

# CAMP: SHARING PERSPECTIVES

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## SLURS

rethorically powerful, insidious

The rethorical effects are (i) systematically predictable, (ii) open-ended and indeterminate  
This makes slurs difficult to handle.

(1) Moses is a kike

(2) Moses is not a kike

However you answer, deny or assent, you are made to agree on the presentation of Moses as a kike.

## (HYP) SLURS ARE PERSPECTIVAL EXPRESSIONS

**Perspectivalism:** Slurs present content from a certain perspective

Slurs are complex:

a truth-conditional component

a perspectival or attitudinal component

Slurs conventionally signal the speaker's derogative perspective (a social, psychological, or emotional relation) on the group identified by the slur's extension-determining core

Andra exempel på perspektiv-uttryck:

du/Ni; slanguttryck för mat, föräldrar m m; etiska och estetiska uttryck ss feg, ren, upphöjd

## A RIVAL HYPOTHESIS

**Expressivism:** Slurs express the speaker's feeling

contra: Expressivism cannot explain why the hearer becomes/feels complicit with the speaker in spite of not agreeing.

contra: Expressivism cannot explain the feeling that slurs misrepresent the targeted group.

Some slurs do not express a negative attitude

(3) I'm glad we have some spics at school

Spics have positive properties; spics are praised

## PERSPEKTIV

- är kognitiva pga motiverar vissa förklaringar och tolkningar
- ofta implicita
- strukturerar en helhetssyn på den relevanta gruppen hos talaren
- är inte alltid under medveten eller avsiktlig kontroll; jf med seeing-as och s k kategorisk perception
- nära och ömsesidig påverkan mellan perspektiv och känslor, men inte nödvändig i enskilda fall

### **Using slurs, the speaker signals a commitment to a certain view on (classification of) group G because**

**(a)** the speaker takes it to be explanatory useful

BUT the classification rarely is substantive or empirically corroborated

**(b)** the speaker takes it to be derogative: the perspective is distancing from G and signals that G is not worthy of respect

YET not all uses of slurs are derogative e.g. among members of G themselves (n.b. cancellation, cf. Grice 1975), or by unknowing users /Can the speaker be unknowing and competent?/

Slurs are **optional**.

Slurs are **nondefeasible** (not open to revision)?

Hearers who think the speaker is wrong can distance themselves by directly disrupting the conversational flow, e.g. That expression is offensive and demeaning!

Speakers coherently may retort that the offense was not intended (cancellability again).

### **The hearer's complicity is double**

Cognitive complicity:

the meaning of the slur automatically triggers a general perspective on things

Social complicity:

if you let the slur stand uncontested, you agree with it

## CONSEQUENCES FOR THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

To only consider language as a means for conveying information is mistaken.

Rhetorical effects tend to be studied within pragmatics.

The case of slurs show that expression and manipulation of thought can be part of semantics (conventional linguistic role).

If the goal is to explain how natural language functions, semantics cannot merely study truth-conditions – such an approach either is distorted or plain wrong.