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**Article**

## Semantic naturalism and the normativity of meaning: against semantic prescriptivism<sup>1</sup>

Naturalismo semântico e a normatividade do significado: contra o prescritivismo semântico

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### ABSTRACT

The slogan “meaning is intrinsically normative” is regarded by several philosophers as capturing an essential feature of linguistic meaning. The normativity of meaning is supposed to constitute a constraint upon theories of meaning. In particular, it has been extensively objected that naturalist theories of meaning are flawed, on the grounds that semantic facts are normative, while natural facts are descriptive. The goal of this paper is to assess two conflicting views on the normativity of meaning – semantic prescriptivism and anti-prescriptivism. First, I show that only the former threatens semantic naturalism. After that, I argue in favour of semantic anti-prescriptivism and show that the main argument for semantic prescriptivism – the simple argument – is flawed. The conclusion is that the viability of semantic naturalism is not touched by the normativity of meaning.

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**Keywords:** normativity of meaning, semantic naturalism, semantic prescriptivism, semantic anti-prescriptivism.

## RESUMO

O slogan “o significado é intrinsecamente normativo” é considerado por diversos filósofos como capturando uma característica essencial do significado linguístico. A normatividade do significado supostamente constitui um pré-requisito para teorias do significado. Em particular, tem-se objetado que teorias naturalistas do significado são falhas, posto que fatos semânticos são normativos, enquanto fatos naturais são descritivos. O objetivo deste artigo é avaliar duas teses conflitantes quanto à normatividade do significado, a saber, o prescritivismo e o antiprescritivismo semântico. Primeiramente, mostramos que apenas o prescritivismo semântico ameaça o naturalismo semântico. Posteriormente, argumentamos a favor do antiprescritivismo semântico e mostramos que o principal argumento a favor do prescritivismo semântico – o argumento simples – é falho. Nossa conclusão é que a viabilidade do naturalismo semântico não é ameaçada pela normatividade do significado.

**Palavras-chaves:** normatividade do significado, naturalismo semântico, prescritivismo semântico, antiprescritivismo semântico.

## 1 Introduction

Semantic naturalism is the thesis that linguistic meaning and mental content are reducible to natural facts. This is a popular and influential thesis nowadays, since it is in accordance with the naturalist worldview: reality is solely constituted by natural facts, and all those facts which at first sight may appear to be non-natural are ultimately natural facts. More precisely, semantic naturalism holds that semantic facts – facts about the content of representational mental states and linguistic expressions – are *reducible* to natural facts. Despite its popularity, semantic naturalism is attacked on the grounds that the naturalistic reductionist project is doomed to fail, because linguistic meanings and mental contents are *normative*, while natural facts are not. But why is it problematic for a naturalist reduction of semantic facts?

The slogan “meaning/content is normative” is regarded by several philosophers as capturing an essential characteristic of linguistic meaning and mental content. This is largely the result of the enthusiastic reception of Saul Kripke’s book, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (1982). Several philosophers, in the wake of Kripke’s controversial interpretation of Wittgenstein’s rule-following considerations, argue that linguistic meaning and/or mental content are *intrinsically normative*. Roughly, this is their line of reasoning (Boghossian, 1989, 2005; Whiting, 2009; Peregrin, 2012). Meaningful expressions have *correctness conditions*: if the linguistic expression “green” means *green* for a speaker, then “green” correctly applies to an object if and only if this object is green. So, there is a rule which specifies correctness conditions for the speaker’s use of “green”. But the existence of correctness conditions of “green” implies that that the speaker *ought* to apply “green” to an object if and only if it is green. If the speaker misapplies “green”, then the speaker has failed to fulfil their *semantic obligation*. The same line of reasoning may be applied to mental content to demonstrate its normative character. The conclusion is that there is an *unbridgeable gap* between natural facts – the ones that pertain to the realm of what “is” – and normative facts – the ones that pertain to what “ought” to be. Thus, there is no hope for a naturalistic reduction of semantic facts.

My goal in this paper is to assess the debate on the normativity of *linguistic meaning*, setting aside the normativity of mental content. More specifically, I present two conflicting views about the

nature of the normativity of meaning, *semantic prescriptivism* and *anti-prescriptivism*, and argue that only the former threatens the viability of a naturalistic reduction of meaning. Finally, I argue for semantic anti-prescriptivism and show that the main argument in favour of semantic prescriptivism – *the simple argument* – is flawed. The conclusion is that semantic naturalism is untouched by the semantic prescriptivist attack.<sup>2</sup>

## 2 Semantic naturalism

*Ontological naturalism* is the orthodoxy among contemporary philosophers. Accordingly, reality is exhausted by nature – everything is natural, and there are only natural properties and facts. That is, a complete description of reality requires reference solely to natural things. The entire reality is *just* the natural reality. But what are natural properties and facts in the first place? This is a contentious matter and it is beyond the scope of this paper to assess conflicting conceptions of natural properties. Here I just assume the *scientific conception*, according to which natural properties and facts are those properties and facts that constitute the subject matter of *natural sciences* – physics, chemistry, biology, etc.

Unsurprisingly, semantic naturalism is just the ontological naturalist approach to meaning: semantic properties and facts are natural. Consider the semantic property that the English expression “green” means *green*, and the semantic fact that John means *green* by “green”. According to semantic naturalism, these are natural properties and facts. But how is it possible? After all, semantic properties and facts look *prima facie* very *different* from natural properties and facts. Semantic naturalists claim that semantic properties are natural, since they are *reducible* to natural properties. The reduction of a property A to a more fundamental property B consists in a definition of A in terms of B, provided that there is no appeal to any notion that presupposes A. Thus, the reduction of semantic properties to natural properties consists in the definition of semantic properties in terms of natural properties, without appealing to any semantic notion.<sup>3</sup>

There are several naturalist theories of meaning available in the market. Causal theories try to reduce semantic properties in terms of appropriate causal relations (Dretske, 1981; Fodor, 1987); teleological theories, in terms of biological function (Millikan, 1984; Papineau, 1993), etc. However, it is not my goal to assess the viability of each naturalist theory. Rather, I will assess whether naturalist theories are doomed by the *normativity of meaning*. Is meaning irreducible to natural properties, since the former is *normative*, while natural properties are not normative? But what is the normative character of meaning in the first place?

## 3 The normativity of meaning

First of all, some *classifications of rules* should be drawn to make clear the nature of the normativity of meaning in this debate. Rules are classified into a variety of kinds. First, rules are classified into *prescriptive* and *non-prescriptive rules*. Prescriptions are rules that determine what the agent *ought* to or *ought not* to do – i.e., an obligation – as well as what an agent *may* or *may not* do – i.e., a permission. The distinctive trait of a prescriptive rule is that it is *action-guiding* – it specifies what the agent ought (not) to do or may (not) do. The rules of a national state are typical examples of prescriptive rules. On the other hand, non-prescriptive rules

<sup>2</sup> There are several other objections to semantic naturalism, but assessing them is not the goal of this paper (I will return to them in the conclusion section). Instead, the goal is to critically assess semantic prescriptivism and how semantic prescriptivists appeal to the normativity of meaning to attack semantic naturalism.

<sup>3</sup> There are also *non-reductionist* versions of semantic naturalism, according to which semantic properties are *primitive* natural properties (e.g., Burge, 2010). However, here I put aside these non-reductionist versions and by “semantic naturalism” I refer only to *reductionist* semantic naturalism.

don't specify what an agent ought to (or may) do. A typical example of a non-prescriptive rule is the rule of measurement established by the metre bar in Paris. Accordingly, it is correct to say that a given object is one metre in length if and only if (iff) the object and the metre bar have the same length. But the notion of correctness involved here differs from the one involved in a prescriptive rule because it follows from a prescriptive rule that the agent ought to (or may) act correctly, while from a non-prescriptive rule it does not follow that the agent has the obligation (or permission) to act correctly (Glüer & Pagin, 1999). A non-prescriptive rule is merely descriptive, it specifies the correctness conditions for an action in accordance with its adopted standard, but it doesn't prescribe that the agent should (or may) act correctly.

Second, rules are classified into *prima facie* and *categorical rules* (Glüer & Wikforss, 2018; Ross, 1930 [2003]). *Prima facie* rules are the ones that can be *overridden* by other rules. A rule can be overridden by another rule when the former is hierarchically less fundamental. For instance, it might be that under several circumstances, you should tell the truth, but not under *all* circumstances. Under exceptional circumstances, maybe the obligation to tell the truth can be overridden by some other obligation (e.g., the obligation to save a human life). By contrast, categorical rules cannot be overridden by any other rule – their validity is *absolute*.

Finally, rules are classified according to their *provenance*, i.e., their origin. Moral, religious and prudential rules have respectively moral, religious and prudential provenances. In light of such a variety of rules, let us introduce the thesis of the normativity of meaning (Kripke, 1982; Boghossian, 1989, 2005; Hattiangadi, 2007; Whiting, 2009; Glüer & Wikforss, 2018).

Meaning is said to be *intrinsically normative* in virtue of the fact that from the attribution of a meaning to a linguistic expression, it follows that there is a rule in force which specifies the *correct* and *incorrect applications* of this expression. So, from the fact that a speaker attributes a given meaning to a linguistic expression, it follows that there is a *semantic rule* in force which specifies the correct and incorrect applications of this expression. The semantic rule for the use of the expression specifies the *correctness conditions* for its use. For instance, the semantic rule for the use of "tea" with meaning *tea* establishes that "tea" is correctly applied to teas and incorrectly applied to non-teas. According to the thesis of the normativity of meaning, the fact that semantic rules are in force for the use of a meaningful expression is a *direct consequence* of the intrinsically normative character of meaning.

What kind of rule are the semantic ones? It is perspicuous that they have *semantic provenance*. A rule in force for the use of a linguistic expression is semantic iff the fact that this rule is in force is derived *uniquely* from the fact that a given *meaning* is attached to this expression. The thesis of the intrinsic normativity of meaning presupposes that, from the meaning of an expression alone, it follows that certain rules are in force, and that these rules are precisely semantic rules. But are semantic rules *prescriptive*? Does it follow from the attachment of meaning to an expression that there are prescriptive semantic rules? Let us finally assess the debate on semantic prescriptivism and show why it threatens the viability of the naturalistic reduction of semantic facts to natural facts.

## 4 Semantic prescriptivism vs. anti-prescriptivism

It is evident that from the attribution of meaning to a linguistic expression, it follows that there is a semantic rule which specifies the *correctness conditions* for the use of this expression. This is "platitudinous" (Whiting, 2013, p. 222). However, the precise nature of semantic rules remains unclear, particularly whether semantic rules have *prescriptive implications* or not. That is, whether semantic rules impose a semantic obligation (or permission) on the speaker. Provided that the speaker attaches a meaning to an expression, is there any obligation (or permission) in force for the speaker to use this expression in accordance with its correctness conditions, i.e., to use it correctly? This is the debate on *semantic prescriptivism*, where semantic prescriptivists and anti-prescriptivists hold opposing views.

Semantic prescriptivism is the thesis that meaning is *intrinsically prescriptive*: from the fact that an expression has a meaning, it follows that the expression ought to (or may) be used correctly and that the expression ought not to (or may not) be used incorrectly. This is established by the semantic rule in force for the use of the expression, which specifies the correctness conditions for use of the expression based solely on its meaning. Thus, if I mean *green* by “green”, I have the obligation (or permission) to apply “green” to a given object iff this object is green. According to semantic prescriptivism, semantic rules are *prescriptive*: if the speaker attaches a meaning to an expression, there is a prescription for the speaker to correctly use this expression. To say that meaning is intrinsically prescriptive is to say that what a speaker means by an expression *determines* how the speaker ought to (or may) use it, because its meaning determines not only its correctness conditions, but also that this expression ought to (or may) be correctly used. The core thesis of prescriptivism is that the *correctness status* of the use of a meaningful expression implies a *prescription* that the speaker ought to (or may) correctly use it. This is the *prescriptive conception* of the normativity of meaning (Kripke, 1982, pp. 22-37; Boghossian, 1989; Whiting, 2007, 2009; Peregrin, 2012). Paul Boghossian developed the classic formulation of semantic prescriptivism:

*The fact that I mean something by an expression [...] implies truths about how I ought to use that expression, truths about how it would be correct for me to use it. This much, of course, is incontestable. The fact that ‘horse’ means horse implies that ‘horse’ is correctly applied to all and only horses: the notion of the extension of an expression just is the notion of what it is correct to apply the expression to. (Boghossian, 1989, p. 530)*

Here an elucidation is required. It should be noted that there is a fundamental distinction between the theses that meaning is *intrinsically prescriptive* and that meaning is *extrinsically prescriptive*. By “intrinsically prescriptive” I mean that the semantic prescription for the use of an expression should have *exclusively semantic provenance*. That is, this prescription should be in force uniquely in virtue of its meaning – semantic prescriptions constitute a *distinctive kind* of normativity. Thus, the validity of a semantic prescription is independent of considerations of moral, intentional, or religious origins. That said, now let us assess the opposing position to semantic prescriptivism.

According to *semantic anti-prescriptivism* (Wikforss, 2001; Hattiangadi, 2007; Glüer & Wikforss, 2009; Boghossian, 2005), it does not follow from the fact that the speaker attaches a meaning to an expression, providing it with correctness conditions, that a semantic prescription is in force for the speaker. The speaker has no *semantic obligation* (or *permission*) to correctly use this expression. Thus, semantic anti-prescriptivism rejects the core thesis of prescriptivism, according to which the correctness conditions for the use of an expression imply that the speaker ought to (or may) correctly use it. Anti-prescriptivists hold the thesis that the *only role* of the status of semantic correctness for the use of a meaningful expression is to *express* the fact that this use is *in accordance* with the correctness conditions for the use of this expression. So, it does not follow that there is a rule in force which *imposes* to the speaker the obligation (or permission) to use it in accordance with this correctness standard. This is the *non-prescriptive conception* of the normativity of meaning.

Finally, before assessing the main argument in support of semantic prescriptivism – *the simple argument* – let us see the reason that semantic prescriptivism threatens the naturalist project to reduce linguistic meaning to natural facts. Sentences of natural sciences are descriptive, they merely describe the natural world. Prescriptions, on the other hand, tell you what you *ought* to (or *may*) do. G. E. Moore (1903 [1993]) and David Hume (1739 [1978]) have famously argued that such a fundamental distinction precludes the reducibility of prescriptive facts to natural facts. Moore argued that any attempt to do it incurs in a *naturalistic fallacy*, while Hume argued that a prescriptive statement is not validly *derived* from a consistent set of descriptive statements. Both arguments conclude that *ought* cannot be derived



from *is*. Thus, if meaning is intrinsically prescriptive, it follows that meaning is not reducible to natural facts, because *semantic facts* are prescriptive, while *natural facts* are not prescriptive.<sup>4</sup> By contrast, anti-prescriptivism poses no problem for semantic naturalism since, according to this position, meaning is not intrinsically prescriptive.

## 5 The Simple argument

Consider a semantic rule for the use of an expression which specifies the correctness conditions for its use. For a speaker *S*, a meaning *F*, a linguistic expression *w* and *f* being the property in virtue of which *w* applies, the semantic rule has the following structure (Hattiangadi, 2009, p. 55):

(CC) *w* means *F* for *S*  $\rightarrow \forall x(\text{it is correct for } S \text{ to apply } w \text{ to } x \leftrightarrow x \text{ is } f)$ .

For instance, this rule is in force for the use of “green”: if “green” means *green* for *S*, then it is correct for *S* to apply “green” to *x* iff *x* is green.<sup>5</sup> It is an uncontroversial fact that a semantic rule of the form (CC) is in force for the use of a linguistic expression insofar as a speaker attaches a *meaning* to it. Thus, if one could demonstrate that it is a consequence, from this fact alone, that a semantic rule is in force *prescribing* the correct use of this expression to the speaker, a knock-down argument for semantic prescriptivism would be established. This is the strategy of *the simple argument* (Boghossian, 1989, pp. 513, 530; Whiting, 2007, 2009; Peregrin, 2012). Accordingly, there are *conceptual entailments* from semantic rules to prescriptive consequences. The simple argument states that since the *very notion* of correctness is *intrinsically* prescriptive, the existence of semantic prescriptions is a *direct consequence* of the existence of correctness conditions for meaningful expressions. The debate on the direct argument is precisely on whether it is a *conceptual truth* that the very notion of correctness is prescriptive.

In what follows, I assess the simple argument in two stages. First, I investigate whether there is a sense in which the notion of correctness is not prescriptive. I argue that this is the case and, so, investigate whether the notion of semantic correctness, as it occurs in a semantic rule that specifies correctness conditions, has a prescriptive nature or not. Then I defend that the notion of semantic correctness is *not prescriptive* and my conclusion is that the simple argument is flawed.

## 6 Correctness conditions

A given rule is prescriptive if it determines that the agent ought (or may) act in accordance with its correctness conditions. But in what sense could the specification of an action as correct, by a rule in force, be not prescriptive? Doesn't it follow from the fact that a rule is in force that the agent ought to (or may) act correctly as determined by the rule? Otherwise, what difference would it make, to the agent, whether a given action is determined as correct or incorrect? What is at stake here is the very possibility of a rule to be in force, and to specify correctness conditions for an action, without prescribing that the agent ought to (or may) act correctly. In order for it to be possible, the rule should have a function with a *non-prescriptive nature*. In what follows, I argue that there are *two functions* that a rule in force can have when it specifies correctness conditions of an action – a *prescriptive* and a *descriptive function*. Consider a theme park where the following rule is in force (Hattiangadi, 2007, p. 59):

<sup>4</sup> It is not the goal of this paper to assess Moore's or Hume's arguments. Here I just show how, according to both arguments, the prescriptive conception of the normativity of meaning ruins semantic naturalism.

<sup>5</sup> Here the relevant notion of application is that of predication, but in other cases it could be the notion of reference, or truth, etc.

(R) *It is correct for a child to play in the park iff the child's height is not inferior to one metre.*

This rule specifies correctness conditions that specify the minimum height of a child in order for it to be correct for the child to play in the park. Evidently, this rule is in force because it is not safe for short stature children to play in the park. So, isn't (R) a prescriptive rule? It depends on how one should interpret it. There is a *prescriptive* and a *descriptive interpretation*:

(PR) *It is allowed for a child to play in the park iff the child's height is not inferior to one metre.*

(DR) *It is safe for a child to play in the park iff the child's height is not inferior to one metre.*

(R) is *prescriptive* if it should be interpreted as (PR): it states a *permission* that children with heights equal or superior to one metre can play in the park; otherwise, there is a prohibition. But if (DR) is the right interpretation of (R), *no prescription* follows. (DR) merely states whether it is safe or not for children to play in the park: if their heights are equal or superior to one metre, it is safe for them to play in the park; otherwise, it is not safe. A rule like (DR) is not prescriptive because it *merely describes* the conditions under which it is safe for a child to play in the park based on the child's height. Once established that it is safe for a given child to play in the park, it only follows from it a prescription if it is in force another rule besides (DR), namely, a *prescriptive* rule. For instance, *a child is allowed to play iff it is safe*.<sup>6</sup> Supposing that there is no prescriptive rule in force, no prescription follows from the fact that it is safe for the child to play in the park. It is an *empirical matter* if the height of a given child is in accordance with (DR) – it is simply the natural fact that the child has (or does not have) a certain height.

Which interpretation of (R) should be adopted? It depends. If the *specification* of the correctness conditions of an action by a rule is prescriptive, then the notion of correctness involved is prescriptive, and (PR) is the right interpretation of (R). But if the specification is not prescriptive, then the notion of correctness involved is not prescriptive, and (DR) is the right interpretation. The problem here is whether the specification of *correctness conditions* by a rule in force is prescriptive or not. Does the specification of an action as correct *always* have prescriptive implications? Before assessing this problem, two elucidations on the nature of the very notion of correctness are required. First, an action can be said to be correct or incorrect *relatively* to a given rule *independently* of whether this rule is or not in force. Evidently, as long as the rule is not in force, it makes no difference for the agent which actions the rule specifies as correct or incorrect (e.g., there will be no criticism or punishment in case of incorrect actions).

Second, there are two *senses* of the notion of correctness of an action, a *descriptive* and a *prescriptive* sense (Hattiangadi, 2007, pp. 59-60; Glüer & Wikforss, 2009, 2018). If the correctness of an action is taken as the notion of an action being *in accordance* with the rule, then the correctness of an action is a *purely descriptive* matter. After all, for an action to be in accordance with a given rule is a factual matter about the natural world – it is simply to be true the description that a given natural fact is the case. For instance, in light of the descriptive interpretation of (R), it is correct for John to play in the park because John is one metre tall. But to have a certain height is a natural fact. Thus understood, the correctness of an action is always a descriptive matter, although the specification of an action as correct can *indirectly* have prescriptive implications. The second sense of the notion of correctness is *prescriptive* – there is an *obligation* (or *permission*) for the agent to *act correctly*. It is undeniable that there are prescriptive uses of the notion of correctness, such as in the case of moral rules, as well as in the prescriptive interpretation of (R).

In sum, one should keep in mind that there are two senses of the notion of correctness in order to verify whether the rule in which it occurs is prescriptive or descriptive. From now on, to avoid this ambi-

<sup>6</sup> Based on prudential reasons, it is evident that this rule is in force. However, notice that (DR) is a rule of completely different nature.

guity, when I use the notion of correctness in a *prescriptive* way, I will indicate that it is the prescriptive sense that is being used, whereas when I use it in a *descriptive* way, I will not indicate that it is the descriptive sense that is being used (i.e., I will use it in a free way).

Daniel Whiting (2007, p. 136.) developed an argument to show that the only possible interpretation of (R) is (PR) and, so, that the notion of correctness there is prescriptive. He acknowledges that for the child's action to be in accordance with (R), it should be the case that the child's height is not inferior to one metre. Nevertheless, assuming that (R) is in force, the fact that the child has (or does not have) the minimum height required has *prescriptive implications*. If the child does not have the minimum height and, even so, is playing at the park, criticisms and punishments would be appropriate. Whiting's strategy is to derive the *prescriptive character* of (R) from the fact that it is *in force*. Since by hypothesis (R) is in force, its specification of correctness conditions for an action has prescriptive consequences and, so, the only possible interpretation of (R) is (PR).

In order to assess Whiting's argument, we need to distinguish two senses of the notion of a rule being *in force*. This is also ambiguous between a *prescriptive* and a *descriptive sense* (Hattiangadi, 2009, p. 57). In the *descriptive sense*, to say that a certain rule is in force in a given community is merely to say that this rule is *accepted and subscribed* by most people in the community or by community's authorities. In this case, there are orders and encouragements for people to act in accordance with the rule, and there are criticisms and punishments for those who violate it. However, if Whiting assumes the descriptive sense, his argument faces a serious problem: it does not follow from the fact that the majority of people (or the relevant authorities) accept and subscribe to a rule that an agent *ought* to accept and subscribe to it.<sup>7</sup> Consider a park in which the following bizarre rule is in force (Miller, 2010, p. 12):

(R\*) *A child is allowed to play in the park iff the child has eaten cornflakes for breakfast on some Tuesday in the past year.*

Suppose that John has eaten cornflakes on some Tuesday in the past year, while Peter has not. Does it follow that Peter ought not to go on a ride and that John may go? Clearly not. It would be insane to forbid a child to play in the park just because it has not eaten an arbitrary food on an arbitrary day of the week in the past year. After all, what connection could there ever be between the fact that a child has eaten something on a given day of the week in the past year and the fact that this child is allowed to play in a theme park? We are reluctant to accept this rule because the fact that this rule is accepted by the majority of community and the relevant authorities is not sufficient for our acceptance (Miller, 2010). We need a *reason* to support this rule, i.e., one that *legitimizes* it. But there is no such reason for (R\*). What follows from the fact that (R\*) is in force is not that Peter is forbidden to play, but that he is forbidden to play *for those who subscribe* to (R\*). What this illustrates is that if a rule is *descriptively* in force, there will always be a *gap* between the fact that this rule is in force and the fact that an agent ought to subscribe to it.

Now consider the *prescriptive sense* of a rule being in force: a rule is in force iff it is a rule that *has to* be subscribed by the agent. In this prescriptive sense, there is an *obligation* for the agent to subscribe to this rule. But if it is in this sense that a rule is in force, Whiting is clearly *begging the question* (Miller, 2010). The conclusion of this argument depends on the premise that (R) is a rule in force. But if the sense in which a rule is in force is that the agent has the obligation to act in accordance with the rule, then Whiting assumes what it intends to prove, i.e., that (R) has prescriptive consequences. Thus, Whiting's argument is invalid. Its conclusion does not follow from the premise that (R) is in force, either in the prescriptive or descriptive sense of this notion. It fails to prove that (DR) is not a possible interpretation of (R).

<sup>7</sup> For instance, it does not follow from the fact that apartheid laws were accepted by South African authorities that citizens should accept it.



Let us assume that (R) is in force and that (DR) is the appropriate interpretation of (R). In this case, which *function* can the specification of correctness conditions have, since this specification does not have any prescriptive implication? The function of this specification is to *classify* or *distinguish* the actions of the agent into correct or incorrect based on the standard for the security of an action (Glüer & Pagin, 1999). That is, the specification of correctness conditions is to classify the agent's actions as *secure* or *insecure*. Since a correct action is an action in accordance with (R), and (R) is a rule of security because it adopts a specific security pattern, it follows that a correct action is an action in accordance with this security pattern. In (R) the *notion of correctness* is equivalent to the *notion of security* – it is correct for a child to play in the park iff it is safe for it to play there. Thus, (R) is a non-prescriptive rule because there the function of the specification of correctness conditions is to *classify* the actions as secure and insecure, i.e., to describe the conditions under which it is safe for a child to play in the park. This is the *descriptive function* of a rule when it specifies correctness conditions. Note that the non-prescriptive rule is *true* when its *classification* of actions as correct and incorrect, based on a given *standard*, is *true*. Consider this variation of (R\*):

(R\*\*) *It is correct for a child to play in the park iff the child has eaten cornflakes for breakfast on a Tuesday sometimes in the past year.*

Assuming that (R\*\*) is in force in the descriptive sense and that it is interpreted in a descriptive way, what is the descriptive function of its specification of correctness conditions? If (R\*\*) has the function of specifying safety conditions for an action, (R\*\*) would clearly be a false rule, since there is no connection between what a child has eaten for breakfast on a Tuesday sometimes in the past year, and the fact that it is safe for a child to play in the park. But it is possible that this this specification of correctness conditions in (R\*\*) has *another* classification function. For instance, if (R\*\*)’s correctness conditions are conditions of honesty – it is not correct for a child to play in the park if this child has jumped the line – (R\*\*) would be false.

The correctness conditions in a non-prescriptive rule like (DR) are *replacements* for certain conditions that an action must satisfy to be in accordance with the standard adopted by the rule – let us call it “x conditions”. In (DR), these x conditions are safety conditions. But apparently we can’t imagine any x conditions that turn (R\*\*) into a true rule. We can’t conceive any descriptive function that is being performed by (R\*\*)’s correctness conditions in such a way that (R\*\*) is a true rule. But assuming that it is possible, (R\*\*) would be a true rule iff the sentence resulting from the replacement of its correctness conditions by its x conditions is a true sentence. That is, iff the resulting description of this replacement is a true description. (R) is a true rule because if we replace “correct” by “safe”, the resulting sentence “it is safe for a child to play in the park iff the child’s height isn’t inferior to one metre” is true. In a descriptive interpretation of (R), the function of its correctness conditions is the classification of the actions as secure or insecure. For any given rule, it is required to specify which x conditions are replaced by its correctness conditions to assess its truth value; to know if a given rule is true, one should know which standard is adopted by it.

Descriptive functions contrast with *prescriptive functions*. The latter determine that an agent *ought* to (or *may*) act correctly. To the extent that a rule specifies *correctness conditions* for an action, the rule performs a *descriptive function*; to the extent that a rule *prescribes* something to the agent, this rule performs a *prescriptive function*. Notice that, to avoid ambiguity, I restrict my use of the notion of correctness to its descriptive sense (i.e., the correctness of an action consists in being in accordance with the rule). So, correctness conditions don’t perform the prescriptive function, since, in this use, correctness conditions are merely descriptive. However, in a prescriptive use of this notion, the prescriptive function would be performed by the correctness conditions for an action. The reason is that, in this case, the status of the correctness of an action would have not only a descriptive function, but *also* a prescriptive function: “correctness” would be a replacement of “ought” or “may”.

The rule is a sentence that expresses a standard of correctness for an action and performs a descriptive function when this standard is expressed. This function consists in an assertion of a classification of actions into two *basic categories* (Glüer & Wikforss, 2009, p. 36), *correct* and *incorrect actions*, through the adopted standard. In case of a *non-prescriptive rule*, the descriptive function is the *only* function performed. In case of (R), the standard of classification is the *safety standard* which classifies the child's actions into secure or insecure. Here the only function being performed is the descriptive one in which the rule simply asserts that the correctness conditions are the safety conditions.

By contrast, in case of a *prescriptive rule*, the rule performs a descriptive function and *also* a prescriptive function. In a prescriptive interpretation of (R), the rule asserts that the correctness conditions of an action are its safety conditions and *also prescribes* that the agent ought to (or may) act in a correct way. So, this rule is prescriptive since performs a prescriptive function. Evidently, it is a necessary condition for a rule to perform a prescriptive function that it also performs a descriptive function, inasmuch as a rule can only prescribe that an agent ought to (or may) act in a correct manner if it *classifies* the agent's actions as correct and incorrect. In short, for any given rule, it is a descriptive rule if it *uniquely performs* a descriptive function, and it is a prescriptive rule if it *also performs* a prescriptive function.

(DR) is a typical example of the descriptive function performed by a non-prescriptive rule. But note that one may derive prescriptive consequences from (DR), like "a child is allowed to play in the park  $\leftrightarrow$  the child's height isn't inferior to one metre". In order to do so, a further premise is required, like "a child is allowed to play in the park iff it is safe for the child to play in the park". The necessity of this further premise shows precisely that (DR) is not a prescriptive rule, and that it is impossible to *directly* derive prescriptive consequences from (DR).

Finally, let us consider another argument proposed by Whiting (2009, pp. 541-542) against the descriptive interpretation of (R). He maintains that there is no circumstance in which (DR) is the appropriate interpretation of (R), because it is *impossible* to derive from (DR) and the fact that Peter is one metre tall the sentence "it is correct for Peter to play in the park". What can be derived is only the sentence "it is safe for Peter to play in the park". But since "it is safe for Peter to play in the park" does not imply "it is correct for Peter to play in the park", Whiting concludes that there is *no circumstance* in which the appropriate interpretation of (R) is the descriptive one. Rather, the only possible interpretation of (R) is the prescriptive one.

The problem with Whiting's argument is that those who maintain that (DR) is a possible interpretation of (R) are precisely maintaining that in a circumstance in which the appropriate interpretation of (R) is (DR), the *correctness conditions* for an action are the *safety conditions*. If (R) is in force, a correct action is the one which is in accordance with (R), but for an action to be in accordance with (R) is for it to be a *safe action*. In the descriptive interpretation of (R), the function of the specification of correctness conditions for an action is merely to classify the actions into those which are in accordance with the security standard adopted by (R) and those which are not. This is the reason that it is possible to derive "it is correct for Peter to play in the park" from "it is safe for Peter to play in the park". Thus, Whiting's argument fails to show that it is impossible for (DR) to be the appropriate interpretation of (R) in some circumstance.

In light of the functions that a rule can perform, let us assess the cases of a rule *prescriptively* and *descriptively in force*. First, how can a prescriptive or non-prescriptive rule be *descriptively in force*? On the one hand, a *non-prescriptive rule* is *descriptively in force* when the relevant community's people or authorities accept the standard of correctness adopted by the rule, although the rule does not prescribe the agent to act in accordance with this standard. On the other hand, a *prescriptive rule* is *descriptively in force* when the relevant community's people or authorities accept that there is a prescription that the agent ought to (or may) act in accordance with the standard of correctness adopted by the rule.

Second, how can a prescriptive or non-prescriptive rule be *prescriptively in force*? A rule is *prescriptively in force* when there is an obligation for the agent to follow the standard of correctness adopted by

the rule. On the one hand, a *prescriptive rule* is prescriptively in force when the agent should follow the standard of correctness adopted by the rule, with the condition that there is no gap between the fact that the rule is in force and the fact that the agent should follow it. On the other hand, just as it happens in the previous case, a *non-prescriptive rule* is prescriptively in force when there is an obligation for the agent to follow its standard of correctness.<sup>8</sup>

The debate on the appropriate interpretation of (R) is just an instance of the problem about the nature of prescriptive and non-prescriptive rules. The fundamental distinction between these two kinds of rules is the prescriptive function that is uniquely performed by prescriptive rules. However, it is not clear whether the prescriptive function is performed by (R). It is in virtue of such an ambiguity that there are two possible interpretations of (R). The conclusion is that it is not possible to determine which interpretation is the right one *prior* to an investigation of the circumstances under which (R) is *concretely* in force. That is, it is not possible to determine through a *conceptual investigation* whether (DR) or (PR) is the adequate interpretation of (R).

In light of the conclusion that the specification of correctness conditions by a rule can perform a prescriptive and a descriptive function, we are finally able to assess the problem whether *semantic rules* are prescriptive or non-prescriptive.

## 7 Against semantic prescriptivism

The goal of this section is to assess the plausibility of the simple argument in light of preceding considerations on the correctness conditions of a given rule. For the simple argument to demonstrate semantic prescriptivism, the very sense of the *semantic correctness* of an action needs to be *prescriptive*. The reason is that the demonstration of semantic prescriptivism depends on the premise that it is a *conceptual truth* that the notion of semantic correctness is prescriptive. Here I will argue that the simple argument is flawed, since the notion of semantic correctness is descriptive. So, meaning is not intrinsically prescriptive.

I have argued that there are two senses of the notion of correctness of an action, a descriptive and a prescriptive one. Only the latter performs a prescriptive function. Hence, the debate over semantic prescriptivism consists on whether or not the notion of semantic correctness performs the *prescriptive function*. In what follows, I argue that it doesn't perform this function.

Semantic prescriptivism comes in two versions, a *radical* and a *moderate* one. According to *radical prescriptivism*, defended by Boghossian (1989), there are *semantic obligations* to correctly use linguistic expressions. For a speaker S, a meaning F, an expression w, and f being the property in virtue of which w applies:

$$(RP) w \text{ means } F \text{ for } S \rightarrow \forall x(S \text{ ought to (apply } w \text{ to } x) \leftrightarrow x \text{ is } f).$$

But (RP) is untenable because it has the consequence that

$$w \text{ means } F \text{ for } S \rightarrow \forall x(x \text{ is } f \rightarrow S \text{ ought to (apply } w \text{ to } x)).$$

The problem, of course, is that it is impossible for S to apply w to every x *that is f* (Hattiangadi, 2007, p. 180). If S means *green* by "green", in order to fulfil this obligation, S has to apply "green" to every

<sup>8</sup> Note that to *follow* a prescriptive or non-prescriptive rule consists in *following* the *correctness standard* adopted by the rule. For the agent to follow (R) – either in its prescriptive version, (PR), or in its descriptive version, (DR) – is to follow the correctness standard adopted by both (PR) and (DR).

green object. But this is absurd. Moreover, since *ought implies can*, (RP) is untenable: no one can apply *w* to every *x* that is *f*. (RP) is just too demanding. So, Whiting proposed a weaker version of (RP) to avoid this problem (2007, p. 137):

(RP\*) *w* means *F* for *S*  $\rightarrow \forall x(S \text{ ought to (apply } w \text{ to } x) \rightarrow x \text{ is } f)$ .

But as Hattiangadi convincingly argues, (RP\*) does not *imply anything* regarding what *S* ought (or ought not) to do (2009, p. 58). On the one hand, if *x* is *f*, nothing follows regarding what *S* ought (or ought not) to do. On the other hand, if *x* is not *f*, it follows that *it is not the case* that *S* ought to apply *w* to *x*. That is, if *x* is not *f*, *there is no obligation* for *S* to apply *w* to *x*, which is distinct from *S* having the *obligation not* to apply *w* to *x*. Therefore, (RP\*) is not a viable option for the radical prescriptivist either. Radical prescriptivism is just flawed.

In light of these problems, the later Whiting (2009)<sup>9</sup> and Peregrin (2012) proposed *moderate prescriptivism* as the viable version of semantic prescriptivism:

(MP) *w* means *F* for *S*  $\rightarrow \forall x(S \text{ ought not to (apply } w \text{ to } x) \leftrightarrow x \text{ is not } f)$ .

Or, equivalently,

*w* means *F* for *S*  $\rightarrow \forall x(S \text{ may (apply } w \text{ to } x) \leftrightarrow x \text{ is } f)$ .

In contrast with radical prescriptivism, moderate prescriptivism establishes no *semantic obligation*, only the *semantic prohibition* to incorrectly use linguistic expressions (or the *semantic permission* to correctly use them). As a result, the problems that undermine radical prescriptivism don't touch moderate prescriptivism.

Moderate prescriptivism may at first sight appear the plausible version of semantic prescriptivism. So, in order to show that semantic prescriptivism is flawed – and given that we have already shown that its radical version is flawed – it remains to be shown that its moderate version is also flawed. In what follows, I argue that there is no semantic prohibition, and, so, that moderate prescriptivism is flawed.<sup>10</sup>

Let us assume that “horse” means *horse* for me. It follows that there is a semantic rule in force according to which it is correct to apply “horse” to an object iff it is a horse. Now suppose that I have applied “horse” to a non-horse. Would I have made a *mistake*? Well, if I actually had an *intention* to correctly apply my linguistic expressions, then I have made a mistake because this intention is fulfilled iff I apply “horse” to a horse. But this is a mistake only if I actually had the intention to correctly apply “horse”; otherwise, no mistake was made. Maybe I have applied “horse” to a non-horse because I had the intention to lie, to be ironical, sarcastic or funny, to tell a joke or to fool somebody (Boghossian, 2005, pp. 207-209). It is even possible that I have misapplied “horse” simply because I do have the intention to incorrectly apply this expression. In all of these cases, I have incorrectly applied “horse” to *fulfil some intention*. Likewise, in order to fulfil my intention to *correctly apply* my expressions, I should correctly apply “horse”. This being the case, do my intentions provide me with a *proper criterion* to determine whether my applications of “horse” are right or wrong?

Not at all. There are several circumstances in which it is a mistake for an agent to act in some way even if they do have the intention to act so. For instance, it is *morally* wrong for an agent to kill someone even if the agent had the intention to do so. Nevertheless, the debate on semantic prescriptivism does not concern morality, but *semantics*. The semantic prescriptivist has to present some case in which it is

<sup>9</sup> The later Whiting changed his mind, rejected (RP\*), and became a moderate prescriptivist (2009, pp. 544-545).

<sup>10</sup> The later Paul Boghossian (2005) changed his position and rejected semantic prescriptivism. The argument that follows against semantic prescriptivism is partly inspired by his argumentation.

a *semantic mistake* to misapply an expression, even if the speaker has an intention which can only be fulfilled through an incorrect application of this expression. But in which circumstance would this happen? Is it possible to conceive such a circumstance? The burden lies on the semantic prescriptivist to mention some circumstance in which it happens in order to support semantic prescriptivism. After all, the prescriptivist is the one who maintains that there are semantic prescriptions.

If meaning is intrinsically prescriptive, the speaker is failing to *fulfil a prescription* in force and, so, making a mistake when the speaker fulfils an intention which requires the misapplication of an expression in order to be fulfilled (e.g., to lie, tell some jokes or be sarcastic). But how could there be a *semantic prescription* in force which prohibits the speaker to misapply meaningful expressions? It is a corollary of semantic prescriptivism that there is a rule in force which prohibits assertions to aim at falsehood, i.e., the speaker to deliberately assert false sentences. How is it possible that, *by itself*, the attribution of a meaning to an expression puts into force a rule which forbids actions that depend on the assertion of false sentences like lying and misleading? Likewise, how could there be semantic prohibitions to incorrectly use an expression in situations where the truth of assertions and the correct use of meaningful expressions are *not even relevant*, such as it happens in some jokes?

The supposed prescription to tell the truth is of moral (or religious) provenance and, as such, depends on non-semantic elements. Furthermore, it is plausible that there are situations in which the speaker should not speak the truth, incorrectly applying meaningful expressions. For instance, suppose that the speaker's mother will die if the speaker tells the truth, about her identity, to the murderer. It is plausible that in such situations there is a prescription for the speaker to lie.

These are insuperable difficulties for semantic prescriptivism. Its consequences are very implausible and there is a high price to be paid by those who defend it – to explain how could there be semantic prohibitions. On the one hand, it seems that the prohibition for a speaker to incorrectly apply their linguistic expressions doesn't have semantic provenance, but religious or moral. On the other hand, it seems that there is no circumstance in which it is a semantic mistake to incorrectly apply a linguistic expression, even if the speaker has an intention that can only be fulfilled through an incorrect application of this expression. So, there are strong reasons to conclude that the notion of semantic correctness does not perform the prescriptive function, only the *descriptive function*. The result is that semantic rules are *not prescriptive*. It is not always the case that the correct use of a meaningful expression is the one that should be made (Wikforss, 2001). If one has the intention to lie or be ironical, it is the incorrect use of the expression that should be made.

In light of these problems, Whiting proposes that semantic rules are not categorical, but *prima facie* rules (2007, pp. 137-9; 2009, pp. 546-550; see also Peregrin, 2012). He agrees that there are circumstances in which the speaker ought to misapply the linguistic expressions, but it does not follow from this that the simple argument is flawed or that semantic prescriptivism is untenable. As previously shown, *prima facie* rules are the ones that can be *overridden* by other rules. Semantic rules are *prima facie* because they can be overridden by hierarchically *more fundamental* rules, such as the ones of moral provenance. Thus, in the aforementioned murder situation, the speaker ought to incorrectly use the expression, as the obligation to always save the mother's life is hierarchically more fundamental than the semantic prescription to correctly use the expression. The meaning of an expression provides the speaker with a reason to correctly apply it, but if there are stronger reasons to misapply the expression, it is the speaker's obligation to do so. Taking into account only what the expression means, misapplying the expression is incorrect. However, all-things-considered, i.e., taking into account all salient factors, it is correct. In sum, the prescriptivist is not committed to the claim that semantic prescriptions are *categorical*; it is open to claim that semantic prescriptions are *prima facie*.

The problem with Whiting's thesis that semantic prescriptions are *prima facie* is that genuine *prima facie* rules can only be overridden by other hierarchically more fundamental rules, they cannot be overridden by the mere *desire or intention* of the agent to override it (Hattiangadi, 2007, pp. 189-190). However,



semantic prescriptions can be overridden by the *mere intention* of the speaker to incorrectly use linguistic expressions, which implies that semantic prescriptions cannot be *prima facie*. Hence, the anti-prescriptivist conclusion that semantic rules are not prescriptive at all, they cannot be either categorical or *prima facie*.

Now we finally reach what I take to be the *fundamental problem* about the supposed *prima facie* character of semantic prescriptions. Does the speaker's intention to incorrectly use an expression has the capacity, *by itself*, to *override* the semantic prescription that specifies the correct use of the expression?

It is a platitude that sometimes we use our expressions to assert something or to speak the truth. There are situations in which it is indifferent whether we speak the truth or correctly use our expressions. In such circumstances, neither the speaker nor the interlocutor is concerned with the truth of the uttered sentences or with the correct use of expressions. So, there will be no punishment, sanction or criticism if the uttered sentence is false. In light of all this, how could there be a prescription in force that the speaker is forbidden to incorrectly use the expressions? The high price to be paid for holding that there are semantic prohibitions is to commit oneself to the unacceptable thesis that the speaker is forbidden to lie, tell some jokes, be ironical or sarcastic.

Faced with this undesirable consequence, the prescriptivist could reply that although in these circumstances there is a semantic prohibition in force, there is also a more fundamental rule in force that overrides this prohibition. But which hierarchically more fundamental rule could it be? Suppose that this is the prescription that if the speaker intends to be ironical (or sarcastic, etc.), then there is a permission to misapply the expression. But the validity of this rule is contingent upon the speaker's intention. The mere speaker's intention, by itself, overrides the semantic prescription. So, the prescriptivist could argue that in this situation there is a reason to override the semantic prohibition to incorrectly use the expression, namely, the aimed irony. But notice that from the acceptance that the semantic prescription is overridden in this situation, it follows that the semantic prescription is *even less fundamental* in the hierarchy of prescriptions.

The reason behind the prescriptivist move to claim that semantic prescriptions are *prima facie* is to deal with examples where there is no doubt that the speaker ought to incorrectly use an expression, e.g., to save a human life. But now we find some situations where semantic prohibitions are overridden by rules that are much less fundamental than the one to act in order to save a human life: if one intends to be ironical, then one is allowed to misapply an expression; if one intends to be sarcastic, then one is also allowed, etc. The prescriptivist could now reply that if there is no reason that justifies the incorrect use of an expression, then the semantic prescription is not overridden and, so, the speaker is forbidden to misapply the expression. For instance, if the speaker simply has the intention to incorrectly use an expression, and there is no reason to justify this use, then the speaker is forbidden to incorrectly use it, even if there is an intention to act in this way.

Now it is easy to see that as long as we advance in this investigation, it becomes more and more *restrictive* the set of situations in which the semantic prohibition would still *not be overridden* by other prescriptions. What happens is that as soon as the prescriptivist concedes that semantic prescriptions are *prima facie* rules, they are committed to recognise that the semantic prohibition supposed to be in force can be overridden by rules that are *less and less* fundamental. But what is the point of still claiming that semantic prescriptions are *prima facie* rules, if it is progressively verified that they can be overridden by rules less and less fundamental? Down to which hierarchical level should one accept that the semantic prescription is in force? Could one accept that the semantic prescription is in force even if it is on the less fundamental level?

Consider a case in which the semantic prescription cannot be overridden by any other prescription. Suppose that John, alone in his room, means *green* by "green" and that he has the intention to apply "green" to a white jacket, even if he is plainly aware that the jacket is not green. There is no further reason for this application, he just wants to apply "green" in this way. So, the prescriptivist would claim that John is forbidden to apply "green" to this jacket and that he violates a semantic prohibition when he does that. But what difference could it make whether or not John applies "green" to this jacket? It makes no differ-

ence to anyone whether John correctly or incorrectly applies “green”. People will not be affected by this semantic misapplication, they will not even be aware of this fact. Could it make any difference to John? Not at all. John does not believe in what he is asserting and, so, he does not have a false belief. The fact that John misapplies “green” does not have any practical consequence either, after all no one would criticize or punish John for this misapplication. No one could even suspect of future applications of “green” by John, since no one has witnessed this misapplication. So, how could this semantic prescription be in force?

A prescription can only be in force if there is, or at least there would be, some *minimal consequence* or *difference* that follows from its violation. That is, there is a *possible consequence* that follows from the violation of the relevant prescription. If there is no difference implied by the violation of the prescription, what justifies that it is in force? Nothing. For instance, the violation of moral prescriptions or laws of the state clearly makes some difference or comes with possible consequences. But John’s incorrect application of “green” results in nothing, it makes no difference. Even if a non-overridden prescription is on the less fundamental hierarchical level, its violation should imply some minimal consequence. In the case of John, the supposed semantic prescription is not overridden, but its violation comes with no consequence and makes no difference, neither to other people, nor to John. But if its violation doesn’t imply any consequence or make any difference, how can this prescription be in force? The conclusion is that there is no semantic prescription in force for the speaker. Semantic rules are not prescriptive.

Finally, there is a *methodological argument* for semantic anti-prescriptivism. Even if there were *equally strong* reasons for and against the thesis that there are semantic prescriptions for the use of meaningful expressions – which definitely is not the case – the balance would lean towards the anti-prescriptivist side. The reason behind it is the *principle of parsimony* as applied to the postulation of prescriptive rules: prescriptions must not be *multiplied beyond necessity*. Semantic prescriptivism posits the existence of a *distinctive kind* of prescription, namely, semantic prescription. However, if semantic prescriptivism and anti-prescriptivism have equal explanatory powers concerning the nature of semantic rules, then the most *simple* or *parsimonious* position is preferable. In sum, it follows from *prescriptive parsimony* that semantic anti-prescriptivism is preferable, since it does not posit semantic prescriptions.

## 8 Conclusion

In this paper, I showed that the simple argument unjustifiably assumes that the notion of semantic correctness is prescriptive. Correctness conditions have a *descriptive* and a *prescriptive sense*, and there are strong reasons to conclude that the notion of semantic correctness is descriptive. There are insuperable difficulties that undermine the thesis that the notion of semantic correctness is prescriptive – both if semantic rules are treated as categorical or *prima facie* rules. The simple argument is flawed: it is not a conceptual truth that the notion of semantic correctness is prescriptive. Thus, semantic rules are descriptive, not prescriptive.

The lesson to be taken is that the semantic prescriptivist attack on semantic naturalism is ultimately flawed. Maybe there is an *unbridgeable gap* between natural and semantic facts, but not because the latter are *prescriptive facts*. Still, there are several other objections to semantic naturalism that take as their starting point the platitude that meaningful linguistic expressions have semantic correctness. Perhaps the most influential objections to semantic naturalism, in the context of Kripke’s interpretation of Wittgenstein’s rule-following considerations, are the *objections of finitude* and *error* (1982, pp. 26-32). So, maybe meaning cannot be naturalised in virtue of further threats, but the semantic prescriptivist attack is simply not one of them.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> For an overview of objections to semantic naturalism, see Hattiangadi, 2007, Papineau, 2008, Boghossian, 2015, Miller & Sultanesco, 2022.

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