INTRODUCTION

> *Man possesses the capacity of constructing languages, in which every sense can be expressed, without having an idea how and what each word means, just as one speaks without knowing how the single sounds are produced. Colloquial language is a part of the human organism and is not less complicated than it. From it it is humanly impossible to gather immediately the logic of language. Language disguises the thought; so that from the external form of the clothes one cannot infer the form of the thought they clothe, because the external form of the clothes is constructed with quite another object than to let the form of the body be recognized.*
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> *The silent adjustments to understand colloquial language are enormously complicated.*
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> Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Philosophicus* 4.002

0.1 Illocutionary meaning: by way of introduction

This book collects the results of an investigation that attempts to examine the interplay between linguistic structures and cognitive processes involved in the construal of illocutionary meaning, with a specific focus placed on three case studies devoted respectively to directive, commissive and expressive speech acts.

The literature on the long debated issue of illocutionary meaning is massive and it has seen different schools of thoughts in philosophy and linguistics tackling the issue of speech acts from a wide array of perspectives, which have provided thought-provoking observations to explain the many intricacies behind human communication (Bertuccelli Papi 2000). Two main

strands are commonly recognized as having played the lion's share in the scientific panorama of the 20th century: the *codification theory* and the *inferential theory*. Proponents of the former ascribe to sentence types the major role in the interpretation of the illocutionary force (Searle 1969, Ross 1970, Morgan 1978, Halliday 1994) and through typological comparisons between a number of languages they identify basic sentence types that connect to illocutionary functions (Sadock and Zwicky 1985, Givón 1990, Dik 1997, Croft 1994 *inter alios*); proponents of the latter emphasize the role of inferential processes in the comprehension of the speaker's communicative intentions and ascribe to mental mechanisms the interpretation of indirect illocutions (e.g. Grice 1975, Bach and Harnish 1979, Leech 1983, Sperber and Wilson 1986). On the one hand, since there exist grammatical devices used to convey illocutionary meaning, illocutionary meaning is part of grammar and grammatical structures need to be accounted for in the investigation of speech acts. However, many illocutions convey a type of meaning that is often in open contrast with the sentence type, as the imperative construction may well exemplify (*Shut up!* vs. *Have more tea!*), whereby the same linguistic pattern is exploited to instantiate different speech acts. On the other hand, the use of indirect illocutions is pervasive in communication and interlocutors are able to quickly derive the intended illocutionary force without effort: their capacity is ascribed to inferential processes, but scholars do not specify the inferential patterns activated in the derivation of implicit meaning nor the cognitive motivation of speech acts at discourse level. As insightful as they are, neither of the two strands are able to offer a full-fledged analysis of the interplay between the linguistic structures that speakers utilize to convey their communicative intentions and the mental paths that guide speakers in the verbalization process and hearers in their interpretive tasks. Scholars in Cognitive Linguistics have advanced new models to overcome the weaknesses of traditional theories. Thornburg and Panther (1998) and Gibbs (1999) identify in conceptual metonymy the cognitive tool that affords access to the illocutionary force of indirect speech acts. Panther and Thornburg (1999) define metonymy as a natural inferential schema that regulates the felicitous performance of speech acts and, in order to deal with the metonymic grounding of illocutionary meaning, they postulate the existence of complex structures that are accessed metonymically, which they call *illocutionary scenarios*, consisting of three main components - a BEFORE, a CORE, and an AFTER - that specify traditional felicity conditions in a cognitive-model theory format. The scenario-based

theory of indirect speech acts foregrounds two pivotal points, i.e. metonymic instantiation and storage in our long-term memory in the form of scenarios, which represent a relevant asset over traditional grammatical and relevance-theoretic models and prompt innovative approaches to the study of illocutionary activity.

0.2 Aims and scope of the research

Although recent proposals from cognitive linguists reveal particularly interesting, some relevant aspects of illocutionary meaning are still in waiting for a systematic treatment in Cognitive Linguistics, as the ensuing ones: is the cognitive grounding of speech acts regulated only by metonymy or is it governed also by experiential gestalts like image schemas and metaphoric thinking? What motivates the use of the same syntactic structure to instantiate different speech acts? How can socio-cultural variables like social power and formality handle the production of utterances? What is the amount of cost and benefit for the interlocutors engaged in an exchange? To what extent do some linguistic patterns represent more common ways of encoding the speaker's intention? Can utterances be accommodated along a cline of prototypicality in the expression of the illocutionary force?

We are fully convinced that an alternative approach may provide substantial answers to these questions and tackle the issue of illocutionary meaning from a more comprehensive perspective capable of integrating and enriching the existing theories. With this primary goal in mind, our present research sets out to illustrate the *Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model* (Baicchi 2009; Baicchi and Ruiz de Mendoza 2010; Peréz 2001; Ruiz de Mendoza and Baicchi 2006, 2007; Ruiz de Mendoza and Peréz 2002), to discuss its explanatory adequacy against more traditional theories, to test its applicability to the three types of interpersonal speech acts, and to develop it further. The *Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model* aims to overcome the shortcomings of more traditional approaches and to improve previous Cognitive Linguistics models. Panther and Thorburg offer the cognitive version of the Searlean satisfaction conditions, but we argue that metonymy alone is not sufficient to give a full account of the many subtle differences between various illocutions. We believe that a more systematic connection of conceptual metonymy and mental storage to the notion of 'Idealized Cognitive Models' (Lakoff 1987) must be advocated and adopted. In our view, the whole set of idealized

cognitive models (frames, image schemas, metonymy and metaphor) are sensitive to the requirements of a full-fledged cognitive account of illocutionary meaning, along with socio-cultural conventions that regulate the different types of illocutions and the linguistic resources that realize them. Banking on the notion of 'mutual manifestness' (Sperber & Wilson 1995), we put forward a cognitive version of Leech's cost-benefit scale that we formulate as an idealized cognitive model that contains the cultural conventions motivating the different speech act categories. The *Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model* enables us to explain how speakers make use of illocutionary cognitive models to motivate the conventionalized illocutionary value of utterances, since it includes those cultural conventions, like PROTOTYPICALITY, QUANTITY OPTIONALITY, POLITENESS, FORCEFULNESS, SOCIAL POWER, COST-BENEFIT, that motivate the different types of speech acts. Furthermore, what Panther and Thornburg label 'illocutionary scenarios' is in our view better understood in terms of *high-level situational cognitive models*. We define a high-level situational cognitive model (e.g., ordering, promising, congratulating) as the way in which language users construct interactional meaning representations abstracted from a number of low-level cognitive models, i.e. stereotypical every-day illocutionary situations (i.e., going to the restaurant, taking a train, driving a car) where people try to have their needs satisfied through expressions of various kinds. We have recently integrated the notion of illocutionary construction into the illocutionary layer of the *Lexical Constructional Model* (cf. Ruiz de Mendoza & Mairal Usón 2008; Mairal Usón & Ruiz de Mendoza 2009; see also Baicchi 2008, 2009, 2010; Butler 2009, Baicchi and Ruiz de Mendoza 2010, Ruiz de Mendoza & Gonzálvez-García 2011, *inter alia*), a usage-based theory of meaning construction that aims to produce constrained semantic descriptions at each level of the linguistic organization. It bridges between projectionist and constructional theoretical frameworks and expands its concerns so as to explain all facets of semantic representation and to investigate the relationships between syntax and all aspects of meaning construction, including implicature, illocution and discourse. By taking side to constructionist approaches to language, especially the cognitive-oriented Golbergian strand, we conceive of speech acts as form-meaning pairing like other kinds of constructions. However, such illocutionary constructions differ from the others in the relatively fixed nature of their form and the situational and high-level nature of the meaning part of the pairing. We envisage in an entrenched procedure together with socio-cultural conventions the link between linguistic form and conventional

meaning. Illocutionary constructions are consequently defined as entrenched lexico-grammatical configurations that activate relevant parts of the illocutionary scenario in connection to the situational context. In this respect, the *Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model* is the only model that circumscribes speech acts under the theoretical notion of construction (Goldberg 1995, 2006; Langacker 1999), and it is able to accommodate, along a cline of idiomaticity, fixed and variable expressions showing family resemblance relationships (Rosch and Mervis 1975).

0.3 Methodology and data retrieval

The collection of corpus data for the analysis of the issue under investigation necessitates a brief discussion. A thorough linguistic analysis requires a large collection of data so that it can cover the full range of possible variation instantiated by the phenomenon under scrutiny. The methodology of linguistic analysis that has guided our research follows the usage-based approach proposed by Langacker (1988, 2000), Biber *et al.* (1998), Huston and Francis (2000), Stubbs (2001) *inter alios*, which has established solid principles of empirical observational study. However, the investigation of illocutionary meaning cannot benefit much from language corpora since they are not tagged to search for illocutionary force. Speech acts "are not readily amenable to corpus-linguistic investigations" (Jucker *et al.* 2008: 273) unless we limit ourselves to search for illocutionary force that combines with the Searlean 'illocutionary force indicating devices' or to routinized formulae. But even routinized formulae can be misleading since their language funtions can significantly differ from those we are searching for and a manual filtering is needed. When illocutionary meaning is realized through highly entrenched grammatical constructions (e.g. *If I were you, I would* is likely to instantiate a polite suggestion, but also a warn), these conventionalized patterns can be retrieved from corpora, even though data thus collected needs to be filtered out in order to ascertain whether it instantiates the illocutionary force we were searching for (*If I were you, I would not call him / If I were you, I would not touch that snake*). The data that backbone our investigation has been retrieved from the BNC, the COCA and the WebCorp. All in all, illocutionary meaning is a very complex phenomenon to examine since its motivation is largely to be found in cognitive mechanisms that may be triggered by contextual clues rather than fixed linguistic items;

consequently, retrieval of data from language corpora, as we have mentioned above, is often difficult or even impossible. As in the best tradition of usage-based approaches, our work follows a qualitative methodology that combines the advantages of both Corpus Linguistics and Cognitive Linguistics: theoretical assumptions are complemented with naturally occurring data drawn from several language corpora that help us validate or reject and improve our initial hypotheses.

0.4 Overview of the chapters

The book is organized in five chapters. Chapter 1 goes back over fundamental notions such as action and intentionality that have paved the way to the foundations of Speech Act Theory and outlines the background against which different theories have been originally developed; it discusses crucial models that have emphasized the role of grammatical aspects in the derivation of illocutionary force as well as those that have given prize of pride to inferential processes; finally, it illustrates more recent contributions elaborated within Cognitive Linguistics. Chapter 2 goes into full detail of the *Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model* and discusses the advantages of addressing the investigation of speech acts in terms of illocutionary constructions; it explains the make-up of the high-level situational cognitive model, consisting of an 'ontology', i.e. the different values of the socio-cultural variables relevant to its description, and a 'structure, i.e. the interplay between the variables; it itemizes how the variables relate in accord with speech act categories; it explains how stipulations regulate the performance of speech acts; it identifies the conceptual metonymies that motivate the constructional procedures instantiating different speech acts. Chapter 3, 4 and 5 present three case studies devoted to the three categories of interpersonal speech acts – directive, commissive, and expressive –, scrutinizes three high-level situational cognitive models – suggesting, offering, and thanking –, examine the rationales for a number of constructional procedures, and pin down commonalities and differences in the applications of the various parameters and variables advocated in the description of the theoretical model. The last section summarizes the main findings and offers conclusive remarks.