder or decide what we want to express, or that this ability can malfunction for some reason. A blunder can be elucidated; this does not erase but rather display that something has gone *wrong*. Reasons for semantic judgments should *both* explain and justify our linguistic behaviour when we come to deliberate about meaning or when someone tries to understand what is said by another.[34]

With this in place, we have shown that it makes sense to formulate the normative question in semantics. It is necessary to inquire about the source because our actual talk about meaning can invoke evaluative judgments which are not expressible in terms of explanatory reasoning. This, however, is not an unproblematic task. Both its formulation and the answers that can be given to it have to live up to certain 'facts of the matter' that philosophy of language has taught us.

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[34] In consonance with Raz (1975, 2009).

2.3.3   A constrained question

We require a systematic and adequate inspection of what can give reasons in support of judgments about semantic (in)correctness. This should take into account certain lessons from philosophy of language, which provide a general clue of the kind of reasons we can give and of what can be an adequate source of them. The following is simply an attempt to lay down some guidelines or requirements on the source and its reasons that are basic, i.e., core but minimal.

Synchronic vs. Diachronic normativity

As observed with respect to Kripke's remarks on normativity, there is a diachronic and a synchronic reading to the basic normativity requirement.

Definition *(Synchronic vs. Diachronic normativity)*

Diac) What gives reasons for the constrained use of S at a certain moment t' considering it was used at t to mean f (where $t < t'$)?

Sync)What gives reasons for the constrained use of S at t to mean f?

While (*Diac*) concerns the criteria for identity of the norms constraining meaning over time, (*Sync*) is instead related to the normativity of a present (potential) use/interpretation. In order to give an answer to (*Diac*), we need to have an answer to (*Sync*) first. Certainly, both are important issues. However, since (*Diac*) presupposes (*Sync*), we will focus on the latter here.[35]

Two menaces of regress

Justification in general is a finite enterprise: an agent's (linguistic) deliberation about either the reasons he has to believe, or the reasons he has to act should at some point be satisfied with reasons which are not supported on further reasons. Henceforth, not all reasons may be rooted in other reasons. This implies, at least, the two following conditions:

1. The source of (in)correctness of our semantic judgments in action has to be such that we are able to justifiably follow reasons, some not rooted in other reasons.

2. Maybe some but surely not all reasons justifying an interpretation/production may require linguistic interpretation. It should be possible to act by reasons which do not require linguistic interpretation.

With respect to (1), in principle, reasons need not be intrinsically normative. What matters is that the source can support them for us, that there exist reasons

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[35] This argument for the priority of (*Sync*) is given in Parrat (2005).

such that the justificatory process terminates. Concerning (2), it is important to see that if all reasons require interpretation, we encounter a regress again since precisely what it at stake is how we can come to ((in)correctly) interpret. Therefore, certain reasons should guide us without the mediation of interpretation and without the backup of further reasons.

Public and action-guiding reasons

A different but essential remark applies to reasons for semantic action. Reasons have to be public for basic normativity as presented in the evidence in 2.3.2 to be represented. If in a dispute about linguistic correctness both opponents can be right, there is no dispute at all. The public character of reasons is indeed created by the reciprocal exchange, by the essential dependence of language on interaction and not in the beliefs isolated individuals may have about language.

The source of semantic normativity has to provide reasons for action, not merely for belief, reasons which can guide our linguistic behaviour, which *explain* and justify why S should be used or interpreted to mean f. In our interpretive perspective on meaning, S can mean f if it is possible for someone to actually as interpreting S to mean f. If a difference in action does not ensue, it is not possible to locate meaning and this shows that reasons for action are a priority.

Reasons and rules

Let us ask the following: Should all reasons be *rules*? The normativity debate took for granted that meaning determines production/interpretation by way of explicit and propositionally given rules guiding action.

However, there is no need to think that justifications about use and interpretation should only invoke rules as justifiers. If rules are distinguished from nomological norms we already have a different kind of justifier. A nomological norm can be singled out as a hypothetical norm in which a change in the antecedent amounts to a change in a categorical law.[36] Since reasons should be directive — an action or a constraint on action should ensue — they may not depend only on purely non normative antecedents. This would not be a problem if the antecedent also has normative but non-semantic components. On the other hand, a categorical norm may be seen as different from rules or nomological norms because they apply unqualifiedly. In any case, given the menaces of regress, not all reasons justifying an interpretation/production may require linguistic interpretation. It should be possible to act by reasons which do not require linguistic interpretation.

Thus justifiers coming from sources for semantic normativity can be rules, nomological norms or categorical norms. Admittedly, our considerations do not

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[36] Cf. Parrat (2005).

settle much, they just point at some possibilities and restrictions for what can be alleged to be a reason.

Simultaneous accessibility

A further consequence ensues from the example of the radical interpreter. First, it lays bare that the source should be simultaneously available for the speaker and interpreter; even if they lack physical proximity or if they do not share their language before their communication, reasons should be available.

A last point to bear in mind: recall that we concentrate on the normativity of linguistic meaning, not of semantic content. So, even if the practical question of an actual speaker/interpreter in a specific situation can arise on the production or understanding of a certain token of an expression — an actual utterance —, the interrogation focuses on the type of that expression. As we saw, misuse may not be elicited in every application of an expression.

The general conditions laid here require that reasons for synchronic normativity should be public and action-guiding. Not all of them need to be rules, but not all of them may require the support of further reasons. Not all reasons may require interpretation, and they should be effective in constraining the type of the expression and not merely in yielding cases of correct application. These remarks already settle some of the issues raised by the debate. Considering our interpretive stance with respect to meaning (reasons should affect actual interactions between a speaker and an interpreter) and the claims that rules should be action guiding, we can **support** (i.b):

i.b) Semantic normativity *in general*, and not only Prescriptivism, requires that norms or reasons involve the (un)conditional performance of an action.

On the other hand, we already rejected in 2.3.2 a conflation of linguistic with empirical mistakes. This determines that (ii.b) is **rejected**:

ii.b) Semantic normativity *in general*, and not only Prescriptivism, requires that the rules (or the correctness conditions themselves) be provided by correctness conditions which should be identified with true or warranted uses.

And we have argued in 2.3.3 that, so far, we can see that normativity does not require that all norms should be semantic. This is at least a partial **support** for (v.a/b)

v.a/b) Semantic normativity *in general* may be non-intrinsic, i.e., not all norms should be semantic.

And yet, (i.a)–(iv.a), (vi.a), (vii.a), (iii.b), (iv.b), (vi.b) and (vii.b) remain unsettled. These general constraints do not suffice to narrow down the tenable claims in this list. The natural question that follows is: how can we do this? In the following section, we will expose our methodological strategy.

2.4   Methodological statement

It should be evident by now that given the complexity of the question that remains unanswered, this investigation needs a very precise and reachable limit. In order to structure our next steps to be a modest but productive examination, we find it opportune and interesting to consider from an instrumental point of view how this question and its answer have been discussed with respect to ethical normativity by Korsgaard (1996).

Here we give some reasons for looking at ethics, and for focusing on just on this author's work, leaving aside the many objections and divergent views on ethics that exist. Then we present the outline of our enquiry, thus sketching the boundaries within which our considerations on ethical normativity will be circumscribed. The extent to which we delve into ethics here is thus deliberately constrained by the significance of the fact that some of its many problematic aspects can have in the understanding of semantic normativity.

2.4.1   Why look at ethics?

The normative question requests a justification of a command or permission under which our behaviour may be constrained. Obviously, this issue can be raised in domains other than ethics or semantics. Why do we look at ethics to have a better understanding of semantics? Why don't we consider other normativity laden disciplines such as philosophy of law or aesthetics? Some reasons for this is suggested by Gibbard (1994) in this rather extended quotation:

> Metaethics ... has two crucial ties to an alleged normativity of mean-
> ing. One is that metaethics studies meanings. The other is that
> metaethics studies normativity. Metaethics just is, in large part, the
> theory of meaning applied in a special domain, namely ethics. The
> subject has a life of its own, because ethics, as a domain of meaning,
> has seemed specially problematic. Still, much of metaethics is a part
> of the theory of meaning. Anyone in metaethics will have to see how
> a normativity of meaning would bear on the meaning of ethical state-
> ments. That's not half the linkage, though: If meaning is normative,
> then a central topic in the philosophy of language becomes a part of
> metaethics. Metaethics can turn imperialistic, and grab territory from
> the philosophy of language. It takes over the study of what meaning
> means.

Gibbard warns against an interpretation of this relationship as a substantive absorption, a statement about the assimilation (or assimilability) of semantic concepts by ethical ones. I.e., this does not imply that semantics is reducible to ethics. The link described pertains to the interaction between metasemantics

and metaethics. While the former one strives to understand the justification of semantic judgments, among other important issues, the latter one is recognized as the natural study of the meaning of normative statements. Our proposed transposition is actually a study of what a theory of semantic judgments can draw from the toolkit of notions that metaethics offers to understand the justification of ethical judgments. Note that it is not clear, however, whether Gibbard's suggestion implies an identification of the reasons in each domain. This will have to be considered in the forthcoming.

Certainly, this link will have a certain bearing for semantics as a part of linguistics. Suppose we could obtain — albeit indirectly and quite modestly — some characterization of what can be a source of semantic normativity. Semantic models or systems including a representation of the source of how an interpreter or speaker judges the moves in the dialogue would have to account for, or at least be compatible with, such a picture. For instance, if it turned out that the source cannot be located at the level of isolated individuals, then the criterion for the correctness of judgments in the formal theory would have to rely on something different than just each individual's information state. We will return to these questions in the last part of this manuscript.

Similar threats for ethics and semantics

A different reason for turning our attention to ethics is suggested by the existence of similar threats to normativity in ethics and in semantics.

Both in semantics and in ethics the need of prescriptive theories is objected by descriptivists who dispute the need of a deontological theory. Anti-normativists as presented in the debate above are a neat example. In the debate, for instance, semantic anti-normativists claimed that no statements about what we ought (not) to or may (not) do with S directly follow from its having certain correctness conditions. The anti-normativist in ethics asserts that there might be something that is correct to do but that ethical theories may just describe and need not prescribe what is correct as what has to be done.

The risk of incurring in a regress of justification is another common worry. We can ask "Why should I do what morality tells me to do?", if the response is "You should do what morality tells you to do because morality has property X", any answer invites the reply: "Why should I do something that has property X?". The voluntarist, for instance, proposes that the property is to be commanded by someone with power over you. When we ask "Why should I do what is commanded by someone with power over me?" we are in the loop of a regress. As indicated in 2.3.3 above, similar problems appear when considering the justification of use/interpretation.

The sceptical threat and complete relativism are also present crosswise. While "(t)he true moral sceptic is someone who thinks that the explanation of moral concepts will be one that does not support the claims that morality makes on us"

(Korsgaard (1996), p.13), semantic scepticism argues that we do not (logically cannot) follow rules in order to use language competently, to express ourselves meaningfully.

The privacy problem appears to be genuinely peculiar for ethics and semantics. Why moral reasons and meanings are not private seems to be similarly urgent problems in the philosophical agenda. The issue why I should value others seems to be at least as difficult as the problem of whether there can be meaning considering just one subject. Meanwhile, the possible privacy of art seems far less problematic. Art can be present to one isolated person; this is not necessarily inconsistent with being a piece of art. In the case of law, examples of private law as being inconsistent with the normativity of law are not abnormal. Privacy is a junction for ethics and semantics which, we feel, is a strong call for an investigation.

This should partly help to understand why we turned only to Korsgaard's discussion of the formulation and answer to the normative question. Her argument on the public character of reasons for ethical judgment, as we will see below in 3.1.1, deliberately draws upon Wittgenstein's argument against the possibility of a private language. According to Korsgaard's reconstruction of this argument, semantic normativity is not possible unless meaning is admitted to be relational. Likewise, she argues, reasons for ethical judgment cannot be private, just as meanings are relational. Norms require a legislator and a citizen to obey, and so the mere definition of what is a reason, a norm, shows that reasons cannot be private.

2.4.2 Our planning ahead

Let us systematically describe here what we will actually develop step by step in the next chapters. We will see here what we will discuss in Korsgaard's systematic discussion of the sources of ethical normativity, and how we will try to transfer it to semantic normativity.

The first thing to consider is how to formulate the question. When we ask about the source of ethical normativity we have to be clear about what we will require a theory of normativity to satisfy. Korsgaard claims that she draws from Kant the following requirements for a theory of ethical normativity:

1. An answer should hold valid when the question arises in a 1st–person perspective ("Why should I behave morally?").

2. It has to meet the transparency condition — it should allow epistemic accessibility.

3. It has to appeal to our identity, to our sense of who we are.

We will reconstruct her arguments supporting these constraints in order to consider later whether the same reasoning holds in the case of semantics.

As we will come to see, the perspective from which it is argued that the normative question should be posed and addressed is a fundamental and debatable issue in the realm of ethics. In semantics, a theory that could explain why someone uses words as they have to be used in a way that is adequate from a 3rd–person perspective could nevertheless fail to justify the action from the agent's own, 1st–person perspective, and so fail to support its normative claims. But is it sufficient to obtain a satisfactory answer when the question arises in a 1st–person perspective ("Why should I use S to mean f?")?

Transparency in ethics demands that the source and its reasons should be epistemically accessible for us: if we ought to act in a certain way, we should be able to do so, and to be aware of what is the reason justifying the action. Should a proposed source of reasons for judgments of semantic (in)correctness meet the transparency condition in the same way as in the ethical case? Are the source and the reasons for our linguistic obligations accessible to us via propositional knowledge or by what sort of epistemic access?

Should a theory of semantic normativity appeal to our identity, to our sense of who we are? The fact that reasons should be action-guiding immediately involves in a possible answer in the way each agents' practical identities interrelate with these motives.

Although a critical appraisal of Korsgaard's interpretation of Kant is an interesting and worthy investigation, we limit the exploration of her work to its possible contribution to how the normative question in semantics could or could not be characterized. Therefore we will not dive into the seas of Kantian erudition and rather concentrate on how the Korsgaard's conditions fit with respect to meaning and not morality. A thorough consideration of the objections that have been raised against her approach is also beyond the scope of this work. We will only refer to those that will be relevant to our ulterior transposition.

We will next consider the alternative candidate sources that Korsgaard evaluates. She examines voluntarism, realism and Humean reflective endorsement, and she gives different reasons of why they do not succeed in meeting the conditions she sets for sources of ethical normativity. We will present her arguments in order to transport them afterwards as analogous sources, but in this new context, of semantic normativity. What kind of authority provides reasons for our judgments of semantic (in)correctness. Could we say that normativity of meaning is secured by certain intrinsically normative entities? Can Humean reflective endorsement provide the necessary test? We will not evaluate systematically her picture of these responses, or her objections. Instead we will come to see that these candidates can feature, but without great success, in the case of semantic normativity.

Finally, we will get at Korsgaard's own candidate for a source of ethical normativity. We will describe as compactly as possible her description of the appeal

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to autonomy and how this option is alleged to satisfy the requirements on ethical normativity. This post-Kantian position naturally relies on the author's appraisal of many Kantian concepts but as the reader could understand we will not devote ourselves to assessing her interpretation. The goal of presenting her view is to take it afterwards to the domain of meaning to see how well it can subsist there. This will depend on how the requirements on normativity can be set up for semantics. We hope it will allow us to exclude from our consideration any critical appraisal of the appeal to autonomy in ethics, to instead concentrate on assessing this proposal as it might fit to work as a source of the normativity of meaning.

Chapter 3

Ethics and justification

The preceding discussion should have made clear how the need to understand the question about the source of normativity in semantics is motivated by the most recent debate on whether linguistic meaning is normative. It is not evident, however, how one may fruitfully formulate such a question. We know that any answer should accommodate the material and formal constraints we have been presented. Yet the search space still appears too broad; we have noted the number and generality of the antecedents in the conditional conclusions of the discussion. How can we better understand what *can be* a source of semantic normativity?

When one lacks answers, sometimes it is useful to operate by contrast or approximation. If we try to see what requirements are imposed on sources for justification outside semantics, we might obtain an indication of what is comparable and dissimilar when meaning is at issue. Christine Korsgaard's *Tanner Lectures* published in Korsgaard (1996) with four critics' objections and her replies to them is a landmark in the systematization of this traditional problem in ethics of: "What can be a source of morality?" In the series of lectures she introduced conditions upon this interrogation, which she technically labels 'the normative question' (henceforth NQ). She argued why NQ in ethics should be formulated as a 1st–person inquiry that can provide a deliberative agent with the guide to actually judge her own moral actions. Furthermore, such a guide should involve that agent's practical, human identity. With these requirements rendered, she presented and evaluated different proposed answers to NQ, and then described and argued for her own, more satisfactory candidate source: the appeal to autonomy.

In this chapter we will give a concise exposition of Korsgaard's systematizaton of NQ: her arguments for the requirements on the question, her objections against voluntarism, realism and Humean reflective endorsement as possible sources for the normativity of meaning, and her own proposal, autonomous reflective success. This will lead us, afterwards, to consider such conditions and proposals with respect to semantic normativity.

3.1 What is NQ for Korsgaard?

Consider any of our daily ethical appreciations of people's action. Faced with this, we might be perplexed with the contents of our morality and, and we might wonder why we condemn or accept what we are confronted with. A different question — not necessarily of a skeptical tone — probes the source of moral

obligatoriness and permissibility; What can provide reasons in support for our moral judgments? Although Korsgaard does not mention it, we believe it's worth noting that we don't *always* ask this question. We do not request a justification whenever we perform an action which could be morally pondered. However, when we ask NQ as above, we inquire about the source of normative reasons for morality *in general*: normativity cannot be defined with respect to an isolated action. NQ can be motivated by an ethical consideration in a particular situation or quandary but if it is to be a meaningful question, it should concern actions *beyond* the present case.

We first present some general constraints regarding Korsgaard's stance in particular, and ethical justification in general. As it will turn out, these are echoed by the general conditions discussed in semantics and likewise do not suffice to give a full blown characterization of what can be a source of ethical normativity.

We will see that, according to Korsgaard, when posed (motivated either by a theoretical worry or by an actual practical deliberation) from a 1st–person perspective NQ asks about the justification and the explanation of our moral considerations. This imposes a requirement of transparency to the answer that may be given, since it should both explain to and justify for an actual deliberative agent her own moral actions, which means that she should have some kind of epistemic access to the source of the obligatoriness of the actions she ponders over, and to the reasons it provides. This also necessitates, Korsgaard argues, that the alleged source should appeal to, or at least it should not conflict with our practical identity.

3.1.1 General constraints

Synchronicity

As it turns out, Korsgaard is concerned with the possibility for an actual deliberative agent to rely on NQ in order to ponder over the legitimacy of reasons in support for an actual action.[1] This implies that she focuses on synchronic normativity, on the problem of justifying an action by a norm or reason, and not on the diachronic problem (Is action x' obtaining later than action x supported by the same norm as x?

Regress

Justification as a general epistemological enterprise needs to remain unharmed by regress. This does not mean that foundationalism is the model for any substantial theory about ethical normativity. This is instead a general formal requirement: invoked sources should not require further normative support in order to preserve establish them.[2]

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[1] Cf. Korsgaard (1996), p.15.
[2] Cf. Korsgaard (1996), p.99.

Public reasons

One of the most delicate problems for ethics, as we noted in 2.5.1 above, is the threat of privacy or complete particularism or relativity; are moral choices supported by whatever an individual feels like appreciating? An argument analogue to Wittgenstein (1958)'s (§§244–271) against the possibility of a private language is used by Korsgaard to show that reasons have to be public.

The claim to prove is that reasons for moral action are inherently public. Otherwise, not only obligations to one another could not be rightly represented, but the very possibility to be obliged, i.e., to act only if our action can be turned into a law, would be cancelled. Yet, Korsgaard claims, just as meaning is a relation because it is a normative notion (this is what Wittgenstein's argument against the possibility of a private language conveys, according to her),[3] practical reasons are relational because for there to be a citizen who obeys there should be a legislator who lays down the obligation, and vice-versa. As soon as you treat someone else as a person, which is an immediate consequence of acknowledging and valuing your own humanity,[4] this other self is a possible legislator and his demands — if moral — have to be treated as reasons.

Explanatory and justifying reasons

A very basic distinction is necessary to give a self-contained presentation of Korsgaard's view. One may be looking for an *explanation* of some or all moral practices, for reasons appearing in explanations of certain phenomena we generally refer to as 'morality'. However, one might be looking for reasons which *justify* this or that behaviour. In this case, we are looking for a philosophical foundation for morality whose principles and contents are given to us in the form of commands, permissions, prescriptions, or other propositions which require the support of normative reasons. Such an inquiry about the justification of morality aims at finding out what may be proper sources for those normative reasons.

Korsgaard conceives NQ as a request for a legitimate source of reasons which *explain* and *justify* ethical behaviour. This can be seen as a double articulation. On the one hand, a broadly Razian perspective is held, one according to which "normative [i.e., justificatory] reasons must be capable of providing an explanation of an action" (Raz (2009)). At the same time, reasons must not only explain action, they should also justify it. A mere explanation may fail to address the normative claims of morality from the agent's own, 1st–person perspective.[5] Explanation and justification are thus inseparable aspects of reasons, and this places a strong conceptual constraint on what a source of normativity can be.

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[3] Cf. Korsgaard (1996), p.137.

[4] Which according to Korsgaard "can never really fail" Korsgaard (1996), p.142.

[5] "A theory that could explain why someone does the right thing - in a way that is adequate from a third person perspective - could nevertheless fail to justify the action from the agent's own, first person perspective, and so fail to support its normative claims." Korsgaard (1996), p.14.

Action-guiding, motivating reasons

Meanwhile, reasons in moral justifications enter into the consideration of actions, not merely of beliefs. Therefore, reasons should be practical, i.e., they should motivate or be able to enter into the motivation of an action. A normative theory about the source of ethical action has to provide reasons which can enter the actual deliberation of someone who requests reasons why she should do or has done the right/wrong thing.

We have found a number of general constraints for any proposed source of ethical normativity. For Korsgaard, more refined requirements can be settled. In order to evaluate different candidate sources, she argues, it is necessary to understand what can be a proper formulation of NQ.

3.1.2 Three conditions: perspective, accessibility, and identity

Since reasons should guarantee an explanation and a justification, Korsgaard argues, NQ should be formulated from a 1st–person perspective:[6]

NQ: Why should I behave morally?

An answer to this question necessitates a theory of moral concepts that succeeds in addressing an agent who may not be at ease with explanations but who demands a justification for the action she should/may (not) perform. As noted above, Korsgaard presupposes that a 1st–person elucidation can succeed in justifying an action as well as in explaining it from a 3rd–person perspective. If, instead, a 3rd–person viewpoint is adopted, then it is possible (though not necessary) that the answer will provide reasons which both justify and explain moral action. Normative skeptics typically adopt 3rd–person accounts since they are simply interested in explaining but not in justifying the correctness of certain phenomena.

Why is this question posed? If seen as purely theoretical, the questioner might be suggesting that there are no moral standards by which we should abide. But as a theoretical question, NQ might only request an explanation. Hence, if conceived of as a theoretical doubt, there are no guarantees that a justification will be given. This is again incompatible with the foremost assumption, i.e., that the source of ethical normativity should provide reasons which both justify and explain moral action. As a practical question, however, it cannot fail to be a request for justification.

Real doubt cannot be settled by a reason which is not a prompt for action. A practical doubt of one's own principles, impulses or desires comes about via a distance owing to self-consciousness. This distance leads us to request our own

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[6] Cf. Korsgaard (1996), p.16.

approval of the pursuit of our wishes, inclinations or goals, in order to consider whether we may or should pursue them. Henceforth, any answer to NQ has to secure a proper source to guide a real agent in an actual deliberative situation.[7]

A further constraint on the answers is the requirement of transparency. If the deliberative agent cannot have notice of the source of normativity, NQ does not receive a proper 1st–person centered response. We should be able to be informed about the justifications that the proper source yields, or the answer to NQ will not satisfy the urgency of the deliberative agent that considers the reasons supporting the moral claim by which she should abide. In Korsgaard's words:

> A normative moral theory must be one that allows us to act in the full light of knowledge of what morality is and why we are susceptible to its influences, and at the same time to believe that our actions are justified and make sense.   (Korsgaard (1996) p.17)

The last condition Korsgaard imposes on any answer to NQ is related to the origin of the question, to self-consciousness. It is required that the source of moral correctness be integrated with our practical identity which broadly comprises physical,psychological, and affective self-recognition. If we act by standards that may lead to inconsistency when joined with our most basic and foundational human identity, we actually fail to live up to our own moral principles, which Korsgaard claims takes us to absurdity. Anything that we might say we do correctly has to go along and not conflict with our practical identity, to our sense of who we are. Our need of (self) approval of the impulses and desires we consider correct to fulfill must run simultaneously with the conservation or construction, and not the termination, of our moral identity.[8]

Korsgaard thus places three particular constraints on any acceptable answer to NQ. Since she conceives of it as a request for norms that both justify and explain ethical action, she argues that NQ must be conceived of as a practical question voiced in the 1st–person perspective by an actual deliberative agent. This requires that reasons should be accessible for such agent, so that he can *indeed* justify and explain his own moral judgments. And further, since this agent's practical identity is involved, defined and affected by the moral choices she makes, it should be guaranteed that there is a role played by, or at least no inconsistency may appear between, the reasons provided by the source and the practical self of this moral agent.

With these three conditions for the source in place, we can consider Korsgaard's evaluation of different responses to the normative question. Sources for ethical justification may thus be examined with these constraints as general measure.

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[7] "When you want to know what a philosopher's theory of normativity is, you must place yourself in the position of an agent on whom morality is making a difficult claim." Korsgaard (1996), p.16.

[8] Cf. Korsgaard (1996), p.17.

3.2   Insufficient attempts

With NQ characterized via Korsgaard's argumentation, we can evaluate how different proposals about the source of the obligatoriness of morality resolve the issue within the above mentioned constraints. We present here her description of, and objections against, voluntarism and realism, and we will try to see how reflective endorsement fares better but has to be further developed in order to become her favoured answer to NQ. May the reader understand that we will not include here a critical appraisal of her version of these proposed sources for ethical normativity, and we shall instead evaluate such characterizations once we turn to them as candidates for a source of semantic normativity.

3.2.1   Voluntarism

Obligation, permission and punishment seem to form a ring and offer an alternative. A legitimate authority or will, one which can legislate over moral agents and enforce law, is a natural candidate to be the spring of normativity. Enforcement of the law is achieved through sanctions, but fear is not the source of our duty to do the right thing: obligation comes with the law that the alien will lay down over us. Note, however, that the moral correctness of that authoritative will remains quite unguaranteed. Korsgaard situates Hobbes (1651) and Pufendorf (1672) in this line, both of whom separately require an alien will to be the authority providing reasons for our moral judgments.

It is normally objected that if a sovereign is an arbitrary legislator, then morality seems to be at risk. However, when the alien authority is argued to be the source of normativity, it is not necessarily attributed power over the content of morality.

> The legislator is necessary not to give content to morality or to explain why people are motivated to do what is right. The legislator is necessary to make obligation possible, that is, to make morality normative.   (Korsgaard (1996) p.25)

Hobbes (1651) and Pufendorf (1672), for instance, held that reason gives content to our morality, not the sovereign.[9] Why does or should the sovereign defend such contents — why is or should the authority be reasonable — is something that remains unfortunately unexplained.

Korsgaard's main counterargument against the voluntarists is that their answer to NQ fails to cope with the problem of regress of justification: How is the authority de-termined? How is this alien will invested with such power? Is it intrinsic to the authoritative position or is it endowed by some other source? If

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[9] Cf. Korsgaard (1996), p.23, 27.

the answer is the second option, we fall in a regress of justification: the problem seems to be merely postponed as the alien authority's power over us lacks independency in its legitimacy. A different objection is related to the 1ˢᵗ–person perspective condition, and the requirement of transparency. If the alleged source backing up the power of the legislator is not related to, or accessible to us as actual deliberative agents, it seems that the answer obscures rather than fulfills the query.[10]

3.2.2 Realism

If, instead, the first option of the previous dichotomy is taken, if we understand that the authority's power is intrinsic, the answer to NQ transmutes into realism. For the realist, moral claims are normative if they are true, and true if there are intrinsically normative entities, facts or truths which they correctly describe. This requires proving that values, obligations or reasons *really* exist. The realist roots normativity in authority itself, or in a less personalist view, it finds certain obligations or actions to be obligatory in themselves. Korsgaard places Moore (1903) in this line, interpreting his argument on the indefinability of the non-natural property of goodness as a claim for its factuality.[11]

Korsgaard's main attack to the substantive realist is a description of his attitude as a refusal to solve the problem of the regress of justification that the voluntarist encounters. By *fiat*, the realist finds morality to be a fact, knowledge of which is the problem that an ethical theory has to describe. "[M]oral claims are normative if they are true, and true if there are intrinsically normative entities or facts which they correctly describe." (Korsgaard (1996), p.18–19.) According to her, intrinsic justification is the realist *non-answer* to how justification can come to an end. It is necessary to see, Korsgaard argues, that the unjustified reasons the realist wants to find dodge rather than solve the problem of the regress. This can be overcome once reasons which resist the demand for justification altogether can be found.

With respect to the specific conditions the realist answer is not fully adequate: when raised from the 1ˢᵗ–person voice as a practical demand to understand what that deliberative agent should do, the realist just offers a piece of reality whose knowledge or apprehension of which via intuition seems to have no guarantees that it will be an actual justification for that particular agent. Moreover, the questioner's epistemic access seems too obscure, thus conflicting with the requirement

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[10] Another argument that could be raised: it might seem that if fear is nevertheless the source of normativity, i.e., if we do not agree that the alien authority can keep obligations to be motivated by law itself and not by the negative consequences of its infringement, we risk running against the integrity of our practical identity when appealed by such a source. If our practical identity is thus endangered, we jeopardize the effectiveness of the answer in view of the third condition on NQ argued by Korsgaard.

[11] She presents Clarke (1706) as the modern referent of this position.

of transparency. Realism fails to give an adequate explanation of what the correct procedure is for observing the corresponding moral truth or fact involved in a certain moral claim.[12] A different way to look at realism is to see it as changing NQ into an epistemological quest: there are truths, facts that establish what our moral obligation ultimately is, and the task of a normative theory is to account for our epistemic access to this bottom of our justifications. However, realists tend to appeal to intuition as the agent's relationship with the basis for our moral standards. According to Korsgaard, far from clarifying the issue about epistemic access, this alternative obscures what the access to the source and its reasons is. Korsgaard actually does not develop why she considers intuition as an invalid form of epistemic accessibility to ethical reasons. Consider the following as a possible argument since intuition tends to be a peculiarly private epistemic operation, the realist is vulnerable to an argument analogous to Wittgenstein (1958)'s (§§244–271) against the possibility of a private language. If we have epistemic access to the source of ethical normativity in a completely private manner, the very possibility of defining obligation is undermined.

Perhaps the hardest point in the realist's agenda, to explain how we have epistemic access to the alleged facts or truths where justification ends and from which normativity springs, is at the same time the key to Korsgaard's cornerstone for a better solution. She observes that the practical scenario for NQ is a lack of confidence in our values; the realist's answer by *fiat* is far from a satisfactory soothing for our shaken state. This image of ethics as an epistemological or theoretical activity is, according to this author, simply misguided. In order to find the normative bedrock of morality, one first has to note that deliberative agents are (not) confident about certain principles rather than know (doubt) them. Korsgaard considers this as an indication of the direction where we need to look for justification, and her plea is that our turning our look inwards provides the test-bed. The examination of moral claims against our human nature and sentiments is what determines the rightness or wrongness of the desire or intention under scrutiny. This ground that both explains and justifies the demands of morality is, according to this author, a process rather than an entity: A process of reflective endorsement.[13]

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[12] Although Korsgaard does not mention this, we can add that it is not clear at all whether a clash between these independent facts and the agent's practical identity could occur. E.g., if the agent lacks knowledge of the source, a confrontation of her practical identity with the reasons emerging from such wellspring might be incompatible.

[13] "The capacity of our moral motives to survive the test of reflection is not a test for something else, the existence of a normative entity. It is normativity itself." Korsgaard (1996), p.48.

3.2.3   Humean reflective endorsement

Korsgaard refers to Hume (1740, 1748, 1751) two-fold reflective endorsement test, a reflective evaluation by which we assess:

1. Whether self-interest approves of our moral sentiments, and

2. Whether our moral sense approves of itself.

This double test checks whether a moral claim is good for us: its consonance with our self-interest and the "faculty's own approval" constitute the spring of normativity, as we obtain proof that something is good for us by directly examining whether it's in accordance with our happiness and whether our practical identity approves of it.

Hume's regulative principles provide moral judgments with a solid basis, but a basis which is not objective in an entity counterpart. Human nature is intrinsically normative in a non-substantial sense, since the normativity is carried by the process of moral judgment itself and not by a distinct realm to which moral judgment gives epistemic access. Normativity lies in and pertains only to human nature:

> Within human nature, morality can coherently be challenged from the point of view of self interest, and self interest from the point of view of morality. Outside human nature, there is no normative point of view from which morality can be challenged.(Korsgaard (1996), p. 65)

Reflective endorsement first provides an explanation of the source of morality in human nature and why we use moral concepts; we use them because they contribute to our happiness and other people's happiness. Sympathy acts as the linking bond between agents, the medium whereby other people's sentiments are "contagious to us".[14] We abide by the same general principles because we hold them sympathetically, we regard them with respect to ourselves and to others. However, the examination does not yield obligations, it does not provide yet with practical reasons which justify our moral claims from a 1st–person perspective. Reflection provides justification when agents come to see that it is in their own interest "to be people who practice virtue for its own sake." (Korsgaard (1996), p.60.)

The second clause requires an observation given by direct reflexivity that checks whether our moral identity itself approves of the claim under scrutiny. Our human moral identity, a foundation for any other more specific identity we might recognize or be attributed, can generally be put thus: humans are reflective animals who need reasons to act and live.[15] As a consequence of the

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[14]   Cf. Korsgaard (1996), p.59.
[15]   Cf. Korsgaard (1996), p.121.

distance created by self-consciousness and the need of reasons to act that can come about from this self observation, it is necessary — and hence universal — for humans to have some conception of their practical identity. In Korsgaard's words, "Moral identity and the obligations it carries with it are therefore inescapable and pervasive." (Korsgaard (1996), p.121.) A claim for a motive or an action that may turn out upon reflection to be dissonant with our identity gives grounds to reject its authority.[16] The congruence between self-interest and morality is guaranteed by the Humean test since the self-interested happiness to which a moral claim can lead leads to its moral approval, and its moral approval is backed up by its contribution to happiness.

Still Korsgaard diagnoses a fundamental problem with Hume's account: since he applies the reflective endorsement test to dispositions or character traits, understood in terms of general rules which do not hold in every case, exceptions are possible.[17] A disposition makes us apt (not) to do certain things but they do not sufficiently bind us to evaluate a possible action in the heat of actual practical reasoning. The real danger of rooting normativity in our most commonly shared traces is that principles turned to such a degree of generality might not be sufficient why at a certain situation we consider that an exception to the general rule might be more beneficial than abiding by it. For instance, although injustice is generally wrong, some isolated violations of laws might lead to a more beneficial outcome than going by them.[18]

Although Korsgaard does not raise this point, a possible threat of relativism can be raised against Hume's model. It seems that one could ask how it is guaranteed that this most general human moral identity is the provider of our (thereby) universally shared moral sentiments and not, say, our culturally, and hence, relative uses and habits. However, it seems that Korsgaard's view on human nature is as thick as Hume's; from the fact that we are reflective animals who need reasons to act and live proceed certain principles constituting a basic but definite human moral identity that are spread and shared, the same for all. We will not take up this issue here or in the presentation of Korsgaard's favoured answer to NQ because it goes beyond her arguments but it will be of our interest when turning to semantic normativity, in 4.1 below.

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[16] Cf. Korsgaard (1996), p.65.

[17] Cf. Korsgaard (1996), p.87–88.

[18] Korsgaard's example is this. Consider a "lawyer for a rich client who has recently died, leaving his money to medical research. In going through the client's papers the lawyer discovers a will of more recent date, made without the lawyer's help but in due form, leaving the money instead to the client's worthless nephew, who will spend it all on beer and comic books. The lawyer could easily suppress this new will, and she is tempted to do so. She is also a student of Hume and believes the theory of the virtues that we find in *A Treatise of Human Nature*. So what does she say to herself?" Korsgaard (1996), p.86.

The appeal to autonomy is the means by which the problem of the generality of the principles of morality can be tackled. This proposal, as we shall see, is rather a complementation than a complete abandonment of Humean reflective endorsement as the source of ethical normativity. The balance between general moral dispositions on the one side, and each particular case's reasons on the other side, can be stroked by an autonomous agent capable of self-legislation. But it should be clear that reflective endorsement is already on the right track by answering NQ from a 1ˢᵗ–person perspective, offering a method by which we are informed about the source of moral justification, and in a way that integrates with, or conserves the consistency of our practical identity.

Let us briefly recapitulate this section before going on to present Korsgaard's answer to NQ. Voluntarists and realists fail to handle the problem of the regress of justification properly, and moreover they do not meet the conditions on NQ presented in the preceding section. Reflective endorsement is a much more satisfactory answer but the norms it can guarantee are too broad to be useful for our situated, actual, practical deliberations. We will see now how the appeal to autonomy can be a better guide for the morally reflective agent.

3.3 Laws for reflective success: the appeal to autonomy

Korsgaard fleshed out the problem of the justification for our normative claims as caused by our reflective distance from our desires. The answer to NQ lies there where the problem arises: the Kantian test involves reflective endorsement but also brings to consideration whether our will can subsume the potential action under a universal law. This reflective movement of course relies on the identity of the deliberative agent, but this need not lead to a relativization of morality, if it can be established that reasons passing the test of autonomous reflection are indeed essentially public or social. If this answer to NQ also succeeds in preventing the regress of justification, it will only be left to see whether it satisfies the requirements for any answer we have already introduced.

3.3.1 Laws for a free will

As we mentioned above, Korsgaard claims that we raise NQ as a result of our reflective distance from the immediate satisfaction of our desires and intentions. An essential part of our humanity, free will, entails that reflection is a halt when we are to act to fulfill an intention or satisfy a desire. Free will requires that we have reasons for action if we are to rightly pursue a desire or an intention. Korsgaard claims that for a will to be free it must be self-directed, it must legislate for itself, or provide rules for its own actions. This is, a free will has to be *autonomous.* If

desires, impulses, or reasons exterior to the will caused the will to act, it would not be free but instead determined by these external causes. The autonomous will must, thus, be able to form principles for itself by which to test whether an impulse is an acceptable reason for action. Free will, an essential 1ˢᵗ–person perspective phenomenon,[19] requires that our choice be based on some law.

Does this suffice to establish morally correct choices? The categorical imperative ("act only on a maxim which we could will to be a law"[20] is the general principle of normativity in the practical sphere but it is our place in the Kingdom of Ends that determines under which laws we may judge and be judged. In order to be a part of a union of different rational beings capable of moral deliberation in a system of common laws, we should act only on maxims that could be admitted by such a community. Clearly this is far more specific than what the categorical imperative yields. Our autonomy is the source of obligation, but our situation in the Kingdom of Ends provides the standard for the laws under which we consider we should be guided. This settles that not just any law can work, and raises the question how the laws that can work actually bind us beyond our individualities. This strong accent on the general strength of reasons secures a social bearing of the reasons issued by such source.

To justify and not merely explain moral action, the laws that a free will ought to follow should not depend on our particular, relative and contingent identities. Ethics requires a stable basis that can yield the laws that might subsist in the Kingdom of Ends. The Formula of Humanity, the moral law, then sets the requirement for the content of the maxims by which we could act to agree with our human (self) identification. We act morally when we treat ourselves and, thanks to that, when we treat others as such reflective creature. So a maxim is good for an agent "if action and purpose are related to one another so that the maxim can be willed as a law" (Korsgaard (1996), p.108) for the agent's (self) ascribed humanity. The very background we rely on when we make a moral judgment guarantees that only such a maxim is desirable for oneself and for others, and this again secures a social and not individual scope of these reasons.

Hence, although a good maxim is intrinsically normative, it sets the correct way to proceed but does not exist as a substantive entity independent of our human condition. We do not get to choose the right thing, like the realist has it, through intuition or an epistemic discovery. Values are a product of and not an input for our legislative wills, they are the output of the process of self-legislation:

> The test for determining whether an impulse is a reason is whether we can will acting on that impulse as a law. The test is a test of endorsement.   (Korsgaard (1996), p.111)

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[19] Korsgaard also expresses this succinctly thus: "Determinism is no threat to freedom." Korsgaard (1996), p.95.

[20] Cf. Kant (1788), 5:19–30

Thus for Korsgaard values exist but they do not lie above or below the success of reflective endorsement. Values are founded in what we take as laws; they consist in approval of an action in view of a law which is acceptable for us regarding our human identity.

3.3.2 Korsgaard's claim for the existence of obligations

Korsgaard then goes on to try to prove that there exist certain moral obligations. Besides her theory of normativity, she wants to establish definite features of a theory of moral content, that there exist definite and *per se* obligatory moral claims.

Since we cannot act without reasons and our humanity is the source of our reasons, we must endorse, i.e., value your own humanity if we are to act at all.[21] The acceptability of laws is drawn by our most general conception of practical identity, our place in the Kingdom of Ends. And since this moral identity is shared with all other human beings, and our self identification as reflective creatures implies the recognition of other human beings as reflective animals as well, it follows that human beings are valuable, i.e., they should be valued. These are, according to her, a universally shared obligation that should be observed by every human being:[22] the obligation to value one's and others' selves.

We will not go deeper in her arguments proving the existence of truths for any theory of moral content. While Korsgaard's project goes a little beyond a metaethical enterprise, we do not take interest in this aspect of her proposal. She does not just show that the normative question can be meaningfully formulated — that it is possible to define what is a moral obligation — but she also purports to establish the existence of determinate obligations by which we should all abide. Our interest here is restricted to the former of her goals.

In any case, this should call our attention to the difference between setting formal requirements for a theory of ethical normativity and giving of a theory of ethical normativity. These are related but different enterprises. This difference also applies in the case of semantics and should be borne in mind in the forthcoming. We should be cautions later and observe whether the formal aspects of a theory of semantic normativity we will argue for imply the truth of particular obligations or permissions with respect to correctness in linguistic meaning.

3.3.3 Autonomy meets the conditions

The appeal to autonomy indeed addresses the actual deliberating agent. It gives reasons for synchronic normativity, to support a judgment by a certain norm and

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[21] Cf. Korsgaard (1996), p.141.

[22] "If values are associated with ways of conceiving one's identity, then the point will be that some ways of thinking our identity are healthier and better for us than others." Korsgaard (1996), p.117.

not to see whether we are acting by the same norm as in a past situation. Reasons are explanatory and justifying in that they not only can rationalize moral choices but also promote or deter them. Actions are decided upon these reasons, as the observance of our human identity is a motivating power over our doings.

And notably, reasons are indeed public: autonomy can only sanction an action to be a duty or permissible if it can be recognized by other bearers of such human identity, i.e., by others in the Kingdom of Ends. This observance *per definitio* of others' free wills as a measure of acceptability also turns these reasons into possible demands between each other. To make this point, Korsgaard invokes an analogy with the normativity of linguistic meaning as summed up in Wittgenstein (1958)'s (§§244–271) argument against the possibility of a private language. Just as meaning is relational in the sense that it takes two to have it — someone who requires and someone who fulfills this or not — laws sanctioned by autonomy are inherently shareable. "What enables and forces us to share our reasons is, in a deep sense, our social nature." (Korsgaard (1996), p.135.)

Laws for a free will address the 1$^{\text{st}}$–person perspective. Laws that can have force and be acceptable in the Kingdom of Ends — i.e., taking into account all other individuals as ends in themselves — involve our experience of having a human identity. This identity is shared with all other humans but it is experienced by each one of us and does not subsist beyond that apperception. It is not factual, even if it involves the occurrence of certain facts.

Autonomous reflective success against the background of our human identity is the source of moral norms. This brings the regress of justification to an end, since the authority of our own mind and will give us a reason for obeying the legislator. And legislation is possible because reasons are public, they can be known, endorsed and enforced by others. The social nature of these obligations is at the same time the condition of their possibility.

One should note however that we do not always do what upon reflection we would do or even what upon reflection we have already decided to do: reflection does not have irresistible power over us, as not all our desires are scrutinized simultaneously. But when we stop and look inwards we cannot but think that we ought to do what on reflection we conclude we have reason to do, though in the end we might not act upon our reasons. And when we don't do what we have a reason to do, self punishment (maybe just as anguish or unhappiness) follows. The authority of our reflective will which approves (rejects) a potential action if there is (not) a law backing it up is the source of obligation.

How about the transparency requirement? Does autonomous reflective endorsement yield a genuine guide for moral action? Autonomous reflective success informs us that acting on a certain desire can be put under the scope of a certain maxim, and fulfillment of the categorical imperative is not hidden from us: although our mind is not transparent or internally luminous,[23] reflexivity means

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[23] Cf. Korsgaard (1996), p.144.

precisely that our judgment of an action as subsumed under a universal law is something we are apt to note, since we indeed have awareness of the practical identity that provides the standards constraining the admissibility of our choices. For Korsgaard, it is as per definition impossible that reflective success is incomprehensible or inscrutable for the deliberative agent: it can happen that we act unreflectively but if we stop and meditate on whether we may or should do something, this cannot go unnoticed for us.[24]

As we have seen, the appeal to autonomy heavily relies and relates to our human identity. Every agent capable of reflection has a sense of human identity. By enforcing this identity as the sieve that retains a reason as a good one for acting, the agent is expressing her autonomy. According to Korsgaard, the need and the source of ethical normativity comes with our reflective nature which requires that we can see our actions as autonomous.

If reasons arise from reflective endorsement under the categorical imperative acting on our will as identified by our human practical identity, then prohibitive obligations arise from reflective rejection; we reject whatever threats the integrity of the identity against which we evaluate a desire or an intention as capable of being taken to be a maxim. Integrity of our human identity implies integrity of other people's. We can legislate for ourselves thanks to there being public reasons backed up by our most general and shared human practical identity

Autonomous judgment via reflective endorsement as performed from a 1st–person perspective issues moral reasons and mutual obligations which are *not* substantially independent as facts that we cognize or discover outside our involvement and self-identification as human agents. And although certain identities, and therefore obligations, can conflict or compete, the foundational role of the human identity establishes an all encompassing background for moral choice to be judged.

Autonomy does not only rely on our practical conception of our human identity, it also configures it. Our practical identity is expressed in the moral choices we make, and feedback from that expression informs our future choices. Note however that it is possible to violate obligations 'just once' without losing one's identity: "Even people with the most excellent characters can occasionally knowingly do wrong". (Korsgaard (1996), p.103.)

Time to take stock: Korsgaard proposes the appeal to autonomy as an enhancement of mere reflective endorsement, a proposal which did not succeed in answering NQ because general principles were too loose to keep exceptions under control. Our legislative will cannot take just any anomaly as it cannot take just any motivation as correct, as action is admissible only if it could constitute a universal law for our human identity situated in the Kingdom of Ends, under the constraint that we belong to a union of rational beings under a common law. This

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[24] *Akrasia* is of course possible. It is a vice precisely because of transparency.

formal constraint, Korsgaard wants to prove, entails not only that the content of our morality is given by reason (insofar as what can be adopted as a law has to hold when set upon the Kingdom of Ends) but also that the consideration of the integrity of our and others' practical identities has to be guaranteed.

As shown, the appeal to autonomy fulfills the requisites on an answer to NQ the author fixed at the outset. Success in autonomous reflective endorsement is a 1st–person experience which is transparent to the deliberative agent undergoing it, and which essentially involves her human, and therefore shared, practical identity. It yields reasons which indeed explain, justify, and motivate action. Interestingly, this proposed source of normativity heavily relies on the distinctly social aspects of our nature, since a reason can only be such if it can be laid down and obeyed, if two parties can interact adopting to the proposal or ban it carries as a law.

3.4 Conclusions and plans

As we indicated, the general constraints for the source of ethical normativity as in 3.1.1 above echoed some of the broad conditions for semantic normativity in 2.3.3. Moral judgment relies on motivating reasons which can lead to action, justifying and explaining it. Our interpretive view on meaning turns reasons justifying semantic incorrectness to hold in practical situations. Reasons should be public in both ethics and semantics, and a possible regress in their support should in either case be avoided.

NQ in ethics can be argued to require a practical formulation and a 1st–person centered answer, if such a response should propose a source that justifies and not merely explains why an action can or ought (not) to be performed. A causal description or natural history of morality is not what NQ requests when voiced by a real deliberative agent. The appeal to autonomy should take a 1st–person perspective and there it can root normativity in the evaluative experience of each practical agent: successful reflective endorsement is a particular operation which is possible because of our shared human identity. According to Korsgaard, an answer to NQ should not also find a source but also guarantee that there is a method for acting according to the reasons prescribed by that wellspring. When we ask in a practical setting why we should behave morally, the answer should provide *us* with reasons for acting, i.e., the source of ethical normativity cannot be hidden from us. The appeal to autonomy guarantees that the deliberative agent is informed about what she should do, as her successful reflective endorsement is transparent and conscious. Our practical identity, our sense of who we are, dialectically interacts with the determination of what is, for us, the right thing to do as given by autonomous reflection. In view of these conditions, the appeal to autonomy turns out to be the only one in the proposed candidates which can fulfill them.

Against this background, in the forthcoming we will try to see whether Ko-

rsgaard's conditions with respect to NQ in ethics can be meaningfully conserved when considering semantics. We will ponder whether the sources for normativity she rejects fall into the same criticisms when taken as candidates for semantic normativity, and we will try to appraise her own proposal as a good answer as well. In chaper 4, we will discuss whether semantic normativity should be voiced from a 1ˢᵗ–person perspective, whether this suffices, whether it guarantees that the source will provide reasons also holding for the 3ʳᵈ–person perspective. We ask whether similar demands should be posed in the case of semantics. Does the question about the source of the normativity of meaning an actual method for interpreting/producing correctly? How if in any way is our practical identity involved in the justification of our judgments of semantic (in)correctness? After discussing these possible conditions, we illustrate Korsgaard's four candidates with analogous proposals for sources in semantic justification. We will evaluate whether they meet all conditions, i.e., those in 4.1 and those in 2.3.2 and 2.3.3. The illustration of the appeal to autonomy will turn out to be the only satisfactory one. In ethics, autonomy secures a social bearing of obligations. In semantics, it might be able to ensure the interactive nature of linguistic abilities, and the interpretive nature of linguistic meaning.

Chapter 4
Linguistic meaning and justification

In this chapter we deploy Korsgaard's specific conditions for sources of ethical normativity as presented in 3.1.2. The analysis she offers will let us understand more precisely what is the normative question in semantics. Then we broadly find analogue sources to the ones she considers in the ethical case, now in the context of semantic justification. Her general picture and scrutiny of these alternatives will let us better identify what can provide reasons in legitimate support for a judgment of (in)correctness of the use/interpretation of an expression with respect to its linguistic meaning.

Korsgaard argued that NQ should be conceived of as asked from the 1st–person perspective. In the case of justifications of use/interpretation, does a 1st–person centered answer guarantee that the reasons hold valid when transferred to other possible viewpoints? As we will see, semantic normativity will require a separate consideration of each stance in the judgment of a use/interpretation.

Korsgaard held that epistemic accessibility should not be justified by appeal to intuition, and its representation as a search or theorization about facts was misled. She argued instead that confidence gives us access to the reasons provided by the appeal to autonomy. Justifications of use/interpretation may not be supported by completely private experiences of cognizance. However, not all access may require propositional representation/interpretation, or a new regress threatens to follow. What other forms of access can we recognize?

For Korsgaard, the strong bond between reasons for ethical judgments and our practical identity implied that the source and its reasons may not conflict with such generally shared human background. Reasons for our judgments in semantics are entrenched with our own individual identity but they do not seem to have their genesis in it. But since they enter into the determination of such individual identity, we need to understand their interaction.

We will suggest an illustration of voluntarism, realism, and Humean reflective endorsement as sources for semantic normativity. The requirements presented in 2.3.2, 2.3.3 above and in 4.1 below will provide us with standards to evaluate them. We will consider the illustration of the appeal to autonomy separately and in more detail, and we will also evaluate it against the proposed requirements. Let us stress once again the illustrative purpose of the examples given: The goal of their examination is not to settle what it the best answer for the normative question in semantics, but rather to exhibit how the requirements we have argued for can be applied.

Chapter 4.

4.1 Three conditions for the normative question in semantics

The following considerations take up Korsgaard's argued requirements as presented in 3.1.2 above. We will consider whether these conditions hold equally when imposed on semantic justification. The resulting requirements will not be the same as those obtained in 3.1.2 but their discussion starts from that examination.

In 4.1.1 we will argue that while the reasons should hold across the three perspectives — from the 1st–, 2nd– or 3rd–person point of view of a certain use/ interpretation —, these standpoints are not inter-reducible. Thus the normative question has to be addressed from each of those possible formulations.

In 4.1.2, we will see how insofar as intuition might be a private, unshareable form of cognition, this may not be the form of access to reasons for judgments of semantic (in)correctness. If propositional knowledge is claimed to be the sole form of accessibility, a collapse in regress ensues. On the positive side, when access to some reasons is seen to be know-how, it seems that justification is secured.

In 4.1.3, we will try to see that although reasons do not emerge from our individual identity, there exists a close relationship between reasons and identity. Conflicts of diverse magnitudes have different roles and effects.

4.1.1 Three perspectives

Now we get to the first point of Korsgaard's examination of NQ. Should the question about the source of semantic normativity centered on the 1st–person as in the ethical case? Let us try to develop this further. Is it necessary to formulate the normative question in semantics from the 1st–person perspective? Is it sufficient? And how about the 2nd– or 3rd–person? Is it necessary to voice the question from that viewpoint? And is it sufficient?

First, let us make a short note about this distinction of perspectives. When Korsgaard refers to this issue, she strongly associates the 1st–person perspective with the practical formulation of NQ, while the 3rd–person stance is related to a theoretical question, "a question about why a certain species of intelligent animals behaves in a certain way." (Korsgaard (1996), p.16) In the case of semantic justification, a 3rd–person perspective need not be conflated with a theoretical formulation of the normative question. An external witness to a dialogue may interpret the expressions uttered in the conversation and regard his own action, his own act of interpretation, as standing in need of justification. And we further consider here the peculiar position of the 2nd–person stance, the direct interlocutor (either speaker or addressee) in a conversation. As a witness, his access to the history of the discourse in which an expression occurs bears a peculiar access that a casual witness may not be familiar with. Consider the following general formulations:

1. Is it right for me to use/interpret S to mean f?

2. Is it right for my interlocutor to use/interpret S to mean f?"

3. Is it right for X to use/interpret S to mean f?"

All the perspectives should be represented

To show why all the perspectives should be represented, let us develop a simple example. Lately Bea has had marital problems. Alf asks Bea how she is doing with that, and Bea replies. Alf is not very well-versed in English idioms.

Alf: So how is it going with Carl? Could you make it up to him?

Bea: Well, it takes two to tango...

Alf: Oh, so are you taking him to take tango lessons?

Why can Bea say that Alf's interpretation is wrong? How can she clarify the blunder? Bea can be somewhat puzzled but she may then explain Alf's somewhat odd reaction: Alf does not know that "It takes two to tango" is used to refer to a two person conflict where both people are at fault. This also justifies Alf's mistake: Alf mistakenly interpreted Bea literally. Alf as a peculiar 2nd–person does not see that his reaction is not appropriate. The situation could go on as follows:

Bea: Uhm, you got me wrong. I meant that it's not only my fault... That is what "It takes two to tango" means.

Alf: Oh, I see. I'm sorry. I hope you will manage to sort it out.

Alf can be convinced that he misinterpreted Bea due to his ignorance of English idioms. If Alf recognizes Bea as a competent speaker, a certain authority is attributed to Bea's assertion which can settle the issue. The new use is adopted without further considerations, with this dialogue as the only known context for the expression. But suppose Alf is somewhat skeptical (or just overconfident about his own competence in English). What if Alf reacted instead thus?

Bea: Uhm, you got me wrong. I meant that it's not only my fault... That is what "It takes two to tango" means.

Alf: Oh, really? Why?

What can Bea answer? If Bea knew about language history she could probably describe how the expression became popularized, spread, etc. Could this description fail to be a justification for Alf? It seems that no engaging reason emerges from a chronicle of past uses. Bea could say a bit impatiently, trying to elicit the elided elements in the full sentence:

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Bea: It takes two <u>people</u> to <u>dance</u> the tango.

Alf could understand at this point but maybe he could once again feel unsatisfied. Bea could ask Alf whether he knows what "dance", "tango", "two" mean. If this were the case, then Bea could try to be even more explicit:

Bea: Just like a dance between two lovers — <u>the tango</u> —, one person might start the fight — <u>the dance</u> — but they both keep it going.

What else could Bea say if Alf is not convinced by the substitution-structure? It feels as though Bea were interacting with a stranger, someone apparently unfamiliar with roles of partners in dances and quarrels. It seems that the kind of ignorance that is revealed is not semantic anymore. The lexical level has been reached and Alf is still not convinced.

The main point of this rather extended example is that Bea might still not be able to convince Alf about the right interpretation of "It takes two to tango". The 1st– and 2nd–person viewpoints in this conversation do not have equal verdicts, and still we — as readers — do not hesitate to adjudicate the discussion in favour of Bea, provided our familiarity with English idioms permits this. An external perspective on the situation can yield a different picture from the 1st– and 2nd– person viewpoints. We don't need to be direct participants of an interaction to notice a semantic mistake. However, this does not undermine the peculiar appreciation of the situation that Alf and Bea had above. Bea is sure of her own use of the expression at issue and Alf doubts. As readers, we are neither Bea himself nor Alf. And still our judgment agrees with Bea's and disagrees with Alf's. Our stance in the 3rd–person is different from the 1st– and 2nd–person viewpoints. None of them is reducible to the other(s) even if a single agent can stand in each of them.

Does a 1st–person centered answer always suffice?

In the case of ethical normativity, Korsgaard made sure that her 1st–person centered answer also worked as a 3rd–person one, since the appeal to autonomy, which guarantees that we should do only what can be universally taken as a maxim, what should be accepted as a justification for any deliberator. Her approach prioritized the 1st–person viewpoint but at the same time was able to involve the 3rd–person perspective.

The publicity requirement on reasons demands and guarantees that the reasons for any agent's justification should be shareable. This implies that not only should the 1st–, 2nd– and 3rd–person standpoints be considered, but also the reasons have to be shareable between them. Are we guaranteed that a 1st–person centered answer will explain and justify our use or interpretation of an expression when considered from the 2nd– or 3rd–person perspective? Are we guaranteed

that a 2$^{\text{nd}}$– or 3$^{\text{rd}}$–person centered answer will explain and justify when considered with respect to the other stances?

Suppose that we conceive of communicative intentions as public entities. We could think that they are the suitable candidates to be reasons for judgments about use/interpretation. Suppose the source of such reasons lies in the speaker's and interpreter's joint awareness of such intentions. However, as we found in the example above, even when Bea made clear his communicative intention, Alf could still ask why Bea used a certain expression to convey that message. Moreover, as the examples found in slips of tongue suggest, sometimes the communicative intention can be clear and still a linguistic mistake is made. As for a 2$^{\text{nd}}$– or 3$^{\text{rd}}$–person centered answer, the risk with such attempts is that a failure for a deliberative agent to access the reasons which others might demand for her implies that her self-judgments may not give reasons for her uses/interpretations.

Thus, even though the source of semantic normativity should provide public reasons which hold across the 1$^{\text{st}}$–, 2$^{\text{nd}}$– and 3$^{\text{rd}}$–person perspective, not every proposed public sort of reasons holding for the 1$^{\text{st}}$–person perspective might constitute sufficient or adequate support for judgments of semantic incorrectness. The same sort of disarticulation can arise with respect to the 2$^{\text{nd}}$– and 3$^{\text{rd}}$–person viewpoints and this establishes the non-priority of these perspectives.

As we have seen so far, a theory of semantic normativity has to cast light on the origin of justificatory and explanatory reasons for an agent considered in the various stances he can adopt as a linguistic actor. It is a fact, as we exemplified above, that semantic confusions, misinterpretations, or corrections can be found, alleged, and understood from the 1$^{\text{st}}$–, 2$^{\text{nd}}$– and 3$^{\text{rd}}$–person stances. And as we have argued, no standpoint seems to guarantee that reasons will hold across these perspectives, a fact that endangers the soundness of a source framed exclusively in one of them. Therefore, although as in the ethical case reasons for semantic judgments should be valid in any possible perspective for the judge, no perspective entails that the normative question in the other stances will be satisfied.

4.1.2 Accessibility to the source and its reasons

Korsgaard's condition of transparency requires that an answer to NQ should not only allege a source but also give a method by which we can come to explain and justify our ethical behaviour. This demands not a full characterization of actual cognitive processes we undergo but rather a guarantee for the conditions of epistemic accessibility to be given for an actual deliberative agent, someone who actually needs the support of the reasons which the source of ethical normativity may provide.

Korsgaard's own proposal relied on confidence as the epistemic means by which we come to obtain justifications for our ethical judgments. In particular, successful autonomous reflective endorsement of our apparently confident actions provides us with legitimate reasons. Although Korsgaard does not enter into a

refined epistemological characterization of reflective endorsement, she does state that it is a conscious deliberative activity. We get to *know* the result of the process of autonomous reflective endorsement: the deliberative process and its outcome (whether the action can be turned into a maxim that can be willed as a law) is a transition in our informative state.

Ineffability or unshareability of the cognitive process by which we are informed of the source and the reasons it provides endangers semantic normativity. This deters appeals to incommunicable sensations, intuition of natural facts, or transcendent facts, or ineffable knowledge of rules. Moreover, not all access may require propositional representation/interpretation, or a new regress threatens to follow. Other forms of accessibility should be available, and our discussion will try to give some indications of some alternatives.

Accessibility: Conscious knowledge? Knowledge of what?

Let us consider whether we could admit that the source and *all* the reasons for our linguistic obligations are accessible to us via conscious knowledge. For this, we would have to find that such a cognitive effort can always be distinguished, and we would need to specify what is the object of such knowledge: Are these acts? Norms? Rules?

Speakers/interpreters can certainly know facts about the linguistic meaning of sentences and expressions of their language. Those who speak English, for instance, can plausibly know that "Mary had a little lamb" is ambiguous (was she the owner or did she have a great dinner?), or that "Alf hits Bea" and "Bea is hit by Alf" are related as active- and passive-voice transformations while the truth conditions do not change.

However, it is harder to make a case that we (have to) consciously reflect on them in order to use/interpret these expressions. It is not clear whether conscious attention to these facts of language motivate our behaviour or even that they could constitute reasons for using/interpreting these expressions in a determinate manner, in all cases. Moreover, since we are looking for practical reasons, we should be guided by reasons, and not merely give a good description of our behaviour by alleging knowledge of these facts. This observation is related to Korsgaard's objection against realism. Justification does not seem to be a matter of consciously collecting factual evidence.

An alternative construction to meet the requirement of transparency is to put this as a matter of knowledge of a system or theory of rules and norms about the grammar and usage for a specific language. To have such knowledge is to have an internal representation of these rules and principles, which speakers use in the course of language production and understanding. The 'level' of these principles could differ, comprising very general principles of grammar, such as (*d'après* Chomsky) the rule $S \rightarrow NP + VP$, or in a lower level, such as a Davidsonian theory of truth, or all rather specific rules such as $NP \rightarrow Det + Adj + N$ in English.

The issue here is that if our practical deliberation should involve an infinite theory of truth — facts about which we normally do not doubt, like the fact that 'table' in English means table — or if different and possibly very complex grammatical/formation rules, it turns out to be too computationally hard a process to be a good account of our generally effortless semantic judgments. Moreover, since we are looking for practical reasons, rules should guide and not merely stand in accordance with our behaviour. An agent justifies her behaviour by appeal to a rule only if that rule is involved in the explanation of her behavior. The point made earlier is precisely how rare it is that such rules indeed enter our explanations. Moreover, reasons should not only explain but also justify. Do people actually justify or excuse themselves for a misuse/misinterpretation by invoking these rules as the standard for correctness? Again, this seems too rare to provide us with the kind of reasons we actually give and take when we judge our and others' uses/interpretations.

But the moral to draw from these observations should be not to conclude anything about whether facts or rules are normative semantic reasons. Instead it is the kind of knowledge invoked that should be further articulated. Perhaps our way into reasons for semantic judgments should not be generally modeled by knowledge as a conscious process in which we engage. We can admit that *some* of our reasons for our linguistic actions can be given by conscious or explicit knowledge but this might not be the kind of access in the vast majority of our judgments.

Why should we think that the relevant relationship is one of conscious knowledge in all cases? When I cycle back home, my movements are properly described by a complicated set of equations in physics, but there is certainly no need for me to know these equations in order to keep my balance. In a similar vein, then, we could see that most of the linguistic behavior of an average speaker is given by procedural knowledge of the semantic facts and rules and syntactic rules her language. Though not ineffable, procedural knowledge does not require propositional expression/interpretation in order to operate. The point is not that this knowledge is not propositionally expressible but rather that it does not need such expression. We can know and understand expressions of semantic rules and facts; they are not hidden from the speaker/interpreter. But we need not retrieve them consciously or explicitly either to perform or to judge our uses or interpretations.

Tacit knowledge? Propositional or non propositional?

In view of this, a line of defense is to argue that knowledge of reasons justifying our semantic decisions is not overt and does not come to us as an extended procedure that we subjectively engage. Tacit knowledge is how the literature normally refers to information that we might only unconsciously bear. It is not generally clear whether this is used as a synonym for ineffable or for unreflective (expressible but unobserved) knowledge. Owing to Ryle (1949), tacit knowledge

is sometimes assimilated with 'knowledge-how' as opposed to 'knowledge-that'.[1] We should note however that this identification is not entirely accurate, since knowledge-that can be explicit or tacit, knowledge-how can be explicit or tacit.

A rationalist move then tries to overcome the implausibility of conscious reflection on complicated grammatical rules by declaring them as objects of tacit knowledge. Jane, an average English speaker, may know, in the ordinary sense of the term, that Chicago is the largest city in Illinois (if asked, for instance, what the largest city in Illinois is, she will answer correctly), but the knowledge she has of the semantic theory of English can be characterized as propositional but tacit because she is proficient in these theories but she does not consciously ponder over them, and normally she does not discuss with someone else the content of what she knows. The same could be said, it is argued, of the syntactic theory, though we find this case to be different because she might even be unable to state by herself certain syntactic rules, while the semantic (somewhat awkward) question "Why do you mean table by 'table'?" can be answered by the common-sense indication: "Well, in English objects such as this or like that are called 'tables'." In the syntactic case, that inability rather implies that it's ineffable (not merely unspoken) knowledge which we are invoking, and this might not go without consequences.

Our previous observation about the rareness of justifications of our uses/ interpretations as backed up by formal rules concerning the lexical or grammatical sense of our expressions immediately poses a difficulty for this approach. Furthermore, there are two serious restrictions to this move. On the one hand, it seems that unconscious propositional semantic knowledge or ineffable (and unconscious) syntactic knowledge suggest that justification lies in agents' unconsciousness, sub-personal beliefs or phenomenological experience of being guided 'blindly' or immediately.[2] The publicity of rules might be endangered if access to the source and its reasons is given by an ability which is completely peculiar and non-communicable. On the other hand, talk of tacit knowledge seems to eschew rather than answer the transparency requirement. If the process that gets us to the reasons does not include us in the subjective experience or awareness of our cognitive activities, it is hard to see how a method can be characterized.

Explicit but non propositional knowledge?

However, as we indicated above, knowledge-how need not be identified with tacit knowledge understood as unconscious or ineffable, at least not if with Stanley and

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[1] As Stanley and Williamson (2001) argue, it is better to take these structures, knowledge-that and knowledge-how, as labels rather than as conditions for the kind of information these categories convey. I.e., the steps to build a skill and train in it might be expressed in knowledge-that sentences. The difference between the categories is better understood by looking as the associated interrogative they take: What do you know φ? How do you know φ?

[2] Cf. e.g., Wright (2007).

Williamson (2001) we grant that a way of doing something can be made explicit.

Even if propositionalizable *a posteriori*, semantic representation/interpretation is not to be a requirement for the kind of knowledge we have when we can perform a certain task. Under this view, reasons are not propositional objects but rather routines. Categorical norms, rules, and nomological norms can be pieces of experience in which we are trained. Again, if these routines lie in the public sphere, if we actually share them, solipsism is demurred. However, tacit knowledge as an unconscious process threatens to some extent the success of this alternative in view of the transparency requirement.

This alternative, some sort of non-unconscious know-how might be characterized as a kind of confident behaviour which does not go unnoticed for us but for acquisition and performance we do not need a theory or an already developed form of semantic justification. As in Korsgaard's analysis, confidence can be regarded as a kind of certainty,[3] something which enters into our cognitive framework as a basic piece which is fundamental for action but which is not provided by propositional knowledge.

We should note that the requirement of publicity and transparency place certain boundaries on the characterization of such know-how or confidence. Whatever we are confident about cannot be only individually accessible. This sort of access can surely be seen to be action-guiding given the cardinal role that basic routines have on our general behaviour. If one admits that at least some of the reasons are obtained by such operation, one of the forms of double regress we considered in 2.3.3 seems to be prevented: not all reasons demand semantic representation or interpretation. Contact with the source and its reasons via know-how would moreover explain and justify our judgments although indeed justification in this case would not resort to further reasons to support it but instead to some sort of priming or training that establishes certain ways as those by which we should go.

The generality of these ideas might leave the reader unsatisfied. May the critical voice understand that, as we announced before, the purpose of considering here the requirement of transparency in semantic justification is not to provide an exhaustive characterization of the kinds of epistemic access by which we apperceive and are guided by reasons. Instead, the aim of this examination is to lay bare the shortcomings of a traditionally unquestioned idea according to which semantic normativity requires propositional knowledge to mediate between us and the reasons which should explain, justify and motivate our judgments.

So far, we have seen that the requirement of transparency sets a limit to the role of propositional and explicit knowledge as the way which leads to our being guided by reasons coming from a certain source. An over-generalization of this

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[3] Korsgaard does not refer to this but confidence is related to certainty as characterized by Wittgenstein (1969).

form of cognitive operation is not only unrealistic but also logically problematic. If tacit knowledge is characterized or identified with unconscious knowledge, this equation has a relatively obscurantist effect that hinders the force of such alternative. Let us stress again that these considerations do not purport an outright rejection of any of the cognitive operations we have referred to. Our goal is not to disqualify them *per se* but rather to question the extent and the consequences of claiming them as the only or most pervasive form of epistemic access. The conclusion of these thoughts mainly points at the need to understand how some form of non propositional knowledge can mediate our semantic justifications if they are to be possible at all.

4.1.3 The source, its reasons and our practical identity

Korsgaard's third requirement settled that an answer to NQ in ethics must appeal to our sense of who we are, to our sense of identity. Our most general conception of ourselves defines our human practical identity and gives rise to the unconditional obligations: "The reflective structure of human consciousness requires that you identify yourself with some law or principle." (Korsgaard (1996), p.103). In Korsgaard's plot, the mind's reflective structure forces us to have a conception of ourselves. This self consciousness forges roles that can have a built in normativity. Our practical reason demands from us justifications for our actions. And reasons for action cannot be obtained if there is not a practical identity from which unconditional obligations spring. How does our identity interact with our semantic judgment?

The no-priority requirement we set with respect to the 1st–, 2nd– and 3rd– person perspectives should show that we do not make an exclusive choice or ordering between a witness's or an 'objective' 3rd–person viewpoint, external, post-Saussurean view on language, and a 1st– or 2nd–person, situated stance. The situation is the peculiar experiential point of view that each speaker/interpreter has with respect to her own linguistic actions, considerations, etc. Admittedly, for methodological or analytical reasons in can be advisable to take into account, as we have done earlier, different perspectives on language. An 'objective' 3rd– person perspective can conceive of it as a system of relations between agents given to an impartial witness/speaker/interpreter, a system that might be formally understood. The 1st– and the 2nd–person perspectives are partial because not only their informative and contextual setting is relevant for what they can do with language, but also because each of those agents is a human agent, an intentional subject with a certain identity and memory, whose acts of speech and judgment constitute the basis for his experience in the world and his communicative interactions with others.

Semantic judgment and communicable identity

A broad idea of what we mean by personal identity can be found in (not necessarily verbal) physical, psychological, and affective self-recognition. This observation does not isolate ourselves, it concerns others too. We consider our nature and grounds of survival, rational anticipation, and self-concern, moral responsibility, compensation, interpersonal moral relations, advance directives, etc. Although not every aspect of this self-recognition requires semantic representation and interpretation (e.g., our propioception), it would be hard and risky to try to isolate linguistic and non-linguistic components. We can immediately point out the entrenchment of such components lying in an interrelation and inter-determination which is hardly deniable.

As we argued earlier, semantic justifications cannot be detached from the particular roles that each subject in a dialogue might entertain. What of our self recognition might be involved in the reasons we give for our uses/interpretations? If it were something completely individual, a phenomenological but non- transmissible experience, the risk of introducing non-public justifications comes to the fore again. So it seems that what has to be preserved of our identity when meanings are judged also concerns others. The no-priority requirement we set with respect to the 1$^{\text{st}}$–, 2$^{\text{nd}}$– and 3$^{\text{rd}}$–person perspectives yields that personal identity which is involved in semantic judgment should be communicable. Ineffability would introduce a private determination on the source of normativity.

The difficult point is to discuss what sort of relationship there is or should be kept between our judgments of semantic incorrectness and whatever is public or shared of our personal identity. A general description of this can point at a double form of interaction between judgments of semantic (in)correctness and our personal identity. On the one hand, insofar as conceptual contents plausibly have a bearing on our personal identification and the unity of consciousness, semantic normativity affects our personal identity. Another way of putting this point along the lines of narrativists is to note the importance of linguistic meaning in constructing a narrative identity for any agent.[4] Not all of our self-identification requires linguistic abilities but our psychological and affective subjective experience is (at least) partly mediated by our past linguistic actions and by expressible self-representations. As Williams indicates, "Our contingent practical identities are, to some extent, given to us but it is also clear that we enter into their construction." (in Korsgaard (1996), p.213.)

On the other hand, although to claim that personal identity is a requirement for anyone who can make judgments of semantic (in)correctness, it is possible to see that our self-identification does influence the background against which our judgments are made. An explicit and point wise self-recognition may not be found upon every case of judgment — that would be a quite extreme and unlikely claim. But insofar as our conversations involve us from a particular subjective

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[4] Cf. e.g., Williams (2007).

stance with respect to our interlocutor, at least a basic distinction between who is participating in the dialogue does occur. Moreover, semantic memory is part of our personal identity, and violations of the integrity of semantic memory affect semantic judgment. So identity has a certain weight on how we judge and act by reasons when we speak/interpret.

This gives us the following partial conclusions: all sorts of aspects of our subjectivity are involved in the subjective perspective from which we participate in any conversation. Of these aspects, those which are communicable or shareable may enter into the justification of judgments of semantic (in)correctness. There is a double pathway between such shareable identity and our normative practices in language: we recognize ourselves in (most of) our sayings, part of our self recognition and at the same time these normative practices influence and/or express our self recognition. How do changes in our personal identity or in our semantic judgments interact? To understand this, the role of conflict should be considered.

Semantic judgment and conflicts with our public identity

Aversion to conflict with our personal identity is so strong as to turn our practical identity into a background in which our ethical justifications have to somehow fit. This is Korsgaard's basic idea for the requirement to appeal to our human identity. However, and this indicates a topic which is discussed at length, conflict in fact occurs. Certainly, and this is something Korsgaard does examine, change in our practical identity is hard; it requires an effort of revision that usually postpones or leaves aside possible foci of conflict. Nevertheless, to admit that ethical change is hard should not dismiss altogether our familiarity with conflict.

Although this ethical issue is an important point in itself, we will not enter into further considerations here. Our interest is centered on how this could be understood in the case of semantics: do conflicts between our personal identity and our semantic judgments occur? Given that changes in our personal identity are indeed hard, does this say anything about the role of conflict in the double pathway between our shareable identity and our normative practices in language?

An important distinction in ethics can be transposed onto semantics: conflict can arise in diverse magnitudes, and its role and effects are not independent of this variable. A conflict might require the revision of particular and possibly few ethical principles, and such operation tends to be easier and perhaps less rare than massive change. One could even say the admissibility of a conflict is more likely as it implies revision to a lesser degree — either because of the quantity of principles to revise or in view of the steadfastness in which they stand for us.

Is conflict between semantic judgments and our self-recognition similar to conflict between ethical judgments and our personal identity? It seems that differences in magnitude can also be distinguished in the case of conflicts with our personal identity as a consequence of a either a poor or a negative semantic judgment. A local confusion, to discover someone — even oneself — has made a

mistake in her use/interpretation of one or some expressions may not represent a major problem. It is rather ordinary and not very significant to discover than someone has made a linguistic mistake but that does not seem to carry a major threat to either the judge's personal identity or to that of whom we evaluate.

Massive conflict seems to have a different effect. Massive conflict might be found either when too many norms or when too basic reasons require a revision, or when too many aspects of our personal identity come to be shaken. Although a sudden and complete loss of norms for semantic judgments is somewhat unlikely, progressive but generalized loss can go along certain health impairments such as Alzheimer or Parkinson disease.[5] This generalized loss is generally associated with dementia or other forms of cognitive impairment which can carry on a loss of self identification. Although loss of memory is most prominently seen as concomitant with loss of self identification, specific cognitive impairments related to semantic competence are singled out as peculiarly co-morbid.[6]

To briefly sum up this discussion, conflict between our personal identity and our semantic judgments can occur. The likeliness and effect of their occurrence are related as in the ethical case. Local conflict and change are more feasible and have less impact either on our identity or in our judgments. Considering the two way path of their interaction, local changes in the norms we endorse can affect our identity, and revisions in our self recognition can affect our semantic judgments. At the same time, while massive change is equally implausible in both domains, its effect is similarly overwhelming.

Let us round up 4.1. We have tried to note some of the similarities and differences with the considerations raised by Korsgaard in the ethical case as we presented them in 3.1.2. The source and the reasons for ethical and semantic correctness need to guide action which should be justified and explained as interaction between agents peculiar with subjective but communicable perspectives. Neither a witness's stance nor that of the participants in a dialogue should be neglected or obscured. The requirement of transparency showed that if access to the source and its reasons may require semantic representation/interpretation, this cannot be the case for all the justifications of our judgments. The interaction between our personal identity and our judgments of (in)correctness requires as well a certain relation of preservation between the two. While conflict can occur and indeed happens, massive conflict is rather rare and it brings along a rather caustic effect. Let us now propose and evaluate three alternative sources inspired by the candidates examined by Korsgaard in order to see these conditions and those in 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 at work.

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[5] Cf. Cuetos (1999).
[6] Cf. Kihlstrom et al. (2002).

4.2 Alternative sources for semantic normativity

With our requirements offered, we come now to see different candidate answers for NQ. We will present, following Korsgaard's pattern in 3.2. above, how the voluntarist, the realist, and the Humean reflective endorsement supporter might elaborate their proposals for what can give reasons which explain and justify semantic correctness. The claim is not necessarily that these sources are exclusive — reasons might spring from different origins. Our examination will not concentrate on whether they can be the sole sources but rather on whether they can be proper sources at all, i.e., whether they fulfill the conditions we have issued.

In 4.2.1–2 we consider voluntarism and realism. Although neither of the two perspectives is completely rejected, their failure to meet the conditions in 2.3.3 and 4.1 leads to a qualification and revision of what they propose. The voluntarist model relies on an external will which might result incompatible, or without effect, on the 1st– and 2nd–person perspectives. Realism supports the objective existence of facts which constitute the reasons for our semantic judgments. When these facts are reduced to empirical events, a logical difficulty comes back, Hume's argument against the is/ought reduction. If facts are not reduced to natural, 'brute-facts', a proper epistemic access needs to be guaranteed, something possible but not frequently given. In 4.2.3 we turn to a version of Humean reflective endorsement in order to overcome the difficulty posed by the transparency condition. This alternative will prove better but not completely satisfying, as it will not rightly accommodate all the evidence in 2.3.2, but it will improve when complemented with an autonomy requirement in 4.3.

We employ Korsgaard's characterization of these positions as a template. Needless to say, that other articulations can be given to voluntarism, realism, and Humean reflective endorsement. The point that we want to stress is not how these positions can be precisely formulated but rather whether they are the right approach to answer the normative question in semantics. By keeping the parallelism, we also stress the idea that Korsgaard's analysis in ethics can give us a good conceptual framework to understand semantic normativity. The coming pages intend to be a simple example of this. And in any case, the most interesting point we hope to make is to indicate why certain attempted answers cannot do the job simply because they are not apt. A different proposal could surely be thought upon the sound and the controvertible aspects of these sources that we will try to ponder and raise.

4.2.1 Voluntarism

Voluntarism in ethics asserts that moral obligations are obtained by invoking the command of an alien will, which has legitimate authority over the moral

agent, and who can make laws for that agent. Normativity springs from the mandates of a lawgiver who has the power to punish whoever does not behave as prescribed. Can we find an analogous source of the normativity of linguistic meaning? What can be a law-giving authority for meaning, external to our will, by whose commands we should abide on pain of punishment?

Another angle to tackle this is to inquire about the arbiter in case of hesitation in linguistic use or interpretation. When we are unsure about the meaning of a word or when we hesitate whether we understand a statement or piece of text properly, what may we rely on, in what do we trust?[7] Dictionaries and other lexicographic or grammatical resources usually supply authoritative and reliable answers at the lexical level. Academic institutions (sometimes a public entity dependent on governmental structures) or independent professionals in our speech community[8] are usually responsible for the[9] elaboration of this kind of material, and it is common to find that they are meant to "look after a certain language" in their mission statement or statutory mandates.

They "look after language"... What could this mean? Do they take care or are they in charge of language? Such paternal characterization seems to indicate that these public institutions or references observe the well being and/or exercise control over language. This expression needs to be examined, as it is not clear whether this monitoring is an active or a passive activity. Are these academies responsible for the fact that there always exists correct use? For instance the Académie française affirms that the recommendations it issues "define the good usage" of French language, though they are not legally enforceable. Does this mean that they operate an active surveillance and influence over their *L*-community? There does not seem to be a role for an active will exercising active power over the linguistic community. Prudential advice is given, abidance by a lexicographic recommendation seems possible and perhaps highly recommended in certain contexts but the lexicographer generally does not turn his recommendations into a commandment that he actively enforces. Dictionaries gain and lose entries and definitions are changed year after year. Is that equivalent to the failure of the previous year's editions in ruling how people should go by their words?

Do such institutions carry out instead an auditor's task? The systematizations given in a grammar or a dictionary always involve decisions; lexicographers gather evidence and sieve it through a theory that presents it consistently. The theory

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[7] Sometimes it's just easier to frame these questions in the frame of a second language, not our own mother tongue.

[8] English language does not have such an institution but Henry Fowler's *English Usage* set the standard for British English for much of the 20th century.

[9] "La mission qui lui fut assignée [à l'Académie Française] dès l'origine était de fixer la langue française, de lui donner des règles, de la rendre pure et compréhensible par tous. Elle devait dans cet esprit commencer par composer un dictionnaire." URL: http://www.academie-francaise.fr/histoire/index.html

is not to be imposed but rather to be contrasted with new evidence, and this process of revision is not assumed to aim at a final point. It seems that neither image is individually satisfactory. It seems that these institutions ensure the existence of a statement for correct use, a systematization of educated people's use of language which acquires the function of a prudential advice when passed by the lexicographer or the grammarian.[10]

General objection: action-guiding reasons

Besides this, our question is whether the Academic fixation of the norms is what justifies our judgments of semantic (in)correctness. Let us note that although upon certain occasions we *do* rely on reference material in order to judge a use/interpretation, the frequency of these events with respect to the flow of communication we entertain is just too scarce to be a general source. And unless one is willing to defend that actual agents interpret/produce applying a Fregean principle of compositionality up to the lexical level, it seems this source would not help us at a grammatical/functional sentence or discourse level. In any case, even if one purports such implausible defense, the standard contact of average speakers with reference material (grammars, orthographic manuals, dictionaries) is too limited to be a general reason we give for a certain semantic choice. So if this material acts upon us as an external will whose command we obey, it seems that this happen too sporadically.

And concerning the power of sanctions that Hobbes and Pufendorf claimed for the law giver to be able to rule over the 3rd–person stance, it seems that in language, punishment, reprimands, or negative reactions do not come from an institution or invested alien authority.[11] This is not to say that semantically wrong linguistic behaviour goes without consequences. A humorous effect, a moment of confusion, a complete failure of communication, all of those can come from a careless, ignorant, or deliberately mistaken use. The point here is rather that these effects occur without there being an external will which arbitrates our conversations providing reasons for our reactions.

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[10] In the case of Spanish language, the Real Academia Española, 22 regional Academies fix together the norm regulating the correct use of language. A consensus is articulated and its minimal requirement is to legitimize those uses in the different linguistic regions which are generalized among the educated speakers in each area (geographical and of knowledge), and which do not endanger the systematic unity of the language. This consensus fixes the common norm for all Spanish speakers concerning lexicon, grammar and orthography, harmonizing the unity of the language in the rich diversity in which it exists. Yet this mission of fixing the norm of correct usage is to make coherent and not to coerce actual usage.

[11] This can remind us of Jean-Luc Godard's *Alphaville* (1964). In the 'Institut de sémantique' the computer Alpha 60 takes out words from the dictionary, "The bible", and poets and journalists are punished under charges of linguistic insurrection.

Regress

Suppose we grant the lexicographer the unlikely role of the Hobbesian law giver. This would turn the experts into the fragments of the 'Leviathan' that rules our linguistic behaviour. Now Korsgaard's question for the voluntarist returns: What prescribes the behaviour of these expert speakers? Is their behaviour intrinsically normative or does it depend on something else? Clearly, they have relied on other, previous standards. What provides those? If we decide to go down the chain of experts, we need to put this to a halt at some point on pain falling in the regress of justification. The expert does not exist if there is not a community that designates her to have that role. This does not undermine the specialist's proficiency but signals that its normative power is conferred by a community that *is already able* to use/interpret language correctly.

Beware, this is not to deny Putnam's thesis about the division of linguistic labour.[12] In fact, there exist experts whose recommendations or usage becomes authoritative in a field. This is just to point out that these specialists are not Hobbesian dictators over language. Even if we as a community endow them with the notoriety of their proficiency, this does not put our daily considerations under the direct constraints of their recommendations. We don't think of the expert each time we justify our communication. Moreover, one does not need to have had contact with the experts to notice semantic mistakes, although it's likely that one would not notice the same mistakes as the expert can. We *do* institute our experts. We do turn them into the trustworthy systematizers of usage. But as an actual explanation of our judgments of correctness this is basically implausible.

Three perspectives

Let us retrieve the requirements for NQ we already discussed. Does the voluntarist account provide for a source of normativity that takes into account the peculiar perspective of the 1st–, 2nd– and 3rd–person? The question: "Why should I speak/interpret as the expert does?" seems open and possible. Although a community may invest certain academics with the cultural position of being a trustworthy standard for correct use, this does not set the expert side by side the daily speaker. On the other hand, prescription has a tendency to favour the language of one particular region, and the question "Why should I speak/interpret as the expert does?" becomes even more urgent and legitimate.[13]

What if the expert does not lie outside but rather inside a conversation, in the 1st– or 2nd–person perspective? Is an expert's use/interpretation in a conversation *always* the right standard that should apply to all the parties' use/interpretation? An expert's interpretation can be wrong and not owing to ignorance of meanings

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[12] Cf. Putnam (1975).

[13] Before 1870 there were no regional Academies of Spanish language in Latin America or the Philippines. Why should I have spoken as the Real Academia Española recommended?

but perhaps due to poor knowledge of the context in which an expression appeared. Not all semantic mistakes or misinterpretations are due to ignorance of meaning.

Transparency

As regards the second condition, the requirement of transparency, once again we need to ask how is it that we come to know the expert's opinion so that our justifications and explanations find there their resolution. Even though the dictionary is a register of their recommendations, it does not seem to give us reasons for following the meanings given in the entries. How do I get to know the reasons for acting by those standards? Is that basic education? Basic education generally provides an abridged and adapted presentation of the Academic consensus. And when we normally speak or interpret, do we actually justify our interpretation invoking our basic education in language? A counterexample comes: basic education can promote archaic or atypical uses that speakers just do not follow, a standard that just not rule our daily linguistic behaviour.

Personal identity

Last but not least, consider the possible connection that such an external source as a lexicographical register can have with our identity. Truly, an educated speaker of a language will identify his uses with many of the entries he could find in his national Academy's dictionary. Nevertheless, as soon as the word in question is unknown, the dictionary presents a meaning possibly alien, unfamiliar to us until that moment. The entry informs of the standard use of the word; once we can use it or interpret it, that information is internalized. Having read the dictionary becomes the starting point of *our* training and eventually our ability to use it but it is not identical with this ability. And once again, Academic prescription has a tendency to favour the language of one particular region over others. Distance from our regional identity can motivate dismissal of a lexicographic recommendation.[14]

Certainly, basic language education has an air of an alien external source that to some extent governs our (in)correct uses of language. It *does* seem that meaning is to some extent externally given; it is just not up to our individual to enter a ritual of baptism of the world or the definition of the grammar she will use. However, it seems that it is the effect of education and not the formal system as an external will that is invoked as the legitimation of competent speakers. Like the Academic expert, education is just does not fit very well the sovereign description of the law-giver defended by Hobbes and Pufendorf. If voluntarism can shed any light on what is a source of semantic normativity, it may not be in the form of a law-maker and sanction-giving external will.

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[14] Once more, note that before 1870 there were no national Academies in Latin America or Philippines.

4.2.2 Realism

The realist's answer to NQ in ethics argued that moral claims are normative if they are true, and true if there are intrinsically normative entities or facts which they correctly describe, which required him to prove that values, obligations, or reasons really exist. In the case of semantic normativity, the realist can be seen to argue that linguistic meaning is normative in virtue of certain intrinsically normative and objective facts.

A clarifying remark is necessary, since semantic realism is an already existing (and intricate) debate in semantics. Dummett (1978, 1993) argues against the independence dimension — verification transcendent version — of realism by particularly rejecting a form of semantic realism. Dummett's objections counter a realist who claims that our understanding of a sentence consists in knowledge of its truth-condition, where the notion of truth involved is potentially recognition-transcendent or bivalent. Dummett's realist is hence of a very specific kind, one who claims that meaning is given by facts, truth-conditions which lie beyond our epistemic access. In our argument below, we will counter (with Dummett) such version of realism but our argument will try to be more general.

Realism about semantic normativity is normally but not exclusively construed as a matter of objective reality of intrinsically normative truth conditions. A more general approach formulates this as a position according to which judgments of semantic (in)correctness rely on reasons which are factual in the sense of independent of the speaker's behaviour and judgments. This approach, we will argue, is not problematic *per se*, at least not if a non-reductionistic approach is taken. More specifically, non-natural facts might be summoned to be the ultimate reasons in support of judgments but only if a proper epistemic access and linguistic change are secured, and if not all facts are claimed to be semantic or require interpretation/representation to be identified.

We add a note here about normative facts in general. It seems that the philosophical sea is divided by intuitions or basic stances when it comes to this issue. There exist positions utterly against the mere soundness of talk about normative facts. Meanwhile, discussions in (meta)ethics, semantics, and metaphysics in general indeed debate about normative facts. In order to even start considering realism, the principled stance against normative facts should be left aside. While this methodological decision will let us evaluate this approach it does not imply an outright defense of the existence of normative facts.

Natural facts, semantic change, and reductionism

The first thing we can ask the realist is what sorts of facts justify and explain our linguistic behaviour. Are they natural or non-natural? Suppose the first option is taken: are these natural facts considered to be types or tokens? If natural facts are considered as kinds, then their immutability makes it difficult to represent

semantic change. If considered at the token level, then the realist should beware of Hume's is/ought irreducibility: no number of empirical particular facts can amount to an obligation or a prescription. A general problem of these strategies is put in the question: How can nature issue what we consider semantically (in)correct?

The basic form for this is to try to draw normativity from the set of effective uses of an expression in a linguistic community. This is simply not possible, and even if it were, linguistic change would pose a serious objection. An approach such as the dispositionalist's or one akin to teleological semantics anchors the reasons for our behaviour in our peculiar human nature but not in specific events. This is not to deny that our semantic practices are an actual and empirically shown part of our behaviour as a species, it is just to stress that the evaluative dimension — how we think things may or ought to be — cannot be deduced from the facts arranged in a particular manner in experience.

After Kripke's arguments against the simple dispositionalist position,[15] we feel this alternative is already in a disadvantaged position. When the dispositionalist argues that our past uses determine our normative uses, it seems hard to see how justification is obtained from a collection of empirical events. Suppose that dispositionalism is construed non-conditionally, e.g., if it argues that dispositions are physical states which can be trumped by other empirical facts in a given situation but which are nevertheless normative.[16] Then again linguistic change seems to counter such alternative; unless one is willing to admit that every semantic change in language corresponds with a certain change in the physical states of all the speakers of the L-community, something we believe is quite implausible.

Those who take Millikan's teleosemantic theories of content as a reference for the realist move towards semantic normativity do not seem to take a too promising path. Evolutionary fitness may provide prudential reasons or a good explanation of our current uses (if content is seen to determine use) but these need not constitute linguistic reasons, of the sort we ordinarily think are provided by the meanings of our expressions. When we learn the meaning of an expression or simply interpret someone's speech, we may not have a single clue about any evolutionary or historical facts of language. Furthermore, Millikan herself remarks that she does not intend her theory to accommodate the idea that meaning is something that must be "open to or within consciousness", such that meaning can ordinarily "instruct us", or be something we can know through introspection.[17]

The points we have raised against realism about the source of semantic normativity when given as a naturalistic-reductionistic position basically runs against two objections: the impossibility to derive norms from mere states of affairs and the difficulty for reductionists to properly model semantic change.

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[15] Cf. Kripke (1982).
[16] Cf. e.g., Wikforss (2001).
[17] Cf. Gampel (1997).

Transcendent non-natural facts: Transparency and semantic change

If instead non-natural but transcendent facts are summoned to be the relevant reasons, one needs to ask whether these are taken to be verification transcendent. If so, then a version of the Dummettian arguments against realism with respect to understanding of meaning as knowledge of truth conditions signals a violation of the requirement of transparency. If the facts to be known are verification-transcendent, an appropriate form of transcendent knowledge or epistemic access has to be established, and the onus of the proof lies there. Our particular view is that the characterization of such epistemic access is rather implausible, and this leads us to leave this proposal aside.[18]

On the other hand, if the reasons should not only justify, but also explain our semantic choices, then transcendent non-natural facts need to be related to our actual linguistic behavior. The most notable difficulty this approach faces is posed by semantic change. Any facts the realist might soundly postulate should be somehow manifested, or our interpretive view on linguistic meaning may be at risk. Without a proper account of how these transcendent facts are related to our actual linguistic behaviour this alternative is put in a difficult position. Additionally, semantic justification and explanation are not eternal; if transcendent non-natural facts are the appropriate support for our choices, an explanation of how they can change so that linguistic change can be accounted for is due. This, again, does not seem an obvious matter when the realist summons non-natural but transcendent facts.

Our argument has pointed out the critical role played by the requirement of transparency and the need to account for linguistic change as conditions that justification via non-natural but transcendent facts seems not to easily accommodate.

Non-transcendent, non-natural facts

If instead non-transcendent and non natural facts are appealed to, perhaps some of these quandaries can be overcome. Social facts or institutional facts are sometimes seen as falling under this metaphysical characterization.[19] We believe the plausibility of this alternative is greater. In any case, if this candidate source is to succeed, all the conditions issued before — especially the transparency requirement — should be properly articulated.

An appeal to social facts as the reasons for our judgments of semantic (in)correctness seems to have some catch. At least the condition of simultaneous accessibility can get to be represented if individuals are guaranteed to know or

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[18] *Personal note:* Admittedly, this position statement needs some argumentation to be supported but we believe the reader might, for the sake of the argument, consider the plausibility of this view.

[19] Cf. e.g., Schatzki (1996).

be aware of them. This, however, is not something obvious or which follows from any characterization of social facts. Therefore the realist needs to ensure that simultaneous accessibility does not become an issue. Considering the requirement that the three perspectives should be addressed by the source while the reasons should remain the same, it should not be the case that such non natural facts change depending on the stance or perspective of a speaker, interpreter or witness of a conversation. And considering the need to preserve the relationship between semantic judgments and our personal identity free from major conflicts, these social facts might give reasons which may not collapse with whatever is shareable and communicable of our personal identity.

It is clear that not all such facts may involve semantic interpretation/ representation in order to be identified. The threat of regress we described in 2.1.2 should already settle this restriction. And yet, in order to cut the first form of regress noted there, the remaining facts should also be intrinsically normative, albeit not of semantic nature. This requires the realist to attribute intrinsic normativity not only to semantic facts but also to facts of other sorts, something which might lead to a reconsideration of even taking this alternative.

Now we come to ask: should these be hypothetical or categorical norms? The point to make here is not whether all/some/no linguistic obligations are/is categorical or hypothetical, but rather whether they can be. If facts are hypothetical norms, they might be rules or nomological norms. An argument given earlier re-enters here: not all of these facts may be hypothetical on something requiring semantic interpretation on pain of a falling in a regress in justification, as correct interpretation would always be required and hence we could not get off the ground. Moreover, if hypothetical, the hypothesis should be shareable and public, which excludes individual's desires as admissible hypotheses. Categorical rules would yield a universal obligation effective on 1st–, 2nd– and 3rd–person perspectives. Again, to prevent the regress, not all of them should require semantic mediation to be known.

We indicated that we do not want to argue against non natural and non-transcendent facts as possible reasons for our semantic judgments. However, the issue of whether these facts can be action-guiding in conjunction with the kind of epistemic access that evidential knowledge suggests can become a more serious issue. The basic fault in the first forms of realism we presented lied precisely in the apparently descriptive approach to the facts that the realist seems to entertain. An evidential use of non-transcendent facts related to what actually obtains in social groups runs a similar risk. It is somewhat misleading to see judgment of semantic (in)correctness to be always supported by evidential knowledge. A proper form of epistemic access, one by which agents do not relate to such non natural facts as pieces of evidence, has to be provided if the realist is to give a normative account at all.

We have tried to show that there is some grip to the realist idea in this: there is a point in semantic justification in which we come to say "This is how we act". We seem to be referring to something that is the case. Does this mean we are claiming a disposition, an evidential history? Or are these facts intrinsically normative? How we actually act is obviously not detached from how we expect ourselves and others to act. The problem is to insist that we gather this facts as evidence to fix or support a certain norm. Facts about how we act *do* have a role to play but maybe not as a basis that we should evidentially know in order to justify our judgments of semantic (in)correctness.

4.2.3 Humean reflective endorsement

The voluntarist looks for an external will which can validate our judgments of (in)correctness. We say S to mean f. We ask: Why? Because X (an external, alien will with the ability to punish) mandates that S means f. The realist claims that there are facts (of some sort) that we need to know. Korsgaard observed with respect to moral claims that their force seems to be evinced in whether we can confidently act as they prescribe. Can we see an analogous trail in the case of meaning? Here we will try to illustrate this with an example, to see what could be a model of Humean reflective endorsement (HRE henceforth) as a source of reasons supporting semantic judgments.

Very young children are able to act and can recognize norms and failures to follow them. They can signal that something has gone wrong.[20] Do they appeal to an expert in the community or cognizance of facts for this? A teacher (a parent, caretaker, or instructor) seems to have the figure of a relative expert and indeed wrong moves are pointed out and negatively qualified. Unlike the Hobbes' or Pufendorf's law giver, the teacher does lay down the contents of the instruction. And unlike Hobbes' or Pufendorf's commander, the teacher does not seem to be conferred his authority by the children. On the other hand, from the point of view of the pupil, his attitude need not be of submission but a certain confidence is required.[21] And although there are facts that they know, examination of facts does not seem to come before being confident.

Korsgaard's move to reflective endorsement acknowledges that the basic attitude towards the claims of morality is one of **confidence** (or lack thereof). Here comes the transposition: We confidently interpret S to mean f, and we can come to ask about the reasons for this either due to critical distance or when a mistake, misinterpretation, or another semantic letdown occurs in communication.

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[20] Cf. e.g., James and Miller (1973); Rakoczy et al. (2008).

[21] "How does someone judge which is his right and which his left hand? How do I know that my judgment will agree with someone else's? How do I know that this colour is blue? If I don't trust myself here, why should I trust anyone else's judgment? Is there a why? Must I not begin to trust somewhere? That is to say: somewhere I must begin with not-doubting; and that is not, so to speak, hasty but excusable: it is part of judging." Wittgenstein (1969), §150.

Semantics must be endorsed from a point of view which itself makes claims on us and so which is itself potentially normative: claims on us that we all recognize are issued by other people. Suppose Alf uses S willing to mean f. Bea listens. What reason can Alf have to behave thus? One way to consider this could observe the **expectations** that escort Alf's utterance. Consider A to be Alf and B to be Bea:

Definition *(HRE)*
A can mean f by S if he can expect B (or anyone in B's position) to act accordingly (as being addressed by S requires) and if B (or anyone in B's position) can expect A to act accordingly (as uttering S requires). [22]

Simultaneous accessibility, action-guiding reasons

A can be **expected** to act accordingly if he can be regularly attributed to have a history compatible with an instantiation of the general expectations of someone who is witnessed to utter S, and if A can plausibly expect the effects of his utterance of S. His current and past linguistic and non-linguistic action should afford the reactions compatible with and called for by this utterance. B can be expected to act accordingly if she can be expected to react as someone who utters S expects, and if she can be expected to anticipate such purported effects in A's utterance of S. If not-S means not-f, and if A asserted $not-S$ before, he is generally not expected to assert S meaning f. If A shouted "Help!" he might be expected to be in a situation of danger or misfortune. This suggestion, analogously to Korsgaard's use of Hume's version of reflective endorsement, is only one alternative for articulating this general model. We thus stress that reflective endorsement is a general concept that can be argued to be a source of normativity, but at a more specific level decisions concerning what is endorsed and under what circumstances come to a choice. May the reader grant us with the outline given here for the sake of the argument.

This expectation can be tightly or loosely constraining; it can be a tight obligation or only a permission.[23] And although some of these expectations pertain to semantic attributions, as in the case in which we expect someone (not) to believe something, these can also simply relate to actions in the future or in the past that the speaker/interpreter might have done or soon do. This should suggest that expectations are not taken to be consequences of content attribu-

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[22] The case of the interpreter is completely symmetric:
Definition *(HRE): B* can interpret S to mean f if he can expect A (or anyone in A's position) to act accordingly (as uttering S requires) and if A (or anyone in A's position) can expect B to act accordingly (as being addressed by S requires).
   Indeed, this has an air of Lewis's requisite of common knowledge or mutual attributions in the definition of a convention. However we do not want to claim here that expectations are conventions.
[23] 'To expect' can be used at least in these two senses: "I expect you to clean your mess." and "I expect the plane should land by 9pm."

tion, and that they are not semantic in nature in every case. Although some expectations are arguably semantic,[24] not all expectations require semantic representation/interpretation and this puts the problem of regress at a good distance.

A noteworthy issue here is: Why do we expect S (not) to mean f and not f'? There is a history of practices, education of what those practices can be turned into, a history of goals and (un)successful attempts to achieve them. While this is indeed something that should and can be accounted for, it is not identical with the normative question. Indeed we can ask how we come to expect something and understanding this will let us see how our behaviour and the beliefs created upon them dispense or afford such expectations. This would explain how we come to behave normatively *thus*, permitting, commanding, or expecting certain things.

Since semantic normativity requires reasons which explain and justify, the point to understand here is, noting that we *actually* have certain expectations, how do they come to justify our linguistic behaviour as speakers/interpreters. The interrogation at stake is whether these prospections can play a role in the justification of our semantic judgments.

The present consideration of expectations can be fitted into a transposition of Hume's two-fold reflective endorsement test. The examiner's confidence is his expectations about what the other one can do or expect establishes the harmony or congruence between two potentially normative points of view, 2nd– and 1st– person perspectives. The method of reflective endorsement tries to answer NQ by checking whether our confidence can resist this double scrutiny. Symmetric operations between 1st– and 2nd–person perspective and reflective endorsement of each examiner work together. When the speaker A checks if he has reason to mean S by f, he asks:

Definition *(HRE-Test)*
"Can I expect B (or anyone in B's position) to act accordingly?" and "Can B expect me (or anyone in my position) to act accordingly?" I check in B's and in my own account whether we can support S to mean f. [25]

A has reason to expect B to act accordingly if he can be confident to expect that anyone in her position would act accordingly. A can check if B can expect him to act accordingly, if he has reasons to expect that anyone in B's position could expect him to act accordingly.

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[24] Think for instance of Wittgenstein (1958)'s (Part 2, section i) dog who might not plausibly be expected to believe that his master will return in two weeks from his business trip to Brussels.

[25] The situation from the perspective of interpreter B is completely symmetric. She asks: **Definition** *(HRE-Test):* "Can I expect A (or anyone in A's position) to expect me to act accordingly?" and "Can A expect me (or anyone in my position) to act accordingly?" I check in A's and in my own account whether we can support S to mean f.

Explain and justify

A successful outcome of this test lets A remain confident about his expectations, his semantic judgment justifies and explains a correct use. An unsuccessful trial yields the expectations regarding B's and A's own behaviour inadequate.

A confident state is a justification and an explanation for our use/ interpretation. As an explanation, A can say: "I say S to mean f because if I say S I can expect B or anyone in her position to act accordingly and B can expect me to act accordingly". As a justification, A can say "I should/may say S for B to act accordingly because if I say S I can expect B or anyone in her position to act accordingly and B can expect me to act accordingly." Why do they justify? For A: "Since I have a reason to act as if you can interpret that by S I mean f, and I have a reason to act as if you can understand that when I say S I mean f, then I am entitled to utter S to mean f." For B: "Since I have a reason to act as if you can mean f by S, and I have a reason to act as if you can expect me to understand that you mean f by S, then I am entitled to interpret that you mean f by S." Entitlement comes from the two-fold check that indeed considers whether A and B's interaction — their actual communication — allows for the use/interpretation or not. Needless to say, this has a Davidsonian air,[26] although as we have remarked earlier, in this sketchy model (self) attribution of expectations is not a semantic action, although some of the contents of the expectations might be semantic.

Reasons are public

Reasons are public because expectations are generated against the background of standard uses of a word or expression and the interaction of the partners in dialogue. Any of the agent's reasoning involves the observation of what others do when they utter or hear such an expression. But despite the publicity of the reasons, the speaker's/interpreter's peculiar perspective is recognized. Mutual expectations in dialogue are formed taking into account the partners' subjectivity in an objective environment of current or normal uses. The 3rd–person's viewpoint, however, seems to be somewhat neglected in the test, as we will come to see in a moment.

Transparency

With respect to our epistemic access to the source and the reasons it issues, A is an average speaker iff A can perform (*HRE-test*). This is possible thanks to his linguistic knowledge (rules of grammar, collocations, fixed expressions, T-sentences, some of this might be known as formal rules, some of this maybe not),

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[26] This is somewhat similar to Davidson (1986)'s account of communication as coincidence of the speaker's and interpreter's passing theories, though it is not intended to represent this idea.

non-linguistic knowledge (associated actions, regularities) and a history of past experiences. Perhaps some of this is borne as propositional knowledge but not possibly all of it.

Even if there is any tacit propositional knowledge of rules (which we doubt, in principle), the basic insight here is that expectations are strongly shaped by interaction, by the affordances of our actions, and the reactions that other people's moves prompt on us, by a knowledge-how that can be taught and shown. The reflective exam analyses whether our confidence in acting as we will or have can be assured by our normal course set by how we act upon self and external expectations.

Neither factually- nor propositionally-borne knowledge seem to be the attitudes that back up our semantic judgments in action, though this is not a claim that reasons or the source are inexpressible in language. The justification of our expectations rather depends on our training in conversation, which in the case of our mother tongue even comes before our formal education of the systematic presentation of the syntax, semantics, morphology, pragmatics, etc., of our language (if we get it at all). This doesn't mean we need to be trained in each expression about which we can generate any expectations. Both our informal and formal education provide us with a limited training that allows us to expect and henceforth make judgments over new, unheard discourse. This is not to suggest that once we can have certain expectations, we can deduce all the rest. This just indicates that we are trained in the ability to expect and not in holding a very definite set of expectations.

Does this mean that our semantic judgments are flawed, ineffable, or private? We believe this only means that the epistemological characterization of the process that leads us to behave (in)correctly as linguistic agents is not best expressed by those relations. As we anticipated at the end of 4.1.2 above, epistemic accessibility to the source and reasons for semantic normativity is a broad concept comprising factual knowledge among other possible epistemic relations. In any case, the expectations are framed by an empirical environment that hosts and constrains what we can do. This should stress again that the justification of our expectations is executed against the background of an environment that guarantees that these reasons are public. Overtly supported justifications are ultimately visible, expressible and shared.

Our personal identity

Concerning the relationship between answering to (*HRE-test*), and our own identity, even if we are not given a fully fledged defense of how expectations are acquired and justified, we think it's fair to say that what we do shapes what we can expect. What we do is essential to our identity: the primitive command "Do x!", "Don't do x!" What we expect shapes and is affected by what we do. A good part of our identity is prospective in this sense: most knowledge of the world is

given in these expectations. Self-recognition (physical and psychological), knowledge of oneself (physical and psychological), certainties about the world define our expectations ("This is a hand.").[27] Linguistic expectations and reactions also interact dialectically with our sense of who we are. But can this be too particular? If the reasons which determine correctness always take A into account, if A makes a semantic mistake (Burge's 'arthritis') we might end up having to take this as a correct use! This idea leads to an objection related to the issue of the perspectives.

Three perspectives: material inadequacies

In Hume's model, judging in sympathy with the narrow circle and according to what others expect, ethical standards are settled. In (*HRE-Test*), the 3rd–person perspective is included as expectations attributable to others in general and not only to our interlocutor. However, this 3rd–person viewpoint is just required to be someone who could be in our interlocutor's position.

Objections coming from the transposition are at hand. As we will see, they will lead our way to a complementation of the sketch of Humean reflective endorsement given here. An external witness's judgment is invoked with respect to a particular attribution, an answer to the (*HRE-Test*) which might accommodate an exceptional use. One is given by an analogous case to the example of the doubting lawyer. (Cf. note 18 in 3.2.3 above.) Upon one occasion it might be possible to answer (*HRE-Test*) positively; this is part of the overpeculiarity of a test that only considers a situation in which only the 1st– and 2nd–person viewpoints are actually considered. A Davidsonian theme comes as a material shortcoming showing the failure:[28] we *can* interpret that Mrs. Malaprop wanted to say 'epithets' when she said, "If I reprehend any thing in this world, it is the use of my oracular tongue, and a nice derangement of *epitaphs*!", but should we? This is a malaprop, we recognize it as such, something is *actually* incorrect. However, reflective endorsement as it works now would deem this correct. "We can" understood as the mere possibility counts as a correct case and hence this wouldn't be a malaprop. Something more binding is necessary to get the two-fold test to predict this as a malapropism and not as a standard, literal meaning.

A different material inadequacy can threaten this proposal: How do we acquire a new correct use? How does it come about that we *should* expect something related to a linguistic expression? Again, something more binding is needed in order to tighten the (*HRE-Test*) or it could end up modeling each interpretation of a malapropism or semantic mistake as a new linguistic meaning thus losing all grip of normativity.

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[27] 'Certainties' here is used following Wittgenstein (1969).
[28] Cf. Davidson (1986).

Let us stress here that, like in Korsgaard's consideration of Humean reflective endorsement, we believe 4.2.3 already offers a better approach to normativity than the first two proposals we considered. However, a successful candidate answer needs a complement that yields norms which can endure and constrain the behaviour of agents outside an isolated interaction.

4.3   Laws for reflective success: the appeal to autonomy

We keep on following Korsgaard's steps. The two-fold test needs to be modified in order to rule out incorrect uses, to issue what should be done and not merely what we are inclined to do. We have a small clue about what is missing to this check for successful reflective endorsement. Somehow it should be required that what we endorse now is not purely occasional. It almost seems as though the correct use precedes our endorsement which would deem reflective endorsement trivial. But this need not be so: reflective endorsement should instead rule out sporadic uses. Alternative forms of complementation are explored.

4.3.1   Failed attempts

A first attempt to articulate this is to add a requirement of repeatability. The idea is to force that it can be adopted beyond one use of S that S means f. Again, consider Alf and Bea:

Definition *(Repeat)*
A can mean f by S if he can expect B (or anyone in B's position) *beyond this use of S* to act accordingly and if B (or anyone in B's position) can expect A *beyond this use of S* to act accordingly.

When Alf checks if he has reason to mean f by S, he asks:

Definition *(Repeat-Test)*
"Can I expect B (or anyone in B's position) to act accordingly *beyond this use of S*?" and "Can B expect me (or anyone in my position) to act accordingly *beyond this use of S*?" I check in B's and in my own account whether we can support S to mean f beyond this use of S.

But note that some people just repeat their mistakes. In some cases of semantic impairment, masculine and feminine personal pronouns ('he', 'she') are regularly used inversely. This however does not turn this agent's speech correct.[29] We can understand and characterize this mistake, we can even expect it (see it

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[29] Cf. Cuetos (1999). This does not imply, however, that impaired subjects making such mistakes are *to blame* for their blunders.

coming) but it is still a mistake. Apparently then it's not a matter of repeatability of occasion.

How can lawfulness be ensured instead? Sharedness, the social character of meaning, can provide the input to reproduce autonomy. Action-guiding reasons come to the fore, but they may not be tailored for just one speaker/interpreter pair. Success in autonomous reflective endorsement only admits of actions than lie under maxims which can be willed as a law, admitting as rightful those actions springing from expectations that can be shared in the 'Kingdom of Ends' understood as all agents in which we can attribute expectations and goals that define their behaviour.

Definition *(Autonomy–1)*
A can mean f by S if *anyone* can expect B (or anyone in B's position) to act accordingly and if B (or anyone in B's position) can expect *anyone* to act accordingly.

When Alf checks if he has reason to mean f by S, he asks:

Definition *(Autonomy–1-Test)*
"Can *anyone* expect B (or anyone in B's position) to act accordingly?" and "Can B (or anyone in B's position) expect *anyone* to act accordingly?" I check in B's and in my own account whether *anyone* could support S to mean f.

An obvious problem becomes prominent: this quantification cannot be literally over everyone. A cannot possibly know all the members of his L-community. With respect to language, specific terminology in a discipline, grammatical subtleties or spelling details are not equally available for all competent speakers of a language. Numerous correct expressions are just not accessible to (possibly large) parts of the linguistic community. What is the domain of quantification? It surely refers to competent speakers in the L-community with S belonging to L-syntax but it does not plausibly refer to everyone. A proper subset is to be defined surely with respect to the (most general) social context of the conversation and its meaning.

A possibility for this is to observe a possible 3rd–person perspective, someone with whom they can both communicate. The expert we need is not an academic expert but a competent 3rd–person or witness who could be asked to adjudicate the dispute. If 'anyone' ranges over those who can be an **interlocutor** for both agents we get a bridge, we add the relevant 3rd–person stance who can potentially adjudicate a dispute. This interlocutor need not be actually involved in a present situation of dialogue; it suffices that she *could* enter it, i.e., that she can be addressed or can demand as A or B do in the dialogue. A's reflective test can be glossed as follows:

Definition *(Autonomy-Interlocutor)*
A can mean f by S if any interlocutor of A and B[30] can expect B (or anyone in B's position) to act accordingly and if B (or anyone in B's position) can expect any interlocutor of A and B to act accordingly.[31]

When Alf checks if he has reason to mean f by S, he asks:

Definition *(Autonomy-Interlocutor-Test)*
"Can any interlocutor of A and B expect B to act accordingly?" and "Can B expect any interlocutor of A and B to act accordingly?" I check in B's and in my own account whether any interlocutor for both of us could support S to mean f.

As we have it now, the mediator or 3rd–person involved in the autonomous reflective endorsement test that should work for both the speaker and the interpreter is just an interlocutor of each of them. It is noted then that if a speaker A and his interpreter B do not pick the same interlocutor in their tests, the method is flawed as it could yield opposing judgments. Imagine Burge's patient suffering from 'arthritis' speaks with his doctor. If he were stubbornly convinced he's right, his potential interlocutor in (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Test*) could just favour his notion of arthritis. This would not be a valid interlocutor for the doctor; and this turns the result of the test for the patient to be irreconcilable with the doctor's, showing this definition is inadequate.[32]

A first idea of revision is to restrict the choice of A and B to a relation of likeliness with the agent who undergoes the reflective endorsement. A's reflective test can be glossed as follows:

Definition *(Autonomy-Interlocutor-like-A)*
A can mean f by S if any interlocutor of A and B *who is like A* can expect B to act accordingly and if B can expect any interlocutor of A and B *who is like A* to act accordingly. [33]

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[30]It's not necessary to say: "if A or any interlocutor of A". A is an interlocutor for herself.

[31] The situation from the perspective of B is completely symmetric. This could gloss B's reflective test:
Definition *(Autonomy-Interlocutor):* A can mean f by S if any interlocutor of A and B can expect A (or anyone in A's position) to act accordingly and if A (or anyone in A's position) can expect any interlocutor of A and B to act accordingly.

[32] Another situation: imagine a child Celia who is learning language L_A, her mother Mom who speaks fluently L_A and L_B, and uncle Jay who speaks L_B. Celia speaks in L_A with Mom. Mom and Jay speak in L_B. Celia yells at uncle Jay: "Gavagai!", the L_A expression for "My rabbit!" expecting from uncle Jay to look for her rabbit teddy, just as Mom does. Uncle Jay looks at Celia a bit puzzled and asks to Mom in L_B: "Ah, is there rabbit for dinner?" Mom will probably have to explain to uncle Jay what just happened. (I thank Jasper Faber for inspiring this idea.) This funny situation shows that the child could test the situation with (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Test*) but get a wrong result by picking *particularly* her mother.

[33] The situation from the perspective of B is completely symmetric. This could gloss B's

This repair is unfortunately insufficient, as an interlocutor of A and B who is like A may not be the same as (or bear the same judgments as) one who is like B. The test is again prone to yielding opposing judgments. Although the idea of a valid interlocutor for both agents seems to facilitate the regularization of what is expected, it still seems to leave room for discrepancies between the partners in dialogue.

4.3.2   The role of the interlocutor

Note that the role of the interlocutor is defined with respect to the agent who performs the reflective test. What if that is not the right co-ordinate to ensure actual mutual understanding in the triangular structure that A, B and their interlocutor C form?[34] If we shift the interlocutor's test with respect to the partner in the dialogue who triggers the autonomy check, we end up in a similar problem: the bonds do not secure congruence of judgments in each party's reflection. It seems that these polarizations on the 1st– or 2nd–person perspective lead us astray. Sharedness of expectations between A and B should not privilege either A's or B's expectations when settling who can be an appropriate mediator. Let's see what a cross check would yield as a gloss of A's reflective test:[35]

Definition *(Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross)*
A can mean f by S if A can expect B and any interlocutor of A and B to act accordingly and if B can expect A and any interlocutor of A and B to act accordingly. [36]

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reflective test:
Definition *(Autonomy-Interlocutor-like-A): A can mean f by S if any interlocutor of A and B who is like B can expect A to act accordingly and if A can expect any interlocutor of A and B who is like B to act accordingly.*

   [34] Cf. Davidson (2001).
   [35] This could also work. For the gloss of A's test:
Definition *(Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross–2): A can mean f by S if A and any interlocutor of A and B can expect B to act accordingly and if B and any interlocutor of A and B can expect A to act accordingly.*
   As a gloss B's reflective test: **Definition** *(Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross–2): A can mean f by S if B and any interlocutor of A and B can expect A to act accordingly and if A and any interlocutor of A and B can expect B to act accordingly.*

   [36] The situation from the perspective of B is completely symmetric.
Definition *(Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross): A can mean f by S if A can expect B and any interlocutor of A and B to act accordingly and if A can expect B and any A and interlocutor of A and B to act accordingly.*

When Alf checks if he has reason to mean f by S, he asks:

Definition *(Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross-Test)*
"Can I expect B and any interlocutor of A and B to act accordingly?" and "Can B expect me and any interlocutor for both of us to act accordingly?" I check whether B and myself can expect any interlocutor for both of us to act accordingly either as a speaker or as an interpreter who could support S to mean f.

Note that we should immediately clarify the scope of 'any': The interlocutors picked by A or B should belong to the overlap of sets from which A and B pick their interlocutors. The exam should require that A's and B's choices actually should belong to set of agents they both consider to be interlocutors of A and B.

Note also that here we are not trying to prove an 'only if' statement. We do not claim that a successful autonomy test is the only source of normativity. Instead, we claim that such a test is a legitimate source; if the outcome of the test is successful, then we can reasons for a judgment. Furthermore, we highlight that such examination does not necessarily commit with an intrinsicalistic point of view — (v.a/b) still holds, as elicited in 2.3.3 above: Semantic normativity in general may be non-intrinsic, i.e., not all norms need to be semantic.

Now let's see if this new revision can resist the problem of a choice of different interlocutors for A and B in their respective tests. Suppose A and B indeed take different interlocutors C and C'. Recall that C and C' are interlocutors for A and B, they belong to the overlap of the sets from which A and B pick their interlocutors. Note that C and C' are themselves interlocutors: C can both stimulate and respond to mean f by S as A does and anticipates, and C' can both stimulate and respond to mean f by S as B does and anticipates. Suppose then that A and B do pick C and C' respectively in their own tests. Let's see what a cross check would yield as a gloss of A's reflective test:

Case *(Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross-A)*
A can mean f by S if A can expect B and C to act accordingly and if B can expect A and C to act accordingly.

This could gloss B's reflective test:

Case *(Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross-B)*
A can mean f by S if B can expect A and C' to act accordingly and if A can expect B and C' to act accordingly.

So each of C and C' is expected to be an appropriate stimulator of, and responder to an utterance of S. This gives that C and C' are congruent judges: if A can expect B and C to act accordingly and C stimulates/responds as C', then A can expect B and C' to act accordingly, and this is parallel to what holds for B, C, and C'.
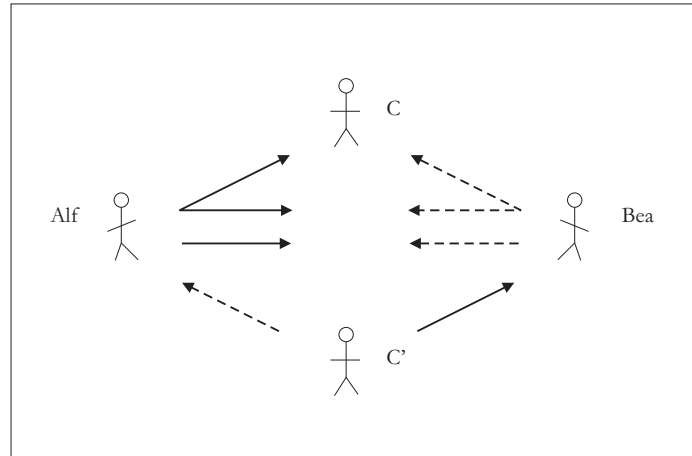
Figure 4.1: Diagram illustrating how C and C' is expected to be an appropriate stimulator of, and responder to an utterance of S to mean f.

Consider yet another case that could be thought to be a possible flaw or objection to (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*). Suppose C_1–C_4 are interlocutors to A and B. Suppose A runs the following test:

Case *(Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross)*
A can mean f by S if A can expect B and C_1 to act accordingly and if B can expect A and C_2 to act accordingly.

This could gloss B's reflective test:

Case *(Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross)*
A can mean f by S if B can expect A and C_3 to act accordingly and if A can expect B and C_4 to act accordingly.

If C_1–C_4 are expected to be appropriate stimulators of, and responders to an utterance of S, will they be congruent judges? Indeed, they will be! This is supported by the restriction made explicit before, namely that the sets from which A and B pick their interlocutors should overlap. Only in case this restriction were not placed would A's and B's test become problematic.

An objection that is raised against Korsgaard's notion of normative force is that it remains unsatisfyingly subjective.[37] (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) tests whether the attribution made by both sides, the speaker and the hearer, can be properly held by an interlocutor of theirs, someone who can be a stimulator and wait for the same reaction as the speaker does, and who can respond to the stimulation as the interpreter is supposed to do.

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[37] Cf. Silverstein (2004).

4.3.3 Evaluation of this proposal

Synchronic normativity, simultaneous accessibility

Reasons issued by the (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) test are in the first place meant to be effective in the case of an actual, practical evaluation. An agent is synchronically involved with the normative question; he demands reasons for a particular judgment of semantic (in)correctness. Furthermore, the reasons are by the definition of (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) test simultaneously accessible to the speaker, the interpreter, and a possible witness.

Public and action-guiding reasons for the three perspectives

Reasons are public and they bind not only the 1$^{\text{st}}$– with the 2$^{\text{nd}}$–person perspectives stably via (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) but also the 3$^{\text{rd}}$–. They are public because the whole reasoning depends on the visibility and intelligibility for a 3$^{\text{rd}}$–person of their interaction. The speaker/interpreter considers what he can expect of his partner and what his partner can expect of him. The others' demands have to be treated as reasons or we cannot have reasons ourselves.

As we have seen, the weaker form of reflective endorsement made it possible to ascertain a corrective interpretation of a semantic mistake ("She said S' but she meant to say S.") This illustrates that sometimes we can cooperate and react to the other's prompts as if they were reasons, and upon reflection realize that a gap was mended on the way. The attributions made by each side onto the other one are submitted to the authentication by the extension of the expectation check onto other relevant speakers. Therefore in a conversation the intervening 1$^{\text{st}}$– and 2$^{\text{nd}}$–persons cross check *their* attributions of expectations. This accounts for the particular consideration of each viewpoint in this test.

Are these reasons provided by (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) test action-guiding? The test actually yields reasons when mutual expectations between 1$^{\text{st}}$– and 2$^{\text{nd}}$–person viewpoints are afforded by an external 3$^{\text{rd}}$–person interlocutor of both. Hence, a reason can address the partners in dialogue if someone can find from the 3$^{\text{rd}}$–person perspective that their actions are intelligible by such justificatory reasons.

Note however that these reasons are not irresistible or flawless: the speaker or interpreter may just not go by the outcome of the reflexivity test in each partner, or they might be wrong in their assumptions of who can be a proper interlocutor for A and B. This is a virtue of the illustration, since a cross test in which the outcome is positive can allow us to be confident in our expectations and hence justify our past action or motivate our future one. Certainly, bad reasons could be yielded for one of the parties as an outcome of a flawed test but this cannot go really further given the discrepancy with the interlocutor's expectation's or what a proper interlocutor for speaker/interpreter should be. Expectations are visible in the form of linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour; hence, the unwarranted

positive outcome in any of the party's test will sooner or later show for his partner in dialogue, and it immediately shows for the 3ʳᵈ–person interlocutor of both.

Explanatory and justificatory reasons

An objection against the explanatory power of cross-autonomous reflective success: Parfit (2006) notes that reflective success may be required for us to act for a reason, but we can have a reason to act without successfully reflecting (or even reflecting at all). It is true that we don't need to have reflected before. But if autonomous reflective endorsement is successful, it means that we were acting by those expectations. Success sanctions that we can be confident in how we acted, that we had such reasons. The issue is that we have reason to act when we can behave confidently, when "This is how we act" can be trusted. We obtain reasons for this when we succeed in autonomous cross-reflection.

Reasons and rules

We come to ask: should these be hypothetical or categorical norms? Again, the point to make here is not whether all/some/no linguistic obligations are/is categorical or hypothetical, but rather whether they can be.

When reasons provided by (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) are hypothetical norms, they can be rules (whose antecedent might be another hypothetical norm) or nomological norms. As we required, not all of these norms need to be hypothetical on something requiring semantic interpretation. (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) does not presuppose that all expectations are semantic, which blocks one form of regress. Moreover, if hypothetical, the hypothesis can be shareable and public, since (un)conditional expectations are shareable and public.

It is plausible to see that certain reasons provided by (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) might be categorical, unqualified. This endows them with intrinsic normativity which nevertheless is not inherent or necessary to such forms of categorical expectations.

Thus justifiers coming from (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) can be rules, nomological norms or categorical norms. Although these remarks are rather vague, the general idea is to show that none of these kinds of justifiers is eliminated.

Expert, beginner, and average agents

So is this good for all competent speakers? An average speaker's search for reasons can obtain them using the method described. Can a child's and an expert's judgment go by this method for obtaining reasons? Are we competent iff we can submit what we say to the cross-autonomous reflective endorsement test? Very young children who can use language but do not yet manifest corrective behaviour rely on the (dis)approval of their teacher to guide their uses. As we indicated earlier, the verticality in this relationship has an air of voluntarism but we have

already noted some issues with taking this too far. Another observation is that the teacher trains (more or less successfully) the pupil to become autonomous. We have to be trained to interact with another speaker before we can apply (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*).[38]

We don't need interpretation to start learning about what to expect: our training in our customs provides (for at least a certain time) the canonical procedure for doing things, and the acquisition of these normative standards provides the building blocks for semantic interpretation. Soon after it begins, it is a linguistic and not only a non-linguistic training. This process of instruction requires a teacher and a pupil: the "normative facts" provided by bottom expectations govern our actions in social — interactive — environments. The novice is taught not only to do things in a certain way, but also to react approvingly when things are done that way and disapprovingly otherwise: the distinction between correct and incorrect is forged in learning. The child acquires autonomy as he is exposed to expectations and reactions with his teacher and she can hold them and react according to them with new interlocutors. As the child starts to experiment and tries to prompt a reaction or react to a prompt in a certain way she has already shared with her teacher, she can start to become more confident and acquire reasons for her behaviour. In the case of an expert, the situation can turn a bit awkward but it still works. Suppose A is an expert and B a mediocre user of language. Suppose A describes a diplomatic scene and says: "The two heads of state shook hands perfunctorily for the photographers." Suppose B wrongly guesses that 'perfunctory' is a synonym for 'eager'. If there is a C regarding the scene, the appropriate operations of autonomous reflective endorsement test by A and B will put C in a position to judge the correctness (and bitter uncooperativeness) in A's speech.

Transparency

As in the case of weaker reflective endorsement, transparency is a point that deserves some attention. Expectations for the speaker and the interpreter associated with an expression are a rather practical or procedural knowledge, a know-how that need not be ineffable but which is rarely verbalized. Is this to claim that it is tacit? It is certainly not tacit when the training has just begun. A certain distance can trigger the production of linguistic hypotheses and permit the understanding of explicit rules of grammar but this does not come before (relatively) competent use is achieved, and it does not turn on every expectation we have created: a child can already use language (somewhat) competently by the time the testing of hypotheses occurs. This vague description merely intends to suggest that various forms of knowledge appear to possibly mediate between ourselves and the source of semantic normativity. Practical knowledge comes first

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[38] Because of her lack of competence, the initiate learner does not yet exhibit self-corrective behavior; her behavior is subject to the check and correction of the teacher.

in our training as competent speakers but never ceases; propositional knowledge appears later and it affects our practical knowledge. It is stable but also more fallible. In any case, what is important to see is that the cross-autonomy test does not demand propositional knowledge of the expectations traded in the conversation and it does not demand that the speaker/interpreter have propositional knowledge or instruction to acquire expectations and generate others. The test can lay bare whether we are warranted in holding such expectations and hence it provides knowledge that we can (not) or may (not) await for, or react upon the expressions in the conversation as we did or were previously confident in.

Our personal identity

The clause adding the autonomous complement to mere reflective endorsement test reinforces the appeal to our identity that the weak version already advanced. What we can cross-autonomously, i.e., regularly anticipate and do in our interactions with other interlocutors, certainly defines our identity, and our identity is surely affected (though obviously not entirely determined) by the *L*-communities framing the expectations in which we live and relate. Against Korsgaard, Cohen holds that "plenty of what I do that I regard as wrong does not challenge my identity at all." (Korsgaard (1996), p.177) This objection partly misses the point both in ethics and in semantics. An ethically reprehensible action or a linguistic mistake considered in isolation may seem innocuous. But accumulation of wrong-doings or incorrect uses/interpretation (or the idea of complete revision) simply leaves us out of scene as someone psychologically disturbed or "hard to reach".

Semantic change

Another thing to note is that the community does not function as a last court of appeal for settling normative disputes, as an unchallengeable tribunal that, like an oracle, dictates what is right and what is wrong. Semantic change happens when the member of a practice can call into question any aspect of the existing consensus of action that sustains the practice, though she may not overthrow every aspect of the existing consensus without becoming an outcast, that is, without ceasing to be a participant in the practice. When her novel expectations become something that can be held or upon which a 3$^{\text{rd}}$–party and not only one interlocutor can adopt, semantic change can begin. What is clear is that semantic change cannot occur spontaneously, and it involves the linguistic community as the new use/interpretation can endure if the possible interlocutors for a speaker/interpreter can bear the same expectations/reactions. The community is not the cause for the change, yet the change can only have force if the community tolerates it.

Despite the autonomy requirement, expectations are not inherently, necessarily normative. It is not necessary that we expect what we expect: meaning can

change. If I can only answer that I do what I do because "this is how we behave",
I also say that our norms of correctness could be different. And this is not, as we
have seen, one of Humpty-Dumpty's judgments of correctness. Norms can change
but that takes a public event (or many) to happen, a communication in which
new interpretations or uses are autonomously endorsed by the stronger version
of the two-fold test. This supervenience on our habits or regular behaviour does
not mean that we can find definite empirical causes for all expectations. In any
case, we are not interested in adjudicating between the naturalist and the anti-
naturalist. The answer "this is how we behave" is not a description of natural
or cultural facts anymore, although it presupposes them. A note for the realist:
this "given" does not lie unchanging. If it comprises facts, what we say in any
case is not: "I know this is how we behave."

As we pointed out before, this need not mean that the source can provide
effective justification which does not fall into regress. The basic support pro-
vided by categorical reasons does not entail their inherent normativity, just their
function for a certain time as universal expectations.

Material adequacy

Does (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) work as a test that will show that the stub-
born patient is indeed wrong? The patient might stubbornly believe that any
interlocutor C for him and the patient will react accordingly, i.e., C will go by
the patient's expression that he has arthritis. However, any non-stubborn inter-
locutor C of the doctor can be convinced by the doctor's authority that 'arthritis'
does not affect joints. Therefore the patient's stubborn belief is unwarranted: if
C does not make the same mistake as the patient or if she's (plausibly) less
stubborn, C will not go by the patient's expression that he has arthritis.

Does it work for radical interpretation? Suppose we are in the deprived sce-
nario of the native and the radical interpreter. None of them speaks a language
already known to the other one (L_A and L_B, respectively). Since we are assuming
that we speak a language, there has to exist or have existed a valid L_A-interlocutor
for A and another L_B-interlocutor for B. As the scenario suggests it, these poten-
tial interlocutors do not speak both L_A and L_B. We will not describe the situation
again,[39] but rather see whether the reflective endorsement test will yield that B's
interpretation was wrong: Let's see what a cross check would yield as a gloss of
A's reflective test:

Case *(Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross-A)*
A can mean *Sacred creature, do not disturb it.* by "Gavagai!" if A can expect B
and any interlocutor of A and B to act accordingly and if B can expect any A
and interlocutor of A and B to act accordingly.

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[39] Cf. 2.3.2 above.

This could gloss B's reflective test:

Case *(Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross-B)*
A can mean *Let's catch the rabbit!* by "Gavagai!" if B can expect A and any interlocutor of A and B to act accordingly and if A can expect B and any interlocutor of A and B to act accordingly.

It shows in the analysis that B's reflective test unwarrantedly (but comprehensibly) relies on the hypothesis that he can expect A and any interlocutor of A and B to utter "Gavagai!" to mean *Let's catch the rabbit!* Admittedly, A's assumption that he can expect B and any interlocutor of A and B to understand that by "Gavagai!" he means *Sacred creature, do not disturb it.* (and thus expect that his and A's interlocutors will not to disturb the running creature) is somewhat precipitate. However, there is not much more than A could do. Perhaps he could represent the same situation in front of B with a competent L_A speaker, he would thereby show A how to react. Yet this would suppose that A should teach B the L_A language, while the scenario does not involve that assumption.

As it was meant to be, autonomous reflective endorsement successfully undergoes the malaprop test: a linguistic mistake is such that even if the intended meaning is still interpretable, it remains a wrong use/interpretation. An external arbiter may or may not be as cooperative as the interpreter in the dialogue he witnesses but in any case she will notice that the speaker has made a mistake. Another interesting challenge for this proposed source is the liar test. As Buleandra (2008) notes, the reconstruction of the normativity thesis as based in the correctness of application and not of use leads to truthfulness as the requisite for correctness. Hattiangadi (2006) takes that account of normativity as a dead-end for the normativist, noting that we can indeed lie or make an empirical mistake and still make correct linguistic use of an expression. And indeed, the test in *(Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross)* does not predict that non veridical uses are *eo ipso* incorrect. There's no equation between correct and truthful speech because cross-autonomous reflective endorsement gives reasons for correct use and not correct application. 3rd–person perspective can notice linguistic correctness since he can communicate with the speaker and can possibly notice the empirical mistake in case he has proper access to the evidence, and can see that they are different. An expert can utter a linguistically correct statement which nonetheless fails to properly refer, and an adequate witness can notice both the linguistically correct use and the incorrect application.

What autonomy adds to reflective endorsement is precisely the normative effectiveness of our reasons. A successful autonomous reflective endorsement provides an explanation and a justification. The subjectivity of the interlocutors and an external point of view which witnesses and can understand the dialogue are articulated. Knowledge of the reasons for our judgments, knowledge of the

answers to (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) is plausible. This test can let each participant inquire whether he or any possible interlocutor can be confident of the use/interpretation under scrutiny. This cross tests involve all of these potential interlocutor's identities, it observes the expectations they could congruently afford.

4.4   Conclusion

In this chapter, we presented three possible requirements for a source of semantic normativity inspired but not identical to those laid down by Korgaard in ethics. With these conditions in 4.1 and those we had already presented in 2.3.2 and 2.3.3, we evaluated the illustrations of voluntarism, realism, Humean reflective endorsement and the appeal to autonomy.

The outcome of this examination showed that the main shortcoming for a voluntarist approach is found in its difficulty to account for all the perspectives — 1st–, 2nd– and 3rd–person — in a conversation. As regards realism, we saw that a plausible formulation can take reasons to be non natural but non-transcendental facts. We noted however that as long as the epistemic access is characterized as evidential knowledge, the realist runs into trouble to actually account for *norms* and not for *facts* about judgments of semantic (in)correctness. Humean reflective endorsement as defined in (*HRE*) offers a better alternative in this respect but a certain negligence of the account for the 3rd–person perspective endangers the whole enterprise. The example of the appeal to autonomy we found in (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) seems to give a sufficient complementation for the two-fold test to accommodate conditions of material adequacy while it also seems to comply with the rest of the conditions discussed in this chapter and the in 2.3.3 above.

After this exercise, our transposition is completed. Now we have the task of evaluating its results beyond the illustrations we have discussed. The next section will try to assess the effects of our use of Korsgaard's template and examples. We will mainly consider the conclusions we can draw from 2.3.2–3, 4.1–3 with respect to the conditional conclusions in the normativity debate, with respect to the relationship between (meta)ethics and (meta)semantics and with respect to the formal semanticist's enterprise. We will also try to draw some limits to the extent to which interpretation could be justified by means of (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) or similarly successful tests.

Chapter 5

Assessment of our proposal

In this section, we want to weight the results of the transposition we have performed. The general conditions discussed in 2.3–3 and 4.1, and the alternatives examined in 4.2–3, have an effect in the appraisal of the consequences yielded by the debate around semantic normativity in the recent literature. Furthermore, our use of Korsgaard's metaethical study, and the fact that we found in her favoured answer a structure which could also allow us to understand the source of the normativity of linguistic meaning, indeed suggest a link between metasemantics and metaethics, as pre-figured in 2.4.1. This implies a nexus between ethics and semantics proper which needs to be inspected.

A more specific point of estimation offered: the conditions in 2.3.2–3 and 4.1 have a certain bearing on semantics as a discipline within linguistics. Our particular interest is related to how these requisites for a source of semantic normativity may affect the formal semanticist's work. We will illustrate our considerations with an examination of a particular theory in formal semantics, Inquisitive Semantics and Pragmatics. We close with a short note describing a limit on the reach of the normative question in semantics, as discussed here. We briefly discuss the possible appraisal of the normativity in the interpretation of metaphors (and non-literal speech in general) by the appeal to autonomy. We will see how this apparently sound proposal is not able to cope with judgments of (in)correct use/interpretation of metaphors. However, this is not a flaw, but rather a virtue, of the characterization of semantic normativity as given in 2.3.2–3 and 4.1. Indeed, it seems that non-literal interpretation appeals to different sources of the normativity of its judgments than literal interpretation. Though a somewhat tangent matter, we hope this brief note on non-literal interpretation will further clarify how we conceive of the normative question in semantics.

We believe these considerations will provide at least a first review of our attempts to understand the justification of interpretation.

5.1   Importance for the debate

We presented in 2.2 the recent literature's characterization of the normativist position, as modeled by Prescriptivism. According to this picture, rules were issued by correctness conditions; abidance by those rules constrained by giving obligations, provide 'genuine oughts' for our linguistic behaviour. Attempted definitions of normativity were then attacked for not providing categorical, intrinsically se-

mantic or simply well-founded justifications. The importance of the conclusions hanged on whether Prescriptivism was indeed a general picture of semantic normativity. After our discussion in 2.3.2–3, we were able to decide about (i.b), (ii.b) and (v.a/b). Can 4.1 help us to consider the remaining claims in the assessment of the debate? What is the significance of the conclusions of the debate, in view of the characterization of the sources of semantic normativity provided by 2.3.2–3 and 4.1?

5.1.1 Conclusions of the debate and the generality of Prescriptivism

In the debate, Glüer (1999); Glüer and Wikforss (2009a); Hattiangadi (2006); Wikforss (2001) characterized semantic normativism as Prescriptivism. Various formulations are given but they can be briefly stated thus: Prescriptivism holds that reasons for our semantic judgments are provided by (explicit) following and abidance by (stated) rules provided by the correctness conditions of expressions.

Anti-normativists countered, then, that correctness conditions do not prescribe, and for this,they indicated that sometimes we may not use an expression correctly —speaking the truth or with warranted assertability — and still be meaningful (like Hattiangadi (2006)). Alternatively, they argued that abidance by correct use — to speak the truth or with warranted assertability — depends on a desire or an agent's particular (communicative) intention (like Glüer (1999)). Objections to the anti-normativists argued that Prescriptivism can be maintained by way of prima facie obligations (like Whiting (2007)).

The conditionals (i)–(iv) were obtained as the expression of the anti- normativists' objections. To establish them, the anti-normativist would have to settle the related issues in (i.a)–(iv.a), in Section 2.2.3. For the defendants to prove their point, (v.a)-(vii.a) in Section 2.2.3 also had to be established. Moreover, we argued why the significance of their conclusions hanged on (i.b)–(iv.b), (v.b)–(vii.b) in 2.3.1, respectively.

After our discussion in 2.3.2–3, we were able to decide about (i.b), (ii.b) and (v.a/b). Below, we argue why (vi.a)–(vii.a) are to some extent correct while (i.a)–(iv.a) are not. We also argue that Prescriptivism is not a good picture of semantic normativity, by referring to the appeal to autonomy and pointing out how this proposed source meets the conditions while Prescriptivism does not. Thereby we claim that Prescriptivism is just not good as a model of semantic normativity in general. We will see that 2.3.2–3 and 4.1 indicate that Prescriptivism is too specific in various aspects to be a general picture of semantic normativity. The correctness categorization as established by an obligation to speak the truth, with warranted assertability or in accordance to the speaker's communicative intentions, is an attempt to establish intrinsically semantic normativity without a prior evaluation of whether that can be a sound characterization of the normative question.

With respect to (vi)[1]

We already indicated in 2.2.3 that we do assume that permissions and obligations fall in the deontic modality. Both obligations and permissions can be effective in settling synchronic normativity. None of them imply a regress, though we denied — in view of the threat of regress — that all obligations/permissions should be given as statements, or a regress follows. They can both provide public and action-guiding reasons. Not all obligations or permissions should be rules. This gives **support** to (vi.b):

vi.b) Semantic normativity *in general* may be given by obligations and permissions.

    Moreover, and this is a general remark against the generality of Prescriptivism, reasons for judgments of semantic (in)correctness may not be given by the categorization induced by correct uses. Our observation about the possibility of semantic change permitted by autonomy should illustrate this. What we expect of someone who utters or interprets a certain expression can change. The source of the normativity of linguistic meaning need not be identified with the normative categorization induced by correct uses. So, although (vi.a) is the case,

vi.a) The categorization induced by correct uses might not come with a direct prescription, and this does not make it non-normative.

this does **not** entail that the source of semantic normativity should be given by a categorization induced by correct uses. Whiting is explicit in indicating that his objections are directed against the anti-normativists, i.e., that he is not making a concrete proposal on what semantic normativity should be. As we have seen, his observation is correct but this does not address semantic normativity in general, it just addresses Prescriptivism.

With respect to (iii)[2]

The same argument concerns (iii.b). Since the source of semantic normativity need not be given by a categorization induced by correct uses, (iii.b) is **incorrect**:

iii.b) Semantic normativity *in general*, and not only Prescriptivism, requires that the categorization be induced by correct uses (which *actually* do not come with a direct prescription).

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[1] Cf. Section 2.2.3, (vi) The categorization induced by correct uses might not come with a direct prescription, but this does not make it non-normative. Prescriptions can come as obligations or as permissions.

[2] Cf. Section 2.2.2, (iii) If the categorization induced by correct uses does not come with a direct prescription, then semantic normativity *in general* is lost.

Now, with respect to (iii.a), we can see in the illustration of the appeal to autonomy that although the source of semantic normativity is not the categorization induced by correct uses which yields 'direct prescription', the categorization indeed has normative force. Either as a hypothetical or a categorical norm, autonomous reflective endorsement provides with reasons that steer our behaviour.

iii.a) The categorization induced by correct uses does not come with a direct prescription.

However, we insist, no identification between the source of semantic normativity and the categorization induced by correct uses ensues from (iii.a).

With respect to (vii)[3]

Change indicates that reasons in support of a judgment of semantic (in)correctness can be *prima facie*. Not necessarily all of them need to be so: some norms might hold until they cease to be regarded as such. In that case, those norms would not merely trumped by other different or new norms, they may cease to be norms at all. This marks that (vii.b) is **correct**:

vii.b) Semantic normativity *in general* may be given by *prima facie* obligations.

Note, however, that this does not settle whether semantic normativity *in general* may be given by *prima facie* obligations only. Such a possibility is an interesting issue to explore, something we cannot do here. But we remark that (vii.a) at least is **not** disproved:

vii.a) The rules provided by correctness conditions do not depend on desires, they are *prima facie*.

The rules provided by correctness conditions may be prima facie, like a revisable, tentative expectation. However, the source of normativity may not only provide *rules* to be reasons for judgments, e.g., some norms — nomological norms — may depend on categorical norms. Moreover, some norms might not be *prima facie*. Again, not necessarily all of them need to be so: some norms might hold until they cease to be regarded as such. In that case, those norms would not merely trumped by other different or new norms, they may cease to be norms at all.

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[3] Cf. Section 2.2.3, (vii) The rules provided by correctness conditions do not depend on desires, they are *prima facie*: they might be overridden by other obligations. Hence, semantic normativity *in general* is not lost.

With respect to (i)[4]

On the one hand, our interpretive stance and the observations in 2.3.2–3 already gave us **support** for (i.b). Nevertheless, this does not grant (i.a). Correctness conditions, in the case of autonomy, certainly involve the performance of an action, and at the same time they can describe what counts as doing something. Howeve, this description is a consequence and not the source of semantic normativity. Note, however, that rules given by correctness conditions would possibly represent, but they would not *constitute*, the reasons for judgments of semantic (in)correctness. (i.a) below does not hold:

  i.a) The rules provided by correctness conditions are constitutive of meaning. Conditions of correctness just provide constitutive rules: they determine what counts as doing something; they do not involve the performance of any action.

With respect to (ii)[5]

Likewise, we had already **supported** (ii.b) in 2.3.2–3. The appeal to autonomy illustrates how the source may not be identified with correctness conditions. This lets us **discard** (ii.a):

 ii.a) The rules provided by correctness conditions (or correctness conditions themselves) should be identified with true or warranted uses.

What is the relationship between the successful test, speaking the truth, speaking with warranted assertibility in the appeal to autonomy? Unlike the prescriptivist position attributed to the normative stance in the debate in the literature, the appeal to autonomy does not conflate a successful test with speaking the truth, speaking with warranted assertibility. We can have reasons to speak correctly when we can perform the autonomous reflective test correctly, and this means we can understand the truth conditions or conditions of warranted assertibility of the expression. This does not necessarily mean that truth or warranted assertibility conditions obtain, or that I should have propositional knowledge of them, in order to use the expression correctly. Success in the autonomy test can be achieved even when the conditions do not obtain or when we do not have propositional knowledge of them.

This surely needs a qualification which we take to be a given about language *d'après* Davidson. Most of the users in an *L*-community should be successful

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[4] Cf. Section 2.2.2, (i) If the rules provided by correctness conditions are constitutive of meaning, then semantic normativity *in general* is countered.

[5] Cf. Section 2.2.2, (ii) If the rules provided by correctness conditions (or correctness conditions themselves) should be identified with true or warranted uses, then empirical and linguistic mistakes are conflated, and semantic normativity *in general* becomes untenable.

in term of their fulfillment of truth conditions, assertion conditions, warranted assertibility, etc. Cases of correct linguistic uses need a background of major coincidence to be defined.

With respect to (v)[6]

We note here again (just for the sake of being systematic), that we had already **supported** (v.a/b) in 2.3.2–3.

v.a/b) Semantic normativity *in general* may be non-intrinsic, i.e., not all norms should be semantic.

With respect to (iv)[7]

Furthermore, the autonomy approach does not assume that correctness conditions provide *rules* that we explicitly follow. As indicated in 4.1, the way in which the literature uses "explicitly", when the prescriptivist allegedly claims that we should explicitly follow rules, is not clear. It can mean 'propositionally' or 'consciously'. A model of practical inference favours the former use[8] (though the second sense then turns up to be related), and hence the normativist is characterized as requiring propositional access to the norms that constrain our semantic behaviour. Justification can actually take place invoking propositionally expressed rules as reasons. However, it is fair to note that such justifications only happen in a reduced variety and number of occasions, much less numerous than those in which we evaluate a use or an interpretation. This is not a claim that there are rules we follow which are not *expressible*, only to point at the implausibility for a claim that we demand them to always be *expressed*. If occasions in which we make semantic judgments, but do not invoke explicit rules, are accounted for by establishing our access to them via a sort of tacit propositional knowledge, it seems we must assume that all expectations require linguistic mediation for them to motivate us. As we already argued, not all expectations are linguistic, even if all of them can be expressed in language. This partly runs against (iv.b), since reasons could be normative but non-semantic.

The normative standard provided by the appeal to autonomy relies on expectations about non-linguistic action, as well as the past and future linguistic behaviour of the reflecting agent and her interlocutor. A natural history of these

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[6] Cf. Section 2.2.3, (v) If the rules provided by correctness conditions are non-semantic, then semantic normativity is not lost, it is just discarded that it is intrinsic. Semantic normativity *in general* should not be identified with strong Prescriptivism.

[7] Cf. Section 2.2.3, (iv) If the rules provided by correctness conditions (or correctness conditions themselves) depend upon an epistemic or moral obligation, an intention, a desire or any non-semantic condition, then semantic normativity *in general* is lost.

[8] Cf. Glüer and Pagin (1999).

basic anticipations and reactions need not be excluded by the appeal to autonomy, although such an account is not to be expected to reduce their normative force, nor to intend their defense as *the naturally correct way to behave*. Furthermore, our strict defense of the contingent character of expectations — the fact that they can and do change — should keep causalist trends at a distance from our favoured answer to the normative question in semantics.

When Prescriptivism claimed that semantic normativity should be intrinsicalist in the sense that all reasons should ultimately depend on something semantic, a regress followed. This partly runs against (iv.b). Another point of criticism is provided by the requirement of publicity and sharedness of reasons which excludes individual desires to be legitimate constraints for reasons supporting judgments of semantic (in)correctness. Thus (iv.b) is **countered**:

iv.b) Semantic normativity *in general*, and not only Prescriptivism, requires that the rules (or the correctness conditions themselves) be provided by correctness conditions which *actually* depend upon an epistemic or moral obligation, an intention, a desire or any non-semantic condition.

While this also **undermines** (iv.a), we do not give here a positive assertion about the actual dependence of reasons on epistemic or moral obligation. The extent of our claim is just to point out that if reasons are indeed normative, they need not be semantic.

iv.a) The rules provided by correctness conditions (or correctness conditions themselves) depend upon an epistemic or moral obligation, an intention, a desire or any non-semantic condition.

Let us take stock at this point. We have tried to show here that our general characterization of the necessary conditions for a normative theory of meaning allow for forms of Prescriptivism which do not fall into the characterization provided in the debate in the recent literature. While semantic judgments can be supported by sound justificatory, explanatory and motivating reasons, a characterization of these need not be unassailable in a naturalistic approach. Naturalism is admissible, if it acknowledges that its task is not all there is to the function of these reasons. What is clear is that reductionistic stances indeed encounter the problem that anti-normativists signal, namely the impossibility of a reduction of a prescriptive command to a mere description of states of affairs. Prescriptivism, as characterized in the debate, takes correctness conditions to be the source of normativity, as it is alleged to issue the rules whose observance guarantees our correct usage. Other normativist positions can be articulated, which better respond to our requirements for what can be the source of semantic normativity. The appeal to autonomy is an account of the source of normativity which does not posit correctness conditions as issuing rules, but rather requests a successful performance in the cross-autonomy test. Certain correctness conditions issue rules

that we invoke explicitly when we expect or are expected to behave in a certain manner, but not all of them. Correctness conditions can be understood if we can have normative reasons, they are not the source of normativity themselves.

5.1.2 (Anti)-naturalists, (anti) intrinsicalists, (contra) hypothetical norms

In view of these remarks, we urge the reader to see that some of the driving fears of the anti-normativist are not really threatened by semantic normativity *in general*. Let us see how their main motives are not really hindered by our conclusions on what can be a source of semantic normativity.

(Anti)-naturalists, (anti) intrinsicalists[9]

The general characterization for a source of semantic normativity presented in 2.3.2–3 and 4.1 does not block an essentialist position. Do our general considerations exclude a naturalistic position? Insofar as a naturalistic approach can acknowledge a justificatory, and not only the explanatory, role of reasons in semantic judgments, a naturalistic approach is not excluded. Naturalism need not amount to descriptivism, dispositionalism or a causal reduction of semantic reasons to natural events or physical states. Insofar as naturalistic investigations about language interpretation and production do not posit a causal reduction of semantic justifications to natural facts (e.g., statistical) about their use, semantic normativity does not run against naturalism.

Conditional: If meaning is intrinsically normative, then naturalism is blocked.
Response: An essentialist position (to claim that inherently normative expectations are semantic) need not block naturalism (where naturalism may not be reductive or claim a causalist view of norms).

(Anti) intrinsicalists[10]

The general characterization for a source of semantic normativity presented in 2.3.2–3 and 4.1 does not block an intrinsicalist position if this is not understood as a demand for all reasons to require interpretation. When this position is construed as demanding that all legitimate reasons for judgments of semantic (in)correctness should be represented/interpreted, it simply fails due to a regress.

Our discussion does not settle whether an intrinsicalist position is (un)acceptable. As far as we have seem. judgments of semantic (in)correctness may or may not only be supported or trumped by other reasons of the same sort. Nevertheless,

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[9] Like Hattiangadi (2006), or Wikforss (2001).
[10] Like Glüer (1999).

the conclusion about the need of reasons which can be given without the need of linguistic interpretation/representation still holds.

Conditional: if semantic reasons depend on something non-semantic, normativity is lost.

Response: if normativity requires that all reasons (categorical and hypothetical) should be semantic in nature, the conditional poses a logical problem. However, the source of semantic normativity may only depend on something non-semantic if it is nonetheless normative. Expectations that justify a use/interpretation might be non-semantic but still normative on the agents' behaviour.

(Contra) hypothetical norms[11]

The general characterization for a source of semantic normativity presented in 2.3.2–3 and 4.1 gave room for categorical and hypothetical norms. Categorical norms are not independent of, but cannot be relativized to, particular agent's desires, intentions or goals in view of the condition of sharedness of reasons.

Only some categorical norms might owe their intrinsic normativity to a reason we should linguistically interpret: categorical norms might be normative but not require semantic interpretation. The same holds for hypothetical norms, be they rules or nomological norms. If all norms are hypothetical on hypotheses which required defined intentions or awareness of another kind of semantic antecedent, how do we ever come to formulate the correct hypotheses? To maintain a normativist view on meaning we may not require all reasons to be semantically mediated, although that need not mean they are not normative on own behaviour.

The appeal to autonomy features certain categorical norms that provide reasons for acting independent of a single agent's desire or will or of a contingent desire or will in an expression along a dialogue. Such expectations are normative and still not all expectations require interpretation for them to be determined. So, not all norms presuppose semantic competence. They determine 'ought to' compromises that can be revised but which govern categorically while they are in force. Their governance does not necessarily presuppose their propositional knowledge and they are subject to change as the model predicted it. Some of them might be *prima facie* i.e., capable of being overridden by other normative considerations. However, none of them stands immune to revision. However, while they hold valid, they can indeed hold categorically.

Are these normative *facts* of language? The appeal to autonomy may realistically treat expectations, but this does not mean that their normativity is objective. It may be objective that they have normative force but their prescriptive vigor is certainly not independent of their *function*. Moreover, they need not be recognized (or even linguistically interpreted) to have such force before

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[11] Like Hattiangadi (2006).

coming to use them, instead their use gives them (or removes) their influence on our behaviour.

Hypothetical norms may be normative, either because their antecedent is a categorical norm — a basic expectation — or because their antecedent is normative though not categorically. The autonomy test would provide hypothetical norms when success in the autonomous cross-attribution of expectations relies on basic expectations which are categorically anticipated. It would also provide such norms if other hypothetical norms in force were posited as the condition for the anticipation of a certain effect on the interpreter or state of the speaker. In this case, the antecedent is itself of a conditional form, so the expectations attributed or held build on a prior norm that we conditionally erect on basic expectations. Hypothetical norms of these kinds can determine 'oughts' or 'mays' if the antecedent is not posited as an individual's desire or want for an end.

As we showed in 4.3, the autonomy test does not provide justification when the expectations in trade cannot be generalized to the reflective agent's interlocutors. For the antecedent to have normative force, it should be willed as an end, it should constitute a binding expectation between the speaker's and the interpreter's behaviour. When the antecedent is falsely assumed (as in an empirical mistake) or when the agent is not bound to it by his own desire, the test still works. Failure of success occurs if one fails to *will* the means, if one does not act by, or anticipate according to, what the interlocutor is entitled to demand. Again, some of them might be *prima facie* i.e., capable of being overridden by other normative considerations, some may not. Nevertheless, none of them are immune to revision.

Conditional: If meaning is hypothetically normative, then normativity is lost.
Response: If these hypotheses have normative antecedents, then they are not up to an agent's desire: normativity is maintained.

We have pondered here the significance of our general conclusions with respect to the conclusions (i)–(vii) of the debate presented in 2.2. Our general arguments were directed against the generality of Prescriptivism in view of the conditions for a source of semantic normativity we introduced in 2.3.2–3 and 4.1. We also used the illustration of the appeal to autonomy to stress this point. This exemplification is backed up by the evaluation of this proposal we made in 4.3. Besides this, some the antecedents or presuppositions of the conclusions were discussed against both the conditions and the illustration of their instantiation given by the appeal to autonomy.

Now it is time to see the relevance of our investigation with respect to the relationship between metaethics and metasemantics. We looked at what can be a reason which explains and justifies an ethical judgment to understand what can be a reason which explains and justifies a semantic judgment. What is the significance of the results given by this methodological proposal?

5.2   Normative reasons in ethics and semantics

Korsgaard's metaethical considerations lead to the requirement of certain conditions to the candidate source of semantic normativity. Our transposition set the search for an answer within the limits set by these conditions with respect to linguistic meaning. What is the resulting relation this suggests between metaethics and metasemantics?[12]

5.2.1   Normative statements or judgments?

We want to analyze the two sides of the linkage suggested by Gibbard's we quoted in 1.4.[13]   We need to see first whether the link suggested relates statements, judgments, reasons or what.

On the one hand, Gibbard refers to metaethics as "the theory of meaning applied in a special domain, namely ethics." (Gibbard (1994)) This seems to suggest that metaethics, as his quotation presents it, is a discipline which deals with normative *statements* about ethics. Although it is not clear from this passage, if the underlying claim is a stronger one, namely that metaethics is concerned *only* with normative *statements* about ethics, then our transposition seems not to exemplify such linkage.

Our transposition of Korsgaard's apparatus onto linguistic meaning does not aim at understanding statements about semantic (in)correctness but judgments in general. A judgment of (in)correctness might not be expressed as an explicit statement but rather as an action or a reaction by the speaker or interpreter. Our bridging between metaethics and metasemantics implies not only that normative statements but also that normative reactions in our linguistic uses and interpretations can be better understood if our scaffolding draws upon the study of how may moral judgments be supported or defended.

In 2.3.2–3, semantic judgment is situated on the spur of linguistic and non-linguistic interaction. This approach to the subject matter of semantics lets us find relevance of our practical reasoning in both ethical and semantic judgments. Both kinds of judgments should prompt action and not only warrant beliefs. Reasons which justify and not only explain need to confront and resist possible flaws of regress which threaten both ethical and linguistic justifications. Congruence of reasons provided by a source available for the parties in a dialogue is needed if normativity is to be preserved against complete relativism. The parallel ap-

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[12]   Just to recall what we mean by metasemantics we quote Kaplan (1989): "The fact that a word or phrase has a certain meaning clearly belongs to semantics. On the other hand, a claim about the basis for ascribing a certain meaning to a word or phrase does not belong to semantics. (...) Perhaps, because it relates to how the language is used, it should be categorized as part of (...) pragmatics ..., or perhaps, because it is a fact about semantics, as part of (...) metasemantics."

[13]   Cf. Gibbard (1994).

plication of the requirements set down by Korsgaard provided us with a means for assessing candidate sources for semantic normativity. Indeed we relied on the conceptual framework of metaethics to approach the question of how semantic judgments can be supported or defended.

5.2.2 A reduction of the sources?

On the other hand, Gibbard predicts that "If meaning is normative, then a central topic in the philosophy of language becomes a part of metaethics. Metaethics can turn imperialistic, and grab territory from the philosophy of language. It takes over the study of what meaning means." (Gibbard (1994))

An important point: does this imply that we require that the source is or should be the same? In principle, the arch we have set does not imply that the reasons in one and other case are to be identified. The fact that the requirements for a normative theory for ethics and for semantics can be found parallel does not entail that reasons for positive moral judgment should be justificatory of linguistic uses/interpretations or vice versa. What we can expect from someone who utters or understands an expression is not what we ethically demand her to do. We can have reasons to interpret someone's words as an insult and still find this morally condemnable.

However, the fact that we *can* provide and establish ethical and semantic reasons can, we have tried to show, be found by way of similar operations in one and other domain. The appeal to autonomy describes a demanding reflective operation that is performed upon interaction considered either morally or semantically, and in one and other application it can yield reasons which are materially adequate and formally correct. Success in the cross autonomy test and in Korsgaard's appeal to autonomy can motivate us for action and can justify judgments about action. Either an external witness or the agent performing an action can plausibly rely on the same examination to obtain a prompt or a judgment of what they do, an action which forms and is limited by our practical identity. One method can be shown to satisfy the conditions settled for each domain. Normativity in these aspects of our action does not seem to be supported by different authorities, our autonomy seems to be the arbiter in these different domains.

5.2.3 Normative reasons, ethics and semantics

Metasemantics (like metaethics) is about in-virtue-of-what certain judgments can be supported, semantics (like normative ethics) deals with what these judgments are about. The conceptual reliance on metaethics and the fact that the same possible source of reasons can be articulated in a metasemantic proposal do not directly compromise what semantic theories are about, but rather what can be a normative theory of meaning.

Therefore, our general considerations in 4.1 are not a claim for a substantive identification of semantics and ethics. None of our ethical borrowings imply that descriptive semantics and ethics should coincide. A person who made linguistic mistakes is not immoral, and a morally appraisable subject might have poor linguistic competence. In the particular case of the appeal to autonomy, possible categorical reasons provided by basic expectations are not argued to have an ethical import as maxims that are lawful ethical categorical norms. Likewise, compliance with universally valid ethical maxims does not have a bearing on our observance of conditions of semantic correctness.

Again, although this is not something that Gibbard (1994) explicitly suggests, the generality of his proposed bridge between metaethics and metasemantics. To take "over the study of what meaning means" (Gibbard (1994)) is not an identification of reasons in our investigation.

As we have tried to summarize here, our methodological exercise has a certain significance as to how we consider metaethics and metasemantics to be related. Ethics is concerned with our morally evaluative behaviour. We turned to metaethics to observe how this discipline attempts to understand our commitments in moral thought, talk, and practice. This provided us with a structure to examine how judgments of semantic (in)correctness can be warranted.

The relationship between these disciplines does not imply a reduction. Normativity might be similarly sourced but the reasons for ethical and semantic considerations are not identical. Now we turn to see how this may be of any importance for the semanticist. When formal semantics is conceived of as an empirical or as a modeling task with respect to natural language interpretation an improper representation of the source of normativity might endanger the theory's achievements.

5.3 Importance for the formal semanticist

By 'formal semantics' we broadly refer to the tradition initiated by Montague, Davidson, Lewis and Hintikka, tries to formulate mathematically developed theories of natural language meaning (although some theories do not have a descriptive goal).[14] The formal semanticist might claim he relates to actual semantic phenomena of natural language only in a distant, inspirational manner. If the goal of his theories is to attain good deductive systems, it seems that semantic normativity might well be ignored as empirical evidence need not be accounted for. However, when an explanatory or strongly descriptive aim is set as the goal of the modeling task, theories modeling agents' justification of their use/interpretation will have to properly represent, or at least not misrepresent the source of the reasons these agents can give. While formalizations might abstract from actual phenomena, semantic models or systems including a representation of the source

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[14] Cf. Kamp and Stokhof (2008).

of how an interpreter or speaker should go about with their utterances will have to account for or at least be compatible with the conditions established in 2.3.2–3 and 4.1 and soundly exemplified by the appeal to autonomy.

5.3.1   Why **Inquisitive Semantics and Pragmatics**?

We will briefly consider here the case of Inquisitive Semantics and Pragmatics (ISP for short, henceforth) as a nice example of a formal semantics which can be evaluated with respect to the conditions that we have laid down. First of all: why do we look precisely at ISP?

In view of our interpretive view on meaning, the Carnapian tripartite division of labour between semantics and pragmatics has to be reconsidered: either its traditional form has to be redefined or it turns out to be an idle hierarchy. The idea that language and meaning are entities defined or existent above (or below) the process of interpretation is countered, thus giving support for a view on them that takes the interactive process of interpretation at the heart of what semantics studies. Under this perspective, dynamic approaches in formal semantics such as the dynamic turn receive a strong philosophical incentive.[15]

ISP (formerly, the 'Logic of Interrogation' or 'Alternative Semantics') is a program purporting to model relatively simple games of raising and resolving issues oriented to gaining information. Heavily relying on the inquisitive effect of disjunction,[16] a formal theory of the semantics for sentences of different kinds (insignificant sentences, assertions, questions and hybrids) is given. *Compliance* is defined as the main semantic/pragmatic relation of the logic, and on top of that a set of rules is claimed to define the successful 'games of interrogation', i.e., coherent pieces of communication leading to the gain of information. The classical semantic relation of *Entailment* can also be defined but the key relation that the model formalizes is *Compliance*. This is a first reason why we are particularly interested in this logic. The fact that it seems to spring from an interpretive view of meaning turns it particularly relevant for our investigation.

Another salient point of this logic is the kind of disjunctive phenomena for which it intends to logically model how correct interpretation is obtained. As suggested in 2.3.2, the normative determination of a Yes/No vs. Alternative interpretation of a question like (I) below.

I) Will Alf or Bea go to the party?

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[15]   Cf. Peregrin (1999).

[16]   This is nicely suggested in the 'Gricean picture of disjunction': "This is a picture of the (or a) use of disjunction in information exchange. If this is a correct picture, then according to our mission statement, the semantics of disjunction should reflect directly that $(\varphi \vee \psi)$ specifies two possibilities, the possibility that φ and the possibility that ψ. We may add to this — Grice would certainly have agreed — that the semantics of disjunction should certainly do something else as well: exclude the possibility that *neither φ nor ψ*. That is the information that $(\varphi \vee \psi)$ provides, its standard truth conditional content." Groenendijk (1999).

ISP is a program devoting itself to construct a formal semantics and pragmatics that can deliver in a logic — among other phenomena — how in a discourse, an agent *has to go* by a Yes/No vs. alternative interpretation. Moreover, although at its current state of development[17] ISP does not rely particularly on the dynamic potential of their models, the long term goal of the programme is to include dynamic phenomena such as anaphora in their interrogative games. This provides, as we have noted above, further proof of relevance of this logic with respect to our investigation.

The central aspect of this logic which makes it salient for our discussion is its modelization of the source of semantic normativity. We will see in a moment that the fact that the source of semantic normativity — what justifies that a Yes/No vs. Alternative interpretation of (I) should follow — is defined with respect to the informative states of agents (represented as stack of stages) which are distinguishable. The incumbency of this logic with the role played by the agents in the determination of the right interpretation that should follow permits the representation of the 1st– and 2nd–perspectives in a particular conversation. In view of the conditions presented in 4.1, this is a further argument in support of considering this particular logic.

Brief sketch of the core notions in ISP

Starting from the observation that information exchange games are far more common in our daily communication than argumentative undertakings, Groenendijk (1999) set in the semanticist's agenda the need to represent dialogues of a certain kind in which the properties of interrogation as a way in which communication is steered in order to achieve our informative goals. Further elaborations led the logic to take the notion of an alternative and then of a possibility[18] as the model-theoretic unit of an appropriate response. With these basic semantic elements, and in seek for an adequate notion to be the backbone of the modeled exchanges, first *Licensing* and then *Compliance* appeared as the logical pith that is to be involved in the determination of the (in) correctness of a production/interpretation. Fulfilling this condition is not essential; instead, its unfulfillment calls for pragmatics to be the ultimate explain away the apparently wrong move in dialogue.

Pragmatics comes in order to guide the process of interpretation, and it is shaped in the logic that dominates this semantics. Gricean maxims are the pillars of the picture, and they govern the hermeneutic process that is conducted in dialogues. *Compliance* is the key to the notion of pragmatic answerhood. This has an informative and an inquisitive side: partial resolution of the current issue, or replacing the current issue by a subissue. At the same time, it serves as the inquisitive version of the Gricean Maxim of Relation. Relation is usually formulated rather vaguely in terms of the requirement that a cooperative contribution

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[17] Among other sources, see Groenendijk (2008, 2009); Ciardelli (2008).
[18] Cf. Ciardelli (2008)

to the conversation should be relevant with respect to the topic of conversation, the question under discussion. *Compliance* is concerned with what the utterance of a sentence contributes to a conversation, how it is related to what was said before. Like the standard logical notion of entailment rules the validity of argumentation, the logical notion of *Compliance* rules the cooperative interaction that is required in coherent conversations.

In the modeling of dialogues in ISP, two participants are considered, a stimulator and a responder, and they are represented as states. The core pragmatic notion in dialogues is that of a *common ground*, which is modeled as a stack of stages containing all the issues in each of the agent's states. This is a sequence of stages, and stages are modeled as sets of alternative possibilities. The changes in the common ground represent in the theory the result of the prior mutual attributions, This representation makes it possible to model a move in a dialogue as a two-step process. The definition of operations on a stack of uptake (in which an utterance is hypothetically added on the common ground, its semantic content introduced, and implicatures calculated) and absorption of a reaction (cancellation, acceptance and support). Acceptance, cancellation, etc. of implicatures ensures the conservation of the common ground, the joint goal of the parties in dialogue.

An important note to make here is that ISP takes an *external* view on the common ground, distinct from the *internal* one.[19] On "the external view the common ground is a public entity. It is created by the discourse, by the moves of the participants..." (Groenendijk (2008)). The internal view proposes "to look ...inside the heads of the participants in a conversation, compare their information states, before and after, and maybe even during the conversation, and you just see the miracle happen of a growing common ground." (Groenendijk (2008).)

The importance of this distinction lies in their possible interaction. Gerbrandy (1999) (chap.6) showed that the internal picture should be kept strictly separated from the external one, where the common ground is publicly monitoring how the dialogue proceeds and what it brings about. Gerbrandy's result proves that the two views can only happily live together if we take a rather poor view of the contents of the common ground. As Groenendijk (2008) put it:

> Roughly speaking, the contents of the common ground should be restricted to information (and issues I would add) which concern the subject matter of the conversation, and not matters at a meta-level, such as what the participants get to know from the conversation about the information of the other participants, etc. And secondly, the common ground should be safeguarded against having to make repairs on it while the conversation is still on the air.

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[19] Groenendijk (2008) refers to Gerbrandy (1999) as the source of this distinction.

So the effects on the agents represented by the changes in the stack of stages by which they are represented depend on what happens to the common ground in the exchange. The external scoreboard, however, cannot contain a register of the peculiar perspective of the 1ˢᵗ– and 2ⁿᵈ–person in the dialogue, the stimulator and the responder.

Cancellation, for instance, keeps the normative source intact from inconsistencies, it is an essential operation to maintain the common ground. Acceptance — which may be implicitly signaled by just coming up with a happy continuation of the dialogue — makes the stack more compact absorbing the information provided by the proposition a bit further down the stack. The maintenance of the common ground also requires following the absorption that is the effect of acceptance in the agents' state. Support of a proposed informative transition indicates that a participant could have proposed the transition herself, if the information provided by the proposition expressed by the sentence uttered by the other participant is not new to her.

Let us turn now to a general note on the task of formal semantics as a discipline. This will lead us to see whether the representation of the source given by ISP should be correct, to get then to discuss whether it is or not.

5.3.2 Formal semantics and the source of semantic normativity

Let us set some general views about the task of semantics.[20] Semantics can be viewed as an empirical science which tries to model actual linguistic facts, it can be conceived of as a less ambitious representation, an anti-realistic one, or it can be seen to aim at producing deductive theories which seem to be just inspired by the data. After that, we will discuss how these views on the goal of formal semantics stand concern our discussion about the sources of semantic normativity.

The formal semanticist's tasks

Semantics can be viewed as an empirical science, when its object is supposed to be found in actual linguistic facts, and its aim is to predict, explain or describe *those* phenomena. The source of observation — the facts of semantics — are judgments of (non-) validity of certain inferences or schemata thereof. This source certainly relies on the semanticist's intuitions, where the generality and correctness of an individual's insights are not an evident affair. Observation is theoretically laden, and this also applies to the semanticist. If one keeps a processual, interpretive view on meaning, the input is still given by intuitions but these pertain to communication as an activity wherein meaning is attained and does not lie underneath.

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[20] We borrow this categorization of the possible goals of semantics from Stokhof (2002).

A more modest standpoint that avoids some of the difficulties in which the empirical view on semantics incurs only sets for the discipline an 'engineering task'. The goal is not to achieve a theory of meaning and actual linguistic operation, but rather — in the spirit of 'saving the phenomena' — to produce formal theories that the apparent agents' processes should agree with. The theories are supposed to be neutral with respect to the actual facts, in the spirit of anti-realism in philosophy of science.

A seemingly even less ambitious turn is taken by those who see semantics as a deductive science, much as mathematics or other formal disciplines. In this case, intuitions do not come as an input but rather constrain the descriptions of structures that the theories might give. This approach sets for the discipline the goal of constructing (or discovering) and studying theories for the sake of obtaining deductively consequences related to a certain realm of the world that is trying to be modeled. Modeling here is not however a matter of getting the world as it is, but instead not to infringe its boundaries. Nonetheless, the fact that the adequacy criterion is given by something external to the theories ('reality bites') normally seems to crawl into this minimalistic claim.

The task and its implications concerning the source of semantic normativity

Both an engineering driven and an empirically oriented conception of the task of formal semantics have a truly contrastive relationship with facts about natural language. Semantic normativity, as we have seen, requires that the source of reasons for semantic judgments of real linguistic agents may not be found in isolation, defined over only the speaker or the hearer in a dialogue. As we already argued in 2.3.2–3, if a theory in formal semantics aims at giving explanations of certain phenomenon in natural language interpretation, reasons for the correct predictions should also have a justificatory force.

A theory with anti-realistic aims may provide a model of interpretation without claiming these are processes explanatory of actual phenomena, and yet the model should not misrepresent the requirements of justification, if only because judgments of validity that are anti-realistically modeled are theoretically laden.[21] This is not to claim that formal semantics has to purport to give a normative theory of justificatory judgments of semantic (in)correctness. Formal semantics may well try to remain silent about the normative dimension of interpretation. However, the proposed explanations or descriptions of interpretation should not conflict with a possible justificatory use of such reasons. A semantic theory that explained or modeled certain phenomena in natural language would predict certain correct uses which, if unacceptable when submitted to the kind of test that can provide reasons for semantic judgments, they would result in an exercise with little or no interest for what semantics indeed would set itself to account for.

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[21] Cf. van Benthem (1983).

The case of the deductive ambition seems at first to eschew these duties. If the deductivist succeeds in remaining free from talk about 'reality which bites', it would be possible for it to ignore the conditions that would constrain the representation of a source of reasons for normative judgments. However, as soon as these theorists talk of evidence not merely inspiring but also constraining their theorizations, an improper representation of the source could amount to a failure in the theory's minimal considerations of material adequacy. Thus, even if the successful deductivist could in principle remain careless about the representation of the sources of semantic normativity, in practice formal semanticists might not be able to avoid this constraint.

Let us briefly argue here why an agnostic position might be in principle acceptable while an 'atheistic' one may not. Suppose the formal semanticist does not want to take any commitments with respect to modeling the justification of linguistic interpretation, with the normative aspects of the semantics/pragmatics interface. By an agnostic position we mean a semanticist who may not aim at modeling normative phenomena of natural language in a descriptive or explanatory manner. This position nonetheless does not run against basic aspects in normative features of natural language semantics. An atheistic would instead deny that formal semantics should care at all about normative phenomena; i.e., misrepresentations would become allowed. With a clear cut distinction between natural science and other disciplines, such an atheistic would seem to deny any interest to the normative conditions we have discussed here. While the agnostic simply avoids potential conflict, this atheistic iconoclastically demurs any relevance of normative aspects in semantic phenomena.

Note that the career prospects for the agnostic and the atheist differ radically. In case the formal semanticist abstains from theorizing about the normative aspects of the phenomena they explain or model, his attitude would let him model the behaviour of actual agents and not just artificial ones. Insofar as the material adequacy conditions for semantic normativity described in 2.3.2 are admitted as such, the atheistic obliteration of normative aspects of their data runs against an actual feature of actual agents in dialogues. Unless the atheistic is willing to give up his task to be one related to human speakers who actually use the natural languages for which a formal theory is devised, it seems that the price of his attitude is rather high.

Let us turn back to ISP now. In view of the arguments above, we can consider what this theory's ambitions are and examine how it represents the source of semantic normativity of the data it models.

5.3.3 The source of normativity in ISP

At its current state of development,[22] ISP cannot be clearly restricted to either one of the descriptions in Stokhof's categories. ISP does not seem to accomplish yet its empirical ambitions, but it explicitly presents its aspirations as a predictive model for inquisitive phenomena and other pragmatic inferences in dialogue. Although at many points there are indications of a more limited, engineering approach, for which empirical adequacy would be enough, this is somewhat over-ridden because of its declared explanatory ambitions for certain natural language phenomena. On the other hand, if we took the enterprise to provisionally qualify as a deductive one, we would have trouble to account for the program's care for linguistic phenomena, which goes beyond a mere logical curiosity on a Gricean-like disjunction. It seems that the present development of ISP falls short in fulfilling the expectations an empirical theory could have, and the current stress on getting the logical system to work at a definitional and operative level concentrates the efforts around the deductive aspects of the project.[23] Presently, then, if ISP is considered as deductive, it neatly refers to data beyond a mere inspirational tone.

In any case, whether we regard it a deductive enterprise, or if ISP purports to construct an anti-realist model, or if it hopes to provide an explanatory and predictive theory, we come to the same conclusion. Our arguments in 5.3.2, including our note against an atheistic approach, yield that such a theory should *at least* not misrepresent the source of normativity. Is this the case?

A virtue

The source of normativity is something social — a neat public entity which transcends what each of the agents undergo individually. The changes in the individuals' minds do not suffice to establish how a new utterance has to be interpreted, and instead the test bed is provided by the informative gain produced by the dialogue up to that point.

> The responder addresses issues relative to the common ground, where of course the contents of the response are motivated by her own current state or stack thereof. Not just considering the state of the responder, but in tandem with the common ground is important. Consider the case where the issue is resolved in the state of the responder. Her state as such does not represent the question anymore, so how to determine the answer to give? The common ground will tell what the issue is. (Groenendijk (2007))

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[22] Among other sources, see Groenendijk (2008, 2009); Ciardelli (2008).
[23] We have treated this at length in Crespo (2009)(manuscript).

In ISP's case, then, the individuality of linguistic skills does not appear to counter an (explanatory) account of the semantic normativity of the language.[24] Even if agents are supposed to share a language before they enter into dialogue, the source of semantic normativity is shared, external and public. The fact that agents already know their language is a formal requirement of the theory, but indeed their understanding of *what each other mean* in a dialogue is not assumed, it is worked out. Therefore, although there is a certain pre-existent knowledge, the determination of what an utterance expresses is given in dialogue. Correctness of interpretation/production is given by the common ground, and that is not identified with any one of the subject's beliefs or knowledge of language; it does not exist before their exchange. In ISP the speaker and interpreter share a partially defined theory of meaning, but sense is ultimately fixed by the discourse in which it is uttered. Interpretation is, in ISP, an independent step in communication for which meaning is a toolkit and not the output.

A problem

Due to the formal representation of the common ground, the source of semantic normativity, the common ground cannot be permeated by what the agents know that they know, leaving introspective knowledge outside what the source can tolerate.

In view of Gerbrandy's result, the common ground, as it is currently modeled in ISP, cannot record the reflective knowledge agents. This means that for, this theory, neither the stimulator's and the responder's awareness of meaning, nor their conscious interpretation and production, *can possibly* play a role in how correctness is settled.

Such lack carries over a misrepresentation of how normativity is *indeed* settled. If this could be represented, but it just happened not to be presently modeled, this issue would not be a problem, but rather something that ISP could do.

However, Gerbrandy's results completely exclude the possibility to represent introspective knowledge of the agents in the external common ground. Introspective knowledge is part of our practical identity, and our practical identity is entrenched with our semantic judgments as they can be made from the $1^{st}-$, $2^{nd}-$ and $3^{rd}-$person perspectives. Therefore, the current formal representation of the common ground as the source of reasons for interpretation in ISP makes it *impossible* to adequately represent the $1^{st}-$, $2^{nd}-$ and $3^{rd}-$person viewpoints. The common ground cannot record subjective information that could belong to either the stimulator or the responder. Even if the introspective states of the agents were modeled with an independent formal *addendum*, the fact that the common ground is the source of semantic normativity as it is now implies that this *addendum* would not provide any further reasons for interpretation, just a

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[24] And in any case, according to Groenendijk this is not essential to the system (personal communication, June 2009).

representation of the changes in each agent's state. Moreover, even if this *addendum* were incorporated, the common ground as it is now contains all the issues in the stimulator's and the responder's states. Therefore, each agent's subjective state may not contain introspective issues that this *addendum* would purport to represent.

This problem, therefore, is not particular to ISP, but rather a specific consequence of the representation of what provides the reasons why a certain interpretation is correct. Nevertheless, is suffices to raise and issue for ISP, in view of our arguments in 5.3.2.

ISP reckons with the normativity of meaning and the social nature of its source. In ISP, interpretation is settled in dialogue: the proper following of the rules of dialogue is represented in the integrity of the common ground. The outcome or informative gain permitted by the proper management is given in the shared stack, where the interactive reactions of the agents carves up the logical space between them. Semantic skills are individual, as we remarked above, but the determination of ambiguities (like the Gricean dual nature of disjunction) or implicatures (as in conditional questions) is nonetheless warranted by the conversation, and not by particular dispositions of the participants.

Nevertheless, the essential shortcomings in the representation of the source of semantic normativity in the theory — as it does not account of the conscious involvement of the participant in the determination of interpretation — seems to be in direct conflict with the first Korsgaardian reason discussed in 4.1. Gerbrandy's results pre-announce the need of a separation between an external and an internal view on the common ground, and this eliminates any consideration of the subjective stance of each participant of the dialogue in the normative determination of how they might go on with their dialogue.

The example of ISP is meant to show how a formal semantics and pragmatics proposal may be required to properly represent (or at least not generate a conflict with) the source of semantic normativity in natural language. If this logic purports to describe, or anti-realistically model, the interpretation of certain sentences and questions, we can demand it not to run against our requirements for the sources of semantic normativity. Now we come to a qualifying note: is justification of all linguistic interpretation supposed to be sustained by the same kind of reasons? Is the (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) good for giving reasons for non-literal uses of language?

5.4 Delimiting justification: non-literal interpretation

(*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) might be put to a test by considering the case of the interpretation of metaphors. What we can note here is that, although there's

a positive side to their appraisal through (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*), in that they may not be conflated to be an empirical mistake, there might be something unpleasant about how their handling goes. It seems that if an expression used metaphorically by a speaker can undergo (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*), what is obtained is an interpretation and hence a meaning for the expression's effects on the speaker/interpreter due to the metaphorical use. It seems then that only dead metaphors could pass the cross-autonomy test successfully.[25] This, however, does not show a flaw of this possible source but rather a limitation in the kind of hermeneutic phenomena it should account for.

5.4.1 A very basic model for metaphors

Let us give an extremely simplified model of what goes on in a production/ interpretation which is received by the speaker/hearer of a metaphor. Suppose that in L-community, S is used to mean f and T is used to mean f'. A can utter T to achieve an effect in interpretation resulting in T as connoting, suggesting or leading to f. This kind of displacement should not be understood as a form of non-literal *additional* meaning:[26] metaphors constitute a different *function* for expressions, rather than a different kind of linguistic meaning. They are rather distinguishable by their effect in the speaker A or interpreter B,[27] an apprehension which is less stable, and not definitively ensured by, the expressions' regular uses.

Possibly, if B is familiar with the meaning of T and with the relation[28] in which f and f' lie, she might get the effect of the metaphorical function in this use. What reasons could B give for this?

A competent interlocutor C of B can plausibly fail to support the same interpretation, and yet pass the (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*). If C appraises T as uttered literally, C could judge: "A uttered T (to mean f) but *actually* T means f'. (He should have said S.)" Possibly depending on C's competence in L (whether C knows that[29] S is used to mean f and T is used to mean f', or that f and f' lie in a certain relation), the utterance might render for C the effect of T as suggesting or leading to f. Nevertheless, a successful outcome for C through the (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) test may not give reasons for the *interpretation* of T as meaning f. Her autonomous reflection is successful but the interpretation differs from B's.

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[25] A live metaphor is normally seen as an original, surprising and perhaps unprecedented use of an expression in a language. Once this metaphor becomes shared by more and more speakers, it is usually seen to belong to a middle stage of fixation. This stage is generally characterized by an alternation of the figurative and literal meaning. The final stage, in which the metaphor dies or freezes, is characterized by an extended use and sometimes loss of awareness of the figurative original function of such use of the expression. Cf. Chamizo-Domínguez (2005).

[26] Cf. Davidson (1986).

[27] This does not necessarily require a deliberate intention of the speaker.

[28] Sometimes called 'congruence'.

[29] Knows-that here need not require propositional representation/interpretation.

Does this mean that B cannot rely in his interlocutors, after all? Is this an indication of the unrealiability of (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) to provide adequate reasons for uses or interpretations? Does this imply that (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) might provide discordant reasons? Is this an argument against the conditions that (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) instantiates?

5.4.2 Expected metaphors are dead

The interpretation of a metaphor appears to be supported here by expectations that can be borne or fulfilled by competent L-speakers. Yet there is something to the live metaphorical effect that is strongly linked to the unexpected, to an occurrence. If the expectations traded somehow involve that it is to be habitually expected of any L-speaker that she notes that, in L, S is used to mean f and T is used to mean f', or that f and f' lie in a certain relation, the peculiar effect of metaphorical reception might slip through our fingers. If expectations trump the possible queerness that metaphors can wear, the appeal to autonomy seems to be inadequate as a good candidate for our effective semantic judgment.

A positive appraisal of this phenomenon turns this threat into a clearer fact about live metaphors: they may not be expected, and hence fail to be received in a certain possibly intended manner when submitted to (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) by a speaker and an interpreter, but this comes precisely to show that the reception of a live metaphorical use of expressions is not identical, nor identifiable, with literal interpretation. The effect on a speaker/interpreter of encountering a live metaphor lies beyond the scope of what (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) should give, precisely because the effect of this function of discourse is not to be equated with a meaning that the L-community should observe.

Verbal communication is full of uses of language which are non-literal: metaphor, metonymy, over- and understatement, sarcasm, irony, pretence and the presentation of points of view other than our own. The acquisition, representation and justification of these functions of language do not seem to fit the kind for source of normativity that we found satisfactory for literal interpretation. The fact that (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) does not predict good results in the case of metaphors seems to be a positive, rather than a negative, feature, and it certainly invites us to think what kind of conditions for reasons and sources we can admit in the case non-literal uses of language.

Note, however, that this is does not imply that non-literal interpretation is not normatively constrained. On the contrary, interpretation of discourse with non-literal function can be deemed (un)acceptable, (in)correct, (im)plausible, etc. The issue we raise here is precisely that such functions of discourse present different normative constraints which do not actually fit the conditions in 2.3.2–3 and 4.1 that (*Autonomy-Interlocutor-Cross*) rightly instantiates. Further work could take up this observation and investigate it. The point of this remark is simply to indicate that such an account would not conflict with our conclusions.

Normativity in non-literal interpretation deserves detailed and careful attention, something we just cannot achieve in this space.

These concluding lines bring to an end the discussion in this manuscript. This last section tried to provide some points of assessment of our exercise. If our general considerations succeeded in giving some measure to weigh the conclusions in the literature about semantic normativity, we expect to have provided useful input for the current contentions. The case we made for the appeal to autonomy has not been defended as the best or the only kind of answer that can be given to the normative question in semantics, but it certainly illustrates an alternative to the characterization of Prescriptivism as it stands in the current debate. We also hope to have clarified the implications of our transposition we are ready to assume. Ethics and semantics are not claimed to have been identified in their aboutness. We have concentrated on improving our understanding the epistemological basis of semantic justification by turning to the epistemological basis of ethical justification. We then tried to draw the attention of those involved in semantics as an area in linguistics, in particular of the formal semanticists, to see that if their goal is to explain, predict or successfully model natural language semantics, the conditions for the source of the normativity of linguistic meaning should not be obliterated. Finally, we tried to remark the boundaries for the kind of justification we have been dealing with. Non-literal interpretation seems to trade with reasons which may not be issued by the sources we are apt to recognize in cases of literal functions of language. We hope these (somewhat scattered) spots of evaluation of our investigations are the first among those that the reader should impose to our possible contributions.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

We conclude with a short summary of our main observations and results. In this thesis we tried to characterize what can provide reasons which adequately justify our judgments of semantic (in)correctness. For this we borrowed from Korsgaard her requirements for a source of ethical normativity. These conditions unveiled some of the features that we demand for a justification of the assessment of the use or understanding of a word or expression with respect to such unit's linguistic meaning.

Material adequacy is the first constraint to observe. Evidence of judgments of semantic (in)correctness constitute data that candidate sources should accommodate. Reasons should be effective in supporting the judgments expressed in the examples, which by the way counter complete normative skepticism. The case of the misinterpretation in the radical interpreter's scenario further requires that it should be possible for the source to be simultaneously available for the speaker and interpreter. Another crucial material condition is provided by language change and language acquisition. Reasons should allow and never exclude semantic variation and learning.

Further conditions on the source and its reasons were presented. Reasons justifying a use or an interpretation have to be public, explanatory and action-guiding. Although all reasons should have justificatory force, not all reasons we are able to justifiably follow may be rooted on further reasons, on pain of a regress in justification. Reasons may be rules, other kinds of hypothetical norms or even some other sort of justifier. And so far, we have seen that it is possible that some semantic obligations are hypothetical and some categorical. What it's not possible is that all hypothetical conditions depend on a semantic antecedent requiring interpretation. Moreover, reasons should not be posited as a requirement for correct uses, as we don't always ask ourselves why a use/interpretation is (in)correct.

Our examination of Korsgaard's requirements supplied the following further conditions. A reason should hold across the different perspectives than can frame the normative question, taking the stance of a 1st–, the 2nd– and the 3rd–person in a dialogue. Both the source and reasons should be epistemically accessible for us irrespective of whether we are the speaker, the hearer or a witness of a conversation. Yet not all of these may require interpretation, or one risks falling into another regress: not every reason may require a linguistic representation or codification. Meaning is first and foremost found and assessed in practical

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abilities or simply concrete action (it does not lie separately of what we can *do*). Therefore the reasons supporting our evaluations should not clash with the practical identity which lies behind and is forged by what we can admit doing.

These different conditions — material, general and 'Korsgaardian' — were not claimed to constitute the sole requirements for a proper reason supporting semantic evaluations. However, the few we have considered and applied here are, we have argued, true constraints for the sources we may admit.

Our illustrations of voluntarism, realism, Humean reflective endorsement and the appeal to autonomy were intended to show how these conditions constrain what can be proposed as sources for semantic normativity. A voluntarist response locates the source of reasons in a law-giving authority external to our will. But if reasons come from a source outside a conversation, if given completely externally, the 1st– and 2nd–person perspectives do not seem to be bound by this support. Admittedly, meaning is to some extent externally given since it depends on interaction. Moreover, basic language education seems to function to some extent as a source of commands over our (in)correct uses of language. However, the voluntarist model relies on a *will* and this does not seem to fit neither the externality of interaction nor the prescriptive role of basic education. This misrepresentation is at the same time informative of the kind of externality required for a source.

The illustration of realism showed a number of alternatives, some of which seemed less promising than others. When natural facts are summoned to provide the relevant reasons, it can be warned that a reduction of the norm to a collection of precise events or previous situations fails to provide an imperative on our future behaviour. If non-natural facts are posited instead, this is possible as long as this does not carry a postulation of an incommunicable or non-shareable epistemic access. It is unclear however what sort of facts should be admitted: if all reasons are provided by facts of semantic nature, a regress re-appears. This sets semantic facts to be properly included among the relevant facts that could be the source. Transparency and semantic change also give some limits to the realist proposal. Semantic change may not be easily modeled if the source of reasons is a realm of objective entities. Furthermore, if justification is epistemically mediated by a search for evidence, it seems to misrepresent how we actually judge linguistic uses and interpretations.

The example given in the case of Humean reflective endorsement proposed a change of stance and stirred the search for the source to include an internal dimension, a certain concern with the speaker's and interpreter's peculiar perspectives. The role of confidence in how we go by our use/interpretation suggests where we should look for reasons. An evaluation of such confident moves based on the speaker's and the interpreter's expectations can provide the guarantee needed to back up a judgment. Yet this test fails to secure the validity of the reasons it provides when taken to a 3rd–person perspective, thus yielding the interpretation of malaprops as cases of a positive judgment which violates a material condition of adequacy for the source and its reasons.

The proposed illustration of the appeal to autonomy succeeded in predicting sporadic uses such as malaprops as cases of a negative judgment. The reflective test includes the consideration of a possible interlocutor for the speaker and the interpreter which turns this approach to consider both internal and external constraints to judgments of semantic (in)correctness. This interlocutor can be attributed the expectations held and anticipated by the speaker and the interpreter. As we showed, this idea meets all the conditions we set. Autonomy adds to reflective endorsement precisely the normative effectiveness of our reasons. This test with an air of a Lewisian signaling games in the setting of Davidsonian triangulation appears to be promising. Future work could further elaborate on this line of thought, to explore the possibility to define this test in a game-theoretical framework, and to discuss the role of conventions in this process.

These results allowed to re-focus on the recent literature with a more sharper on what can settle their debate. We showed how the antecedents to the anti-normativists' conclusions are incorrect, and why their allegedly general remarks against semantic normativity only address a specific and not particularly successful picture of the source of semantic normativity. We also noticed that although our methodology did not propose a substantive reduction of semantics to ethics or an identification of the relevant reasons in each case, the appeal to autonomy indeed appears to work as a framework for both realms of justification. We briefly illustrated how the conditions for a source of semantic normativity can become a point of assessment of a formal semantic/pragmatic theory such as Inquisitive Semantics and Pragmatics. This system appears to have some virtues and flaws in its modeling of semantic normativity. The source is external to the stimulator and the responder — this is genuine virtue — but its formal representation inherently excludes the possibility to represent the peculiar perspective of the stimulator and a responder in a dialogue.

As announced, this thesis did not intend to arrive at a particular proposal of a particular source of normativity but rather at understanding what can qualify as such. The present manuscript presented a study of the conditions for a source of the normativity of linguistic meaning. May this propaedeutic investigation serve as an initial step for particular candidate sources, something we believe deserves careful attention.

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