The Cambridge Handbook of the Philosophy of Language

The philosophy of language is central to the concerns of those working across semantics, pragmatics, and cognition, as well as the philosophy of mind and ideas. Bringing together an international team of leading scholars, this handbook provides a comprehensive guide to contemporary investigations into the relationship between language, philosophy, and linguistics. Chapters are grouped into thematic areas and cover a wide range of topics, from key philosophical notions, such as meaning, truth, reference, names, and propositions, to characteristics of the most recent research in the field, including logicality of language, vagueness in natural language, value judgments, slurs, deception, proximization in discourse, argumentation theory, and linguistic relativity. It also includes chapters that explore selected linguistic theories and their philosophical implications, providing a much-needed interdisciplinary perspective. Showcasing the cutting edge in research in the field, this book is essential reading for philosophers interested in language and linguistics, and linguists interested in philosophical analyses.

PIOTR STALMASZCZYK is Professor and Chair of English Language and Linguistics at the University of Lodz (Poland). His research is concerned with philosophy of language and linguistics. Recent publications include the edited volume Philosophical Insights into Pragmatics (De Gruyter 2019), and two edited volumes on predication theory (both with Peter Lang, 2017). In 2017 he was elected president of the Polish Linguistics Association.
CAMBRIDGE HANDBOOKS IN LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS

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Contributors

Brian Ball  New College of the Humanities, London, UK
André Bazzoni  University of Barcelona, Spain
Antonio Blanco Salgueiro  Complutense University of Madrid, Spain
Emma Borg  University of Reading and the Reading Centre for Cognition Research, UK
Piotr Cap  University of Łódź, Poland
Robyn Carston  University College London, UK
Bianca Cepollaro  Vita-Salute San Raffaele University, Milan, Italy
John Collins  University of East Anglia, UK
Roberta Colonna Dahlman  Lund University, Sweden
Eros Corazza  The University of the Basque Country, Donostia, IKERBASQUE, Basque Foundation for Science, Bilbao, The Basque Country, Spain, and Carleton University, Ottawa, ON, Canada
Guillermo Del Pinal  University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA
Marta Dynel  University of Łódź, Poland
Luis Fernández Moreno  Complutense University of Madrid, Spain
Sarah A. Fisher  University of Vienna, Austria
Chris Fox  University of Gothenburg, Sweden
Manuel García-Carpintero  University of Barcelona, Spain
Peter Hanks  University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, USA
Daniel W. Harris  Hunter College, the City University of New York, USA
Leopold Hess  Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland
Ray Jackendoff  Tufts University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA
Jarosław Jakielaszek  University of Warsaw, Poland
Kasia M. Jaszczolt  University of Cambridge, UK
Eleni Kapogianni  University of Kent, UK
Katarzyna Kijania-Placek  Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland
Michael Losonsky  Colorado State University, USA
Peter Ludlow  University of Campinas (UNICAMP), Brazil
List of Contributors

Genoveva Martí ICREA (Institució Catalana de Recerca i Estudis Avançats) and University of Barcelona, Spain
Jukka Mikkonen University of Helsinki, Finland
Alexander Miller University of Otago, New Zealand
Stephen Mumford Durham University, UK
Joanna Odrowąż-Sypniewska University of Warsaw, Poland
Panu Raatikainen Tampere University, Finland
François Recanati Collège de France, Paris, France
Esther Romero University of Granada, Spain
Scott Soames University of Southern California, USA
Belén Soria University of Granada, Spain
Andrés Soria Ruiz IFILNOVA, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal
Piotr Stalmaszczyk University of Łódź, Poland
Isidora Stojanovic Jean Nicod Institute, CNRS, ENS, PSL Research University, France
Jean H. M. Wagemans University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Alexander Williams University of Maryland, USA
Preface

The Cambridge Handbook of the Philosophy of Language constitutes a comprehensive guide to contemporary investigations dealing with the intricate relations between language, philosophy, and linguistics. The volume is divided into six parts. After an introductory chapter which discusses different definitions and descriptions of the field, especially within the analytic tradition (assumed in most contributions), Part I provides an overview of the origins and main stages in the development of philosophy of language; it also offers suggestions for future directions. Part II investigates some selected foundational issues. The chapters concentrate on the relations between language, ontology, and logic, and on the philosophical foundations of language, on issues connected with philosophy of language and mind, and different theoretical perspectives on language and meaning. Part III discusses such fundamental concepts as truth, reference, names, natural kinds, vagueness, and indexicals. The authors not only discuss those concepts but also comment on the current debates and controversies. Chapters in Part IV focus on issues in semantics and pragmatics (within different theoretical approaches), such as entailment, presupposition, implicature, speech acts, events, and also on value judgments, and slurs. Part V is devoted to the philosophical implications of selected linguistic theories (generative grammar, conceptual semantics, Relevance Theory) and of the theory of mental files, and to an overview of the relations between philosophy of language and discourse studies. Finally, chapters in Part VI offer a range of possible extensions to some less traditional areas of investigation, such as the philosophy of argument, the philosophical assumptions explicit and implicit in analyzing denial, deception, irony, and metaphor. This part concludes with chapters on the analytic philosophy of literature, and on the philosophical implications of linguistic relativity. The volume is furnished with a cumulative list of references, which may serve as a comprehensive bibliography for philosophy of language.
The topics discussed in this Handbook include notions belonging to the core of any philosophical discussion (e.g. truth, reference, names, propositions), concepts crucial to semantic and pragmatic theories, and also some nonobvious extensions, characteristic of the most recent research (e.g. logicality of language, vagueness in natural language, value judgments, slurs, deception, proximization in discourse, argumentation theory, linguistic relativity); the volume also includes chapters discussing selected linguistic theories and their philosophical implications.

The Cambridge Handbook of the Philosophy of Language is aimed at graduate and PhD students, but it is also meant for all scholars interested in the more philosophical inquiries into language and linguistics, especially different aspects of meaning and language use.

A publication like this would not have been possible without the involvement and joint effort of numerous people. First and foremost, I want to thank all the contributors for accepting my invitation, for their enthusiasm, reliability, and hard work; it has been my pleasure to work with you (a word of warning: I am already looking forward to further projects!).

The very idea of this Handbook would not have been possible without the initiative and most helpful suggestions from the publisher. The idea was suggested to me by Helen Barton, whom I would like to thank for constant encouragement and support at every stage of the project; many thanks also to Isabel Collins for her invaluable assistance, and to Jacqueline French for her positive attitude and highly professional copyediting.

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