Lecture 3: ‘and’-conjunctions and the explicit/implicit distinction

1. a. It’s summer in New Zealand and its winter in England.
   b. She handed him a cloth and he wiped the windscreen.
   c. She gave him fish for supper and he became very ill.

   Three meanings: ‘&’ [symmetric, truth-functional]
   ‘& then’ [asymmetric, non-truth-functional]
   ‘& as a result’ [asymmetric, non-truth-functional]

Pragmatic accounts of the non-truth-functional meanings:

2. Gricean account (Grice 1975; Grice 1981, pp.185-187):

   Semantically, ‘and’ is equivalent to ‘&’, i.e. it is truth-functional and its semantics is given by the truth-table for the logical conjunction operator.
   The richer non-truth-functional aspects of the meaning of ‘and’-conjunctions are treated as conversational implicatures, derived by a process of pragmatic inference employing one or other of the conversational maxims.

   a. He took off his trousers and he got into bed.
      what is said:  \( P \land Q \)
      what is implicated:  \( P \text{ TEMPORALLY PRIOR TO } Q \)

      Manner maxim of orderliness. If one is talking about events then the most orderly manner of presentation is an order that corresponds to the order in which they took place.

   b. She insulted him and he left.
      what is said:  \( P \land Q \)
      what is implicated:  \( Q \text{ IS A CONSEQUENCE OF } P \)

Which conversational maxim is involved here?

Is this account in the minimalist or the contextualist camp?

3. Relevance-theoretic account (reviewed in Carston 2002, chapter 3):

   Semantically, ‘and’ is equivalent to ‘&’.
   The richer non-truth-functional aspects of the meaning of ‘and’-conjunctions are derived pragmatically (following the RT comprehension procedure) but contribute to the proposition expressed by the utterance (its truth-conditional content).
Is the pragmatic process one of saturation or free enrichment?

Is the account minimalist or contextualist?

4. Two kinds of ‘free’ pragmatic meaning: conversational implicatures and contributions to explicit content (‘what is said’ or truth-conditional content).

Choosing between the two pragmatic analyses of ‘and’-conjunctions:

5. Embedding test:

   a. If [the old king has died of a heart attack and a republic has been declared] Sam will be happy; if [a republic has been declared and the old king has died of a heart attack] Sam will be unhappy. (Cohen 1971)

   b. I hate parties: either [no-one will talk to me and I get drunk] or [I get drunk and no-one will talk to me].

6. On the minimalist view, the proposition expressed is equivalent to:

   a. If P & Q then R; if Q & P then not R [contradiction]

   b. Either (P & Q) or (Q & P) [not genuine alternatives]

   [NB: ‘P & Q’ and ‘Q & P’ are equivalent]

So it appears that the temporal/consequential meaning contributes to the truth-conditional content.

Cohen’s conclusion: ‘and’ has a much richer semantics than ‘&’

My (contextualist) conclusion: these (and many other) ‘and’-conjunctions undergo a process of free pragmatic enrichment.

7. Scenario: Bill has had an accident at work

Mary: Will Bill get accident compensation?
John: Someone left a manhole uncovered and he broke his leg.

Implicated answer: Yes, Bill will/should get accident compensation.

An inferential process involving the contextual assumption:
   If a manhole is left uncovered and this causes someone to injure himself, he is entitled to compensation.

The other premise is the proposition explicitly expressed by the speaker. Which is it?
   a. Someone left a manhole uncovered & Bill broke his leg
   b. Someone left a manhole uncovered & as a result Bill broke his leg.

What role or function does (a) have in the comprehension process?
8. Propositions ‘communicated’ (as opposed to merely expressed):

An (ostensibly) communicated proposition is one for which the speaker makes overt her intention to make it manifest to the addressee. In other words, she is open about her intention that the addressee should represent the proposition and hold it to be true.

[Compare a case of irony, e.g. ‘That’s clever’ when someone has just made a silly mistake. Proposition literally expressed is not communicated.]

9. Two kinds of communicated propositions (assumptions):

Bob: How is Jane feeling after her first year at university?
Sue: She didn’t get enough units and can’t continue.

Propositions communicated by Sue (‘speaker meant’, in Grice’s terms):

a. [JANE, DIDN’T PASS ENOUGH UNIVERSITY COURSE UNITS TO QUALIFY FOR ADMISSION TO SECOND YEAR STUDY] & AS A RESULT OF P JANE, CANNOT CONTINUE WITH UNIVERSITY STUDY

b. JANE IS NOT FEELING HAPPY

What did the speaker “say”?
What did the speaker merely “implicate”?

10. Relevance theory’s explicature/implicature distinction:

‘An assumption communicated by an utterance \( U \) is explicit if and only if it is a development of a logical form encoded by \( U \). On the analogy of ‘implicature’ we will call an explicitly communicated assumption an explicature. Any assumption communicated, but not explicitly so, is implicitly communicated: it is an implicature.’

(Sperber & Wilson 1986/95, p. 182)

11. What is the linguistically encoded meaning (LEM) of the sentence Sue uttered?

not \([X \text{ FEMALE} \text{ get enough units (for something)}]\) & not \([X \text{ can continue (something)}]\)

A schema (with gaps and free variables in it) for the pragmatic construction of fully propositional forms (explicatures). Sperber & Wilson call this the logical form (or semantic representation) of the sentence. It is typically non-propositional (not fully truth-conditional, so not truth-evaluable).

12. Other possible levels of meaning [between (11), i.e. LEM, and (9a), i.e. explicature] (omitting temporal reference):

a. Just fixing reference (value) of overt indexicals:

\( \text{JANE}_i \text{ DIDN’T GET ENOUGH UNITS & JANE}_i \text{ CANNOT CONTINUE} . \)

This would be the minimal proposition expressed, or semantic content of the sentence (in a context), according to Cappelen & Lepore 2005.
b. Indexical reference fixing and ‘completion’:
  JANEi DIDN’T GET ENOUGH UNITS TO QUALIFY FOR ADMISSION TO SECOND YEAR STUDY
  & JANEi CANNOT CONTINUE WITH UNIVERSITY STUDY

A moderately minimalist semantics, involving just those pragmatic contributions
needed to recover what many people intuitively take to be a complete proposition.

c. Indexical reference, completion and specification (of ‘get’, ‘unit’):
  JANEi DIDN’T PASS ENOUGH UNIVERSITY COURSE UNITS TO QUALIFY FOR ADMISSION ….

d. P & AS A RESULT Q
Free enrichment resulting in an unarticulated constituent of content [i.e. ‘as a result’].

13. How many levels or kinds of meaning do we need in our account of verbal
communication and comprehension?

Relevant theorists and Francois Recanati:
Three levels: linguistically encoded meaning and two kinds of communicated
  propositions (explicature and implicature)

14. Four levels:

Two levels of linguistic meaning (semantics):
  a. Linguistically encoded meaning
  b. What is said (minimal contextual contribution)

Two levels of communicated meaning:
  c. Explicature (or pragmatically enriched ‘what is said’)
  d. Implicature (additional communicated propositions)

(Bach 1994)

15. The semantics/pragmatics distinction:

What is semantic content?
  Linguistically encoded meaning / truth-conditional (propositional) content
Problem: These two characteristics come apart.
Furthermore: To derive truth-conditional content (a minimal proposition), pragmatic
work is required so we lose a clearcut semantics/pragmatics distinction.

16. On the RT view:
The semantics/pragmatics distinction correlates with a processing distinction
between linguistic decoding (carried out by the language module, whose output is
context-independent logical forms) and pragmatic inferencing which takes the logical
form (= linguistically encoded meaning) as its input and, using contextual information
and pragmatic principles, delivers communicated assumptions (explicatures and
implicatures).

  Consequence: there is no intermediate level of ‘what is said’ or a minimal
  proposition expressed (as distinct from explicature)
References:


Homework for backup (30 Jan. 2007):

1. **Reading**: The paper referenced above by Kent Bach (1994). At this stage, you need only read pp. 124-144.

2. What is the distinction Bach makes between ‘completion’ and ‘expansion’?

3. What does he mean by “impliciture” as opposed to “implicature”?

4. How does his notion of “what is said” differ from Grice’s?

5. What role does his notion of “what is said” play in an account of utterance interpretation?

6. How does he seem to be drawing the distinction between semantics and pragmatics?