

Against Blurring the Explicit/Implicit Distinction*

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ABSTRACT

In this article it will be argued that nothing is gained by further subdividing the categories of communicated content or by allowing the explicit and the implicit to overlap in content, and so the explicit / implicit distinction can remain exhaustive and classificatory as was originally claimed in relevance theory. First, Bach's notion of *impliciture* will be analysed and rejected as a useful category, and second, it will be argued that Carston's independence criterion gives us a distribution of the information communicated by utterances that meets the predictions of the criterion of consistency with the principle of relevance. To that effect, a number of counterexamples that have been levelled against the independence criterion are reanalysed and found to fit rather than violate it.

1. Introduction

The concept of explicitness that Sperber & Wilson (1986) present in their theory is classificatory, like that of Grice, but differs from his in that the explicit in communication is seen as the result of decoding and inference, whereas for Grice the explicit could only be determined by conventional means.¹ As for the explicit / implicit distinction, it is exhaustive for both Grice² and Sperber & Wilson: the assumptions communicated by an utterance are either explicit or implicit, but for the latter the explicit is also a comparative notion, allowing assumptions to vary in their degree of explicitness according to the amount of inference they require.

The main reason Sperber & Wilson parted company with Grice when drawing the explicit/implicit distinction was an awareness that linguistic expressions are semantically underdeterminate in many respects and hence not directly truth-evaluable, something to which pragmatists were not paying much attention at the time. But if both the recovery of explicit content and the derivation of implicatures require inference, Grice could not be right in assuming that the explicit/implicit distinction ran parallel to that between coded / inferred information and the identifying criterion for implicature could not be its dependence on contextual factors.

Outside relevance theory, it has been felt that a correct characterization of linguistic communication requires further subdivisions (within the implicated, Levinson's generalised conversational implicatures (cf. Levinson (1995), within the explicit, Bach's implicatures), which have both blurred the distinction and called into question its exhaustiveness. And even within relevance theory the two categories are not always kept mutually exclusive, thus weakening the original claim that the explicit and the implicit are classificatory notions.

In this paper I want to argue first against the proliferation of levels of representation to account for utterance interpretation, by bringing under scrutiny Bach's category of implicature³. Second, against the (formal) blurring of the explicit/ implicit distinction by restoring Carston's (1988) independence criterion in the spirit in which she meant it, as a useful heuristic for the theorist given relevance theoretic assumptions about human cognition and communication. I will argue that the alleged counterexamples to her criterion must be reanalysed and their logical and pragmatic status revised.

2. Bach's *implicatures*

K. Bach has recently taken up the issue of the semantic underdetermination of sentences in a number of articles (Bach 1987, 1994a, 1994b, 1996, 1997) and conceded that not every bit of inferred information is justifiably an implicature. However, instead of arguing from the incompleteness of semantic representations to an inferentially enriched notion of what is said, as is done in relevance theory, he proposes a third category *implicature* that encompasses a) completions of the semantic representation of the sentence (other than reference assignment), b) non-literal uses of sentences in which no constituent is being used non-literally, what he calls *standardized non-literality*. Examples of (a) include cases of semantic underdetermination of sentences such as those in (1-5); examples of (b) are given in (6-11):

1. Steel isn't strong enough [for the job]
2. The princess is late [for the party]
3. Tipper is ready [to dance]
4. The king has arrived [at the palace]
5. Al has finished [speaking]
6. You are not going to die [from this cut]

7. I haven't eaten [today]
8. Everyone [in the class] is going [to the concert]
9. She has nothing [appropriate] to wear [to the party]
10. The cupboard [in this house] is bare
11. He has [exactly] three cars

According to Bach, (a) and (b) differ in that the sentences in (a) do not express complete propositions (even after disambiguation and reference assignment), whereas those in (b) do express complete propositions, but not exactly the ones that the speaker wanted to express. Understanding the first group of cases requires a process of *semantic/conceptual completion*, whereas in the second group a “pragmatically mandated” process of *lexical expansion* is invoked to go from the proposition expressed by the sentence to the proposition expressed by the speaker. We thus seem to have three levels of communicated information, what is said, the implicature and the implicatures of the utterance.

Although Bach's notion of saying differs from Grice's in crucial respects⁴, the main motivation for postulating this third category is to follow Grice in his characterisation of what is said as closely related to the conventional meaning of the sentence uttered, which he turns into a requirement that “anything that does not correspond to some element or feature of the uttered sentence is not part of what is said”, (Bach 1994b:279) thus making a considerably stronger claim than the original. This justifies allowing the referents of indexicals to be part of what is said but not the added bits of information in (in 1-5), which are confined to the implicature because they are neither visible sentence constituents nor syntactically required in any sense. This criterion for assigning pragmatically derived information to the explicit level of communication is what Carston (1988) calls a *linguistic direction criterion*.

In what follows I shall argue against the necessity of postulating implicatures in two steps: first by showing that his expansion cases are problematic and are more naturally analysed as cases of semantic underdetermination, and then by showing that neither what is said in Bach's sense, nor his implicature level are theoretically useful categories.

2.1

There is a whole host of expressions and constructions that give rise to pragmatic expansion, among them definite noun-phrases, names, numerals, focus particles, quantifiers, operators, instances of loosened as well as narrowed down conceptual content, and some tenses. Given this diversity a detailed analysis of all of them is hardly feasible, so I will focus on those cases to which the author himself gives more attention.

To begin with, if, as he claims, the sentences in (6-11) express complete propositions but not the ones the speaker wanted to convey (hence their non-literality), we are up against the old problem of demarcation with conversational implicature. Bach says that whereas an implicature is “a conceptually independent proposition” implicatures are “built out of what is said” (Bach 1994b:273),⁵ a purely stipulative characterization. We would need to know

what 'being conceptually independent' amounts to for the practical purposes of making decisions, given the growing number and the nature of cases in dispute. This issue will be addressed in section 3. The more specific distinguishing feature he mentions is detachability, a property of implicatures (cf. Bach 1994a:137) but not of implicatures⁶. To illustrate the phenomenon Korta (forthcoming) uses Bach's examples in (12-13) and claims, following Bach, that since what is said is the same in both but only (12) gives rise to the implicature in (14), implicatures are detachable:

- 12. I haven't had breakfast
- 13. I haven't had breakfast before
- 14. I haven't had breakfast this morning

However, it is clear that the detachability of implicatures does not qualify as a criterion because to test for it one has to assume that what is said by a certain utterance of a certain sentence (say, (12)) corresponds to what Bach takes it to be (13), thus forcing us to assume what had to be proved in the first place. Since the view Bach is attacking favours (14) as what is typically said in utterances of (12), the test is simply not applicable and we are left with an unsolved problem of demarcation.⁷

We see that what Bach takes as the explicit content of all uses of these sentences is based on the literal or conventional meanings he assumes for them. However, his meaning ascriptions are far from uncontroversial. Let's take (6-8), (15) and their literal meanings in (6'-8'), (15') according to Bach:

- 6. You're not going to die
- 7. I haven't eaten
- 8. Everyone is going
- 15. I've had breakfast
- 6'. The hearer is immortal
- 7'. The speaker has never eaten
- 8'. Everyone in the world is going
- 15'. The speaker has had breakfast before⁸

Even accepting that the present perfect or the 'going to' form are not indexical tenses in the sense that they do not identify specific points in time to which the speaker is referring, but rather quantify over periods of time, it is far from obvious that (6'-8'), (15') correctly characterize their context-free meaning. Notice that it is doubtful that one can use these sentences to communicate what the author takes to be their explicit content based on their literal meanings in (6'-8'), (15'), for the first three are patently false while the fourth is trivially true, a rather awkward consequence of his analysis. In fact, when he defends his analysis of the sentences in (1-5) as not expressing complete minimal propositions, he argues that the reason (3) does not mean (3'), the minimal proposition, is that it is not

possible to use the former to communicate the latter, and so the sentence could not be used in its literal sense:

3'. Tipper is ready for something or other

This would also be the case for its negation:

3''. Tipper is not ready for anything

In the terms that will be defended here (3') might well be the explicit content of (3) on a certain -if not very common- occasion of its use, but in any case, his argument carries over intact to his examples of non-literality in (6-11).

In fact, an analysis like F. Recanati (1993)'s in which the semantic representations of sentences involving quantification (whether explicit as in (8-9) or implicit as in certain tenses) requires the setting up of slots in the semantic representation of the sentence corresponding to the domains of quantification to be contextually specified, does not have this problem and is more in line with current assumptions by cognitive linguists that view linguistic expressions as a series of constraints on interpretation (cf. Fauconnier (1994)). This would give us the (simplified) semantic representations for (7 and 8) in ('7''-8''):

[illegible]

8''. Everybody ----- is going -----
in domain of quantification place

In this view, what Bach proposes as the literal meanings of (6-11) are in fact default completions of gaps in their semantic representations (or representations in which the values of the variables have already been chosen). Thus 'today' or 'never', or whatever other period may be relevant in the particular sentential and extrasentential context in which these tenses might appear, would fit in places already present in the representation. Besides, Bach need not worry about these aspects of pragmatically determined content being part of what is said because tense is present in the sentence⁹. He finds the idea of 'hidden markers' gratuitous (Bach 1997:4), but does not say why. When discussing incomplete definite descriptions (as in (10) above) which he takes as contributing unrestricted uniqueness requirements to what is said (as in (10') below), he again rejects the idea of semantic slots as unnecessary:

10'. The only cupboard there is in the world is bare

"A standard use of a sentence like 'the table is dusty' concerns a particular table, but this fact can be explained without positing a semantic slot for a restriction on the universe of discourse or for a completion of the description. Strictly speaking, the utterance of

such a sentence is not literal -what the speaker means is an expansion of what is said" (Bach 1997:7).

The problem is that his explanation has the undesirable consequence that speakers are forced to say something they do not mean on virtually every occasion of the use of a definite description, a problem which an alternative analysis of definite descriptions as contributing not only descriptive content but also a search procedure for a candidate referent does not have. In fact, the strongest evidence against the type of semantics that Bach envisages for linguistic expressions comes from the problems to which his derived notion of what is said poses for pragmatic analysis, as we will see in the next section.

I agree with Recanati as well that what Bach takes to be the explicit content of the utterance would not be recognised by speakers as such, (it would not be *consciously available* to them, which Grice seemed to require), but since intuitions can and have been invoked to make opposite claims, due to the different ways in which the word 'say' can be taken, I will not argue for it here. In any case, it is as well to remember here that the explicit allows for degrees. Thus, although (8) and (16) may well be used to represent the same state of affairs, and so to say the same thing, recovering the proposition expressed requires less decoding and more inferencing in (8) and so we say that it is less explicit.

8. Everyone is going.

16. Everyone in the class is going to the concert.

This in no way means that the pragmatic effects of both utterances will be the same: the claim is simply that the two utterances are equivalent at the level of the proposition expressed, not that they are equivalent in all other aspects of their interpretation, something that relevance theory is especially well suited to handle given the crucial role that effort plays in it.

It seems then that we can reduce Bach's cases of expansion to cases of semantic underdetermination¹⁰, and therefore view them as resulting from a process of pragmatic completion of the semantic representation of the utterances involved. I want to argue next that there is no justification for maintaining implicature as a category that can be distinguished from the explicit content of the utterance.

2.2

It will be remembered that the reason Bach allows contextually determined referents (temporal, spatial, and personal) to be part of what is said is not that they are required for the utterance to be truth-evaluable but that they correspond to constituents of the sentence uttered, whereas "conceptually mandated semantic slots" (such as those for the implicit arguments of verbs like 'arrive' or 'finish') are not sentence constituents and so, "they enter in not at the linguistic but at the conceptual level" (cf. Bach 1994b:282, and also 1994b:132-3). That information, according to Bach, is not 'linguistically there' to be recovered (cf.

Bach 1994a:132). However, since it is the general cognitive system that performs the task of assigning particular entities to referring expressions, the level of what is said cannot be a grammatical level and must instead be conceptual structure, the level at which Bach's implicatures would fit too. The question is if the linguistic direction criterion is sufficient grounds for positing two different sorts of conceptual representation with exactly the same properties: both what is said and the implicature are partly decoded and partly inferred structures. But what is said by an underdetermined sentence can never be a thought of the speaker's or what the speaker means, for as Bach himself concedes, "the conceptual representations that comprise them [thoughts] cannot be semantically underdeterminate in the way that sentences can be" (Bach 1994a:157).¹¹

It is also strange that Bach denies these semantic slots their linguistic status only because they are not syntactically required. After all, for someone who believes, as he does, that semantic structure is a grammatical level distinct from conceptual structure¹², a semantic requirement must surely be a linguistic requirement.

We see as well that, contrary to what Bach claims, the rigidity of his linguistic direction criterion does not seem to be in line with Grice's characterization of what is said, for by anyone's standards, the conventional meaning of a verb like, say, 'finish' requires two arguments.¹³¹⁴ And so we see again that it is Bach's overdetermined meaning representations that get in the way of a viable notion of what is said.

Notice as well that his notion of what is said for both incomplete and non-literal sentences is at odds with Grice's in that for the latter the implicatures of the utterance are calculated on the basis of what is said and the assumption that the maxims of conversation, or at least the cooperative principle, are in operation. But it seems clear that the implicatures of an utterance of (8) or (19) would have to be calculated by taking the pragmatically more elaborate representations he takes to be the implicatures as premises, not what is said, thus rendering it functionally inert (to borrow a phrase from Carston (1995)), as the examples below illustrate:

- 8. A: Tipper is ready [to leave] [to come on stage]
- 17. A wants me to call a taxi
- 18. A wants me to pull up the curtain
- 19. A: Do you want a coffee?
B: I've had breakfast [a short while ago]
- 20. B doesn't want coffee

It seems then that Bach's category of what is said can neither be a linguistic representation nor a communicated category, and so we are left with its being close to the sentence as its only merit to theoretical utility. But since even that is questionable, as we have seen, we can conclude that his notion of what is said has to be modified to include the information he assigns to the implicature, and so the explicit/implicit distinction can remain exhaustive.

3. Explicature implicated?

It is generally assumed that the explicit and the implicit (or rather, the implicated) must be independent propositions, but discrepancies over particular cases have made it plain that what is meant by 'independent propositions' needs clarification¹⁵. The original dispute centred on whether what some pragmatists were describing as cases of generalised conversational implicature (21-22 below) might not in fact be cases of pragmatically determined explicit content, as was claimed in relevance theory¹⁶:

- 21a. She gave him the key and he opened the door
- 21b. She gave him the key and then he opened the door (implicature?)
- 22a. Some of the students passed the exam
- 22b. Not all the students passed the exam (implicature?)

Of the different criteria that have been proposed¹⁷ to decide I want to focus on R. Carston's functional independence criterion because it catches the bull by the horns by claiming that the explicit and the implicit must not overlap in content, thus providing a clear notion of what she means by independent. For Carston, the reason why (21b-22b) are more than suspect implicatures is that they entail what is said by the utterance and so make it redundant, "playing no independent role in inference" (Carston 1988:158). This would give us an analysis incompatible with relevance theoretic assumptions about the role of processing effort in utterance interpretation:

"It is clearly more economical to derive the single assumption 'P & then Q' rather than both 'P & Q' and 'P & then Q', and whatever contextual effects 'P & Q' gives rise to so will 'P & then Q', as well as having potential for more" (...)

"In general, whatever constitutes an adequate range of contextual effects, they can be derived entirely from the single assumption 'P and then Q', which is more economical to derive and manipulate than the two assumptions. In fact if 'P and then Q' were understood as an implicated assumption the derivation of S [the implication] would follow from contextual assumptions alone. Then it would not qualify as a contextual implication...". So relevance theory not only predicts that it is the correct analysis, it precludes the other one." (Carston 1988:170-171).

Surely Carston is right that an analysis of what is implicated by an utterance which entails what is said should make the theorist have second thoughts. F. Recanati (1989) agrees with her that (21b-22b) provide the explicit content of (21a-22a) but notes that her functional independence heuristic boils down to a requirement of logical independence of the propositions communicated by an utterance and so she is committing an instance of what he calls 'the formal fallacy in pragmatics', "for it is quite possible for an implicature to have this property accidentally" (Recanati 1989:320). In what follows, a number of alleged counterexamples to Carston's criterion understood in exactly the way Recanati finds problematic will be reanalysed, bearing in mind that in relevance theory both what is said

and what is implicated are fully truth-conditional categories of *communicated* information and that it is speakers that say, whereas sentences and linguistic expressions in general provide information that directs the construction and recovery of the propositions that the speaker is trying to make mutually manifest. It will be argued that given these assumptions Recanati's accident is not pragmatically possible.

3.1. The counterexamples to the independence criterion

To prove his case that the independence criterion is not a valid one, Recanati makes up examples like the following:

"Suppose that John says to Jim: 'Someone will come and see you today -someone you have been expecting for a long time. I am not permitted to reveal the identity of visitors in advance, but I take it that you see who I mean'. Suppose it is clear that John means that Mrs Robertson is going to come and see Jim. Has John said that Mrs Robertson is going to come? No: he has said that *someone* was going to come, and has implied that it was Mrs Robertson. The implication is very clear, but the fact that it is an implication and not something that is explicitly said, is no less clear ..." (Recanati 1989:318)

23a. John: Someone will come and see you today

23b. Mrs Robertson will come and see you today (implicature?)

I would like to argue that contrary to what Recanati claims, it is far from clear that we have an implicature here. To begin with there is an element of secrecy to the utterance ('I am not permitted to reveal the identity of visitors in advance') which casts doubt on whether (23b) can be said to constitute a communicated assumption even if its representation has been provoked in the hearer. But let us suppose for the sake of argument that it has been communicated. Does the interpretation of this example require the generation of (23b) as an implicature? Notice that there is no more economical way of communicating (23b) than uttering (23b) itself, and that in the example no additional effects are obtained by uttering (23a) instead. This means that the exchange would not meet the criterion of consistency with the principle of relevance. (23b) is also problematic as a Gricean implicature for the behaviour of the speaker cannot be reconciled with the assumption that s/he being rational and cooperative. Besides, notice that John goes out of his way to make sure that Jim correctly identifies the referent to be replaced by the indefinite pronoun, ('I take it that you see what I mean') and so what we have here might well be a local pragmatic process of the kind that Recanati himself later called a 'transfer process' (cf. Recanati 1993, 1995) which he describes as involving "an already available constituent which is mapped into another one which replaces it" (Recanati 1993:263). This happens when the replacing candidate becomes more accessible through multiple activation than the constituent being processed, as interpretation proceeds on-line. We see then that either (23b) is not a communicated assumption or, if it is, it must be analysed as the explicit content of the utterance, not an implicature, and therefore there is no accidental entailment of the two categories.

The second counterexample Recanati discusses is more complex:

A: Was there anybody rich at the party, who might be asked to pay for the damages?

B: Jim is rich

A: Yes, but did he go to the party?

B: I don't know, but I can tell you that if *anybody* was there, Jim was there.

A: *Somebody* was there -this I know for sure (I saw John going there). So it looks as if the damages will be paid for, after all. (p. 320)

24. B: If anybody was there, Jim was there

24a. A: Somebody was there. John was there

24b. Jim was there (implicature?)

According to Recanati there are three candidates for the status of what is said in (24a): a) There is at least one person that was at the party, b) John was at the party and c) Jim was at the party, this last option being the one that the independence criterion would select, but which no-one in their right mind would propose. For him option (b) is not a good one either because indefinite pronouns do not have referential readings. So we are left with (a), the option that his intuitions favour but which violates Carston's principle. However, this need not be so, for even if we agree that indefinite pronouns are not referring expressions, this does not mean that they are barred from being used to refer on occasion, as we saw in the first example. Here A makes it clear that s/he has a specific referent in mind, (that 'somebody' is clearly not equivalent to 'some person or other') so much so that the identity of the person involved is the next thing s/he contributes to the exchange, thus manifestly inviting the hearer to replace the indefinite with the fully identified referent. This very possibility weakens Recanati's certainty that the alleged implicature in (24b) entails what is said in (24a). But suppose we alter the example so that the possibility of a referential reading for the indefinite pronoun in (24a) does not arise. Does that mean that (a) is the only candidate we have for the explicit content of (24a)? Before concluding that it is, I would like to explore the possibility of a fourth option briefly.

Indefinite noun-phrases allow a span of possible interpretations that range from maximum specificity when the domain of quantification only contains one individual, to maximum unspecificity, in which case the domain of quantification covers any and all individuals that satisfy the predicate. Leaving aside the question of whether cases involving maximally determined domains can be said to be instances of referring, this means that when making decisions about what has been said by an utterance including an indefinite expression the hearer will use whatever information is sententially or extrasententially available to decide on the appropriate domain. A common trap theorists fall into is using the least determinate option as the default reading and then treating it as the explicit content of all uses of such expressions. But there is no evidence that this is what hearers actually do and no reason why they should. And then, there are the problems this kind of strategy poses for the analysis, as we saw in section 2. To dissolve the entailment between (24b) and (24a)

this time, we have to consider (24) first and decide what B might be saying by means of it. We see that the maximally general reading is true if Jim went to the party, but this turns the conditional statement into a tautology: $(Pa \rightarrow Pa)$, clearly not what B meant. This means that the indefinite must be interpreted as more specific than that, at least as not including Jim, i.e., as 'someone other than Jim'. As for the indefinite in (24a), we see again that if it includes Jim then (24b) is explicit and if it does not -as Recanati thought- the alleged implicature would not entail the explicit content of (24a). Either way no entailment appears between what is said in (24a) and the implicated conclusion in (24b). The exchange has this form now (where, crucially, $x \neq a$):

24'. A: If someone (other than Jim) was at the party, Jim was at the party

$(\exists x Px \rightarrow Pa)$

24a'. B: Somebody (other than Jim) was at the party $(\exists x Px)$

24b'. Jim was at the party (Pa)

It turns out that (24b) entails (24a) only if we assign maximally general default values to the domains of quantification of the indefinite pronouns in (24-24a). But since it is utterances that we are dealing with, our analysis cannot afford to obviate aspects of their interpretation that would no doubt be playing a part.

There is another important problem with this kind of example in that it is not at all obvious that an implicated conclusion that follows from the premises supplied by two different speakers is anything more than that, an implicated conclusion, since implicatures are assumptions that the speaker manifestly expects the hearer to derive and attribute to him/her. In Recanati's example it is clear that this option is too strong from the very way the speaker in (24a) weakens his/her epistemic backing to it ('it looks as if the damages will be paid for, after all'), but this criticism is meant to apply generally to all cases in which speaker A uses a conditional sentence and speaker B asserts the antecedent of the conditional. Notice that the problem is not that we may be dealing with an indeterminate implicature as in cases of vague(r) communication: while it is perfectly natural to check out on the intentions of the speaker by making the implication derived explicit in cases of indeterminacy, it is unnatural to do so in this case, as witness the contrast between (25) and (26):

25. A: What are you going to do today?

B: I've a headache

A: Does that mean that you're not doing the shopping today?

26. A: If Mary was late the whole plan fell through

B: Mary was late

A: ?Does that mean that the whole plan fell through?¹⁸

This same argument applies as well to Levinson's counterexample in (27) below but Levinson's example has problems of its own. He argues against Carston that "many

implicatures meet the condition on explicatures that they must contain the encoded semantic representation or logical form as a proper subpart" (Levinson 1987:723) and gives the following example:

27. A: If Thatcher has won the election, she will have won three times
 27a. B: Thatcher has won the election
 27b. Thatcher has won the elections three times (implicature?)

As with Recanati, one wonders what makes his intuition about what is implicated in these cases so overriding, given that (27b) may well be true but false that Thatcher has won the elections being referred to, and so it is doubtful that (27b) entails (27a)¹⁹. In any case, one might think that it is possible to construct counterexamples to the independence principle by fabricating slightly different exchanges like (28) below, in which the first speaker uses a conditional sentence the antecedent of which entails the consequent. A second speaker asserting the antecedent would be saying something that entails the alleged implication, thus going in the opposite direction to that intended by Levinson, but still providing an apparent violation of Carston's principle²⁰:

28. A: If Thatcher has won this election she will at least have won one election
 28a. B: She has won this election
 28b. She has at least won one election (implicature?)

But since B cannot but communicate (28b) by analytic rule, (28b) is unquestionably part of the explicit content of the utterance. Could it be an implicature as well as the main explicature of the utterance? The problem is that it does not seem possible to make sense of it as a contextual implication, much less an implicature, for it is not the case that bringing together (28) and (28a) as premises "yields new conclusions not derivable from either [(28)] or (28a)] alone" (Sperber & Wilson 1986:107).²¹ Notice as well that (28) is tautological and, as such, nothing is said by it. It does focus the attention of the hearer on certain facts, and it may well achieve optimal relevance by doing just that, but contextual implications are combinations of old and new information and that is not what we have here.

If the counterexamples proposed were valid the characterization of the explicit and the implicit as being mutually exclusive would not be correct, and therefore Sperber and Wilson's view of the explicit as a classificatory notion (cf. Sperber & Wilson 1986:182) would have to be modified. D. Wilson seems to have made a move in this direction recently by claiming that

"We allow for the possibility that entailments and implicatures may coincide, as in the following example:

- [29]. Peter: Would you like to listen to my Rolling Stones record?
 [29a] Mary : No. I'd rather hear some music.
 [29b]. Peter's Rolling Stones record is not music (implicature?)

Here, Mary's utterance suggests that Peter's Rolling stones record is not music, and this suggestion has all the hallmarks of a Gricean implicature. However, it is also an entailment: Mary's statement that she would rather hear some music than hear Peter's Rolling Stones record entails that Peter's Rolling Stones record is not music. Thus what is recovered as an implicature may also be an entailment, and our definition of implicature does not rule this out". (I. Higashimori & D. Wilson 1996:122)

As Wilson says, (29a) entails (29b) since the arguments that the predicate 'rather' takes must be treated as belonging to mutually exclusive categories. This means that (29b) has been made available by analytic rule. What the hearer has to decide next is whether Mary seriously believes this proposition or whether she is simply being echoic and therefore wants it to be taken attributively, as is typical of ironical utterances (cf. Sperber & Wilson 1986:237-243). But as we saw before, it does not seem to be correct to talk about implicature in this case. For if the hearer already has available the information in question what would s/he gain by re-deriving it? And then, how could we even talk of a contextual implication here when (29b) is derivable from the proposition expressed by (29a) and no other premise?

This same kind of reasoning would apply to some of the examples quoted in the relevance theory literature as clear cases of implicature but which on closer inspection violate the independence criterion. Consider (30-32) below:

- 30. A: Does John drink whisky?
- 30a. B: He doesn't drink alcohol
- 30b. John does not drink whisky (implicature?)
- 30c. Whisky is alcohol (implicature?) (Wilson & Sperber 1986)
- 31. A: Would you drive a Mercedes?
- 31a. B: I wouldn't drive any expensive cars
- 31b. B would not drive a Mercedes (implicature?)
- 31c. A Mercedes is an expensive car (implicature? (Sperber & Wilson 1986)
- 32. A: Have you read Susan's book?
- 32a. B: I don't read autobiographies
- 32b. B has not read Susan's book (implicature?)
- 32c. Susan's book is an autobiography (implicature?) (Carston 1988)

(30) is obviously the clearest case, for again, (30b) follows from (30a) by analytic rule, since 'whisky' is a hyponym of 'alcohol'. (31) might seem more controversial, since in this case the property of being expensive is a contingent property of Mercedes cars, albeit one the speaker is most likely to share with the hearer. Notice that (31b) can only be a communicated assumption if A attributes (31c) to B, and that understanding (31a) must involve some working out of the extension class of 'expensive car', not necessarily exhaustive, of course, but at least as including 'Mercedes cars', given the prominence of this element in the exchange. (31c) then seems to be part of the explicit content of the utterance, rather than an implicature.

(32) is an example that Carston uses to illustrate her point that the principle of relevance sets an upperbound on what can count as pragmatically determined aspects of explicit content, but which Groefsema (1995) reanalyses as a case of explicit communication. Notice that the same as before, the hearer will not be able to establish the relevance of B's answer in (32a) unless s/he includes 'Susan's book' in the extension class of 'autobiographies', and again the entailment between (33a) and (33b) is automatic. In fact, in the three cases it is not possible for the speaker to deny the alleged implicature without contradiction, in contrast with clear cases of implicature such as (36):

- 33. John does not drink alcohol and he drinks whisky (which is alcohol)
- 34. I would not drive any expensive cars and I would drive a Mercedes (which is an expensive car)
- 35. I do not read autobiographies and I have read Susan's book (which is an autobiography)
- 36. A: Would you like a coffee?
- 36a B: I've just had one
- 36b. B does not want a coffee (implicature)
- 36c. I've just had a coffee and I want another one

The reason it has seemed so natural to speak of conversational implicature in (30-32) is that the contextual assumptions in (30c-32c) are needed for their derivation. But notice that before we can decide that (30b-32b) constitute implicated conclusions we must have made a decision concerning the explicit contents of (30a-32a) and the generic terms they include, and that just as bridging reference requires the construction or retrieval of contextual assumptions that are "incorporated into a representation of the proposition expressed by the utterance" (Wilson 1993:177) so too, deciding on the extension class of the generic noun phrases may well require a similar process. And so the automatic assignment of the assumptions in (30b-32b) to the domain of implicatures must be reconsidered.

It seems then that an assumption is communicated at the explicit or the implicit level but not at both, and that in so far as what is implicated is calculated on the basis of the explicit content of the utterance both require that the hearer identify them as intended and so it cannot be indifferent either if a certain piece of information is part of the explicature or an implicature of the utterance.

To conclude, we return to Recanati and ask what criterion allows his intuitions on how to allocate communicated content to remain unshaken in the face of cases of content overlap such as those he himself presents in (23-24). He says:

"This type of counterexample shows that what defines a communicated assumption as an implicature is not a formal property, and in particular not the formal property of (logical) independence with respect to the proposition expressed, but the way it is recovered in the interpretation process -i.e. not by enriching and developing a logical form encoded in the sentence, but by an inference process the starting point of which is proposition obtained by enriching and developing an encoded logical form." (Recanati 1989:321)

But since both processes depend on inference and, as Groefsema (1995:64) points out, there is no agreement on the ways logical forms can be enriched and developed (or, for that matter, what logical forms to assign, as we saw with Bach, or even if it is sentences that we must assign logical forms to), we would be left with our intuitions as our only guide²².

4. Conclusion

As Bach suspected, the dispute over how to allocate communicated content to the explicit or to the implicit level and how many levels of representation are required is not a terminological issue. For in so far as pragmatics seeks to explain how speakers understand (and produce) utterances, the distinctions we postulate have a direct consequence on our description of the cognitive operations that speakers carry out. I have tried to show that Bach's category of implicature is based on a questionable analysis of the meanings of linguistic expressions and turns what is said into a category whose linguistic and pragmatic status is very problematic. It therefore constitutes no improvement over the relevance theory notion of explicature.

I have also defended Carston's independence criterion as a useful heuristic for any theory which makes processing effort a key factor in utterance interpretation, for as she contended, if the implicatures of an utterance entail its explicit content, there is no role for the latter to play, and if the explicit content entails what is implicated, deriving the implicature would be futile. In fact, when looked at in detail, the examples which were devised to counter the independence principle turn out to support, rather than violate it.

The explicit/implicit distinction can therefore remain exhaustive and classificatory.

Notes

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1. Unlike the implicit, which, in his view, could be determined both conventionally and unconventionally.

2. I am ignoring here the fact that for Grice speech act and propositional attitude information were not included in either category, as D. Wilson points out (cf. Higashimori & Wilson 1996).

3. See Carston (1995) for thorough and persuasive criticism of generalised conversational implicatures as a distinct level of representation.

4. Most notably, for Bach saying something does not entail meaning it, and so it is possible in his sense to say something and not mean anything.

5. He also says that implicatures are "intended additional conceptual material to be read into one's audience" (Bach 1996:7) or "implicit in what is said" (Bach 1994a:141), strongly suggesting that they are subpropositional and inserted in the explicit content of the utterance. If this were so,

the distinction implicature / explicature would boil down to nothing more than a terminological quibble. However, he disallows this position by claiming that "since part of it [the implicature] does not correspond to any elements of the uttered sentence (...) it is inaccurate to call the resulting proposition the explicit content of the utterance or an explicature. I will instead call it an *implicature*" (Bach 1994b:273). He also insists "For me there is inexplicit meaning, but no inexplicit saying" (1994a:144, and 1994b:274). Besides, although he sometimes reckons that this may be a question of what terminology you favour ("Perhaps (...) one person's explicature is another one's implicature" (Bach 1994b:274)), he also claims that "Presumably the dispute here is not over terminology but over psychologically relevant distinctions needed for an account of understanding utterances" (Bach 1994a:161).

6. See Grice (1975:43-44) on the non-detachability of implicatures.

7. He also uses the *hearer's indirect quotation* test, based on the idea that "What is said is specifiable by a *that* clause embedded in a matrix clause of the form *S said that ...*" (Bach 1994b:278) to defend his analysis of what is said in the case of underdetermined sentences as not fully propositional. Thus the fact that I can report to you 'S said that steel isn't strong enough' (or for that matter, 'S said that he's had breakfast') counts for Bach as intuitive evidence that what is said by the corresponding unembedded sentences does not include the conceptual additions of implicatures. But, if anything, this would be evidence that referents are not part of what is said either, for it is equally possible to quote a sentence including an indexical term.

8. Notice as well that it is far from clear in what sense 'You're not going to die from that cut' or 'I haven't eaten today' can be said to be expansions or "fleshing outs" of 'You are immortal' and 'I've nevr eaten'. This may be the reason Bach describes expansion as a lexical, not a logical, process of strengthening, "the result of inserting additional words into the sentence" (1994b:279).

9. It is strange that Bach allows for the pragmatic specifications for genitive locutions to be part of what is said, but not domain restrictions on quantified expressions (cf. Bach 1994a:151). After all there is conceptual material in (b) which does not correspond to any elements in (a) and so it seems that he should be talking about implicature here as well:

a. John's book

b. the book that John wrote.

10. See Carston (1995) for a semantic analysis of numerals in terms of underdetermination.

11. This clashes with his characterization of literal uses as cases in which the speaker means no more than s/he says and forces him to modify it to allow for completions as well. But this leaves us with the paradoxical consequence that expressions such as "what is strictly and literally said", which he often uses (cf. Bach 1994a:158), are uninterpretable.

12. Something which Jackendoff, for one, does not believe. (Cf. Jackendoff 1996).

13. Bach also quotes Grice (1989:24-5) to the effect that what is said must correspond to "the elements of the [sentence], their order, and their syntactic character", but then Grice never said that his notion of saying allowed for non-propositional representations, and certainly seems to have led everyone to believe that it did not.

14. He could have avoided this last problem by assigning minimal propositions to incomplete sentences, thus reducing all cases of implicature to non-literal expansions. But then the problems outlined in section 2.1 would have to be solved.

15. Thus, for example, although both Recanati and Bach speak of independent propositions and claim that what is implicated is external to the proposition expressed, they reject the idea that

this amounts to a requirement of logical independence, and so one wonders how one is meant to understand these notions.

16. See Carston (1995) and references therein.

17. See Carston (1988) and Recanati (1993) for a discussion of other criteria.

18. This is the reason the claim in the postface to the last edition of *Relevance* seems too strong:

"...if it is mutually manifest to communicator and audience that an assumption contextually implied by an utterance increases its overall relevance, then it is (in general) mutually manifest that the communicator intended this implication to be manifest. In other words, the assumption is communicated (as an implicature)". (Sperber & Wilson 1995:275)

19. This was pointed out to me by Fernando García.

20. Carston's independence heuristic naturally applies both ways, for an explicature which entails the implicature would not play an independent role in the interpretation process either.

21. For a detailed analysis of Levinson's example in (27) as partly tautological and not giving rise to the implication in (27b) see Vicente (forthcoming).

22. I agree with Recanati that our intuitions (as speakers when speaking, not as more or less sophisticated theoreticians), generally give us the right analysis, but this is not an applicable criterion. As for the scope principle, there does not seem to be any reason why a Gricean might be convinced that the temporal sequencing communicated by some uses of 'and' is a matter of explicit content when seeing the conjoined utterance embedded in a disjunction or a conditional sentence, if the unembedded utterance had not moved him/her.

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