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EPILOGUE

Creative to whom, and on what basis?

The role of perspective

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This epilogue considers creativity from three different perspectives: that of the producer of the expression, of the person paying attention to the expression (the attender) in the same context, and of any attender from a different time and place than that in which the expression was produced. These perspectives are considered in face-to-face interaction and contrasted with mediated interaction. Whether an expression is perceived as creative or not from one of these perspectives depends on what is in that person's scope of relevant behaviors. In addition, frame knowledge is considered in relation to viewing expressions as creative or not. Examples from the chapters in this volume illustrate how these various factors play out in relation to each other.

Keywords: attender, face-to-face interaction, frames, mediated interaction, scope of relevant behaviors

1. Introduction

Creativity in expressions related to time are explored in a range of domains in this volume, from the linguistic (in prosaic as well as poetic uses), including both written and spoken language, to speakers' gestures, to explicitly creative productions beyond the linguistic, such as the composition of pieces of music and film. Fundamental questions raised in the volume concern the similarities and differences between (a) one's experience of time and (b) one's conceptualization of what time is and how it functions, and the variability of both of those across individuals, as well as within any given individual: at different points in time, in different places, and on different time scales (across seconds, hours, days, etc.). The kinds of creativity of time expression that are discussed in the chapters cover quite a range, from what might be called everyday sorts of creativity (such as in word choices) to more extraordinary forms (as in musical composition or cinematography).

One lens through which we can view these various forms of temporal expression is that of the perspective involved with respect to the expression. As explored below, perspective can have to do with whether one is producing/has produced the expression, or whether one is perceiving (mainly hearing or seeing for the examples being considered here) or in general paying attention to the expression. Perspective can also have to do with the framework that one is using for making sense of the expression, be it the knowledge frame, the contextual frame, the historical frame, etc.

2. Three perspectives

Any form of expression (be it produced by the body, as in vocal sounds, or by some product that somebody has made, as in an artwork) can be viewed from (at least) three perspectives or roles. Rather than using categories such as speaker and hearer or artist and audience, I use the overarching labels of *producer* and *attender*. Here they are described adapted from Cienki (2017a: 136; 2018: 61):

1. The producer is a first-person role or perspective (where 'I' am expressing something). It is the one that produces a verbal expression, other sound, or gesture; creates a work of visual art; composes or performs a piece of music; films images; or choreographs or performs dance. (We call all of these forms of expression *expressions*.) This role thus encompasses Goffman's (1981) categories of animator and author.
The other two roles involve those paying attention to someone else's communication or expression. Following Clark (1996: 21), they are called *attenders*. The attender role is considered in terms of two forms.
2. One kind of attender is the observer of the expression in the same live or virtual context in which it was produced (paying attention to 'you' as the one expressing something). This includes the second-person role of the intended addressee in a conversation, but also that of a passer-by, an eavesdropper, etc. (as discussed in Clark 1996: ch. 1).
3. Another kind of attender is the third-person role of one hearing and/or viewing the expression or a recording of it – an attender, at a later time, and likely in a different place, than that in which the expression was produced. (This perspective involves paying attention to 'him, her, or them' expressing something.) For example, a film viewer, a film studies researcher, and a gesture researcher all embody this role in relation to the recorded video they watch (and analyze, in the case of the researchers).

The second-person role is not usually relevant in relation to some producers. For example, an author writing a novel, a play, or a screenplay does not usually have someone watching what they write as they write it. However, a cameraman filming a movie often has others present who may be seeing what s/he is filming in the moment, and these individuals may be considered second-person attenders (imagine one of them saying to the cameraman “I like the angle you used for this shot”). The typical viewing audience for a film, though, would be third-person attenders (e.g. “I love how they shot that last scene”). An audience member in a theater at a play is a second-person attender of the actors, but a third-person attender of the playwright’s composition.

2.1 The scope of relevant behaviors

Those attending to a producer of some kind(s) of expression pay attention to the expressions to varying degrees and variably over time. Similarly, producers themselves pay varying degrees of attention, varying over time, to what they are expressing, even if producers presumably normally pay greater attention to what they are expressing than attenders might. To enable talking about these processes of attention from the point of view of the different perspectives or roles outlined above, I have introduced elsewhere (Cienki 2012, 2015a, 2015b, 2017b) the construct of the scope of relevant behaviors (SRB).

In the context of the present Epilogue, we might think more broadly in terms of the scope of relevant forms of *expression*, but for consistency’s sake, I adhere to the previously introduced term of SRB. The notion can be explained as follows.

Building on work from Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986), the selective activation of meaning (Müller 2008; Müller and Tag 2010), and attentional analysis of meaning (Oakley 2009), the claim (Cienki 2012: 155) is that a given producer’s focus on what behaviors to deploy as relevant in a given context, and an attender’s focus on which behaviors of the producer are relevant in a given context, are both variable; this means that the producer’s and attender’s scope can be broader or narrower, involving more or fewer behaviors (e.g., speech+gesture+facial expressions in an emotional context versus just the words spoken in a fact-oriented recitation of items). Presumably when the size of both the producer’s and attender’s scopes are aligned with each other, their communication should be more in sync. But the scope of relevant behaviors is dynamic not only in terms of how it can zoom in or out, but also in that its focus can shift. Whereas for speakers, spoken language in face-to-face interaction arguably constitutes the default focus, the focus can move temporarily from this gravitational center to other behaviors, such as gesture (such as when one is trying to communicate through a soundproof glass wall).

(Cienki 2017c: 7)

Consider the example of someone making a call on their mobile phone while on public transportation (say, a bus or train). They may be gesticulating while talking loudly, much to the consternation of their fellow passengers (unwilling attenders), and if it is not a video call, the interlocutor on the phone (the attender-addressee) will only hear the speaker's voice. The differing SRBs of the producer and second-person attender are pre-determined here by the technology being used: the speaker/producer can hear his own voice and feel (through proprioception) and potentially see his own gestures, but the attender-addressee can only hear the speaker's voice. Even if the second-person attender were on the same public transportation with the speaker, s/he might be looking out the window occasionally to keep track of where they were on their journey and not be visually perceiving many of the producer's gestures. What any individual's SRB encompasses from moment to moment depends upon many factors – not only the attender's degree of attention to the producer (in general and at a given moment), but also the conditions in the environment for communication, the cognitive load the individual is handling at the moment, etc. (Cienki 2020: 84). As a result, the scope of relevant behaviors can thus differ (and probably usually does differ) for producer and attender at any given moment.

We can see that the different forms of creative temporal expressions (and indeed the expression of any domain) play out differently in terms of the three different perspectives, partly according to the contexts in which they appear, relative to the given producer's and attenders' scope of relevant behaviors. The distinctions above play out in rather specific ways if we consider the different kinds of creative expressions of temporality explored in this volume. This is partly a factor of the contexts of interaction in which the expressions are normally used.

3. These perspectives in context

Let us consider the differences between the context of face-to-face interaction versus different kinds of interaction that are mediated in some material or technological way.

3.1 Face-to-face interaction

The producer may add expressive elements to their verbo-gestural temporal expression (such as the facial expressions noted by Alcaraz, this volume), and if attenders see and hear the producer and are from the same or a similar culture, they will be likely to appreciate the creativity as such. However, as noted with the possibility of differing scopes of relevant behaviors, described above, they may not be looking

at the producer at the moment and only listening, and thus may miss out on the creativity involved if the utterance is produced with a neutral intonation pattern. In other cases, the producer may be speaking a foreign language, and may have imported some gestural behaviors from their first language (L1) into the use of their second language (L2). (See Gullberg 2014 on how L1 gestures are carried over for a long time in the acquisition of an L2.) For example, a Chinese L1 speaker may use a gesture for time along the vertical axis, as described by Gu (this volume) when speaking English as L2, yet the English L1 attender may not understand such a gesture as being temporal in reference. They may interpret it in another way, relating to some other aspect of the utterance; for example if the conversation was about a trip that the person took last week, the attender might interpret the upward gesture (that the Chinese speaker used for reference to past time) as expressing something about how big and great the trip was. The attender may see this as a creative gesture, especially if they are not familiar with Chinese language and culture, whereas for the producer, it was a conventional, non-creative means of gesticulating about time (in their L1 culture, carried over to their L2 language use).

The attender may also simply not pay attention to the gesture, taking it as a mistake or strange movement. However, if the markedness of it fits certain criteria, it will be perceived as pleasurable/likeable, and presumably as creative, rather than as problematic or eccentric. One way of characterizing how this might happen can be found in what Giora et al. (2004) propose as the Optimal Innovation Hypothesis. According to this, a stimulus is optimally innovative if it invokes a response that is novel and nonsalient but also “allows for the automatic recoverability of a salient response related to that stimulus so that both responses make sense (e.g., the similarity and difference between them can be assessable)” (p. 116). So the L1 speaker of English may see the Chinese L1 speaker’s vertical gesture for time when speaking English as L2 and catch both the aspect that is salient to them (the height of the gesture, which stood out in what they perceived in their SRB), and the novel (to them) nonsalient relation to time, and appreciate it as something creative and clever.

3.2 Mediated interaction

The script-writer, the music composer, and the choreographer have a special role as producers (in the sense in which that term is being used here). They are normally not seen or heard directly by their intended attenders (the audience). Let us call such producers *creators*. The intended attenders may or may not pick up on what the creator intended. Witness the example of the creative techniques of presenting flashbacks in films, described by Gordejuela (this volume). While presumably most audience members will understand what is being presented with them, in terms of ‘time travel’, some (such as young children, for example) may not; others may simply

have not seen some crucial moments that provide the cues that a flashback is taking place (they might have been talking for a moment to someone next to them in the movie theater and so what happened in the film momentarily fell outside of their SRB) and then they may be confused when they turn their attention back to the screen. Creativity on the creator's part may or may not be creativity for the attender.

Some creative techniques in film rely so cleverly on cognitive techniques that they may not even be noticed very consciously by viewers, but rather be understood intuitively. Take, for example, the scene Coëgnarts discusses (this volume, his Type IV example) wherein a straight razor blade for shaving in one scene, seen in front of the main character's face as he is looking at it, is juxtaposed with a similarly shaped knife in a flashback as seen from the main character's point of view, a knife being held up threateningly by his captor in front of him at a time in the past. The creativity on the part of the creator (involving cuts in film editing that change perspectives while keeping a referent in the same place on the movie screen as a grounding point) can be perceived via everyday techniques of conceptual integration (*à la* Fauconnier and Turner 2002) on the part of the film viewer—perhaps with jarring results as the viewer realizes the shift in time and place being shown. Whether this type of creativity would fit the Optimal Innovation Hypothesis, mentioned above, and be perceived as pleasurable is an empirical question. In sum, creativity by a producer may not be perceived/comprehended by an attender as creativity, and vice versa; the SRBs of the participants on the two sides may not have included or made use of the same expressions to the same ends.

4. Perspectives from frame knowledge

Another form of perspective comes from the frames one is using to understand the context or genre event that one is engaged with at the moment. Witness the example from *Gordejuela* (this volume) in which a voiceover in a scene in the film version of *Jane Eyre* creates a blend between a conversation in the present and a hide-and-seek scene from the main character's past. The conversation and the act of physically hiding from someone each have their own frame or script of action sequences (in the sense of Schank and Abelson 1977) in which they can be understood. In the film, viewers are expected to invoke both in order to understand the protagonist's emotional state in the present. The blending of a specific conversation with a specific instance of hiding, both involving the same character, makes for a temporal blend that puts some cognitive demands on the attender.

Other cases involve more common forms of linguistic creativity – in the stretching of domains to which words may apply. In the examples presented by Valenzuela and Illán Castillo (this volume), it has to do with extending the use of

verbs in English that refer to manner of motion and using them in a metaphorical sense as an expression of movement in the given utterance in relation to time (to note two of their examples: “As the 20th century marched on” or “as the years blew by”). In the framework of a poem, these might not be taken by frequent readers of (attenders to) poetry as being particularly creative temporal expressions. However to someone in the corporate world reading a report about their business, such lexical choices used there might be interpreted as reflecting a flippant attitude towards the business (e.g. “our profits just kept decreasing as the years flew by”) – a kind of creativity at the Chief Financial Officer’s expense.

5. Closing points

Creativity in expressions of time is only “in” the creative product in a certain sense. Following the cognitive linguistic perspective, the expressions are not containers of meaning, but are cues for constructing meaning (Fillmore 1985; Langacker 1987: 154–163; Turner 1996). As Reddy (1993) made clear, communication is not a matter of transference of ideas, packaged in words and texts, from one person to another. Rather, expressions (of whatever sort) from some producer provide a set of tools which we, as attenders, can use to make meaning. The meaning we construct is partly a factor of what is in our SRB, partly a matter of what frame(s) of interpretation we invoke, and also other factors.

One of those other factors is expectancy. Expectancy can be seen as a way in which an event frame or script can be engaged in terms of its future orientation. Anticipating that the rest of the typical steps in the frame or script, that you see yourself in, will be carried out provides a specific set of expectations. As Besada (this volume) discusses, expectancy plays an important role in one’s receptiveness to creative expression, helping shape one’s emotional attitude towards what is to come when engaging in a conversation, hearing a piece of music, or taking in other modes and forms of communication.

Another factor is the normativity that comes with expectations that a script in our frame knowledge will be carried out. Normativity plays a formative role with respect to anticipating subsequent moves, acts, or techniques, according to the genre of communicative usage event (Langacker 1988) that one is engaged in. “Temporal expectations in musical performance also come from visual inputs such as reading a score – when it exists – or the gestural and bodily interactions of all performers (Palmer and Zamm 2017) – that may include an eventual conductor”, as Besada (this volume) notes.

Finally, the ways in which we might be creative in our use of temporal and other expressions depends upon a variety of other factors, such as the extent of

our knowledge of shared cultural models (Shore 1996) that we can draw upon and push the boundaries of. In addition, someone employing a broad SRB might refer to certain contextual cues to assess the acceptability of being more creative or not in their own or others' expressiveness. This process can rely on knowledge about one's interactants and what their expectations are, knowledge of the language and culture if one is in a foreign language context – and if one is seeing or listening to (attending to) a work of art, knowledge of the particular creator's oeuvre. The degree of creativity one might employ, or the degree to which one might be open to interpreting expressions as creative, can depend on all of these factors to different degrees.

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