

Bert Peeters · Kerry Mullan ·
Lauren Sadow *Editors*

Studies in Ethnopragmatics, Cultural Semantics, and Intercultural Communication

Meaning and Culture

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*Dedicated to our good friend and colleague
Cliff Goddard*

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Chapter 1

Culture Is Everywhere!



Bert Peeters

Abstract This introductory chapter to the second of three volumes celebrating the career of Griffith University academic Cliff Goddard recaps the fundamentals of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) approach, which is explicitly adopted by all contributors to this volume (Sect. 1.2), then contextualizes and introduces the individual papers (Sects. 1.3 and 1.4).

Keywords Meaning · Culture · Cultural keywords · Discourse · Natural Semantic Metalanguage

1.1 Introduction

This volume, subtitled *Meaning and culture*, is the second of three celebrating the career of Griffith University academic Cliff Goddard under the general title *Studies in ethnopragmatics, cultural semantics, and intercultural communication*. A ‘fun tribute’ that recaps the major milestones in Goddard’s personal and professional life may be found in the opening pages of volume 1; a hopefully exhaustive list of Goddard’s publications to date closes each of the three volumes.

Apart from this introductory chapter, volume 2 comprises two main parts that are very different in length (seven chapters as opposed to two). Part I is named after Goddard’s contribution to the *Oxford handbook of the word* (Taylor 2015); in it, he discusses ‘Words as carriers of cultural meaning’ (Goddard 2015). Part II reproduces the subtitle of Goddard’s (2006) foundational collection of edited *Ethnopragsmatics* chapters. Ethnopragsmatics was of course one of the main topics

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of volume 1, which only goes to show that culture is never far from Goddard's mind; he has even explicated the word in NSM (Goddard 2005a). The common denominator in volume 3, where culture looms large as well, is the use of a recent offspring of NSM, known as Minimal English, of which Goddard has been an important advocate (see Goddard 2018a), but no less so than of NSM itself (see Goddard 2018b). NSM as such being explicitly adopted by all contributors to volume 2, a recap of the fundamentals of the NSM approach (Sect. 1.2) may be appropriate before we contextualize and introduce the individual papers in the remainder of this introductory chapter (Sects. 1.3 and 1.4).

1.2 NSM in a Nutshell

NSM is a powerful descriptive tool created by linguists for linguists, but also for the world. It is a descriptive tool like no other. It is the tool that seventeenth-century philosophers such as Leibnitz, Descartes, Pascal, Arnauld, Locke and others dreamt of but were unable to piece together. They were philosophers, after all, and no matter how well-intentioned they were, they did not have the linguistic know-how to make their dream a reality. NSM consists of a maximally culture-neutral vocabulary of universal (or at least quasi-universal) and semantically simple building blocks held together by a syntax intended to be as universal as the building blocks themselves. It was painstakingly developed over the last several decades, first by Polish-born linguist Anna Wierzbicka, who migrated to Australia in the early 1970s, then by the most formidable tandem in contemporary linguistics, Wierzbicka and Goddard, her erstwhile student with whom she has co-authored dozens of high-calibre publications. Apart from relying on their own investigations, Wierzbicka and Goddard have been able to put to the best possible use the extensive research carried out by linguists (colleagues as well as students), in Australia and elsewhere, on dozens of typologically and genetically unrelated languages from all corners of the world.

The NSM *approach*, which is inspired by a desire to overcome ethnocentrism and in particular Anglo bias in linguistic analysis, is the paradigm in linguistic semantics that uses the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (the term is Goddard's) in its endeavour to *explicate*, i.e. make explicit, the meaning of culture-specific words and phrases. The technique used to this effect is known as 'reductive paraphrase'; it aims at *reducing* and ultimately removing cultural complexity by *paraphrasing* it into semantically simpler terms. The result is referred to as an *explication*. Explications are fine-grained and, above all, non-Anglo-based descriptions that the English language as such is woefully inadequate to emulate in ways that are convincing to native speakers of other languages. Written in non-technical language, they are accessible to cultural insiders (those for whom English is their native language) and cultural outsiders (all others) alike. Since, until compelling evidence to the contrary (or unless stated otherwise), nothing in an explication is non-universal, explications can be translated without deformation or bias into other

languages (other NSMs), thereby making culturally specific terms universally intelligible. Several contributors, to this volume in particular, illustrate this by providing explications not only in English, but in other languages as well.

In its purest form, NSM vocabulary is limited to 65 so-called *semantic primes*, a list that is now considered near-final. As indicated above, the primes are concepts or building blocks that are found in all (or nearly all) of the world’s languages and that NSM practitioners believe to be semantically irreducible. They have resisted all attempts at semantic decomposition into more basic elements and are therefore deemed indefinable in terms that are semantically simpler than the primes themselves. The English exponents of the primes, grouped into meaningful categories, are listed in Table 1.1. Comparable tables for many other languages can be found on the NSM homepage at <http://bit.ly/1XUoRRV>.

NSM syntax, on the other hand, is as universal as the primes, it is empirically validated, and it sets the rules for the combination of primes into the semantic components that make up an explication. Each of the primes has its own set of combinatorial properties. Charts that summarize these properties, or at least the most important of them, can also be found on the NSM homepage at <http://bit.ly/1XUoRRV>.

Table 1.1 Exponents of semantic primes in English

I, YOU, SOMEONE, SOMETHING ~ THING, PEOPLE, BODY	Substantives
KIND, PART	Relational substantives
THIS, THE SAME, OTHER ~ ELSE	Determiners
ONE, TWO, SOME, ALL, MUCH ~ MANY, LITTLE ~ FEW	Quantifiers
GOOD, BAD	Evaluators
BIG, SMALL	Descriptors
KNOW, THINK, WANT, DON’T WANT, FEEL, SEE, HEAR	Mental predicates
SAY, WORDS, TRUE	Speech
DO, HAPPEN, MOVE	Actions, events, movement
BE (SOMEWHERE), THERE IS, BE (SOMEONE/SOMETHING)	Location, existence, specification
(IS) MINE	Possession
LIVE, DIE	Life and death
WHEN ~ TIME, NOW, BEFORE, AFTER, A LONG TIME, A SHORT TIME, FOR SOME TIME, MOMENT	Time
WHERE ~ PLACE, HERE, ABOVE, BELOW, FAR, NEAR, SIDE, INSIDE, TOUCH	Place
NOT, MAYBE, CAN, BECAUSE, IF	Logical concepts
VERY, MORE	Augmentor, intensifier
LIKE ~ AS	Similarity

- Notes*
- Exponents of primes can be polysemous; i.e., they can have other, additional meanings.
 - Exponents of primes may be words, bound morphemes, or phrasemes.
 - They can be formally, i.e. morphologically, complex.
 - They can have combinatorial variants or allolxes (indicated with ~).
 - Each prime has well-specified syntactic (combinatorial) properties

Thanks to its universal (or at least quasi-universal) lexicon of primes and its universal (or at least quasi-universal) syntax, NSM is quite unlike any other descriptive tool used in linguistics. No other metalanguage has been developed for which there exist so many strictly isomorphic versions in languages other than English. No other metalanguage has been developed that allows for its outputs (referred to above as *explications*) to be so freely and (mostly) effortlessly translated into other NSMs. NSM is thus very much unlike ordinary languages, which at times raise considerable translation issues. No other metalanguage has been developed that can lay claim to being a genuine *mini-language*, as opposed to a terminology that does not have its own intuitively clear grammar. No other metalanguage has been developed that is unburdened with unnecessary (but necessarily alienating) associations with culturally tainted material from any language. Its English version can be used to explicate culturally specific material belonging to any other language, e.g. Japanese or Warlpiri, without adding an English spin to the explication—in exactly the same way as the Japanese or Warlpiri versions could be used to explicate culturally specific material belonging to English, without adding a Japanese or Warlpiri spin. For NSM practitioners, the so-called *insider perspective* is sacrosanct.

Sometimes, though, it just cannot be done with primes alone. Attempts to systematically exclude non-prime material may at times lead to very cumbersome explications that would be rather unpalatable. Apart from primes, some explications may need to rely on so-called *semantic molecules*. To distinguish the latter from genuine primes, molecules are usually formally identified by means of a following lowercase *m* placed between square brackets, i.e. by means of the symbol [m]. Unlike primes, molecules are complex and not necessarily universal. However, they could still be widely shared across languages of the modern world. They are never posited lightly. Their main function is to maintain the overall readability of explications that would otherwise become impenetrable. Most importantly, they can and must be independently decomposed into semantic primes (or into combinations of primes and more basic molecules, as the case may be). Several contributors to this volume occasionally rely on molecules to ensure that their explications remain legible yet are as culturally neutral as possible (or at least desirable).

There is much more that could be said. For more information (on NSM syntax, on semantic molecules, semantic templates, cultural scripts, allolexy, Minimal English, etc.), the reader is referred to the introductory chapters to volumes 1 and 3, and to the literature referred to therein. Another source of reliable information is the NSM homepage. Last but not least, information on literally hundreds of NSM-related publications is available on <https://nsm-approach.net>, a fully searchable and continually updated online database of relevant bibliographic notices that also allows to trace explications, scripts, and tables of primes and molecules in the NSM literature.

1.3 Words as Carriers of Cultural Meaning

Although, from a historiographical point of view, it is not entirely accurate to say so, it is nonetheless defensible to argue that, in some way, the most commonly used variant of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) is a form of English devoid of its multiple layers of cultural meaning: a form of English stripped to the bone. This is not how NSM saw the light of day, but looking at it that way enables us to focus on a very important point that is often lost sight of. English, as we know it today, in its multiple varieties (British English, American English, Australian English, New Zealand English, to name but a few), is as impregnated with culture as any other language, which means it cannot be used as an *objective* yardstick and an *unbiased* descriptive tool for cultural specificities in other languages. It *can* be used as a yardstick and a descriptive tool, as can any other language; but if it is, it is with total disregard for the insider perspective. The alternative—some would say the only alternative—is the use of a fine-grained and relentlessly fine-tuned tool such as NSM, which allows us to unpack culturally complex meanings in a way that makes sense to cultural insiders and outsiders alike. It allows us to realize that ‘almost any and every word can be seen as culture-bearing to some extent’ (Goddard 2015: 397). Indeed, the research that underpins the NSM approach has revealed that the number of genuine semantic universals is unlikely to exceed 200. This number includes the 65 semantic primes, as well as several dozens of universal semantic molecules. Everything else is culturally specific, and everything else carries cultural meaning, even in English.

The first and by far the largest part of this volume deals with *words* as carriers of cultural meaning. Most words do, as we have just seen, but not all to the same extent. In the NSM literature, the most obvious lexical carriers of cultural meaning, be it in English or in any other language, are usually referred to as ‘cultural keywords’. The term *keyword* (or *key word*), used with or without the adjective *cultural* (which is always understood to be there), has been a staple of NSM semantics for the last twenty-odd years. It figures prominently in the title of two book-length publications. One is Wierzbicka’s trailblazing book *Understanding cultures through their key words* (1997),¹ the other Levisen and Waters’ collective volume *Cultural keywords in discourse* (2017). Cultural keywords are ‘highly salient and deeply culture-laden’ and as such act as ‘focal points around which whole cultural domains are organized’ (Goddard & Wierzbicka 1995: 57; Goddard 2005b: 78); they are ‘culture-rich and translation-resistant words that occupy focal points in cultural ways of thinking, acting, feeling, and speaking’ (Goddard 2015: 386, 2017: 9; Goddard and Ye 2015: 71). Fernández (2016: 197) defines them as ‘salient words from a particular language that act as ‘guiding words’, as they embody a particular value or a set of values that is central to the culture in

¹In subsequent NSM work, Wierzbicka (1997) has come to be referred to as “the *Key Words* book” (see, e.g., Peeters 2000: 444, Goddard 2017: 9). Wierzbicka herself uses the phrase in her response (Wierzbicka 2001a) to William Ramson’s attack on her views.

question'. The phrase *guiding words*, i.e. words that serve as guides to a particular culture, is taken from Levisen (2012: 70), who observes that cultural keywords 'embody underlying shared assumptions which are at work in a speech community'. Cultural keywords exist in all languages but are rarely studied in a way that combines total transparency (regardless of the audience) with the absence of any cultural bias. Transparency and bias avoidance can only be achieved with a sophisticated methodology such as the NSM approach, which relies on decades of empirical research into the true universals of meaning.

Inspired by Goddard (2001, 2005a, 2011, 2018c, *inter alia*) and Wierzbicka (1997, 2001b, 2006a, b, 2010a, b, c, *inter alia*), several contributors to this volume firmly situate themselves in the 'cultural keyword tradition'. The decision to start off Part I with a chapter on Japanese was prompted by the fact that, in NSM circles, the concept of 'cultural keyword' seems to have been operationalized first in a paper that deals with 'Japanese key words and core cultural values' (Wierzbicka 1991).² Japanese has always remained high on the NSM keyword agenda, with subsequent publications by Travis (1998), Hasada (2002, 2008), Svetanant (2013), Asano-Cavanagh (2013, 2017, 2019, *inter alia*) and Farese (2016). Yuko Asano-Cavanagh and Gian Marco Farese are the joint authors of a chapter on the Japanese compounds *shūkatsu* 'job hunting' and *konkatsu* 'marriage partner hunting', which appears as Chap. 2 in this volume. Securing the ideal job and finding the ideal marriage partner are stressful and time-consuming processes that involve a great deal more than the English glosses suggest. A lot of hard work is required of those who engage in them. Both endeavours are usually taken very seriously, with people living in fear of not reaching their goal. All of this information is implicit in the suffix *katsu*, which also occurs in other compounds, making it a productive morpheme in modern Japanese word formation processes, a morpheme that, judging by the available evidence, is semantically rooted.

Chapter 3 is by Jan Hein, whose work on *viveza criolla*, *vivo* and *boludo* in *Porteño* Spanish, the variety of Spanish spoken in Buenos Aires, is another illustration of the shortcomings of simple English glosses. *Viveza criolla* is far more than 'native wit and cunning', a *vivo* is not just someone 'vivacious' or 'clever', and *boludo* and 'moron' are not in the same league either. Existing definitions have not sufficiently insisted on *viveza* being an expression of local culture and sociality, nor have they appropriately captured *vivo* and *boludo* as social categories. A *boludo* is usually a victim of someone else's (a *vivo*'s) *viveza*. Of course, *Porteño* Spanish is not the only language whose speakers refer to inventiveness or the lack thereof by means of commonly used words, which thereby acquire the status of cultural keywords. French (Peeters 2015a) is another such language, among many more. Importantly, though, the exact meaning of those words is not the same from one language to another. The words themselves came about in different cultural

²An updated version of this paper appears in Wierzbicka (1997), together with other early work involving other languages, including but not limited to Wierzbicka (1992) on so-called 'Australian b-words' and Wierzbicka (1995) on concepts akin to 'homeland' and 'fatherland' in German, Polish and Russian.

contexts, which is something that needs to be acknowledged through properly conducted semantic analysis.

Chapter 4 is by Roslyn Rowen, whose earlier work (Rowen 2017) forms the backdrop for a so-called occasioned semantics analysis the object of which is the term *bogan*, a social identity and community membership marker that, in recent times, has been trending in Australian (and New Zealand) English. Unlike the other contributors to this volume, Rowen does not enrich our stock of NSM explications. Instead, she critically engages with her existing explication, drawing attention to the need for a metalexic awareness component to be added at the end. Rowen's chapter convincingly demonstrates that meaning is constructed (or 'occasioned') in discourse and that not all components included in her 2017 explication of the term *bogan* are necessarily present in every single use of the word in context.

In Chap. 5, Stella Butler and Zuzanna Bułat Silva take a complementary view: they show that NSM explications do not have to aim for the ultimate semantic invariant, thereby glossing over individual or contextual differences. Instead, explications can be used to highlight divergent takes on the same word. This is illustrated with reference to the English word *comfort* in a contemporary social realist play by British author Mike Packer in which the loss of, and search for, comfort plays a central role. The protagonists of *Inheritance* approach comfort either as 'an ethical value' or as 'sensuous appeasement', and this is a difference that can be captured in NSM. Butler and Bułat Silva's analysis has the added quality of being overtly interdisciplinary. It is an attempt to demonstrate, on the one hand, that NSM can be profitably used to study how meanings and values are negotiated in the literature and, on the other, that adding literary writing to the NSM data set may provide previously unexplored evidence of evolving meanings in a fast-changing world.

Asano-Cavanagh and Farese's *shūkatsu* and *konkatsu* (Chap. 2), Hein's *viveza*, *vivo* and *boludo* (Chap. 3), Rowen's *bogan* (Chap. 4) and Butler and Bułat Silva's *comfort* (Chap. 5) refer to important aspects or social categories of the culture of Japan, Buenos Aires, Australia and New Zealand, and the English-speaking world more generally. This makes them eminently eligible for the status of (cultural) keywords, a term effectively found in all but one of the above chapters. Asano-Cavanagh and Farese do *not* use it. Nor does Rachel Thompson (Chap. 6). Her investigation of insults in Akan (Ghana) reveals that *kwasea* 'oaf/fool', *aboa* 'animal/beast' and *gyimii* 'retard/stupid person', all of which are commonly used and, as one would expect, highly culture-specific, can even target individuals in high political office whose alleged inappropriate acts contravene Akan values.

The keyword status of insults is an open question. Different authors seem to be holding different views, with both sides being represented in this volume.³ *Boludo*,

³Insults have been the topic (exclusive or otherwise) of a handful of other NSM studies, among which Tien's (2015) work on Hokkien words in the vernacular languages of Singapore (Hokkien itself, Malay, Tamil, and the much-despised Singlish, i.e. the local English) deserves special mention. Older research includes Wierzbicka (1992), Kidman (1993) and Stollznow (2004). Unfortunately, Indrawati's (2006) study on Madurese insults is only available in Indonesian.

in *Porteño* Spanish, is an insult—even though in today’s usage the word has acquired other meanings as well. Hein has no qualms about calling it a cultural keyword. Thompson’s Akan insults, on the other hand, are not referred to as keywords at all. What is this telling us?

No matter how successful the notion of ‘(cultural) key word’ (or ‘keyword’, which appears to be today’s preferred spelling) has been in NSM studies—as recently illustrated by Levisen and Waters’ edited (2017) volume on ‘Cultural keywords in discourse’ and by my own work on the Dutch ‘keyword’ *gezellig* (Peeters 2019)—I feel little is to be gained from trying to categorize individual words in overly narrow ways that are unlikely to ever be consensual. Goddard’s (2015) distinction between ‘cultural key words’, ‘other culturally important words’ and ‘other culture-related words’ is anything but straightforward. Goddard (2015: 386) has made this point himself: ‘The concept of a cultural key word is qualitative and somewhat inexact in the sense that it is not always possible to draw a strict line between cultural key words, other culturally important words, and less important but still culture-related words’ (see also Goddard 2017: 9). Disagreements are bound to arise as to whether a (lexical) carrier of cultural meaning is a cultural keyword or otherwise. Referring to a continuum ranging from obvious cultural specificity to hardly noticeable cultural specificity appears to be a more attractive alternative. Provided we do not doubt the existence of cultures (as some people do), it seems uncontroversial to say that, in one way or the other (without subdividing them any further), all the words explicated in Chaps. 2–6 are ‘carriers of cultural meaning’, to use Goddard’s phrase—or, as I would call them (Peeters 2013, 2015b, 2017), ‘culturally salient words’ (see also Wierzbicka & Harkins 2001: 25; Levisen 2012: 70). Culturally salient words exist in any language side by side with culturally salient phrases, metaphors, norms, syntactic moulds and perhaps other categories, all of which are carriers of cultural meaning.

Some may object that the label ‘culturally salient’ is not perfect either: what is salient for one person may not be salient for another (Peeters 2015b: 55). In fact, the label is neither more nor less appropriate than Goddard’s. Something that may carry cultural meaning for one person may not be perceived by another person as carrying cultural meaning at all. However, once cultural salience has been established by one individual, on whatever grounds, and this individual has subsequently shared his or her view with others who may not have had the same impression, the word may well gain in cultural salience for those who were not inclined to think that way. The same could be said, *mutatis mutandis*, with respect to the label ‘carrier of cultural meaning’. Still, in my view, the label ‘culturally salient’ has a slight edge over the other one: as it is an adjectival phrase, it is easier to combine with the linguistic data (words, phrases, norms, metaphors, etc.) it applies to than the label ‘carrier of cultural meaning’, which requires an explicit link (as in ‘words *as* carriers of cultural meaning’).

The authors of Chap. 7, Bert Peeters and Margo Lecompte-van Poucke, call the Cèmuhi (New Caledonia) word *bwénaado* ‘culturally salient’, *without* trying to categorize it any further. Three discrete meanings of the word (roughly, ‘large-scale customary celebration’, ‘customary ceremony’ and ‘customary gift’) are identified.

Arguing against the simplistic—but at the same time terminologically complex—view that the Kanak social exchange system (in which all three meanings are highly relevant) is underpinned by a universal principle of reciprocity, the authors point out that ‘Kanak reciprocity’, as some might want to call it, is in fact culture-specific. They adopt one of the pathways in Peeters’ (2013, 2015b, 2017) applied ethno-linguistics model, viz. ethnoaxiology, to build a case for a hypothetical cultural value underpinning the culturally salient word *bwénaado*. That hypothetical cultural value, which is hypothetical only from a learner’s or outsider perspective, needs to be corroborated with additional linguistic and non-linguistic evidence for the hypothesis to become more of a reality (for the learner or the outsider).⁴

Chapter 8, which concludes the first part of this volume, is the only one to tackle head-on the issue of words whose cultural import is not confined to a single language (such as Japanese, Akan or Cèmuhî) or to one or more languacultures (such as *Porteño* Spanish or Australian and New Zealand English). Regardless of their insistence on cultural specificity and on the shifts in meaning that almost necessarily result when culturally salient words cross cultural boundaries (which is not unusual in today’s world, as shown in selected chapters in volume 3), NSM practitioners recognize that such shifts are not inevitable. Culturally salient words that are ‘pan-European’ or ‘pan-religious’, for instance, do exist.⁵ These words may well look different from one language to another, sometimes dramatically so, but what they convey remains the same, wherever they are used. Chapter 8 is a brief but enlightening study by Sandy Habib of the metaphorical meanings of English *heaven* and *hell* and their Hebrew and Arabic counterparts. Most of Habib’s publications deal with religious concepts that, in some cases, have acquired meanings beyond the realms of religion (see, inter alia Habib 2012, 2014, 2015, 2017a, b, 2018). What he demonstrates here is that the metaphorical meanings of *heaven* and *hell*, Hebrew *gan eden* and *geyhinom*, and Arabic *aljanna* and *Jahannam*, are the same in all three languages (and no doubt in a host of other languages as well, although this is a hypothesis he does not explicitly address). *Heaven* is used metaphorically in a sentence such as *California is heaven*; *hell* is used metaphorically in *War is hell*.

⁴One aspect that this chapter shares with several chapters in the third of the three volumes is its (fairly tentative) use of Minimal English, an offspring of NSM, in a few so-called pedagogical scripts, which translate the pure NSM of cultural scripts into something that may be of more immediate use to non-linguists and therefore appeal more to those for whom such scripts are ultimately created.

⁵The idea of a culturally salient word that is nonetheless ‘pan-European’ is touched upon by Butter and Buřat Silva in Chap. 7. They point out (using established NSM terminology) that *comfort* “has become a keyword in contemporary Western accounts of the ideal home”, which seems to indicate that it may have been a cultural keyword (or at least a culturally salient word) in English before being adopted and acquiring a similar status in other languages. But this is not, as we have seen, their main focus.

1.4 Understanding Discourse in Cultural Context

Ethnopragmatics, as several chapters in the first volume show, is all about ‘understanding *discourse* in cultural context’. This does not mean that, to understand discourse in cultural context, while at the same time adopting the NSM approach, ethnopragmatics is the only way forward. The two chapters in Part II show otherwise.

Chapter 9, by Carsten Levisen, is a study in ‘popular Danish geopolitics’, the first of its genre by an author who is well known for his work on Danish cultural semantics (see Levisen 2012, 2013, 2014, 2017, *inter alia*). Levisen’s focus is on the two Danish prepositions, *i* and *på*, that are instrumental in how Danes conceptualize Greenland. Whereas the so-called *på*-attitude, i.e. the habit of saying *på Grønland* ‘on Greenland’, highlights its status as an island and Danish dependency, the *i*-attitude, or habit of saying *i Grønland* ‘in Greenland’, acknowledges its status as a separate country. Levisen draws on Goddard’s work on spatial semantics, place constructs *and* ethnopragmatics, but he stops short of calling his ‘postcolonial semantic account of Danish preposition talk’ an exercise in the latter (on Danish ethnopragmatics, see Levisen and Waters 2015; Levisen 2018). Cultural scripts, one of the hallmarks of ethnopragmatics, are used to account for the ways of thinking that underpin Danish *på*- and *i*- attitudes towards Greenland.

Last but not least, Chap. 10, by Helen Leung, brings us more or less back to the part of the world where we started off. Leung, who has authored several papers on Cantonese utterance particles, which are used in informal Hong Kong Cantonese to express speakers’ attitudes, assumptions or feelings (see Leung 2012, 2013, *inter alia*), shows that, when such particles are combined, as they often are, the meaning that results is the exact sum of the meanings of the individual particles. This claim, often put forward in the literature, had never been substantiated (because the particles themselves had not been subjected to rigorous semantic analysis). Leung’s chapter fills an important gap in our knowledge of the functioning of utterance particles in a language that, without them, would sound unusual at best.

1.5 Send-Off

I will hopefully be forgiven for repeating *verbatim* the first sentence of this introductory chapter, the one in which I stated that this volume, subtitled *Meaning and culture*, is the second of three celebrating the career of Griffith University academic Cliff Goddard. On behalf of all the contributors, I congratulate Cliff on his many invaluable contributions to linguistics at large and to the NSM approach in particular and hope many more papers and chapters (and, why not, books) will see the light of day in years to come.

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