

Eugenio Coseriu



Past, Present and Future

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Angela Schrott (Kassel)

Eugenio Coseriu and pragmatics

*Speaking is a universal and general human activity, which is realized individually in specific situations by individual speakers as representatives of language communities with shared traditions of speaking a particular language.**

1 Introduction: why pragmatics?

Eugenio Coseriu's linguistic thinking is essentially based on the concept of speaking as activity. This understanding is absolutely central to Coseriu's system of linguistic competence, whose core are the rules and traditions that govern language use (Coseriu 1955–1956, 1985, 2007 [1988]). The quote I have chosen as the starting point for my contribution summarizes his concept of language in a nutshell. The dynamic concept of activity (G. *Tätigkeit*) is very close to the perspective of pragmatics, which focuses on language use as an activity that takes place in individual environments of speaking. Pragmatics is thus not a discipline focused on the analysis of specific linguistic structures of the language system (*langue*), but rather a perspective on language (Verschueren 1995: 11, 2009: 14–16) that explores its use and its potential in speaking as an activity and form of human behavior. Thus, linguistic phenomena are analyzed with a focus on speakers and language use. Since this perspective includes the interlocutors and the situation in which they speak to each other, pragmatics is interdisciplinary in its design, also encompassing cognitive, semiotic, historical, and cultural dimensions (Verschueren 1995: 13, Escandell Vidal 2004: 348–350). This wide scope of the pragmalinguistic perspective is implied in Coseriu's definition quoted above, which encompasses the universal dimension of speaking, the common traditions of speaking particular languages in language communities, and the individuality of speaking in specific situations. Coseriu's definition therefore has the merit of not only embracing all the dimensions of the pragmatic perspective, but also of providing the necessary categories to distinguish them. The understanding of language expressed in the quote is further developed by Coseriu into an elaborate system of linguistic competence (1955–1956, 1985,

* “Das Sprechen ist eine universelle allgemein-menschliche Tätigkeit, die jeweils von individuellen Sprechern als Vertretern von Sprachgemeinschaften mit gemeinschaftlichen Traditionen des Sprechkönnens individuell in bestimmten Situationen realisiert wird” (Coseriu 2007 [1988]: 70) (translation A.S.).

2007 [1988]). The distinctions of this system can be applied to distinguish the dimensions of pragmalinguistics mentioned by Verschueren – cognitive, semiotic, linguistic, historical, and cultural – and thus provide the outline of an integrated theory of pragmalinguistics.

In several publications I have developed a model for pragmalinguistic research based on Coseriu's system of language as an activity which extends his original system of linguistic competence and opens it up to current topics of pragmatics (Schrott 2014, 2015, 2017a, 2020). This article summarizes these publications and develops them further.

2 Coseriu's system of linguistic competence (G. *Sprachkompetenz*)

The cited definition contains three basic characteristics. Speaking has universal qualities; it has the historical characteristics of the particular language used by the speakers and it is an individual activity because human beings always speak as individuals. The triad of universal activity, historical languages and individual realization is reflected in three levels and three types of knowledge (Coseriu 2007 [1988]: 69–75; on the development and history of the model see Coseriu 1955–1956: 31–34, 1973 [1955–1956]: 285–291, Kabatek 2017).

Table 1: The levels of linguistic competence (Coseriu 2007 [1988]: 75; slightly modified, translation A.S.)

Level	Activity (<i>enérgeia</i>)	Point of view Knowledge (<i>dýnamis</i>)	Product (<i>érgon</i>)
Universal level	Speaking in general, in all languages	Universal principles and rules (elocutional knowledge)	—
Historical level of languages	Speaking a particular language	Linguistic traditions (idiomatic knowledge)	—
Individual level of discourse	Discourse as speaking in a particular situation	Discourse traditions (expressive knowledge)	Text

The universal level is formed by the universal principles and rules that apply to speaking in all languages, regardless of the structures of different languages and also regardless of the cultures in which the speakers live (Coseriu 2007 [1988]:

74–75). Coseriu calls this universal layer of speaking the *elocutio* and refers to it as ‘elocutional knowledge’. In the reception of the model it has become more common to speak of universal principles and rules, since in this way the universal status of this knowledge becomes clear. The universal principles include fundamental cognitive and communicative-semiotic abilities, such as a basic coherence of speech (Coseriu 2007 [1988]: 106). The ‘alterity of speaking’ which implies that people speak to others and for others in order to be understood and make an effort to understand their interlocutors is also a universal principle of speaking (Coseriu 2007 [1988]: 79, 89–90, 192–193). This concept is closely related to the idea of the cooperative principle that Grice (1989) established in pragmatics: In a certain way, cooperation and ‘alterity’ are two sides of the same coin.

The historical level of languages refers to historicity as a characteristic of all languages that are subject to linguistic change and therefore have a historical dimension (Coseriu 2007 [1988]: 107–109). By ‘idiomatic knowledge’, Coseriu understands the mastery of languages, i. e., the ability to express oneself and communicate correctly in one or more languages (G. *Sprechenkönnen*), be they native or foreign languages. The concept of linguistic knowledge not only relates to languages of the present but also to earlier time periods, for example when someone learns Old English, Middle High German, or Old Spanish in order to read the texts of these periods. The term ‘linguistic traditions’, which I have chosen for this knowledge type, implies that linguistic knowledge is passed from generation to generation as a tradition (Schrott 2015: 121, Lebsanft and Schrott 2015: 24–25). The concept of tradition is already present in the Coserian system of language competence (cf. the quote chosen for this contribution and also 2007 [1988]: 81). As Coseriu defines ‘culture’ as the ability to produce traditions (1974 [1958]: 92), the idea of tradition is central for his understanding of linguistic competence as a cultural competence (2007 [1988]: 65). For Coseriu, the concept of tradition combines firmness and flexibility, as each tradition offers space for variation and change and thus makes possible the creation of something new that can be learned and transmitted (Coseriu 1974 [1958]: 92, 2007 [1988]: 69; on the influence of Menéndez Pidal on the Coserian idea of tradition cf. Lebsanft and Schrott 2015).

The individual level refers to discourse as an activity performed in a specific speech situation by an individual speaker who takes responsibility for his words. In addition to the universal principles and the mastery of a particular language, this level hosts a third knowledge type that enables speakers to adapt their speech acts to different speech situations, interlocutors and topics of conversation. This cultural knowledge – Coseriu calls it ‘expressive knowledge’ – allows the speaker to adapt his discourse to the speech situation and act appropriately

and successfully (Coseriu 2007 [1988]: 74, 86–88). Here, too, it makes sense to speak of ‘traditions’, as this knowledge type is also of historical nature and is passed on from generation to generation as a cultural tradition (Coseriu 2007 [1988]: 81, cf. Schrott 2015: 117–118, 120–125). In Romance linguistics, the concept of discourse tradition is central to linguistic approaches that understand language as a cultural competence and analyze the design of discourses and texts embedded in their social and cultural environments (cf. Schlieben-Lange 1983, Koch 1997, Oesterreicher 1997, Lebsanft 2005, Schrott 2015, 2017a, Kabatek 2015, 2018a).

Linguistic traditions and discourse traditions have in common the character of habitualized knowledge. They differ in that the former refer to the mastery of languages, whereas the latter are cultural models of verbal interaction that show how to use a language not only correctly but also appropriately in different speech situations in order to successfully implement one’s communicative intentions (Coseriu 2007 [1988]: 88–89).

As a concept, discourse traditions cover wide-ranging cultural traditions of interaction. A very insightful case of discourse-traditional knowledge are communicative routines, e. g., how to start or end a conversation, how to write a private letter, or how to phrase a polite request. However, as cultural patterns of speaking, discourse traditions also include certain styles of verbal interaction, such as modern small talk or the art of gallant speech in the eighteenth century. Moreover, text types or genres can also be understood as discourse traditions or combinations of discourse traditions, for the successful writing of a short story or a leading article is also based on the mastery of the corresponding discourse traditions. Finally, discourse traditions also include literary forms: Coseriu (2007 [1988]: 171–172) cites the sonnet as an example of a cultural tradition of writing that can be translated and thus transferred from one language to another.

Coseriu’s system differentiates analytically between three types of principles, rules and traditions which, together, always shape the discourse and at the same time presents them in their interconnectedness. Linguistic traditions and discourse traditions enter into a particularly close connection as discourse traditions select the linguistic means that are used in a situation and are thus the regulating factor (Koch 2005: 231–232). At the same time, discourse traditions only become visible when realized in speech; they need the linguistic material to take shape (Kabatek 2015: 58). The two types of tradition are therefore interdependent, but this interdependency is asymmetrical, the dependencies are of different kinds.

The three sets of knowledge are the core of the Coserian model, but the tripartite system goes beyond the field of knowledge. For integrated into the model are three points of view: language can be conceived as an activity (*enérgeia*), as

knowledge underlying this activity (*dýnamis*) and as its product (*érgon*) (Coseriu 2007 [1988]: 71–72). I have already discussed the aspect of *dýnamis*, i. e., the three sets of knowledge, in detail. These three types of rules and traditions have their origin in speaking as a creative activity (*enérgeia*) which generates new rules and traditions beyond the already existing knowledge. The creative force of *enérgeia* is the motor for change in linguistic traditions as well as in discourse traditions and drives language change and the transformation of cultural models of speaking. The product of this activity (*érgon*) are the texts (spoken or written) which can be recorded, passed on, or remembered as something that has been produced in verbal interactions (Coseriu 2007 [1988]: 72). The product manifests itself vividly and clearly above all on the individual level, because products always arise from a specific situation and have an individual speaker as their author.

3 A new system for pragmatics: three levels, three fields, three perspectives

The desideratum of a comprehensive systematization has been brought up several times in pragmatics. A quotation from Escandell Vidal (2004), which is still relevant, may serve as an illustration:

Pragmatics has reached an outstanding level of development, both in social and inferential approaches; now it is time to work out an integrated theory [...]. Only in this way will we be able to account at the same time for what is universal and what is culture-specific; only in this way will we be able to edge closer to a better, fuller, and richer understanding of human communication. (Escandell Vidal 2004: 366)

The model of the three levels based on Coseriu not only fulfils the requirement of separating universal rules and culture-specific norms of speaking, but goes even further. Coseriu's tripartite system separates universal rules, linguistic traditions and discourse traditions, thus making a clear distinction between universal rules and traditions as well as between two types of tradition. The main potential for pragmatics lies in the cross-classification offered by the model, i. e., the clear distinction between universal knowledge and traditional knowledge on the one hand (universal rules vs. linguistic traditions and discourse traditions) and the differentiation between linguistic knowledge (linguistic traditions) and nonlinguistic knowledge (universal rules, discourse traditions) on the other. In addition, these rules and traditions are systematically recorded in their interactions and dependencies. Thus, linguistic traditions are the material through which dis-

course traditions as cultural knowledge take shape in discourse. As for the non-linguistic sets of knowledge, the universal principles set a general framework of cooperation to which the discourse traditions add their cultural imprint (Schrott 2015: 129–130, 2020: 25, 27–28).

Both differentiations – cultural vs. universal, linguistic knowledge vs. cultural knowledge – are present in pragmalinguistic research. Thus, Coseriu's model does not bring entirely new categories to pragmatics as such; its power rather lies in its explicit distinctions and systematic cross-references. Thanks to the three types of knowledge Coseriu's system also explains the interdisciplinary nature of pragmatics: the universal rules capture cognitive and semiotic bases of communication, the linguistic traditions include the mastery of languages, and the discourse traditions embrace the cultural models of interaction. Therefore, Coseriu's model offers pragmatics a system that does justice to the nature of pragmalinguistic research which goes far beyond an approach of language restricted to idiomatic knowledge. On the basis of the three levels of linguistic competence, a model of three levels and perspectives of pragmatics can be developed that starts from the point of view of *dynamis* and focuses on the knowledge of rules and traditions that are effective in speaking (cf. Schrott 2014, 2017a, 2020):

Table 2: Three levels, three fields and three perspectives of pragmatics

Level	Universal level	Historical level	Individual level
Rules and traditions	Universal principles and rules	Linguistic traditions	Discourse traditions
Fields	Universal pragmatics	Language pragmatics	Discourse-traditional pragmatics
Perspectives	Universal	Historical	Historical and cultural

Based on the levels and types of knowledge, three fields and perspectives of pragmatics emerge. The universal principles and rules form the central object of investigation of universal pragmatics, which focuses on fundamental cognitive and communicative-semiotic abilities and aims to explore universal rules and units of speech. The perspective on speaking is universal; the aim is to find universal rules, units and categories of speaking that are valid in all languages and cultures. Examples of the approach of universal pragmatics are the theory of universal speech act types (Searle 1969) and the cooperative principle (Grice 1989). Another example are studies of verbal politeness which examine different lan-

guages and cultures in search of universal principles (cf. Brown and Levinson 1987). Universal pragmatics is thus concerned with rules and principles that take shape in particular languages, but are not part of these languages (cf. Coseriu's statement on the scope of pragmalinguistics in Kabatek and Murguía 1997: 159–160).

At the historical level, the focus of language pragmatics is on the forms and structures of particular languages and their potential for verbal interaction. Language pragmatics is dedicated to the study of particular languages, such as English, Spanish, or French. It covers semasiological studies that start from certain elements or structures (e. g., modal particles or tense forms) and examines their functional profiles; it also includes onomasiological studies that investigate the linguistic means which realize cognitive concepts (e. g., modalization or succession in time). Incidentally, this field is the only one in which designations such as 'Spanish pragmatics' or 'English pragmatics', which presuppose reference to particular languages, are justified (cf. Coseriu's statement in Kabatek and Murguía 1997: 159–160). The perspective is historical, since a particular language is examined as it is at a certain time, e. g., the German language spoken at present, the Spanish of the Middle Ages or the French of the seventeenth century.

On the individual level, the discourse traditions as cultural models that shape and guide speech are at the center of attention. Here, the branch of discourse-traditional pragmatics examines cultural traditions that enable successful linguistic interaction by guiding the speaker to select from his or her linguistic repertoire those means that are appropriate and promising in a speech situation. For instance, if a speaker wants to make a request, the discourse traditions valid in his or her cultural community guide the speaker to formulate the request in such a way that it appears neither too submissive nor too demanding and reaches its goal in an appropriate manner; if a private letter is written to a friend, the mastery of the relevant discourse traditions ensures that the writer can create the desired closeness by greeting and addressing the friend in an appropriately warm manner. Discourse-traditional pragmatics has a historical perspective as it explores traditions that are the result of historical developments, and it has at the same time a cultural perspective as it is focused on the cultural knowledge embraced by the very discourse traditions.

Since all three sets of knowledge are present in speech, the three perspectives also merge and overlap, depending on the object of investigation and the research questions. When it comes to the relatedness of universal principles and discourse traditions, this means that even pragmalinguistic research aiming at universal principles must always consider the cultural influence of discourse traditions and that pragmalinguistic approaches concerned with historical and cultural phenomena must always bear in mind the influence of universal

rules. In the same way, language pragmatics is not a discipline strictly limited to linguistic structures, because a linguistic element and its functions can only be studied in depth if one considers the universal principles and culture-specific discourse traditions that guide its use.

Close connections also exist between linguistic traditions and discourse traditions which merge in language use, as all speaking is a cultural activity. A central task of language pragmatics and discourse-traditional pragmatics is to recognize how both types of traditions interact in concrete verbal interaction. If, for example, imperative forms in different languages are used in a different way in order to express volitions, the reasons for the divergent use may be at different levels. The imperatives can have different functional profiles in the languages in question which imply that the imperative forms are used in different ways. However, it is also possible that the functional profiles are more or less identical and that the difference can be traced back to divergent cultural discourse traditions of expressing requests. In the first case, the difference lies in the language traditions, i. e., in the different linguistic systems, and the varying imperative use distinguishes the speakers of different language communities. In the second case, the difference lies in the discourse tradition. While the discourse traditions used in one language favor direct volitions with the imperative, the discourse traditions used in the other language prefer indirect requests and avoid using imperatives. In the latter case, the different way of expressing volitions characterizes cultural communities that apply different discourse traditions of requesting. The Coserian system thus provides clear, analytically linked categories that precisely describe the interaction of linguistic traditions and discourse traditions.

In order to have a full understanding of both types of traditions, it is useful to take a closer look at the groups that practice them (Coseriu 2007 [1988]: 86). Language traditions create a community that is constituted through language: people belong to one or more language communities because they speak these languages. Language communities have relatively clear boundaries and their history can be written as the history of well identifiable communities (Coseriu 2007 [1988]: 86–87). Discourse traditions are also practiced by individuals who belong to groups. These groups may be identical with the language communities, but they are usually not (*ibid.*). Thus – returning to the examples already mentioned – literary forms like the sonnet are mastered by only a relatively small group in a language community. However, discourse traditions with limited accessibility can be present in several language communities, which is the case with sonnets, which have been appropriated as a discourse tradition by small groups of speakers of different languages, so that sonnets exist in Italian, French, German and many other languages. On the other hand, discourse tradi-

tions can have an extremely wide range and encompass several language communities; this is the case with certain communicative routines (cf. Schrott 2014, 2017b). The cultural communities that carry traditions of discourse can thus be smaller or larger than a single language community, and they can also embrace smaller groups in several language communities. This differentiation implies that the speakers of a language community may differ considerably in their cultural traditions, while, conversely, speakers with very similar cultural discourse traditions can belong to different language communities.

Both traditions also differ in the type of community they form. Since the average speaker can usually only master a very limited number of languages, he or she belongs to only a few language communities which strongly shape his or her identity. By contrast, the vast majority of speakers practice a far greater number of discourse traditions than languages. This differentiation implies that both types of tradition influence individuals in different ways and shape their identity to different degrees. Regarding the level of particular languages, speakers are closely connected with their languages in all their verbal interactions, whereas discourse traditions are options for the speakers between which they always make new choices when entering a new speech situation.

The model of the three levels, three fields and three perspectives of pragmatics presented above (Table 2) applies to different directions in pragmatological research and can be adapted to the profiles and research questions of these directions. In the following, I will focus on historical and contrastive pragmatics.

4 How to use the model: historical pragmatics and contrastive pragmatics

4.1 Historical pragmatics and the history of language

As linguistic traditions and discourse traditions change over time, the historical dimension is inherent in the model and allows it to be adapted to the topics of historical pragmatics. As a discipline historical pragmatics deals with speaking in former linguistic and cultural communities, analyzing communicative tasks and their solutions in earlier times (cf. Cruz Volio 2017, Iglesias Recuero 2010, 2016, 2017, Schrott 2016, 2020, Taavitsainen and Jucker 2008, 2010, Held 2006, Jung and Schrott 2003). The challenge of historical pragmatics lies in the fact that the discourses, seen as *enérgeia*, belong to the past and that the interactions of earlier times are only accessible as products (*érgon*) created according to tra-

ditions of the past that no longer exist or have at least changed significantly. Therefore both types of tradition can only be reconstructed as fragments.

Historical pragmatics can set two different priorities here: it can primarily aim to recover the functional profiles of linguistic structures and thus choose the historical level of particular languages as the focal point, or it can be mainly dedicated to the individual level and the discourse traditions that guided verbal interaction in the past. Nevertheless, historical pragmatics must always take both types of tradition into account, a necessity that is illustrated by the research on verbal politeness (cf. Iglesias Recuero 2017, 2016, 2010, Nevala 2010, Jucker 2012, Schrott 2020). A clear example within this field are requests, which in present-day languages and cultures are frequently expressed through question acts that open up an option – *Can you pass the bread? ¿Puedes pasarme el pan? Tu peux me passer le pain?* – whereas the imperative as a direct way of expressing volition is much less frequent (cf. Brown and Levinson 1987, Lara Bermejo 2018, Siebold 2008, Díaz Pérez 2003, Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2001, van Mulken 1996). Historical studies on English, Spanish and French indicate that in the Middle Ages and early modern times the imperative was the most common form, whereas requests realized with interrogative sentences represent a much more recent development (cf. Frank 2011: 63–65, Kohnen 2008: 27, Schrott 2020: 36–38).

The key question is what exactly has changed. On the one hand, of course, the linguistic traditions have changed. However, linguistic change is not the crucial factor here. What is decisive is that the discourse traditions of polite speech and the associated cultural values have undergone change. Nowadays, polite requests avoid imposing actions on the addressee, instead giving the addressee (at least superficially) options for action. By contrast, the findings in medieval corpora of English, French and Spanish indicate that giving options was not a central value and that volitions were expressed clearly and plainly (cf. Culpeper and Archer 2008: 74–76, Frank 2011: 446–447). The added value of politeness came from expressions of appreciation that accompanied direct volitions (Frank 2011: 173). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that in English, French and Spanish verbal politeness in the Middle Ages was aimed at the ‘positive face’ as a desire for appreciation and closeness, whereas verbal politeness today aims to satisfy the ‘negative face’ as a need for self-determination and freedom of choice (Frank 2011: 446–447, Kohnen 2008: 41–42).

The example of verbal politeness illustrates the advantages of the model of pragmalinguistics inspired by Coseriu. For the question of whether a change affects the linguistic traditions or the discourse traditions is already contained in Coseriu’s system and its distinction of the three levels. The same applies to the issue of the universal principles, as the connection to possible universal foundations of polite speech is already given in the system. Furthermore, the Coserian

system allows us to fundamentally reflect on the scope of language history. The case of verbal politeness shows that the history of language and speech can only be grasped by an entangled history of language which does not focus solely on linguistic structures, but includes the impact of discourse traditions and thus conceives the history of language as a cultural history (Gardt 2011). The difference between a language history focused on language change and a language history understood as cultural history can be accommodated by Coseriu's model of the three levels. Thus, a history of language that is limited to language change as a change in linguistic structures is situated exclusively on the historical level of languages, whereas an extended history of language, which understands language and speech as cultural phenomena, operates on two levels: on the historical level of languages and on the individual level of discourse traditions.

4.2 Contrastive pragmatics

Another branch of pragmatics that gains from the three-level model is contrastive pragmatics, which explores speaking in different cultural environments and focuses on the diversity of cultural imprints that characterize language use (cf. Díaz Pérez 2003, Jung and Schrott 2003, Siebold 2008, Trosborg 2010, Wierzbicka 2003, 2010). As a discipline, contrastive pragmatics can focus on different language systems, i.e. their structures and functional profiles, which are situated on the historical level of languages, or it can operate primarily on the individual level in order to highlight cultural contrasts in discourse traditions. When exploring cultural differences and similarities, contrastive pragmatics is confronted with the question of whether these common features could possibly constitute a universal rule of speech (Trosborg 2010: 9–10). Another central research question is whether empirically established differences in verbal interaction are caused by different linguistic traditions on the historical level of languages or by different discourse traditions on the individual level of discourse.

To illustrate these research topics, I refer once again to the example of the polite request expressed by interrogative structures as a question act (Schrott 2014, 2017b). As mentioned above, this communicative routine is widely known to speakers of different languages. Such a wide distribution suggests that it is worth examining whether it might represent not a limited cultural tradition, but a universal rule of speech. From this perspective, an indirect request of the type *Can you pass the bread?* would be explained as the universal rule of avoiding potentially impolite directness and using instead an indirect expression that respects the 'negative face' of the addressee. However, evidence against the

hypothesis of universality can be found if one expands the spectrum of languages and cultures studied. Thus, research on Polish or Russian shows that these speaker communities have a clear preference for direct requests which are often accompanied by expressions of appreciation and affection which are directed to the ‘positive face’ of the interlocutor (Wierzbicka 1985: 154–156, 2003: 33–37, 2010: 46–48). The case study of the polite request shows that the widespread technique of realizing polite requests through questions has no universal status but has to be considered as a cultural discourse tradition. If a technique of requesting is the same in several cultures, it must be examined whether a universal principle is effective in such a case or, rather, whether the speaker communities in question share the same cultural patterns and discourse traditions of interaction (Schrott 2014).

The example of verbal politeness shows that studies on contrastive pragmatics are also permanently confronted with the question to what extent verbal interactions in different languages and cultural areas are shaped by the linguistic traditions of the historical level of the individual languages or by the discourse traditions of the individual level. Here, too, the system already takes into account the necessity of this differentiation and, in addition, shows how both types of tradition interact. The methodological necessity, always present in contrastive pragmatics, of examining cultural discourse traditions for their universal part also finds clear guidance in Coseriu’s system. In the field of tension between universality and cultural diversity Coseriu’s model is able to create a balance, since it shows that universal rules and cultural discourse traditions are always co-present in speaking as an activity (*enérgeia*). To sum up, analogous to historical pragmatics, it also applies to contrastive pragmatics that the Coserian model offers a coherent system that points out clearly the different types of knowledge as well as their complex interdependencies.

5 An open system

Coseriu’s linguistics is based on speaking as an activity (*enérgeia*). The sets of knowledge that go into speaking are born out of this activity; they constantly change and renew themselves through the creative power of *enérgeia*. The conceptual proximity of the concept of *enérgeia* to the pragmlinguistic perspective on language as an activity has become clear in the preceding presentation of the three levels of language and language use. Therefore, the interpretation of the Coserian model as a blueprint for pragmatics is not to be considered as a reinterpretation that changes the system, but rather as a creative development which preserves the spirit of the Coserian system while opening up to new re-

search questions that were not originally linked to the model. Under this premise, the distinctions between universal rules, language traditions and discourse traditions can not only enrich pragmalinguistic research but also offer a coherent system for the topics of research as well as for the different fields of pragmatics. The model provides categories that not only give clear distinctions for the three sets of knowledge, but also indicate the complex interdependencies between them. Universal rules are specified culturally and historically by discourse traditions, and discourse traditions choose linguistic traditions for discourse and regulate which linguistic structures are included in the discourse. At the same time, linguistic traditions are always the material in which discourse traditions take shape, so they are in a sense second-order traditions (Kabatek 2015: 57–58).

A great strength of Coseriu's model lies in its integrative power, for it not only provides systematic linking at the level of the objects to be researched, but also organizes various branches of pragmatics (and linguistics in general). Thus, linguistic lines of study dealing with basic cognitive and semiotic abilities operate on the universal level, while culture-oriented branches of linguistics have their focus on the level of discourse traditions. Another important strength is that the model, which is absolutely coherent in itself and therefore in a certain sense self-contained, is at the same time characterized by openness and freedom for further development. This is the concluding thought for a readership that may be getting to know Coseriu's work for the first time: Coseriu's linguistics is a productive system that allows and stimulates innovation. In this way, the concept of *enérgeia* also applies to the system itself.

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