From Normative Pragmatics to a Relevance-Theoretic Pragmatic Framework

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Abstract: *The paper addresses the transition from the distinction between 'what is said' and what is implicated, viewed within Grice's philosophically based analysis, to the distinction between explicature and implicature advanced by the relevance theory within a cognitive theoretical framework. One of the key differences between Grice's model and relevance theorists' model of analysis lies in the distinction between explicatures and implicatures. The explicature/implicature distinction is one manifestation of the distinction between the explicit content of an utterance and its implicit meaning. On a relevance-based account, the Gricean class of conversational implicatures has become considerably reduced and Grice's generalized conversational implicatures are treated as part of what is explicitly communicated, that is, as explicatures.*

Keywords: *implicature; pragmatics; meaning; convention; relevance; explicature*

1. Semantic content and implicature

In his 'logic of conversation', Paul Grice (1967/89) drew a distinction between the semantic content of an uttered sentence (i.e. what is said) and speaker's thoughts or ideas that are communicated by uttering the sentence. He coined the term implicature to refer to all those extra or implicit meanings. In his view, implicatures are intended propositional components of the utterance's global significance but are not the basis on which the utterance is judged as true or false.

Implicatures can arise in two ways: via presumptions concerning rational communicative behaviour or via certain linguistic conventions. The former are called **conversational implicatures** and are illustrated in (1). The latter are called **conventional implicatures** and the implicature of (2) is an example of this type.

(1) That silk looks green to me.
Conversational Implicature: There is some doubt about whether the silk is green or not.

(2) Mary is a housewife but she is very intelligent.

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Conventional implicature: There is a contrast of some sort between being a housewife and being very intelligent. In this case, the conventional implicature is attached by convention to the conjunction *but*.

With (1), the line of reasoning is that if the speaker was completely certain of the greenness of the silk he should have made the more informative statement that the silk is green; since he did not and since speakers are expected to be as informative as they can relevantly be, he must be implicating that there is some doubt about the greenness of the silk. Thus this conversational implicature follows from one of the several maxims of conversation that Grice sets out as underlying rational or logical principles for efficient and efficient and effective use of language in conversation (Grice 1975, 1989).

With (2), the implicature does not depend on any conversational presumptions, it is not generated by any of these maxims, nor does it depend on any context. On the contrary, it occurs across all contexts because it is generated on the basis of the conventional linguistic meaning of the connective *but*. The implicature in (2) is called conventional[1].

When these conversational maxims set out by Grice are not adhered to on a superficial level, hearers still assume that they are adhered to at some deeper level. The inferences that arise in order to preserve the assumption of cooperation and to bridge what is said to what is meant are called by Grice **conversational implicature.**

There are two ways in which **conversational implicatures** can be created: speakers may either abide by the maxims, in which case they generate what Levinson (1983) calls **standard implicature**, or they may flout one or several maxims, giving thus rise to floutings or exploitations.

Grice further distinguished between **generalized** and **particularized conversational implicatures. Generalized conversational implicatures** arise irrespective of the context in which they occur. In other words, they do not depend on particular features of the context and if any of those features

[1] Grice’s concept of conventional implicatures is the most controversial part of his theory of conversation. The category of conventional implicatures blurs the distinction between what is said, usually conceived as determined by the semantic conventions of language, and what is implicated, usually thought of as a matter of inference as to a speaker’s intentions in saying what he or she does. Conventional sentence meaning contributes crucially to what is said, which is considered essentially different from implicatures; but now we have the result that some elements of conventional meaning do not contribute to what is said but to implicatures (albeit conventional) (Bach 1999). Thus, for some expressions, it places the study of the conventional meaning within the scope of pragmatics (the study of intended meaning), rather than semantics (the study of conventional meaning).

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changes this does not trigger a change in the inferred meaning. The utterances in (3) illustrate generalized conversational implicatures.
(3)
a. I walked into a house.
Conversational implicature: *The house is not mine*.

b. Bill has got some of Chomsky's papers.
Conversational implicature: *Bill hasn't got all of Chomsky's papers*.

c. Fred thinks there is a meeting tonight.
Conversational implicature: Fred doesn't know for sure that there is a meeting tonight.

d. Mary has 2 children.
Conversational implicature: *Mary has no more than 2 children*.

The utterances in (3) always give rise to the same implicature, no matter what the context.

Particularized conversational implicatures, on the other hand, are derived not from the utterance alone, but from the utterance in context. Consider the excerpt in (4):
(4)
A: What on earth has happened to the roast beef?
B: The dog is looking very happy?
Conversational implicature: *Perhaps the dog has eaten the roast beef*

The state of looking very happy in reference to the dog would ordinarily not convey anything about the roast beef. So the implicature in this case depends on the context as well as the utterance itself. In this particular context the utterance *The dog is looking very happy* may generate the implicature *Perhaps the dog has eaten the roast beef*.

Generalized conversational implicatures are inferred irrespective of the context of utterance and result from the speaker's abiding by maxims of Quantity and Manner. Particularized conversational implicatures are inferred in relation to a particular context and result from the existence of the Maxim of Relation. In both cases, however, these inferences arise from the assumption that the speaker is observing the maxims of conversation and the CP. Thus both generalized and particularized conversational implicatures can be regarded as instances of standard implicature.

Conversational implicatures can also be derived on the basis of the speaker's intentionally or unconsciously flouting or exploiting a maxim (i.e.

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on the speaker’s not abiding by the maxim) as in the following examples where the speaker flouts the maxim of quantity:
(5)
a. If he does it he does it.
Conversational implicature: *It’s no concern of ours*.

b. War is War.
Conversational implicature: *Terrible things may happen*.

Floutings or exploitations of the maxim of quality give rise to irony and metaphor.
Grice proposes a definition of implicature which can be stated as follows:
(6)
S saying that p conventionally implicates q iff:
(i) S is presumed to be observing the maxims, or at least (in the case of floutings) the co-operative principle

(ii) in order to maintain this assumption it must be supposed that S thinks that q

(iii) S thinks that both S and the addressee H mutually know that H can worked out that to preserve the assumption in (i), q is in fact required

Moreover, Grice argues that, for the addressee H to be able to calculate the implicature q, H must know, or believe that he knows the facts in (7):
(7)
(i) the conventional content of the sentence (P) uttered
(ii) the co-operative principle and its maxims
(iii) the context of P (e.g. its relevance)
(iv) certain bits of background information (e.g. P is blatantly false)
(v) that (i) – (v) are mutual knowledge shared by speaker and addressee

From all this a general pattern of working out an implicature can be adduced:
(8)
(i) S has said that p

(ii) there’s no reason to think S is not observing the maxims, or at least the co-operative principle

(iii) in order for S to say that p and be indeed observing the maxims or the co-operative principle, S must think that q

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1.1. Properties of conversational implicatures

Grice isolates the following five characteristic properties of conversational implicatures:

1. They are **cancellable** or **defeasible**

The notion of defeasibility is crucial in pragmatics since it is exhibited by various kinds of inferences. An inference is defeasible if it is possible to cancel it by adding some additional premises the original ones.

> a putative conversational implicature that p is explicitly cancelable if, to the form of words the utterance of which putatively implicates that p, it is admissible to add but not p, or I do not mean to imply that p, and it is contextually cancelable if one can find situations in which the utterance of the form of words would simply not carry the implicature
>
> (Grice 1989:44)

Consider the example (9) and its straightforward implicature (10) which results from the Maxim of Quantity:

(9) Mary has three cats.
(10) Mary has only three cats and no more.

Notice that (9) entails (11):
(11)
Mary has two cats.

Implicatures can be cancelled by mention in an *if* clause:
(12)
Mary has three cats, if not more.

(12) no longer carries the implicature in (10). Entailments, being non-defeasible, cannot be suspended in a similar way:
(13)
Mary has three cats, if not two

Moreover, implicatures are overtly and directly deniable without any sense of contradiction:

(14) Mary has three cats, in fact five
(15) Mary has three cats and maybe more

2. They are **non-detachable**

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The second important property of implicatures is that (with the exception of those arising from maxim of Manner as they are specifically linked to the form of the utterance) they are non-detachable. By this Grice means that the implicature is attached to the semantic content of what is said, not to the linguistic form, and therefore the implicatures can be detached from an utterance simply by changing the words of the utterance for synonyms.

> it will not be possible to find another way of saying the same thing, which simply lacks the implicature in question, except where some special feature of the substituted version is itself relevant to the determination of an implicature (in virtue of one of the maxims of manner)
>
> (Grice 1989:39)

As an illustration of this property, consider the ironic interpretation (17) of (16):

(16) John’s a genius.
(17) John’s an idiot.

The same implicit meaning can be conveyed by any of the sentences in (18) in a context in which it is mutually known that (18) is false:
(18)
a. John’s a mental prodigy.
b. John’s an exceptionally clever guy.
c. John’s an enormous intellect

3. They are **calculable**
As Grice (1989:31) argues, “the presence of a conversational implicature must be capable of being worked out; for even if it can in fact be intuitively grasped, unless the intuition is replaceable by an argument, the implicature (if present at all) will not count as a conversational implicature”.

For any implicature it is possible to construct an argument of the type of in (8) showing how from the literal meaning or the sense of the utterance, on the one hand, and the co-operative principle and the maxims, on the other, it follows that an addressee will make the inference in question to preserve the assumption of co-operation.

4. They are **non-conventional**
They are not part of the conventional meaning of linguistic expressions. A linguistic expression conveying a single meaning can give rise to different conversational implicatures in different contexts. Since one has to know the literal meaning or sense of a sentence before one can calculate its implicature

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in a context, the implicature cannot be part of that meaning. Moreover, it can be shown that an utterance can be true while its implicature can be false, and vice versa, as in:
(19)
Herb hit Sally.

which by Quantity would implicate
(20)
Herb didn’t kill Sally by hitting her.

(since if Herb killed Sally, the speaker would, in saying just (19) be withholding information in a non-cooperative way); but a speaker might say (19), attempting to mislead, in a situation in which (19) is true, but (20) is false.

5. They are **context-dependent**
A linguistic expression conveying a single meaning can give rise to different implicatures on different occasions when various aspects of the context are changed. Moreover, on any one occasion the set of associated implicatures may not be exactly determinable. An example such as the one given in (21):
(21) John’s a machine.
could convey that John is cold, efficient, or never stops working, or has little in the way of grey matter. Thus implicatures can evince certain indeterminacy in at least some cases, incompatible with the stable senses usually assumed in semantic theories.

In Grice’s conception of ‘what is said’ one can detect a notion of semantic content quite similar to that of Frege and Russell and which closely tied to the context-free semantics of the words in the uttered sentence with only a very minimal context-dependent component, restricted to choosing between the senses of ambiguous words and supplying reference for indexicals (Grice 1975: 44). However, Grice’s ‘what is said’ has another important property that distinguishes it from truth-conditional sentence meaning. Grice’s interest in language in use, in actions performed by speaking required that, for him, ‘what is said’ by an utterance must be a component of speaker meaning[2]. In other words, ‘what is said’ is overtly endorsed by the speaker. Hence what is said and what is implicated together constitute what the speaker meant by his utterance (for discussion, also see Recanati 2004).

2. From ‘what is said’ to explicature

Over the past twenty years, *relevance theory* has become a key area of study within semantics and pragmatics. Relevance theory is an approach to

[2] *Speaker meaning* is also referred to as meaning-intended, or m-intended.

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implicature developed by Sperber and Wilson (1986, 1995) as part of a broader attempt to shift pragmatics into a cognitive framework. In relation to implicature, as conceived by Grice (1975), relevance theory can be viewed as a reductionist theoretical approach for two reasons. Firstly, it reduces all pragmatic principles that have been proposed to underlie conversational implicature to a single ‘Principle of Relevance’. Secondly, it reduces all the different species of meaning in the Gricean/neo-Gricean framework (such as what is said, conventional implicature, scalar implicature, generalised conversational implicature, particularised conversational implicature and so on) to two broad categories: explicature and implicature.

Relevance theory is based on the assumption that human beings are endowed with a biologically rooted ability to maximize the relevance of incoming stimuli (linguistic utterances or nonverbal behavior). Relevance is not only a characteristic property of external stimuli (e.g. utterances), but also of internal representations and thoughts, all of which may become inputs for cognitive processing. Assessing relevance is a typical mental activity of human beings, always geared to obtaining the highest reward from the stimuli which they process.

The following sentences summarize Sperber and Wilson’s relevance theory: (a) in a given context, the decoded meaning of the sentence is compatible with a number of different interpretations; (b) these interpretations are graded in terms of accessibility; (c) hearers rely on a powerful criterion when selecting the most appropriate interpretation; and (d) this criterion makes it possible to select one interpretation among the range of possible interpretations, to the extent that when a first interpretation is considered a candidate to match the intended interpretation, the hearer will stop at this point.

In what follows I will examine the basic tenets of Sperber and Wilson’s relevance theory. The central focus of the discussion is on such key concepts as ostensive-inferential communication, the dichotomy implicature-explicature, and the notion of relevance.

2.1. Ostensive-inferential communication

Sperber and Wilson take the Gricean inferential approach to communication as the starting point, but they disagree with Grice on some aspects. Grice underlined the crucial role intentions[3] play in human communication. His emphasis on the expression and recognition of intentions laid the foundations of the inferential model of communication. However, Sperber and Wilson do not embrace the complex schema of human reasoning which Grice proposed for the calculation of conversational implicatures.

[3] Intentions can be roughly defined as mental representations of a desired state of affairs.

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Sperber and Wilson argue that communication can exist without the need for a code. All that the communicator has to do in order to communicate a thought is to get the addressee to recognize his/her intention to convey it. The proponents of relevance theory view ostension and inference as two sides of the same coin. These two concepts refer to the production and interpretation of certain stimuli respectively. Unlike coding and decoding, ostension and inference are non-conventional. The addressee's attention is drawn to a given fact in order to infer the content of that which the speaker tries to communicate. In Sperber and Wilson's (1986:63) own words:

> The communicator produces a stimulus which makes it mutually manifest to communicator and audience that the communicator intends, by means of this stimulus, to make manifest or more manifest to the audience a set of assumptions.[4]

Sperber and Wilson distinguish two levels of intention: **informative** (an intention to inform the addressee of a given fact) and **communicative** (the intention to inform the addressee of that informative intention). The former entails the identification of the latter, which is typically activated by verbal ostensive communication in which it is clear to both speaker and addressee (mutually manifest in Sperber and Wilson's terminology) that the speaker has the intention to communicate the intention to inform the interlocutor of something. For ostensive communication to be efficient, the addressee has to realize that the stimulus produced by the communicator (i.e. speaker) is intentional, i.e. is directed to the addressee and it is a conscious modification of the environment to draw addressee's attention to a group of facts.

Relevance theory explains the addressee's inference of the speaker's intended meaning by resorting to a claim that is central to Grice's theory of implicature: ostensively communicated utterances generate expectations which activate the addressee's search for the speaker's intended meaning. Unlike Grice, who explained these expectations in terms of the assumptions hearers make that speakers are following the cooperative principle and its maxims, Sperber and Wilson account for these expectations in cognitive terms and propose a Cognitive Principle of Relevance, without relying the Co-operative Principle.

In Sperber and Wilson's view, Gricean maxims are required to bridge the gap between what is said and what is meant. Sperber and Wilson have shown that people are normally loose when they speak and only on very

[4] Sperber and Wilson (1986:39) define the term manifest as follows: "A fact is manifest to an individual at a given time if and only if he is capable at that time of representing it mentally and accepting its representation as true or probably true."

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specific occasions do they intend their utterances to be regarded as literally true. They propose a single explanatory framework based on general expectations of relevance that will account for all loose uses of language (metaphor, hyperbole, irony, vagueness, etc.).

2.2. The concept of relevance

According to Sperber and Wilson (1986, 1995), for a piece of information to be relevant, it must produce some effect on the addressee's cognitive environment. These effects are called contextual effects and they are said to be of three types: contextual implications, strengthening of existing assumptions and contradiction of existing assumptions.

Conceptual implications are inferences which follow from the combination of the propositional content of an utterance and its contextual assumptions. Consider the example in (22):

(22)

A: Are you coming to the rock concert?

B: I've got a meeting at half past six.

If this all the information that we have, we cannot know with any certainty what B implies by delivering the utterance in (22). We are not certain whether she will go to the rock concert or not. If (22) is processed in a context containing the assumptions in (23):

(23)

a. The rock concert starts at 7 o'clock and finishes at 8 o'clock.

b. B's meeting will last at least one hour.

From the utterance in (22) considered within context in (23), the contextual implication in (24) will follow:

(24)

B is not going to the rock concert.

Thus, (24) does not follow from the propositional content of (22) alone or from the assumptions in (23), but from the inferential combinations of both.

The example in (25) illustrates the strengthening of existing assumptions:

(25)

A: I have the impression that Paul's new girlfriend is a foreigner.

B: I guess she is, she speaks with a French accent.

In (25), A indicates that he is not totally sure of the truth of his utterance. Assuming that A's context contains the following premise:

(26)

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Someone who speaks with a French accent is a foreigner.

then B’s utterance supplies information that can serve as further evidence that supports the truth of A’s assumption.

The contradiction of existing assumptions can be illustrated by the exchange in (27):

(27)
A: I think Bill and Jane have split up.
B: Nope, they are just coming down the street kissing each other.

In (27), B supplies information that proves A’s assumption is wrong. The clash between assumptions will be solved in favour of the strongest one, since “information available from perception is usually assigned much greater strength than information based on inference” (Gutt 1991: 29).

Sperber and Wilson (1986) point out that an utterance is not relevant unless it yields some contextual effects. However, this not enough since relevance is not an absolute notion, but a relative one. The contextual effects of an utterance must be related to the effort necessary to achieve those effects. They argue that “other things being equal, an assumption with greater contextual effects is more relevant; and, other things being equal, an assumption requiring a smaller processing effort is more relevant” (Sperber and Wilson 1986: 125).

Relevance is not an intrinsic feature of utterances. It is property derived from the relationship between a given utterance and the addressee’s assumptions in a particular situation. What may be relevant for somebody at a given moment may not be relevant for somebody else or for the same person in a different situation.

The intention to communicate is based on the fact that the speaker intends to modify the hearer’s cognitive environment in some way. This is called the presumption of optimal relevance and it has been defined by Sperber and Wilson in the following terms:

Presumption of optimal relevance:

(a) The set of assumptions {*I*} which the communicator intends to make manifest to the addressee is relevant enough to make it worth the addressee’s while to process the ostensive stimulus.
(b) The ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one the communicator could have used to communicate {*I*}. (Sperber and Wilson 1986: 158)

From this, the principle of relevance is derived and formulated as follows:

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Principle of relevance:
Every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its own optimal relevance (Sperber and Wilson 1986: 158)

Thus, the principle of relevance expresses the assumption will make his utterance as relevant as possible in the circumstances in which it is produced. This does not necessarily mean that a satisfactory degree of relevance is always achieved. Some utterances do not yield any contextual effect and consequently they are not relevant.

2.3. Implicatures and explicatures

One of the key differences between Grice's model and Sperber and Wilson's model of analysis lies in the distinction between **explicatures** and **implicatures**. The explicature/implicature distinction is one manifestation of the distinction between the explicit content of an utterance and its implicit meaning. Some proponents of minimalist approaches equate the explicit/implicit distinction with semantics/pragmatics distinction or with Paul Grice's saying/implicating distinction.

The concept of explicature, which belongs to a relevance-based approach to pragmatics, has close affinities with the contextualist framework for semantics and pragmatics according to which context-sensitive pragmatic processes make a more significant contribution to the proposition explicitly communicated than merely resolving ambiguities and providing referents for indexicals. Thus, there are pragmatic processes of meaning enrichment and adjustment which are only motivated by considerations of communicative relevance. This has important implications for the concept of explicature. Firstly, explicit utterance content can include constituents which are not articulated in the linguistic form of the utterance. Secondly, certain Gricean implicatures are re-analysed as components of the explicitly communicated truth-conditional content.

In the vein of relevance theorists, Recanati (1989, 1993, 2004) proposes the Availability Principle according to which "in deciding whether a pragmatically determined aspect of utterance meaning is part of what is said, that is, in making a decision concerning what is said, we should always try to preserve our pre-theoretic intuitions on the matter" (Recanati 1989: 309–10; 1993: 248). Thus he strongly advocates for a pragmatically enriched level of communicated content, which he refers to as the 'intuitive (or enriched) what is said' or the 'intuitive truth-conditional content' of the utterance and which is distinct from Grice's minimalist semantic notion. In his view, native speaker intuitions become a kind of criterion for distinguishing explicature (enriched what is said) from implicature. The principle has implications for many cases of particularized implicatures. Consider, for instance, the case of (28):

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(28)
a. Robert broke a finger last night.
b. ROBERT BROKE A FINGER, EITHER HIS OWN OR SOMEONE ELSE'S, ON NIGHT n.
c. ROBERT BROKE HIS OWN FINGER ON NIGHT n.
d. ROBERT CAN'T PLAY IN THE MATCH TODAY

(Carston 2002: 167)

On a Gricean account, what is said by the utterance in (28a) would be as given (28b). But (28b) is not available to the conscious awareness of the speaker and hearer and therefore the Availability Principle denies that it is 'what is said'. Intuitively, the inference that the finger broken was Robert's – which Grice treated as a generalized conversational implicature – is part of what is 'said', or explicitly communicated, and is what provides the basis for the hearer's inference to the (particularized) implicature in (28d). In this case, there is strong consensus that (28c), rather than (28b), is what was said or explicitly communicated (Carston 2002: 167). On a relevance-based account, (28c) is the explicature.

The term *explicature* is used by Sperber and Wilson to cover aspects of meaning which Grice included in the term conversational implicature, namely the so-called **generalized conversational implicatures**. Sperber and Wilson's (1986/95, 182) definitions of explicature are as follows:

(I) An assumption communicated by an utterance U is explicit [hence an 'explicature'] if and only if it is a development of a logical form encoded by U. [Note: in cases of ambiguity, a surface form encodes more than one logical form, hence the use of the indefinite here, 'a logical form encoded by U'.]

(II) An assumption communicated by U which is not explicit is implicit [hence an 'implicature'].

To further illustrate this distinction, consider the example in (29):
(29)
A: How is Mary feeling after her first year at university?
B: She didn't get enough units and can't continue.

On the basis of the definitions above, it seems relatively clear that (30a) is an explicature of B's utterance and (30b) is an implicature.
(30)
a. Mary did not pass enough university course units to qualify for admission to second year study and, as a result, Mary cannot continue with university study.
b. Mary is not feeling very happy

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Sperber and Wilson propose two types of explicitly communicated information: the basic-level **explicature**, and the **higher-order explicature**. The latter also includes the speaker's attitude (*to regret that*…, *to be happy that*…, etc.) or a higher-order speech-act schema (*to be asking that*…, *to be ordering that*…, etc.**)**. Both explicatures and implicatures allow for degrees (i.e., strong and weak explicatures/implicatures), depending on the addressee's responsibility for their derivation and the amount of mental processing required.

Thus, a relevance-based approach to pragmatics rests upon the following two tenets: (i) the ostensive stimulus is relevant enough for it to be worth the addressee's effort to process it; and (ii) the ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences (Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 267 and 270). As Wilson and Sperber (2002: 257-258) correctly point out, communicators "cannot be expected to go against their own interests and preferences in producing an utterance. There may be relevant information that they are unable or unwilling to provide, and ostensive stimuli that would convey their intentions more economically, but that they are unwilling to produce, or unable to think of at the time". All this is covered by the definition of optimal relevance, which states that the ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one "that the communicator is WILLING AND ABLE to produce" (ibid., 258).

Conclusions

In the move from Grice's philosophically based distinction between 'what is said' and what is implicated to the cognitive distinction between **explicature** and **implicature** advanced by the relevance theory, the Gricean class of conversational implicatures has become considerably reduced. On a relevance-based approach to pragmatics, most, if not all, instances of generalized implicatures have turned out to be local adjustments to subparts of the decoded logical form rather than propositions derived by an inferential mechanism. Thus the treatment of generalized implicatures as constituents of the proposition which is explicitly communicated, in other words, their treatment as explicature, is supported not only intuitively, but also theoretically.

Moreover, relevance theorists have pointed out that the shift from implicature to explicature is not confined to cases of generalized implicature. Several kinds of non-literal language use, such as hyperbole, metaphor and metonymy, whose communicated (speaker-meant) content was analyzed as particularized implicature by Grice (and by neo-Gricean pragmaticians), have been re-analyzed as cases of local adjustments of encoded meaning, at the lexical or phrasal level. Thus they also contribute elements of content to the proposition directly communicated by the speaker, that is, the explicature (see Carston 2002; Wilson and Sperber 2002; Wilson and Carston 2007).

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Another respect in which a relevance-based treatment of implicature differs from the Gricean theory is that entailments can sometimes be implicated. Consider the following exchange:

(31)

X: Does John like cats?
Y: He doesn’t like any animals.
a. CATS ARE ANIMALS.
b. JOHN DOESN’T LIKE CATS.
c. DOGS ARE ANIMALS.
d. JOHN DOESN’T LIKE DOGS

On a relevance-based account, the inferences from (31a) to (31d) are (potential) implicatures which can be inferred from Y’s utterance in the context supplied by X’s question: (31a) and (c) are implicated premises, while (31b) and (31d) are implicated conclusions. (31a) and (31b) pair are strongly communicated in that X must recover them in order to understand Y’s utterance. On the other hand, (31c) and (31d) are communicated less strongly since they need not be derived. Both (31b) and (31d) are entailed by Y’s utterance and, as a result, Griceans would not treat them as implicatures but as part of what is said, or, in other words, they would treat them as part of what is explicitly communicated. In this respect, relevance theorists take a different view: since (31b) and (31d) are communicated by the utterance, they are either explicatures or implicatures, but they cannot be explicatures because the utterance Y does not encode a logical form from which they could be developed.

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