0. INTRODUCTION

For many theoretical linguists and applied logicians, model theoretic semantics à la Montague, Cresswell a. o. seems to represent the most advanced stage of the theory of semantics and pragmatics. But it should be clear that this theory remains in the context of realistic semantic theories, as v. Kutschera has called them. Such theories “interpret meaning as a conventional relationship between signs and concrete or conceptual entities which exist independently of the linguistic signs” (v. Kutschera, 1975, p. 19). These theories may still be called realistic theories even if they no longer assume, as in the classical position, that the meaning of a linguistic expression does not depend on conditions of use. In fact, modern model theoretic analyses can account for the variations dependent on conditions of use. The pragmatic account of the context is, however, “realistically” sematicized.

Recently, M. Bierwisch has made the interesting proposal to reinterpret Montague’s semantics in a psychologistic context (see Bierwisch 1980). By the reinterpretation proposed, meaning is not a relationship between signs and entities of independent existence, but primarily a relationship between signs and mental entities in the speakers of language. Bierwisch writes: “My proposal is now, to restrict $D$ the domain of possible extensions in such a way that it becomes the structure of the internal, cognitive experience of a person $p$. In other words, $D$ is to be construed as the formal structure of (a certain aspect of) the mental states of $p$.” In following this course, “possible worlds turn out to be what they (unavowedly) have been all along: cognitive projections of real persons.” (ibid.)

Bierwisch’s proposal involves a number of problems which require detailed discussion. First, it must not be forgotten that realistic semantics of logical analysis has been introduced in the context of antipsychologistic critiques of modern logic. Are the arguments advanced by logicians and philosophers no longer relevant? Second: Embarking on psychological semantics seems to require a much more radical revision of Montague’s approach — and other model theoretic approaches — than Bierwisch seems to assume. Third: A revision of Montague semantics in psycho-physiological context can only
involve part of the required description. Let me now discuss these problems in detail.

1. THREE ASPECTS OF LANGUAGES

I believe that the arguments for a strictly non-psychologistic conception of logic so conclusively advanced by Frege, Husserl and all modern logicians following them, do not hold for linguistics, contrary to what many structural linguists believed. Logic can and should indeed be confined to the analysis of the conditions for correct reasoning and not be extended to the psychology of actual reasoning. Linguistics, on the other hand, must analyze the actual aspects of language use. In a sense, logic can be considered to be an explanation of some fundamental concepts, such as the concepts of truth, consistency, completeness of conceptual analysis etc. They are idealized concepts which are norms for our actual reasoning.

Languages, however, are not determined by such idealizations. We could at most postulate structured processes underlying language use. Therefore, linguistics cannot be confined to the analysis of structural conditions only. Instead, languages can and should be studied in three different domains: First, as systems of abstract expressions (words or morphemes, sentences, texts) and their relations to realistic meanings, second, as systems of conventionally regulated intentional acts and third, as psycho-physical processes. Often the studies of languages are restricted to one of these domains. For instance, the grammatical studies of languages (whether synchronic or diachronic) are confined to the studies of the systems of expressions, i.e. to the studies of words or morphemes, sentences and texts as well as their phonological and morpho-syntactic forms and their meanings understood as entities of some sort. Current theories of grammars, such as transformational generative grammars, Montague grammars etc. must be understood to be elaborations of this aspect.

On the other hand, there is a long tradition considering languages to be specific and essential kinds of human faculties for performing intentional acts connected with uttering or thinking in words, sentences or texts. It is the distinctive character of these acts that they are regulated by convention. Current speech act theory is to a large part an elaboration of this aspect.

In contrast to these grammatical and act-theoretic views of languages, theoreticians of the last century (Steinthal, Paul, Wundt) emphasized that languages are central parts of the psycho-physical structure of human beings and that words and sentences and their grammatical properties are merely