

Speaker Intentions and Objective Metasemantics

The word ‘I’ has a context invariant meaning that suffices to determine semantic values for it in context. Many people, including the author of the present paper, think that a lot of contextually sensitive expressions aren’t like that: their context invariant meanings *don’t* by themselves suffice to secure semantic values for them in context. Demonstratives and demonstratively used pronouns are familiar examples of expressions that appear to be of this sort. But arguably, tense, quantifiers, gradable adjectives, modals, conditionals, possessives, expressions that take implicit arguments (‘John has had enough’), ‘only’, and more are examples of expressions of this sort as well. For such expressions, the question arises as to the mechanism by means of which they secure semantic values in context. Call an account of how one of these expressions manages to secure a semantic value in context a *metasemantics* for the expression in question.

As I suggested above, I believe that the context invariant meanings of the contextually sensitive expressions just mentioned must be supplemented in some way in context in order for these expressions to have semantic values in context. For this reason, I call these expressions *supplementives*. In a series of recent papers, I have defended a single metasemantics that I claim applies to all supplementives.¹ I call my metasemantics for supplementives the *coordination account*:

Coordination Account Metasemantics

A speaker S’s use δ of a supplementive in context c has o as its semantic value iff
1. S intends o to be the semantic value of δ in c; and 2. a competent, reasonable, attentive hearer H who knows the common ground of the conversation at the time S utters δ , and who has the properties attributed to the audience by the common

¹ King [2013, 2014a, 2014b]

ground at the time S utters δ would know² that S intends o to be the semantic value of δ in c .³

I'll sometimes abbreviate condition 2 by saying that *an idealized hearer who knows the common ground of the conversation would know that S intends o to be the semantic value of δ in c* . When both conditions in the coordination account are met, say that *S has a recognizable intention that o be the semantic value in c of δ* . So according to the coordination account, recognizable intentions fix the semantic values in context of supplementives.

In a recent paper Michael Glanzberg argues against the coordination account and in favor of a metasemantics on which numerous features of a conversation determine the semantic values of supplementives in context.⁴ According to Glanzberg, shared presuppositions, comparison classes determined by salient groups, overt prior discourse, speaker intentions and other features determine the semantic values in context of supplementives. Because Glanzberg's metasemantics claims that things other than speaker intentions play a role in securing semantic values for supplementives in context and because many of them are objective features of the conversation, I call metasemantic accounts like Glanzberg's *objective* metasemantics. The purpose of the present paper is to respond to Glanzberg's arguments against the coordination account and in favor of his objective metasemantics.

The only supplementives Glanzberg considers are gradable adjectives. Following Glanzberg, I'll assume a Kennedy [2007] style semantics for gradable adjectives on which they

² Perhaps what is required here is that the hearer would bear an attitude towards the claim that S intends o to be the semantic value of δ in c that is just like knowledge except for lacking safety (assuming safety *is* required for knowledge). See King [2013] note 5 for discussion.

³ This is the version of the coordination account I call *Bad Intentions* in King [2013]. The requirement in condition 2 that the hearer have the properties attributed by the common ground to the audience will play almost no role here. See King [2013] for discussion. I actually now favor the version of the coordination account I there call *Best Laid Plans*, but the latter is more complex and the additional complexity won't be relevant to the examples in the present paper.

⁴ Glanzberg [2018]. All references are to this paper unless otherwise indicated.

denote *measure functions*: functions that map individuals to degrees (type $\langle e, d \rangle$). In turn, these degrees are totally ordered with respect to some dimension given by the adjectives meaning (e.g. height in the case of ‘tall’), yielding a *scale*.⁵ Adjectives combine with degree morphology yielding expressions that denotes properties of or relations between individuals. In the positive form (‘is tall’), the degree morpheme is a null morpheme *pos*. Hence, syntactically, the positive form of the adjective with degree morpheme looks as follows:

1. $[_{\text{DegP}}[_{\text{Deg}}\textit{pos}] [_{\text{AP}}\textit{tall}]]$

The semantics for *pos* is: $\|pos\|^c = \lambda g \lambda x. g(x) > d_c$, where d_c is a degree of tallness determined in context c and g ranges over adjective meanings (measure functions). Thus $\|[_{\text{DegP}}[_{\text{Deg}}\textit{pos}] [_{\text{AP}}\textit{tall}]]\|^c = \lambda x. \mathbf{tall}(x) > d_c$, where **tall** is the semantic value of ‘tall’.⁶ An individual o has this property just in case the height **tall** assigns to o is greater than the degree of height d_c determined in the context c . So a sentence like

2. LeSean is tall.

is true in context c just in case

2TC. **tall** (LeSean) $> d_c$

On a theory like this, the gradable adjective, or really, *pos*, is the supplementive and a degree on the relevant scale is the semantic value it gets assigned in context (d_c in the present case). The coordination account claims it gets assigned a degree d_c in context c by the speaker recognizably intending d_c to be the semantic value in c of *pos*.⁷

⁵ Kennedy [2007] doesn’t commit to any particular way of formalizing scales, but he says that they “minimally” have to be triples $\langle D, <, \delta \rangle$, where D is a set of points, $<$ totally orders D and δ is a dimension (wealth, height, etc.). I assume Kennedy means that $<$ *strictly totally orders* D , that is, that $<$ is irreflexive, asymmetric, transitive and connected.

⁶Here I depart slightly from Kennedy’s [2007] view, on which $\|pos\|^c = \lambda g \lambda x. g(x) > s(\mathbf{tall})$, where s is a contextually determined function from adjective meanings to degrees. For various reasons, I prefer the view in the text.

⁷ Of course ordinary speakers wouldn’t describe their intentions this way since they aren’t aware of *pos*. This is how we as theorists describe the relevant intentions. Speakers *would* describe their intentions as determining a cutoff in context for e.g. ‘tall’. For some complications regarding this, see King [2014a]. Further, in some felicitous uses of

Earlier I said that Glanzberg argues against the coordination account, but that isn't quite right. Glanzberg calls supplementives *contextual parameters* and he distinguishes two types: *thematic parameters* and *functional parameters*.⁸ Glanzberg is happy to accept the coordination account for demonstratives, demonstratives pronouns and thematic parameters generally, or at least he is happy not to challenge it for these supplementives.⁹ However, for covert functional parameters, covert parameters occurring syntactically in functional categories, Glanzberg rejects the coordination account and argues for his objective metasemantics. Recall from above that *pos* is the supplementive/contextual parameter for gradable adjectives in the positive form. Recall also that it occurs in Deg/Deg_p, which are functional categories. Hence, *pos* is a covert functional parameter and as such Glanzberg thinks it requires his objective metasemantics. My view, of course, is that the coordination account is the correct metasemantics for *pos*. Let's turn to Glanzberg's arguments that *pos* requires an objective metasemantics instead of the coordination account. The dialectic here is a bit convoluted, because in the end the arguments for his objective metasemantics we are about to consider aren't the main arguments for his view. He later seems to admit that the coordination account has responses to his arguments here and gives a different argument against the coordination account in the end. However, Glanzberg seems to at least think that his arguments here make a *prima facie* case for his objective metasemantics, so it is worth considering them and how an advocate of the coordination account can best respond to them. To this task we now turn.

As I indicated above, Glanzberg thinks that a number of factors, together or separately, secure semantic values for supplementives in context. He calls a metasemantics like this, where

gradable adjectives in the positive form, speakers don't have intentions that determine *unique* cutoffs/values for *pos* in context. See King [forthcoming] for discussion.

⁸ See Glanzberg [2007, 2016 and 2018]

⁹ P. 15.

several different factors, alone or together, secure semantic values for supplementives in context an *indirect metasemantics*. *Prima facie*, an account like the coordination account on which a single factor—recognizable speaker intentions—secures semantic values for supplementives in context is what Glanzberg calls a *direct metasemantics*. However, as we’ll see later Glanzberg argues that the coordination account is itself an indirect metasemantics. The arguments we are now going to consider in favor of Glanzberg’s objective metasemantics consist of a series of cases in which Glanzberg claims that various different factors secure semantic values for supplementives in context in his different cases. As noted above, all Glanzberg’s cases involve gradable adjectives. So in each case, *pos* gets assigned a degree in context. Glanzberg talks about these cases in terms of *setting* or *determining the standard* (a degree: d_c) *in context*. In his terminology, then, the cases are supposed to show that different factors set the standard (in context) in different cases.

Here is Glanzberg’s first case. He had been discussing comparison classes setting the standard, which we will return to below, and here he claims *lexical meaning* sets the standard:

Following Kennedy & McNally (2005), we can observe another important factor in some cases. The scale structure that an adjective lexically encodes can be crucial. Kennedy and McNally observe that ‘absolute’ adjectives like ‘open’ and ‘straight’, which have a minimum or maximum value for their scale, at least usually require the extreme value to be taken. Consider:

- (10) a. The door is open.
 b. The rod is straight.

To be straight is to be completely straight, and so to have the maximum value on the scale. To be open is to be even a small amount open, and so to have above the minimum value on the scale. Crucially, we see little or no context dependence in absolute cases. The reason is that the lexical meaning of the adjective does all the work, and nothing else about the context (typically) matters. Hence, comparison classes can be overruled by lexical meaning.

We thus have at least two factors that contribute to setting the standard: comparison class, and lexical meaning. Both can contribute, but neither is

sufficient to fix standards for all adjectives in all contexts.¹⁰

Glanzberg follows Kennedy and McNally in claiming that absolute adjectives in virtue of their meanings take the maximum or minimum degree on the relevant scales as their semantic values in context. ‘Straight’ takes the maximum degree of straightness on its associated scale (to be straight is to be completely straight) and ‘open’ takes the minimum degree of openness on its associated scale. But as Glanzberg himself seems to say, that means we really don’t have context sensitivity here at all. Or if we do, we should think of this as a case like the pure indexical ‘I’ where the context invariant meaning of the contextually sensitive expression suffices by itself to secure a semantic value for the expression in context (an absolute gradable adjective on this view would have the unusual feature of being a contextually sensitive expression that has the same semantic value in every context). But either way, such absolute gradable adjectives are not supplementives at all. That means that a metaseantics for supplementives is not relevant to them. As a result, this case is simply irrelevant to the debate over the correct metaseantics for supplementives. Hence, it provides no support for Glanzberg’s objective metaseantics.

Here is Glanzberg’s second case, in which he claims *shared presuppositions* set the standard/assign a semantic value in context to *pos*:

We thus have at least two factors that contribute to setting the standard: comparison class, and lexical meaning. Both can contribute, but neither is sufficient to fix standards for all adjectives in all contexts.

I have argued that other factors can play a role too. Most of the kinds of things that influence context can. Not surprisingly, shared presuppositions can (as we learned from Stalnaker (1978), among many others). Consider:

(11) Context: We are at a summit on international development. Shared presuppositions about the problems facing poor nations, and the things that can be done to fix them, make it clear that individuals or countries can only make an impact with contributions of \$10

¹⁰ Pps.6-7.

million or more. I make manifest my intention to count average philosophers as rich, by holding up photos of conferences and saying 'look at all those rich people'.

Assertion: We should try to get money from philosophers because they are rich.

Absent any other clear contextual information, the claim that philosophers are rich just appears false in this context (though of course, it could be true in a context where we were talking about, say, relative income in the United States). In this case, the shared presuppositions about our purposes in classifying as rich beat out an attempt to make a salient comparison class, and they beat out a fairly clear communicative intention.¹¹

I agree with Glanzberg that the claim that philosophers are rich does not seem true here. I also think the entire assertion itself does not seem true. This is what the coordination account and Glanzberg's objective metasemantics must explain.

Glanzberg claims that the shared presuppositions about our purposes in classifying people as rich in this conversation set the semantic value in context of *pos* very high on the wealth scale in such a way that the claim that philosophers are rich comes out false. He doesn't attempt to explain the fact that the entire assertion seems untrue or false but that would seem to follow from the fact that the claim that philosophers are rich is false: the truth of sentences of the form 'A because B' presumably requires B's truth.

Glanzberg seems to think that an account like the coordination account on which recognizable speaker intentions fix the semantic value in context of *pos* will incorrectly predict that 'they are rich' expresses something true here. However, I don't think that's right. For the conditions of the coordination account are not met here. For those conditions to be met, 1. the speaker S must intend a degree *d* of wealth as the threshold for being rich; and 2. a competent, reasonable, attentive hearer H who knows the common ground of the conversation at the time S utters 'rich', and who has the properties attributed to the audience by the common ground at the

¹¹ P. 7

time S utters ‘rich’ would know that S intends d to be the threshold for being rich in c . Though Glanzberg talks about a “fairly clear communicative intention” here, it isn’t at all clear that *either* condition is met in this example. Glanzberg doesn’t mention that the speaker intends a specific degree on the wealth scale to be the semantic value of *pos* in context here. Let’s suppose the speaker intended having an annual income of \$100,000 to be the threshold for being rich so that condition 1 of the coordination account *is* satisfied. Call this *version 1 of Glanzberg’s ‘rich’ example*. Still, holding up pictures of people at conferences and saying ‘look at these rich people’ won’t allow a competent, reasonable, attentive hearer H who knows the common ground of the conversation at the time S utters ‘rich’, and who has the properties attributed to the audience by the common ground at the time S utters ‘rich’ to know that S intends an annual income of \$100,000 to be the threshold for being rich in c . How would such a hearer know how much money the people in the pictures make? So condition 2 of the coordination account is not met with the result that far from predicting ‘they are rich’ expresses something true here, the coordination account predicts that it expresses something not truth evaluable, and hence not true. So the coordination account predicts that the claim that philosophers are rich is not true here.

The coordination account also predicts that the entire assertion is not true:

3. We should try to get money from philosophers because they are rich.

3 is of the form ‘A because B’ and as indicated above, for something of this form to be true, B must be true. But we just saw that the coordination account predicts that B expresses something not true. So then it predicts 3 as a whole is not true. So the coordination account claims that ‘they are rich’ expresses something not true as the example is constructed, whereas Glanzberg can claim it expresses something false. Both accounts predict that 3 is either false or not true. I don’t see that Glanzberg’s explanation of the case as it stands has any advantage over the

coordination account's explanation. In particular, both accounts can claim 'they are rich' isn't true. I don't think being able to say it is false is any real advantage, mainly because I am skeptical that people clearly distinguish between not being true and being false in making judgments about such cases.

Perhaps we can better compare Glanzberg's account and the coordination account by altering the case as little as we can while insuring both conditions of the coordination account are satisfied. Call this *version 2 of Glanzberg's 'rich' example*. Imagine that the speaker has pictures of people where under each picture it says: 'Philosophy Professor. Annual income: \$101,000' (or some other number over \$100,000). The speaker then holds up the pictures and says: 'Look at these rich people. They all make over \$100, 000 per year'. This would appear to satisfy condition 2 of the coordination account, so that now both conditions are satisfied and \$100,000 is the threshold for being rich in this context according to the coordination account. Suppose that 3 is uttered next.

In this case 3 seems false as before and the claim that philosophers are rich sounds infelicitous or inappropriate. I don't think it sounds clearly untrue in this case, as it is clear to all that the speaker is conveying the true claim that philosophers are rich_{100,000}.¹² So what needs to be explained here is why 3 sounds false and why the claim that philosophers are rich sounds infelicitous or inappropriate.

If we assume that 'rich' here gets assigned the threshold of having an annual income of \$100,000 as the coordination account claims, 'they are rich' should sound infelicitous in 3. After all, that philosophers are rich_{100,000} in 3 is being given as a reason for thinking we should get

¹² Following Karen Lewis in unpublished work, I use 'Philosophers are rich_{100,000}' to express the proposition expressed by 'Philosophers are rich', where the threshold for 'rich' is fixed at \$100,000. All parties should agree that in this case the speaker is *conveying* the claim that philosophers are rich_{100,000} in uttering 'they are rich'. The only question is whether the speaker *semantically expresses* this claim in speaking as he does in this context.

money from them to fix the problems facing poor nations, where only someone who can give \$10 million or more can make an impact. But clearly, that philosophers are rich_{100,000} is a *terrible* reason for thinking we should get money from them to fix the problems facing poor nations, where only someone who can give \$10 million or more can make an impact.¹³ This also means that 3 is false if ‘they are rich’ expresses the true claim that philosophers are rich_{100,000} as the coordination account predicts, because it thereby is a terrible reason for thinking we should get money from philosophers to help poor nations needing at least \$10 million and yet it is being given as a reason for such.¹⁴

So version 2 of Glanzberg’s ‘rich’ example can also be explained by the coordination account even given that it claims ‘they are rich’ in 3 expresses the true claim that philosophers are rich_{100,000}. For it predicts that ‘they are rich’ as it occurs in 3 is infelicitous. Of course Glanzberg predicts ‘they are rich’ to be false as it occurs in 3. But, again, I have a hard time seeing how that is a significant advantage for Glanzberg. As long as both accounts predict there is something “bad” about ‘they are rich’ as it occurs in 3, both accounts capture the judgment that something went wrong with ‘they are rich’ as it occurs in 3. In a moment, we’ll see another reason for thinking ‘they are rich’ should seem infelicitous in this case if the coordination account is right that it expresses the claim that philosophers are rich_{100,000}. Further, both accounts predict that 3 is false. Hence version 2 of Glanzberg’s ‘rich’ example as it stands provides no argument against the coordination account and no argument for Glanzberg’s objective metasemantics and the claim that the standard is set in this case by shared

¹³ If I say to you out of the blue ‘I am moving to New York, because I love the west coast’, ‘I love the west coast’ seems odd or infelicitous even if true because it provides such a bad reason for moving to New York absent other considerations.

¹⁴ I assume here that a sentence of the form ‘A because B’ is false if B is true but is a terrible reason for A.

presuppositions. I should add that I think the falsity of 3 produces noise in judging whether ‘they are rich’ is true or false in 3 and further disinclines speakers to judge it to be true in 3.

So let’s change the example so that ‘they are rich’ is not being given as a reason for thinking we should get money from philosophers to help fix the problems of poor nations to eliminate that bit of noise that I claim disinclines speakers to judge that ‘they are rich’ in 3 is true. Call this *version 3 of Glanzberg’s ‘rich’ example*. Hence, suppose after holding up the photos of philosophers, where under the photo it states their profession and salary, and saying ‘These people all make over \$100,000 per year’, the speaker simply says

4. Philosophers are rich.

Here both conditions of the coordination account are met and it predicts that 4 expresses the proposition that philosophers are rich_{100,000}. Clearly, there still is something bad or wrong about uttering 4 in this situation. But if the coordination account is right, 4 expresses the truth that philosophers are rich_{100,000}. Further, it is not being given as a bad reason for thinking we should try to get money from philosophers to help poor countries. So why does 4 sound bad or wrong *here* if the coordination account is right? The answer is not far to seek. Given that we are in a conversation in which we are interested in individuals who can afford to donate \$10 million dollars, setting the threshold for being rich at having an annual income of \$100,000 is inappropriate. It renders the utterance of 4 irrelevant, and inappropriate for current concerns, and so infelicitous. After all, why is the speaker discussing who is rich_{100,000} in a context where we need people capable of donating \$10 million? So even if 4 expresses the true claim that philosophers are rich_{100,000} as the coordination account claims in version 3 of Glanzberg’s example, we can explain why it sounds bad and infelicitous. Glanzberg can claim instead that shared presuppositions set the standard very high on the wealth scale so that 4 is false, but it isn’t

at all clear whose explanation of the badness or wrongness of 4 wins out in the end. So here again I think we have a stalemate between the coordination account and Glanzberg's objective semantics. But obviously that does no good for the defense of Glanzberg's account. It is worth adding that the coordination account's explanation of why 4 is infelicitous here will also provide another reason for why 'they are rich' is infelicitous in 3 in version 2 of Glanzberg's 'rich' example. For there too, in setting the standard at \$100,000 the speaker is using 'they are rich' to express something irrelevant and inappropriate given conversational purposes, and so the sentence is infelicitous.

Finally, it is worth noting that if we change Glanzberg's example minimally, so that setting the standard at \$100,000 *isn't* inappropriate and irrelevant, 4 suddenly becomes felicitous and seems true. Call this *version 4 of Glanzberg's 'rich' example*. Imagine that the summit on international development is winding down and we are getting ready to go back home. Holding up the pictures of philosophers as before, where under each photo the profession and salary of the individual pictured is stated, I say:

4+. We have been talking about the ultrawealthy during this summit. As we go back to our communities to work with the poor there, we shouldn't focus on the ultrawealthy. All of these people make over \$100,000 dollars. That's a lot of money. So as you go back to your communities, it is important to remember that philosophers are rich and could do a lot to help the poor.

Here the claim that philosophers are rich_{100,000} seems both felicitous and true, just as the coordination account predicts, given the change in conversational purposes. Of course Glanzberg could appeal to the overt discourse here as an objective factor that changes how the standard is set.

Because the dialectic has been complicated, let me summarize what the coordination account and Glanzberg's objective metasemantics claim about the different versions of

Glanzberg's 'rich' example. In version 1, Glanzberg claims 'they are rich' is false. The coordination account claims it is not true. Both Glanzberg and the coordination account claim that 3 is false or untrue. Given the subtle difference between being not true and being false, I think neither theory has a clear advantage here. In version 2, the coordination account claims 'they are rich' in 3 is true but infelicitous for two reasons. First, it is being given as a reason for thinking we should try to get money from philosophers and that philosophers are rich_{100,000} is a terrible reason for thinking we should try to get money from them, given that only people who can donate \$10 million can have any impact. Second, given that our concern is with individuals who can donate \$10 million, setting the threshold for being rich at \$100,000 is inappropriate and irrelevant. This makes 'they are rich' in 3, which according to the coordination account expresses the claim that philosophers are rich_{100,000}, itself inappropriate, irrelevant and so infelicitous. Here, the coordination account predicts 3 is false, as it seems to be. I claim this further disinclines speakers to judge that 'they are rich' in it expresses something true. Again, Glanzberg predicts that 'they are rich' expresses something false here due to shared presuppositions setting the standard very high. Again, I see no advantage for either account here. In version 3, the coordination account predicts 4 is true but infelicitous. Given that we are in a conversation in which we are interested in individuals who can afford to donate \$10 million dollars, setting the threshold for being rich at having an annual income of \$100,000 is inappropriate. It renders the utterance of 4 irrelevant, inappropriate and so infelicitous. Here again, Glanzberg predicts that 4 is false. As before, this seems to me a stalemate. Both accounts predict 4 will sound bad and wrong. Finally, version 4 of Glanzberg's 'rich' example bolsters the explanation that the coordination account gave of version 3. It was claimed that in version 3, given conversational purposes and that 4 expressed the claim that philosophers are rich_{100,000} as

the coordination account claims, 4 was inappropriate, irrelevant and so infelicitous. When we minimally changed conversational purposes in version 4, so that 4 expressing the claim that philosophers are rich_{100,000} is not inappropriate and irrelevant, 4 suddenly seemed felicitous and true. In the end, then, I don't see that any version of Glanzberg's 'rich' example provides support for his objective metasemantics over the coordination account.

Glanzberg's next example purports to show that a *comparison class* can fix the standard:

In other cases, a comparison class can exert a stronger influence than common ground information that is presupposed by all parties. For instance:

(12) Context: We surrounded by basketball players, and everyone is talking about basketball. I happen to be obsessed with jockeys, and you know that I am. A 5' 5" high man walks into the room. I say:

Assertion: He is tall.

It appears very hard to hear this as true. In this case, the standard is influenced by the salient group in the immediate environment, which can provide a comparison class. Our shared knowledge of my obsession with jockeys, and the communicative intention that goes with it, does not overrule this.¹⁵

I agree with Glanzberg's judgment that it is hard to hear the assertion as true here. His view claims it is false.

For definiteness, suppose, as I think Glanzberg does, that the conversational participants are the speaker and the addressee (after all, it is important that the jockey obsession is common ground and only the addressee was claimed to know about it). So here Glanzberg claims that a salient group in the environment of the conversation—a group of basketball players—perhaps along with the subject matter of the conversation—basketball—provide a comparison class—the class of basketball players—that in turn sets the standard. He claims that this overrides the speaker's intention. But note that again the coordination account conditions are not satisfied

¹⁵ Pps.7-8

here. Even condition 1 appears not to be satisfied, since the speaker does not appear to intend a particular degree of height to be the semantic value of *pos* in context. Further, the fact that the speaker S is obsessed with jockeys does not guarantee that condition 2 is satisfied. That is, S's known obsession with jockeys does not guarantee that a competent, reasonable, attentive hearer H who knows the common ground of the conversation at the time S utters 'tall', and who has the properties attributed to the audience by the common ground at the time S utters 'tall' would know that S intends the semantic value of *pos* in c to be the threshold for tall jockeys. I suppose if S is known to *always* use the threshold of being tall for a jockey whenever he uses 'tall' the condition would be satisfied. But in that case, it again is not obvious that 'He is tall' is false as opposed to merely irrelevant, inappropriate and so infelicitous given the context ("everyone is talking about basketball players"). This would explain Glanzberg's judgment that "it is hard to hear this as true." And if we give up the supposition that S always uses jockey height for his standard in using 'tall' and satisfy condition 2 some other way in the context of utterance, the judgment that 'He is tall' is false loses its force. Suppose, for example, as before S is obsessed with jockeys and their heights and this is known to the hearer. Further, S is clearly reading a picture-filled magazine called 'People Who are 5' Tall and Taller and so Would be Tall for a Jockey but not for a Basketball Player Quarterly'.¹⁶ Finally, suppose that though the basketball players are still salient to S, S clearly has no interest in them or the conversation he is hearing about them. Let all this be common ground. Now a 5' 5" man walks in and S says 'He's tall.' Here I think condition 2 of the coordination account is satisfied. But here, I find we can readily hear the utterance as true.¹⁷ So once we modify Glanzberg's case here in such a way that the

¹⁶I put the title this way, because 'People who are tall for a jockey and not a basketball player' seems to presuppose that they are jockeys and basketball players and we don't want to assume that the man who is about to walk in is a jockey. Thanks for suggestions on the title to Annie Papreck King.

¹⁷ Informants I have tried the example on agree.

conditions of the coordination account are satisfied, the relevant utterance seems true just as the coordination account predicts. Further, in Glanzberg's original version of the case, the coordination account predicts that no truth evaluable proposition was expressed. So we can actually agree with Glanzberg that in that version of the case it "appears very hard to hear this as true". Hence, the case again provides no evidence for Glanzberg's claim that a comparison class fixes the standard or for his objective metasemantics.

Glanzberg's final case is intended to show that *overt prior discourse* can fix the semantic value of *pos* in context:

Work in pragmatics has also shown how previous discourse can affect context in different ways than mere presupposition. We see that at work with standards too. If we supplement (12) with some discourse, the situation changes:

(13) Context: We surrounded [sic] by basketball players, and everyone is talking about basketball. I happen to be obsessed with jockeys, and you know that I am. A 5' 5" high man walks into the room.

Discourse: I am going to a horse race later today. I just know that the shorter jockey will win. They always do. You have to be under 5' to do really well.

Assertion: He is too tall.

I am not sure how firm the judgement is here, but it is much more easy to hear as true. So, overt discourse can override prior presuppositions, and can implicitly guide us to different comparison classes we well.¹⁸

So here Glanzberg claims that the prior discourse provides a comparison class—jockeys—that in turn secures a semantic value for *pos* (5') that makes 'He is too tall' true when 'He' picks out the 5'5" man that just walked in. By contrast, the coordination account claims that the prior discourse makes manifest the speaker's intention to make 5' the threshold for being tall in the context of utterance. As a result, both conditions of the coordination account are met. Clearly,

¹⁸ P. 8

the speaker intends 5' to be the threshold for being tall in this context. Further, precisely because of the previous discourse, a competent, reasonable, attentive hearer who knows the common ground of the conversation at the time the speaker utters 'tall', and who has the properties attributed to the audience by the common ground at the time S utters 'tall' would know that the speaker intends 5' to be the semantic value of *pos* in *c*. So the coordination account can explain why 5' is the semantic value in context of *pos* in this case and hence why the utterance is judged true. So Glanzberg's case fails to show that prior discourse fixes the semantic value of *pos* in context and so here again the case provides no argument in favor of Glanzberg's objective metasemantics.

This last response on the part of the coordination account brings up an important point. The coordination account is clearly not an objective metasemantics since it claims that semantic values of supplementives in context are fixed exclusively by recognizable speakers' intentions. However, there is a sense in which the coordination account mimics an objective metasemantics and allows that prior discourse, common ground, salient comparison classes and the like play an *indirect* role in fixing the semantic values of supplementives in context. We just saw an illustration of the way this occurs. Given the prior discourse, a speaker who wishes to be understood had better intend 5' to be the threshold for being tall in context. Further, given the prior discourse, a competent, reasonable, attentive hearer who knows the common ground of the conversation at the time the speaker utters 'tall', and who has the properties attributed to the audience by the common ground at the time the speaker utters 'tall' would know that the speaker intends 5' to be the semantic value of *pos* in *c*. In general many, many factors about the context of utterance, including the meanings of the words the speaker is uttering, prior discourse, questions under discussion, and all those mentioned by Glanzberg as factors in his objective

metasemantics, *constrain* what a speaker can reasonably intend to be the semantic value of a use of a supplementive and *determine* that an idealized hearer who knows the common ground of the conversation would know what the speaker intends. Let me give two more examples to illustrate this point, because it will be important later. Suppose two of us are in the locker room of a professional basketball team and the only people present are us and the players. If I use ‘tall’ in this context and wish to be understood, I had better intend the threshold for ‘tall’ to be appropriate for basketball players unless I do something else to make a different intention recognizable. Similarly, in such a case absent any indication to the contrary, an idealized hearer will know that I intend such a threshold. So here again, an objective feature of the conversation—a salient group determining a comparison class—can constrain what semantic value a speaker can reasonably intend and determine what an idealized hearer who knows the common ground of the conversation would know about the speaker’s intention. For a final example, suppose that it is common ground that we are meeting Glenn for lunch at Gjusta, that we can all recognize his car and that as we pull up to Gjusta Glenn’s car is parked out front (we all see that we all see this). Pointing at the car, I say:

5. Looks like he beat us here.

In such a case, unless I make a different intention manifest in some way, if I wish to be understood I had better intend Glenn as the semantic value of ‘he’ in context and an idealized hearer who knows the common ground of the conversation would know that I so intend. So once again, we have objective factors—the common ground—constraining what a speaker who wishes to be understood can intend and determining what an idealized hearer who knows the common ground of the conversation would know about what the speaker intends.

One more point should be made before turning to other issues. Glanzberg often says

things like the following:

A contextual parameter with an indirect metasemantics must be set by the various pieces of information context provides, but context does not simply hand us a value for such a parameter, nor does it hand us a uniform rule for computing the value from a specific piece of contextual information. Rather, a range of contextual information and computational rules must be taken into account and weighed in working out the value from context.¹⁹

This makes it sound as though he claims that various contextual factors—salient groups, comparison classes, shared presuppositions, overt discourse and so on—combine in different ways in different cases to fix the semantic value of *pos* in context. However, as we have seen when he gives examples that purport to show that these factors fix the semantic value of *pos* in context, only one factor fixes the semantic value in context. In his first example, it was alleged to be lexical meaning, in the second shared presuppositions, in the third, a salient group and in the fourth overt discourse. So Glanzberg hasn't really offered a case that purports to show that various factors *together* get weighed and combined to yield a semantic value in context for *pos*.

In any case, Glanzberg argues next that my metasemantics is *indirect* in his sense. Recall that this means for Glanzberg that multiple factors play a role in fixing a semantic value for *pos* in context. This could mean that different factors play a role in different cases or it could mean that different factors may play a role in a single case. As we saw, though Glanzberg appears to claim the latter, the actual examples he gives only purport to show the former. But either way, it may seem surprising that Glanzberg claims that the coordination account is an indirect metasemantics since it claims that semantic values for supplementives in context are always fixed by what appears to be a single factor: recognizable speaker intentions. However, Glanzberg correctly claims that on my view different *kinds* of intentions can fix the semantic value for *pos* in context. For him, this apparently means that my metasemantics is indirect.

¹⁹ P. 9

Though I am indifferent as to whether my metasemantics is direct or indirect in Glanzberg's sense, in discussing the issue he ends up ascribing to me a version of the coordination account I don't hold. This is important since he ends up arguing that his metasemantics is superior to the version of the coordination account I do not hold and his arguments exploit features of that account that differ from the version of the coordination account I do hold. Hence, I need to consider Glanzberg's case that my metasemantics is indirect.

For gradable adjectives like 'tall', 'heavy' and so on it is plausible that at least in many cases speakers intend that a degree on the relevant scale be "cutoff" points for e.g. being tall in a context, since we can identify heights with degrees on the height scale. In such cases, speakers have a height—a number—as the object of their intentions in using the gradable adjective. Hence, the coordination smoothly applies to such gradable adjectives and the degree assigned to *pos* in context will be the height the speaker recognizably intends. But as noted in King [2014], there are gradable adjectives like 'smart' where it is unlikely that in using them a speaker has as the object of her intention a number—a degree on a scale. My thought was that for such gradable adjectives, speakers have as the object of their intention in using them something that *determines* a degree on a scale. In particular, I thought that in the case of 'smart', a speaker might intend a *kind of person as regards intelligence* as the thing that determines the cutoff for being smart in a given context. Presumably, a kind of person as regards intelligence has a degree of intelligence on the scale for intelligence. So in this case, the degree that is assigned to *pos* in context is determined indirectly. The speaker has as the object of her intention a kind of person as regards intelligence, which in turn determines a degree on the relevant scale. This means that there are at least two kinds of intentions invoked by the coordination account in its application to gradable adjectives: intentions whose objects are degrees on the relevant scale; and intentions

whose objects are *kinds of things* that in turn determines degrees on the relevant scale. This is enough to make the coordination account an indirect metasemantics according to Glanzberg, though he seems to equivocate on *why* the coordination account is indirect. At one point, he suggests it is because when the object of a speaker's intention is a kind of thing in using a gradable adjective, the connection between the object of the intention and the degree is indirect with the former determining the latter:

For the standard, on King's theory, the speaker will intend to count certain kind of people as smart. That in turn fixes a standard for smartness. They may understand that this creates a cut-off, but they may well not know there is a parameter whose value needs to be set. King's metasemantics thus marks a clear contrast between simple cases for demonstratives and cases like the standard. *And for the standard, the metasemantic process King proposes already has some indirectness, as it runs through a kind to reach a degree value.*²⁰

But, after arguing that I must invoke other kinds of intentions as well—something I will dispute below—Glanzberg seems to suggest that what makes the coordination account indirect is that it must posit many different kinds of intentions with different kinds of objects:

What this shows, I believe, is that if we wish, we can offer an intention-based indirect metasemantics for parameters like the standard. *We can describe what fixes the standard as a complex set of communicative intentions, making reference to multiple sorts of contextual factors, that must be integrated in a contextually appropriate way to indirectly fix a standard.* We can, with King, require those intentions to be publicly manifest. The contrast with demonstratives still stands. What we have is an indirect metasemantics.²¹

Bracketing the issue of whether the coordination account has to posit more kinds of intentions than I have to this point, resulting in “a complex set of communicative intentions”, which again I return to below, so far I agree with Glanzberg's exposition of the coordination account.

However, Glanzberg next appeals to the fact that examples like his 12 discussed above and experimental evidence shows that statistical properties of salient individuals in a comparison

²⁰ P. 16, my emphasis.

²¹ P. 17, my emphasis.

class can fix the semantic value of *pos* in context. Of course, I claimed that in example 12 as Glanzberg states it, the conditions of the coordination are not met and so *pos* gets no semantic value in context resulting in ‘He is tall.’ not expressing anything truth evaluable. This explains Glanzberg’s judgment about the case that it is hard to hear the sentence as true. And as we saw, when we alter the example so that the coordination account’s conditions *are* met, we judge that the sentence *is* true. So I don’t think 12 lends any support to the view that statistical properties of salient individuals in a comparison class fixes the semantic value of *pos* in context. As for the experimental data Glanzberg cites, as far as I can see it shows only that conversational participants in using gradable adjectives are sometimes sensitive to statistical properties of salient individuals in a comparison class. This is obviously a far cry from the claim that statistical properties of salient individuals in a comparison class *fix* the semantic value of *pos* in context. My own view is that the reason speakers are sometimes sensitive to statistical properties of salient individuals in a comparison class is that they know such individuals are salient to other conversational participants and they are trying to figure out what they should reasonably intend if they are to be understood; and hearers are aware that such individuals are salient to the speakers and are trying to come to know what speakers intend. That, of course, is completely consistent with the coordination account.

Glanzberg goes on to claim that in order to account for cases like 12, in which he claims the semantic value of *pos* is fixed by statistical properties of salient individuals in a comparison class, and his experimental evidence, I am going to have to claim that sometimes the intention that fixes the semantic value of *pos* is an intention whose object is a group of salient individuals in a comparison class:

But the evidence, both from examples like (12) and the experimental evidence I reviewed in section 1, shows that we can also fix standards by reference to

statistical properties of salient individuals in a comparison class. We might have intentions corresponding to those salient individuals, which we might express in terms like *the salient things around here*. So we have at least two comparison class-oriented options for how our intentions might go: intention to fix a standard via a kind, or via the statistical regularities across salient individuals.²²

The thought is that such an intention has as its object a group of salient individuals, which in turn determines a comparison class, which with a bit of implicit statistical reasoning determines a degree on a scale. As we have seen, Glanzberg is wrong to claim that the coordination account must posit these sorts of intention to handle 12 and explain his experimental evidence. We have already seen how the coordination account explains these things without positing such intentions.

That said, I don't want to reject intentions of this sort out of hand. There *might* be some cases where a recognizable intention of this sort *does* fix the semantic value of *pos* in context. Here is a plausible case. Suppose Perez is unfamiliar with basketball but has some idea that being tall is an asset in basketball. I extoll the virtues of NBA basketball and get Perez interested in the game. We end up at an NBA game and are allowed to visit the locker room before the game. Perez has never seen an NBA player and he walks into the locker room to find only three players present. We are talking about NBA players, shooting percentages etc. Perez points to the tallest player in the room and says 'Is he tall?' I recognize that Perez wants to know whether the player is a tall basketball player (as would an ideal hearer who knows the common ground of the conversation). Arguably, the object of Perez' intention in using 'tall' is the comparison class comprising basketball players (or the salient players, who in turn determine the comparison class of basketball players), which in turn fixes a degree on the height scale assigned to *pos*. So though I reject Glanzberg's claim that 12 and his experimental data force the coordination

²² P. 16, emphasis in original.

account to posit intentions of this sort, we may want to handle cases like the one just described by means of such intentions.

Glanzberg next claims that because of absolute gradable adjectives like ‘open’ the coordination account is going to have to posit intentions in their use that are intentions to describe things as *completely open*:

We have also seen, both from examples like (10) and experimental evidence, that lexical content can change the situation, leading to much less context dependence, and little reliance on either of the options we just considered. If we are to take King’s line, that would relate to a different sort of intentions [sic], specific to the lexical meanings of absolute adjectives. We might, for instance, have a tacit intention to describe things as *completely open*. So, we have multiple roles for comparison classes and a role for lexical content as part of our metaseantics, even if we view it as intentional. Each comes with different kinds of intentions, and the intentions can be to varying degrees complex and tacit.²³

But Glanzberg is mistaken here in claiming that the coordination account has to posit things like intentions to describe things as completely open to handle absolute gradable adjectives like ‘open’. As we saw above, such absolute gradable adjectives are either not contextually sensitive at all or their context invariant meanings alone suffice to secure semantic values in context for them. Either way, they are not supplementives at all and so the coordination account doesn’t apply to them. Clearly then, the coordination account doesn’t have to posit *any* sorts of intentions to deal with them since it doesn’t deal with them at all.

Next, Glanzberg considers how prior overt discourse in using gradable adjectives is viewed on the coordination account (I begin with the end of the last quotation to provide context):

So, we have multiple roles for comparison classes and a role for lexical content as part of our metaseantics, even if we view it as intentional. Each comes with different kinds of intentions, and the intentions can be to varying degrees complex and tacit.

²³ Pps. 16-17, emphasis in original

The same can be said for the role of prior discourse. Now, we might see prior discourse as making parts of our complex communicative intention manifest. And so, we might describe the affects [sic] of discourse on the standard in intentional terms. But still, it changes the options for how we are to integrate salient individuals into our process of determining the standard, as we see with example (13). We also see with example (11) and its contrast with (13) that presuppositions can compete with overt discourse for fixing the standard.²⁴

The first two sentences of the quotation here are misleading, suggesting as they do that the coordination account must posit all kinds of new intentions based on the considerations adduced by Glanzberg. Again, I'll return to this below. But Glanzberg is right that the coordination account views overt prior discourse as in his example 13 as one of many ways speakers make their intentions in using supplementives recognizable and hence satisfy condition 2 of the coordination account. As noted earlier, the coordination account views many objective features of discourse—prior discourse, salient objects, questions under discussion—as devices speakers employ to make their intentions recognizable and devices hearers employ to come to know the intentions of speakers. So here Glanzberg gets the coordination account exactly right. However, the very next remarks about changing the options as to how salient individuals are integrated into fixing the standard and how presuppositions compete with overt discourse in fixing the standard on the coordination account miss the mark. In an example like Glanzberg's 13, as discussed above, the overt prior discourse makes completely clear that in this context the speaker is using 5' as threshold for 'tall'. Hence both conditions of the coordination account are met and 5' is secured as the semantic value of *pos* in this context. On the coordination account, the salient individuals simply aren't relevant to assigning a semantic value in context to *pos* in this case. Hence, there simply is not need to “integrate salient individuals into our process of determining the standard.” Though Glanzberg next contrasts 11 and 13, I think he intended to contrast 12 and

²⁴ P. 17

13. Glanzberg talks of 12 and 13 showing how presuppositions and overt discourse *compete* on the coordination account. But the coordination account doesn't view these factors as competing in the way Glanzberg's view does. In 13, the overt discourse makes clear that the speaker intends 5' to be the threshold for 'tall'. Both conditions of the coordination account are met and so 5' *is* the threshold for 'tall' in context. In 12, as we saw, as formulated by Glanzberg, in the example no threshold meets both conditions of the coordination account and the sentence 'He is tall' does not express a truth evaluable content due to *pos* not receiving a semantic value in context. On my amended version of the example, 5' meets both conditions of the coordination account and so is the semantic value in context of *pos*. But in these cases on the coordination account there is no "competition" between presuppositions and something else, as Glanzberg suggests there is. As we'll see, Glanzberg appears to be viewing the coordination account through the lens of a theory like his on which various factors compete and combine in fixing a semantic value in context for *pos*. But the coordination account is not like this. Either an intention uniquely satisfies each of conditions 1 and 2 of the coordination account, in which case it *alone* fixes the semantic value in context of the relevant supplementive; or no intention uniquely satisfies each condition, in which case the supplementive has no semantic value in context.²⁵

Finally, Glanzberg summarizes what the coordination account will have to look like, given the considerations he has adduced and the different intentions he claims the coordination account must posit:

If these are all intentions, or the making of intentions manifest, then we have multiple kinds of intentions or ways to make them manifest. In different contexts, these contribute differently to fixing the standard, and how they contribute can be

²⁵ There are also cases in which felicitously used supplementives are not assigned a unique semantic value in context but rather a *range of candidate semantic values in context*. See King [forthcoming] for discussion.

a matter of context. This is a re-casting in intentional terms of the full case I made above for an indirect metasemantics.

What this shows, I believe, is that if we wish, we can offer an *intention-based indirect metasemantics* for parameters like the standard. We can describe what fixes the standard as a complex set of communicative intentions, making reference to multiple sorts of contextual factors, that must be integrated in a contextually appropriate way to indirectly fix a standard. We can, with King, require those intentions to be publicly manifest... What we have is an indirect metasemantics. In light of the arguments I gave in section 1 and here, I believe that the best way to understand King's proposal is precisely as an intention-based indirect metasemantics, when it comes to parameters like the standard.²⁶

This description of how to understand the coordination account is at best *very* misleading. In the first sentence of the quotation, Glanzberg is alluding to all the new kinds of intentions he claims the coordination account must posit, given the cases he raised. But as we saw, none of the considerations Glanzberg raised forced the coordination account to posit *any* new sorts of intentions. In the case of gradable adjectives in the positive form, all of Glanzberg's cases were explained on the basis of the two kinds of intentions the coordination account posited all along. Either the intention will be that a degree on the relevant scale be the semantic value of *pos* in context; or the intention will have as its object a kind of thing as regards the dimension in question (e.g. intelligence), which in turn determines a degree on the relevant scale. I have accounted for all of Glanzberg's cases and data using only these two intentions, which, again, the coordination account posited all along. I did at one point claim that there *may* be cases for which we would want to add a third kind of intention: an intention that had as its object either salient individuals who are members of a comparison class or the comparison class itself, with the comparison class in turn determining a degree on the relevant scale. But the positing of this sort of intention was not required to handle any of Glanzberg's examples or data. Once he had brought up such an intention, I thought there might be cases that were best handled by them and I

²⁶P. 17; italics in original text.

gave an example of one. As to whether this version of the coordination account is indirect in Glanzberg's sense, I am not sure. But as I indicated, I have no real interest in this question. One point that is important for Glanzberg is that the intentions involved in the use of gradable adjectives will be different from the intentions involved in the use of demonstratives on the coordination account. I think he is right to say they will be, since intentions regarding comparison classes and kinds of things as regards a dimension will not be in play with demonstratives but are with gradable adjectives.

But the other things Glanzberg says about how best to understand the coordination account in the above passage are incorrect. He has the picture of a bunch of different kinds of intentions combining and contributing to fixing a semantic value for *pos* in context and doing so differently in different contexts. But this is completely foreign to the coordination account. To repeat what was said above, in each case where a unique semantic value in context is secured for *pos*, a *single* intention uniquely satisfies each of conditions 1 and 2 in the coordination account. That intention is either an intention with a degree on a scale as its object, or a kind of thing as regards a dimension or a comparison class. There is no "complex set of communicative intentions, making reference to multiple sorts of contextual factors, that must be integrated in a contextually appropriate way to indirectly fix the standard." There is a *single* intention of one of the three kinds mentioned above that uniquely satisfies each of conditions 1 and 2 in the coordination account. This is important, because as we'll see the arguments Glanzberg gives against the coordination account depend on adopting the version reflected in the above passage from Glanzberg. Clearly, this is not the version of the coordination account I am defending.

The primary argument Glanzberg gives for his objective metasemantics and against the coordination account comes in section 3 of his paper.²⁷ As we'll see, Glanzberg really only argues that if one broad view of communication is correct, we should adopt his metasemantics, whereas if another broad view is correct, we should adopt the coordination account. However, I think there is good reason to think that *neither* of the broad views of communication is correct and so as we'll see I think the dialectic is more complicated than Glanzberg makes it out to be. As I indicated above, I also think Glanzberg gets the coordination account wrong here with the result that he would probably be surprised at how much I agree with the broad view of communication he favors. Of course I don't agree that this broad view favors his metasemantics.

Glanzberg makes a number of preliminary points about tense and gradable adjectives and more generally about lexical and functional categories, most of which I agree with. But the rubber meets the road when Glanzberg identifies some of the factors that he thinks "go into our fixing a standard" in context.²⁸ They are:

1. grammatical competence, which delivers a tacit grasp of the structure of the Degree Phrase of which the gradable adjective is a constituent²⁹
2. our ability to approximately represent magnitudes like *fast*, *tall*, *bright* and so on
3. our ability to tacitly do statistics on comparison classes
4. overt prior discourse
5. lexical meaning in the case of absolute adjectives
6. shared presuppositions

I actually agree that, in a sense, all the factors on this list can "go into fixing a standard" in context, with the exception of 5, since as I have said either absolute adjectives are not

²⁷ The section is entitled 'Cognition and Semantics'

²⁸ P. 22

²⁹ The grasp is tacit because ordinary speakers are not explicitly aware that its structure is $[_{DegP} [_{Deg} pos[_A Adj]]]$.

contextually sensitive or they are like pure indexicals whose context invariant meanings alone serve to secure semantic values for them in context. What is at issue between me and Glanzberg is *how* these factors “go into fixing a standard” in context. To put my cards on the table right off, I think 1 and 2 are background conditions a speaker must satisfy to form the sorts of intentions that the coordination account claims secure semantic values for *pos* in contexts.³⁰ As for 3, I take this ability to play two roles. First, as we have seen I *may* want to say that we exploit this ability in fixing the standard by having an intention in using a gradable adjective that has either salient individuals in a comparison class, or the comparison class itself, as its object. On the other hand, this ability may constrain what a reasonable speaker who expects to be understood can intend in using a gradable adjective and determine what an idealized hearer who knows the common ground of the conversation knows about the speaker’s intention. Similarly, 4 and 6 may constrain what a reasonable speaker who expects to be understood can intend in using a gradable adjective and determine what an idealized hearer who knows the common ground of the conversation knows about the speaker’s intention.

Obviously, then, I do not view all of 1-6 as intentions (how could grammatical competence be an intention?!).³¹ Indeed, I don’t view *any* of 1-6 as intentions! But Glanzberg seems to suggest that I do, when in discussing 1-6 above he says:

Now, if we stretch the notion of intention enough, I suppose that is alright to call any of these intentions... But always putting things in terms of a stretched notion of intention elides important distinctions. Some aspects of the metaseantics of the standard are familiar ordinary communicative intentions. But some are highly tacit abilities. Some are special purpose, while some are

³⁰ Note that I don’t mention hearers here because so long as the speaker satisfies these condition, she will be able to fix a semantic value in context regardless of whether her *actual* hearers satisfy these conditions. For an idealized hearer who knows the common ground of the conversation is defined to be competent and to have the properties the common ground attributes to the audience, which in usual cases will include having normal cognitive abilities including sensitivity to statistics of comparison classes. When the common ground does *not* attribute this latter property to the audience, the speaker may have to do more than usual to secure a semantic value for *pos* in context according to the coordination account. See King [2014b] for discussion.

³¹ Henceforth, when I talk about 1-6 above, I mean to exclude 5 as irrelevant.

general-purpose. These can serve our communicative intentions without being intentions. That is clear from tacit knowledge of syntax, but it holds for tacit abilities to do statistics too. Fixing a standard is a process that draws on many of these distinct kinds of abilities. The version of the indirect metaseantics I prefer keeps track of these distinctions. It can appeal to intentions specifically, in cases like previous discourse, while appealing just as specifically to our abilities to do statistics or our grammatical competence. I think this is the most revealing way to capture the metaseantics of the standard. Hence, I do not opt for a thoroughly intention-based metaseantics. I thus conclude that the metaseantics of parameters is indirect, and also, that the indirectness is not best described in uniformly intentional terms. Intentions are crucial, but not the only factor.³²

Again, I am not claiming any of 1-6 are intentions and so am not eliding distinctions between intentions, special purpose tacit abilities like 1 and general purpose tacit abilities like 3 as Glanzberg claims in this passage. So the case Glanzberg makes here for his objective metaseantics over the coordination account misses the mark.

Glanzberg goes on to provide a reply to the argument I just responded to on behalf of advocates of the coordination account:

There is a reply from defenders of intention-based metaseantics that we should pause to consider. I have highlighted a variety of cognitive resources we draw on to think about properties expressed by gradable predicates, to structure those thoughts in language, and to fix standards in context [1-6 above]. Not all of these are intentions, and not all of them are fundamentally about communication. But still, we can employ basic, often tacit, cognitive resources to serve a variety of functions. Our perceptual abilities serve our motor abilities when we run to catch a ball, for instance. *Is what we see with the standard genuinely a mix of intentions and non-intentional cognitive factors, or rather a mix of intentions, some of which are based on underlying tacit non-intentional factors?* I have suggested the former gives us a more accurate picture of what happens when we fix the standard, and so is a better metaseantics. But it is open to intentionalists to pursue the latter.³³

³² p. 23

³³ Pps. 23-24, my emphasis. Glanzberg footnotes this passage saying that in a personal communication I said this line of thinking was important. In the personal communication in question, I was actually trying to articulate the line of thinking I articulated above in responding to Glanzberg. I fault myself for not being more clear in the personal communication.

Note that this isn't how I responded to Glanzberg's argument above. First, to repeat, in any given case where *pos* is assigned a semantic value in context, I don't claim, as Glanzberg seems to suggest here, that there is a *mix* of intentions. I claim that there is a single, recognizable intention. Second, it is misleading to say that I claim that such an intention is *based* on non-intentional things like 1-6. To repeat what I said above about the roles 1-6 play according to the coordination account in fixing semantic values for *pos* in context, 1 and 2 are background conditions a speaker must satisfy to form the sorts of intentions that the coordination account claims secure semantic values for *pos* in contexts. 3 play two roles. First, I may exploit this ability in fixing the standard by having an intention in using a gradable adjective that has either salient individuals in a comparison class, or the comparison class itself, as its object. On the other hand, this ability may constrain what a reasonable speaker who expects to be understood can intend in using a gradable adjective and determine what an idealized hearer who knows the common ground of the conversation knows about the speaker's intention. Similarly, 4 and 6 may constrain what a reasonable speaker who expects to be understood can intend in using a gradable adjective and determine what an idealized hearer who knows the common ground of the conversation knows about the speaker's intention. So the response Glanzberg makes to his argument on behalf of the coordination account is not my intended response.

Glanzberg ends his paper by outlining two competing views of the role 1-6 play in communication and argues that if one accepts the first, one should adopt the coordination account and if one accepts the second, one should adopt his metasemantics. Here is the first view:

I have already given my reasons why I prefer the less intentional version [Glanzberg's account]. It offers a more refined account of the facts, that keeps track of more information about how the standard is set. But there is a reason that intentionalists can offer for preferring their option. *One might hold that if any of*

*the non-intentional resources I have mentioned—tacit statistics, magnitude representation systems, grammatical competence, etc. [1-6 above]—are to serve communication, they must do so via communicative intentions. If one holds this view, then the only role for these kinds of resources is to produce complex communicative intentions. If so, then the intentionalist response [sic] we just considered is obligatory, and nearly a tautology.*³⁴

Above, I argued that Glanzberg *hasn't* given reasons for favoring his account.³⁵ Also, I clearly do not hold the view that the only role for 1-6 in communication is to produce complex communicative intentions. I have several times now stated the various roles played by 1-6 in the coordination account and these roles that are not a matter of the production of intentions. Indeed, only 3 is implicated at all in the production of intentions.³⁶ I tentatively suggested that sometimes the intention that is relevant to fixing the semantic value of *pos* in context is an intention with either salient members of a comparison class or the comparison class itself as its object. But note that even here, the ability to do statistics on salient individuals in comparison class doesn't *produce* an intention. It uses a comparison class that is the object of an intention to yield a degree on a scale. So really *none* of 1-6 is involved in the production of the intentions the coordination account appeals to. Hence to a large extent I actually *reject* the broad view of communication Glanzberg seems to think I hold and that he thinks favors the coordination account.

Glanzberg contrasts the view of the role of 1-6 in communication just discussed that he wrongly attributes to me with the view he holds:

But I also think that the scaffolding upon which we build our overt thoughts and communicative intentions need not be intentional at all, nor need the cognitive and linguistic abilities that provide the scaffolding underlie any specific

³⁴ P. 24, my emphasis.

³⁵ See the remarks following the material quoted two quotations back about the coordination account “eliding important distinctions.”

³⁶ 1 and 2 are background conditions a speaker must satisfy to even form the intentions the coordination account claims secure semantic values for *pos* in contexts. In that sense, they are involved in the production of these intentions. But that is hardly a matter of these abilities playing the role of *producing* these intentions.

communicative intentions. To put it simply, when it comes to lower-level cognitive and linguistic abilities, overlap of ability is enough, and we need not have intentions, shared intentions, or any other Gricean-inspired apparatus of communicative intentions corresponding to these. Such overlap of lower-level abilities is enough to serve communication and communicative intentions, even if it is not itself intentional.³⁷

He illustrates this idea with two cases: processing of speech sounds and syntax:

If each of us, as a speaker, processes speech sounds roughly the same way, communication succeeds. It is not necessary to have any communicative intentions surrounding that ability, beyond the general intention to speak and be understood. Our more general intentions to speak and be understood are fully served by having phonetic and phonological abilities, and others having overlapping ones. If they do, we succeed, if they do not, we may fail. I do not see a role for intentions here... As with sounds, overlap seems to me to suffice. If my hearer and I share enough grammar, communication succeeds and our communicative intentions are satisfied; if not, it fails. But no communicative intentions need to attach to functional aspects of grammar. Like the processing speech sounds, our understanding of grammar happens automatically, and either it overlaps across speakers or it does not.³⁸

So Glanzberg claims that in the cases of our ability to process speech sounds and our tacit grasp of grammar, we need have no intentions directed towards these abilities for communication to occur and we need only have these abilities sufficiently overlap for communication to occur. I completely agree with the former claim. In general when normal people are communicating, they will have no intentions regarding their ability to process speech sounds or their tacit grasp of grammar. Again, that Glanzberg thought I would disagree with this claim suggests that he really did misunderstand my view. However, the latter claim—that all communication requires so far as knowledge of grammar and speech sound processing is sufficient overlap in these abilities—seems to me false at least in the case of knowledge of grammar. Suppose you and I *do* sufficiently overlap in our ability to process speech sounds and our tacit grasp of grammar to communicate. Suppose, however, that I perversely don't believe that your grammar and mine

³⁷ P. 24

³⁸ P. 25

overlap at all. I hear what seem to be English sentences coming from you, but believe that you are speaking a completely different language whose sentences sound like English sentences. Then clearly communication will not succeed, as I will think I have no idea what you are saying. But once we add that what is required for communication as far as this knowledge of grammar goes is sufficient overlap and (tacit) belief that there is sufficient overlap, I am onboard with this claim too.

Finally, Glanzberg returns to the roles of 1-6 above:

The case I made above is that setting the standard relies on these kinds of abilities, and also other abilities like our ability to do tacit statistics, which are not fundamentally communicative at all. That is what I argued for at length. I now add the claim that these can affect communication by merely overlapping across speakers, and we need not, and should not, look for specific communicative intentions to which they are linked. I have not fully supported this claim, by any means. Even so, I hope to have made clear what the two general views of how lower-level cognitive abilities support communication are, and I have offered a few illustrative considerations about why one might prefer my non-intentional option.³⁹

As we saw above, Glanzberg is wrong to think that I claim that 1-6 are “linked” to communicative intentions in any significant way. I don’t hold that 1-6 play a role in producing complex communicative intentions as he claims. 1 and 2 are conditions a speaker must satisfy to have communicative intentions at all; and 3-6 can play a role in constraining the kinds of intentions a speaker interested in being understood can have and in determining what an idealized hearer who knows the common ground of the conversation knows about the speaker’s intentions. Further, I agree with Glanzberg that with respect to 1-6, communication requires that we overlap sufficiently with respect to these abilities and at least tacitly believe that we do so.

So in the end, the alleged differences between Glanzberg and me in the roles 1-6 play in communication that he has cited so far aren’t real differences at all. We pretty much agree on all

³⁹ Pps. 25-26

these points. So far as I can see, our disagreement isn't on some big picture issues about communication as Glanzberg suggests. It is much more local. I claim 1-6 play a role in constraining reasonable speakers' intentions which then determine a semantic value in context for *pos* in favorable cases and determining what an idealized hearer who knows the common ground knows about the speaker's intentions. Glanzberg's claim that 1-6 somehow together and in different ways in different cases *themselves* determine the semantic value for *pos* context. I think the only way to adjudicate *this* disagreement is the old-fashioned way: a case by case consideration of predictions both accounts make in particular examples and a determination of which theory makes the best predictions. Unfortunately, this way of proceeding is currently not an option because, as Glanzberg himself notes at the end of his paper, his metasemantics is not sufficiently fleshed out to make any real predictions. In particular, the exact factors that together fix the semantic value of *pos* in context have not yet been fully identified. Perhaps more importantly, no theory has been offered as to how those factors are weighed and combined in specific cases to fix a semantic value in context for *pos*. Further, Glanzberg claims that the relevant factors are weighed and combined differently in different cases, and no theory has been offered as to what determines how they are weighed and combined in a given case. Until these gaps in the theory are filled in, Glanzberg's objective metasemantics remains more promise than theory.

Let me close with a methodological point that about the dialectic here. Glanzberg and I agree that the coordination account is needed. As I mentioned at the outset, Glanzberg allows that it is the correct metasemantics for what he calls *thematic parameters*. But since we need it anyway, good methodology requires applying it as widely as possible. In other words, we shouldn't posit a second metasemantics until we see that it is absolutely needed in addition to the

coordination account. Thus, the argumentative burden is clearly on Glanzberg to demonstrate that his account is needed over and above the coordination account. This is important, because in some of the cases we considered, we seemed to reach stalemates between the competing explanations of the coordination account and Glanzberg's objective metasemantics. But given the dialectic just described, these are wins for the coordination account since a stalemate between the coordination account and Glanzberg's objective metasemantics cannot show the need for his account in addition to the coordination account. But this is precisely what Glanzberg needs to show.

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