



Für | For Manfred

From his students

Herausgegeben von Sophie Repp & Tue Trinh

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From his students

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Vorwort

Lieber Manfred,

mit dieser Sammlung, dieser Galerie, dieser Schatzkiste an kleinsten, kleinen, mittleren und großen Texten zu linguistischen und nicht-linguistischen Themen möchten wir, die bei Dir lernen durften und die Du während ihrer Forschungsarbeit für die Magister- oder Masterarbeit, und auf den Wegen und Wendungen der Promotion hin zum Dokortitel begleitet hast, für deine Inspirationen, Deine Neugier und Begeisterung danken. Da Du ein Mensch bist, der sich für viele Dinge interessiert und von vielen Dingen zu berichten weißt, die weit, weit über das Themengebiet der Sprachwissenschaft hinausgehen, haben wir in unserer Sammlung fast genau das gemacht: wir sind weit über die Sprachwissenschaft hinausgegangen. Nicht weit, weit – denn dies ist immer noch ein Buch an den Lehrer, und dieser ist ein Sprachwissenschaftler – aber Du wirst sehen, dass die vielen Gespräche, die wir mit Dir hatten, Inspiration waren, über vieles Verschiedenes nachzudenken: über Musik, über Rezepte für leckeres Gebäck, über Haustiere, über Reisen in der Antike, oder einfach auch über Erinnerungen an eine wichtige, letztlich für alle eindrucksvolle Zeit. Natürlich auch über sprachwissenschaftliche Phänomene und Analysen: es wäre ja eine unmögliche Welt, wenn das nicht so wäre!

Du wirst auch sehen, dass unsere Gespräche mit Dir auch Inspiration waren, ein wenig mit Sprache zu spielen. Du wirst überrascht sein – oder Du hast es sowieso schon geahnt –, wie künstlerisch begabt manche von uns sind. Lyrik von der kürzesten bis zu längeren Formen, Bildergeschichten, amüsante Berichte aus dem Leben, formalere Abhandlungen: alles ist möglich, wenn man Dich als Lehrer hatte. Und natürlich haben unsere Beiträge viele sprachliche und kulturelle Hintergründe: wie könnte es anders sein, da Du doch auf mehreren Kontinenten unterwegs warst und bist, und Deine Erfahrungen mit uns geteilt und – natürlich – uns inspiriert hast, neugierig zu sein, sprachlich und kulturell. Unsere Beiträge kommen auch von mehreren Kontinenten, denn wir sind an vielen

Orten in der Welt, mit einer gewissen Konzentration auf Deinen deutschen Wirkungsraum. Ist ja klar. An unserer Sammlung konnten nicht alle mitwirken, die einen Magister/Master- oder Doktorabschluss mit Dir absolviert haben. Aber diese Sammlung soll stellvertretend für alle sein, die Du betreut hast. Mehrere, die nicht dabei sind, haben uns auf den Weg gegeben, dass sie sich genauso bei Dir bedanken wollen.

Die Einbandgestaltung haben Herausgeberin und Herausgeber aufgrund eigener grafischer Unfähigkeit inhouse outgesourct an Sascha Repp, der unseren Wunsch erfüllt hat, etwas Buntes zu kreieren: so bunt wie die Beiträge in diesem Buch.

Wir alle hoffen, dass Du ~~ein-bisschen~~ ganz viel (!) Spaß beim Stöbern und Blättern hast.

Sophie

Berlin, Oktober 2022

Preface

This book contains contributions from people who wrote their Master's or PhD thesis under Manfred Krifka's supervision. It is meant as a small parting gift to Manfred on the end of his tenure as Director of the Leibniz-Zentrum Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft, popularly known as ZAS.

The relationship of us, the authors of this book, to Manfred is essentially academic: we were his students. From him we learned the arts and craft of our discipline and received inspiration to continue on our own. But Manfred is more than just a teacher of linguistics. He loves the science, but he also loves the people, in all of their variety, complexity, and difficulty. He shares his knowledge to help us understand the natural world, but he also imparts his kindness and humanity to give us that wonderful, affirming experience of knowing a good person with a big heart.

The contributions in this book are an eclectic mix. Their subject matter ranges from horses to Wittgenstein, from ships and cookies to negation and genericity, from music and wine to modal particles and embedded speech acts. Equally heterogeneous are the genres, which include squibs, papers, letters, comics, cooking recipes, and poems of different sorts. This diversity mirrors that of Manfred's interests and research topics. It also reflects the diversity of the people whom he has helped all over the world. And no matter how different the writings in this book are from each other in form and content, they all share the same perlocutionary goal of letting Manfred know that we, the authors, remember him and are grateful for his presence in the course of our life.

Tue

Berlin, October 2022

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Wittgenstein trivia

Tue Trinh

One current strand of research into the interface between grammar and logic is concerned with two kinds of trivialities: those that result in deviance and those that do not. Consider the contrast between (1a) and (1b).

- (1) a. #Some student but John came to the party.
- b. Some student who is not John came to the party and
 it is not the case that some student came to the party.

According to the well-known, and widely accepted, analysis proposed by von Fintel (1993), (1a) sounds strange because it is contradictory: the semantics which von Fintel assigned to *but* results in (1a) meaning, essentially, what (1b) means. Note, however, that (1b) is a fine sentence. It is a contradiction, but it does not feel “wrong” in the same way (1a) does.

Similarly for tautologies. Consider the contrast between (2a) and (2b).

- (2) a. #At least zero students came to the party.
- b. Zero or more students came to the party.

According to Haida and Trinh (2020), (2a) is weird because it is trivially true: what it says is that either no student came to the party or some did. However, this is also what (2b) says, but (2b), just like (1b), feels like a perfectly fine sentence.

Attempts have been made to clarify the distinction between the two kinds of trivialities, and it has become consensus to call trivialities which result in deviance “L-trivialities” (cf. Gajewski 2002, Abrusán 2007, Gajewski 2009, Del Pinal 2019, Pistoia-Reda and Sauerland 2021, among others). I will not discuss the notion of L-triviality any further. My purpose in writing this squib, for this book, is to point out two facts. One is that Manfred Krifka was among the first linguists to explain ill-formedness in terms of triviality. Already in 1995, he proposed an analysis for NPIs which accounts for the contrast between (3a) and (3b) by interpreting the first as contingent and the second as contradictory.

- (3) a. John did not read any book.
- b. #John read any book.

The other fact is that long before any linguist said anything about triviality and deviance, a philosopher, who happens to share the same birthday with Manfred, had talked about the grammatical status of contradictions and tautologies in a remarkably similar manner. In his dissertation, commonly referred to as the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein put forward a theory of language according to which sentences are pictorial: they represent states of affairs in the same way as, say, the score of Schubert’s *Unvollendete* represents the sound of this symphony (Wittgenstein 1921). And just as we can compare the score and the sound to see if they match, we can compare a sentence and reality to see if it is true. Here is what Wittgenstein said about tautologies and contradictions in proposition 4.466 of the *Tractatus*.

4.466 Einer bestimmten logischen Verbindung von Zeichen entspricht eine bestimmte logische Verbindung ihrer Bedeutungen; *jede beliebige* Verbindung entspricht nur den unverbundenen Zeichen

Das heißt, Sätze, die für jede Sachlage wahr sind, können überhaupt keine Zeichenverbindung sein, denn sonst können ihnen nur bestimmte Verbindungen von Gegenständen entsprechen.

(Und keiner logischen Verbindung entspricht *keine* Verbindung der Gegenstände.)

Tautologie und Kontradiktion sind die Grenzfälle der Zeichenverbindung, nämlich ihre Auflösung.

To a definite logical combination of signs corresponds a definite logical combination of their meanings; *every arbitrary* combination only corresponds to the unconnected signs.

That is, propositions which are true for every state of affairs cannot be combinations of signs at all, for otherwise there could only correspond to them definite combinations of objects.

(And to no logical combination corresponds *no* combination of objects.)

Tautology and contradiction are the limiting cases of the combination of symbols, namely their dissolution.

The proposition makes perfect sense. Can we use musical notation to produce a score which matches every possible piece of music, or no possible piece of music? Obviously not! In the same way, we cannot put linguistic symbols together to produce a model of every, or no, state of affairs. Reading 4.446, one would think that the grammar of Wittgenstein's ideal language, i.e. one which mirrors thought, cannot generate tautologies and contradictions. Just as we cannot *picture* a triviality, we cannot *construct* a trivial sentence. Such a sentence would be no *Zeichenverbindung* at all, and constructing it would amount to throwing syntax to the wind.

It should thus be a consequence of Wittgenstein's theory that trivialities are ill-formed. However, Wittgenstein faced a dilemma: he had to accept that trivialities such as *it's raining or not raining* are grammatical. In fact, he claimed that all propositions of logic and mathematics are of this kind. The way he got out of this dilemma is to introduce a distinction between sentences that are *unsinnig* 'nonsensical' and sentences that are *sinnlos* 'without sense'. Specifically, *unsinnig* are sentences that violate the rules of syntax, and *sinnlos* are sentences that are trivial but syntactically well-formed.

I find the *unsinnig*–*sinnlos* distinction one of the least cogent and, also, one of the least comprehensible aspects of the Tractatus. How can there be sentences that are not pictures of anything, given the central thesis that sentences are pictures. Wouldn't it mean that there are pictures that are not pictures of anything? It seems to me that Wittgenstein never really got out of the dilemma, and what he really needed is something like the distinction between L-triviality and triviality in general. Specifically, what would have helped him is a more differentiated notion of triviality according to which the sentences that he called *sinnlos* are not trivial after all.

Maybe Manfred can think about this when he has more free time.

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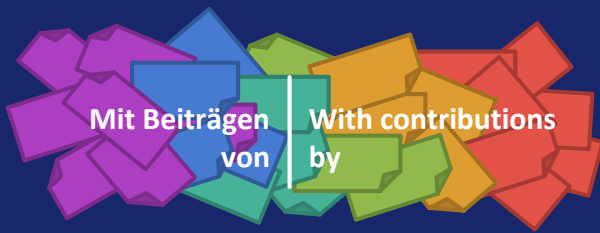
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