

from her book: Relevance and Linguistic Meaning

BLA019E

2 Non-truth conditional meaning

2.1 Varieties of non-truth conditional meaning

If 'meaning' is taken in its broadest sense to include both linguistically encoded meaning and meaning which is inferred from the context, then the term 'non-truth conditional meaning' can refer to two quite different aspects of the interpretation of an utterance. On the one hand, it can refer to the contribution made by expressions and structures which cannot be analysed as a contribution to the truth conditions of the utterances that contain them, for example, the contribution made by *but* in (1) and the cleft structure in (2a) and (b).

- (1) I've got the tomatoes and peppers but they didn't have any lemons.
- (2) (a) It was Anna who found the cat. *presup: Sb found the cat*
(b) It was the cat that Anna found. *presup: Anna found st*

On the other hand, it can be taken to refer to meaning which cannot be attributed to the presence of any particular expression or structure but which is due to the particular context in which an utterance is made. Thus while the suggestion of contrast or incompatibility conveyed in (1) is due to the use of *but*, the suggestion that B did not manage to get everything is recovered from her utterance in (3) only because it is interpreted in the context triggered by A's question. In another context, for example, the one triggered by the utterance in (4), the suggestion would not arise.

- (3) A: Did you get everything?
B: They didn't have any lemons.
- (4) What shall we make – chocolate mousse or lemon mousse?

In all of these cases, there is a suggestion which will not be regarded as a condition on the truth of the utterance that communicates it. Thus the truth or falsity of the suggestion that there is some kind of incompatibility between the two segments of (1) has no bearing on the truth value of (1) at all: it will be true

iff (a) B got tomatoes and peppers and (b) the shop that B went to did not have any lemons. Similarly, B's utterance in (3) is true iff the shop B went to did not have any lemons: the fact that B did in fact obtain lemons or some suitable substitute would not turn her utterance into a falsehood.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, for some theorists this would be sufficient grounds for treating *all* of these suggestions within pragmatics. However, the result of this is to blur the distinction between linguistically encoded meaning on the one hand, and contextually determined meaning on the other. And in blurring this distinction one is denying oneself the opportunity of being able to explain the difference between what expressions such as *but* contribute to the interpretation of the utterances that contain them, on the one hand, and what expressions like *have* or *lemon* or *not* contribute, on the other. Contextually determined suggestions such as the one communicated by B's utterance in (3) are regarded as unproblematic in the sense that it is assumed that they can be explained in terms of inference and general purpose communicative principles. Linguistically encoded suggestions, however, do not sit comfortably in this picture. At the same time, however, they do not sit comfortably in semantics – on the assumption that semantics is a theory of the contribution that expressions and structures make to the truth conditions of the proposition expressed by the utterance that contains them. Accordingly, the emphasis in this chapter will be on linguistically encoded non-truth conditional meaning.

Perhaps the problem illustrated by *but* and cleft structures would not be such a worrying one, if it were restricted to these expressions. However, it is acknowledged that there is a wide range of expressions and constructions which raise the same problem. From the point of view of this book, the most important of these are the so-called discourse connectives or markers, some of which are illustrated below.

- (5) Ben is a New Zealander. *So* he loves rugby.
- (6) Ben is a New Zealander. *After all* he loves rugby.
- (7) Ben is a New Zealander. *Nevertheless* he loves rugby.
- (8) *Although* Ben is a New Zealander, he loves rugby.

While all of these utterances will be understood to have the same truth conditional content, they will not be understood in the same way. These differences must be attributed to the italicized words.

However, the phenomenon extends beyond the scope of this book. For example, there are expressions such as *too* and *even* whose meanings interact with focus.

- (9) Even Ben likes rugby.
 (10) Ben likes rugby too.

While (9) suggests that Ben's liking rugby is less likely than other people liking rugby, (10) suggests, depending on the focus, that Ben is not the only one to like rugby or that rugby is not the only sport Ben likes. However, both utterances will be true iff Ben likes rugby.

Similarly, while the sentence adverbials in (11–14) and the parentheticals in (15–17) clearly make a difference to the interpretation of the utterances that contain them, many theorists, for example, Bach and Harnish (1979), Nolke (1990) and Recanatì (1987), would claim that all of these utterances are true under exactly the same conditions, namely, the situation in which they are not going to ask Tom.

- (11) *Fortunately*, they are not going to ask Tom.
 (12) *Sadly*, they are not going to ask Tom.
 (13) *Frankly*, they are not going to ask Tom.
 (14) *Regrettably*, they are not going to ask Tom.
 (15) They are, *I suppose*, not going to ask Tom.
 (16) They are not, *I warn you*, going to ask Tom.
 (17) They are not, *I bet*, going to ask Tom.

It should be pointed out at the outset that this view of sentence adverbials is not shared by other theorists. For example, Higginbotham (1988, 1989, 1994), who, as we have seen, aims to give a truth conditional semantics for natural language sentences, claims that it is possible to provide a truth conditional account of the meaning of a sentence adverbial such as *sadly*. As Carston (1999) points out, Higginbotham fails to distinguish between the question of whether a sentence adverbial can be given a truth conditional semantics *qua* semantics of the linguistic system, on the one hand, and the question of whether it encodes a meaning that contributes to the truth conditions of the utterance, on the other. Whatever the answer to the first question, it seems that the answer to the second – at least as far as *sadly* is concerned – is 'no'. Moreover, as Ifantidou-Trouki (1993) has shown, the answer to this second question does not seem to be the same for all sentence adverbials. Thus while the meanings of so-called illocutionary adverbials such as *sadly* do *not* seem to contribute to the truth conditions of the utterances that contain them, it seems that the meanings of so-called evidential or hearsay adverbials *do*. I shall discuss this problem in more detail in section 2.

As Wilson (1975) observed, truth conditionally equivalent expressions may communicate different attitudes or emotions. Thus for example, while (18) and (19) have the same truth conditions, the speaker's choice of *deprive of* in (18) suggests a positive attitude towards Tom which contrasts with the attitude communicated by *spare* in (19).

- (18) We were deprived of Tom's company tonight.
 (19) We were spared Tom's company tonight.

Much earlier Frege (1918) made similar observations about the differences in 'tone' created by the use of *cur* rather than *dog*. And more recently, Kaplan (1997) has discussed the differences in what he calls 'expressive content' created by the use of *the bastard* in examples such as (20) and the use in French of *te* rather than *vous* in examples such as (21).

- (20) Where's Stanley? Surely *the bastard* hasn't forgotten to come.
 Where's Stanley? Surely he hasn't forgotten to come.
 (21) Je t'aime.
 Je vous aime.

However we describe these differences, it is clear that they are not differences of truth conditional content.

The problem with all the expressions discussed so far is that although they occur in utterances which can be assumed to have truth conditions, they do not contribute to those truth conditions. However, there are also constructions and expressions whose use in an utterance means that it cannot be described as being true or false at all. Thus it is often claimed that imperatives such as the one in (22), interrogatives such as the one in (23) and exclamatives such as the one in (24) cannot be said to have truth conditions.

- (22) Turn off the computer.
 (23) Have you turned off the computer?
 (24) What a terrible noise!

This would suggest that the non-declarative syntax (the imperative, interrogative and exclamative word order) is non-truth conditional not in the sense that it contributes to a suggestion which is not a condition on the truth of the utterance that contains it, but rather in the sense that it makes talk of truth conditions irrelevant. The same kind of effect seems to be achieved by the use of certain particles, for example, *eh*.

- (25) He's a good cook, *eh*?

wood indicators
 look at the
 edge

Not all particles have this effect, however. Thus while *eh* turns the host utterance into a question, the use of *huh* indicates that the host utterance is ironic and hence that the speaker is dissociating herself from the truth of the proposition expressed.¹

- (26) He's a good cook, huh!

Other particles, for example, *oh*, seem to function more like an attitudinal adverbial – although it is much more difficult to pin down the exact attitude or emotion expressed.

- (27) Oh, this weather is awful.
(28) Oh, you're here already.

It might be argued that these particles lie at the margins of linguistics.² However, if they are said to carry linguistic meaning at all, then it seems that this meaning cannot be analysed in terms of truth conditions.

In presenting these examples of non-truth conditional meaning I have simply assumed that you have intuitions about what the truth conditions of an utterance are, and, moreover, that these intuitions are the same as mine. This assumption is justified only to the extent that, first, we have pre-theoretic intuitions about truth conditions in the same way that we have intuitions about, say, grammaticality, and, second, that these intuitions are invariable from speaker to speaker. While it is possible that the examples that I have just cited have presented no difficulties for this assumption, it seems that the semantics literature is full of examples for which intuitions are not so clear-cut. Iten (2000b:230) gives the example made famous by Donnellan (1966):

- (29) The man drinking a martini is a famous philosopher.

The question is whether the utterance is true or false in a situation in which the man indicated is in fact a famous philosopher but is drinking from a martini glass containing iced water. The post-graduate students in my post-graduate summer school semantics class (Netherlands Graduate School of Linguistics, Utrecht 2001) were divided almost equally between 'true' and 'false', and there were some who were (understandably) reluctant to give a verdict.

Perhaps this simply shows that pre-theoretic intuitions cannot be relied on, and that we need a theoretical criterion for truth conditionality. The one that is

¹ See Blass (1990), for discussion of dissociative particles in Sissala. See also Wilson and Sperber (1993).

² For further discussion, see Wharton (2001).

usually invoked is based on the assumption that only truth conditional material can fall within the scope of a logical operator such as *if then*. Thus if we assume that *but* carries a suggestion of contrast, we can establish whether it is part of the truth conditional content of (30) by embedding (30) into a conditional, as in (31).

- (30) Tom is home but Ben is out.
(31) If Tom is home but Ben is out, then we can have prawns for tea.

If the speaker is understood to be saying that we can have prawns for tea iff (32a, b and c) are true, then we would have to say *but* falls within the scope of the conditional and that it is truth conditional. If on the other hand, the speaker is understood to be saying that we can have prawns for tea iff (32a and b) are true, then the suggestion of contrast falls outside the scope of the conditional and *but* is non-truth conditional.

- (32) (a) Tom is home.
(b) Ben is out.
(c) There is a contrast between the fact that Tom is home and Ben is out.

The problem with this test is that it depends on our intuitions about the truth conditions of the conditional. In other words, it seems that in the end, we cannot avoid the appeal to intuitions – and it seems that intuitions may vary. Moreover, as Iten (2000b:213–14) has observed, it is not clear that the assumption that only truth conditional material can fall under the scope of a logical operator is correct. She asks us to consider Mary's utterance in (33) which will be understood to communicate the implicature in (34).

- (33) PETER: Would you like to go to the cinema?
MARY: I'm tired.
(34) Mary doesn't want to go to the cinema.

The problem is that even though (34) is clearly not part of the truth conditions of Mary's utterance in (33), it seems that it can fall within the scope of *if... then* in (35).

- (35) If Mary is tired, then Peter won't book cinema tickets.

Iten suggests that the explanation for this lies in the role that assumptions about causal connections play in a cognitive system: because establishing causal connections is so important to us, *if... then* 'gets interpreted causally wherever possible' (Iten 2000b:214). Independent evidence for the centrality of causal

connections can be found in the psycholinguistic literature (see Sanders and Noordman 2000).

In fact, as both Iten and Ifantidou-Trouki (1993, 1994) have discovered, it is not always grammatically possible to embed an utterance under a logical operator. However, the important point is that even when this is possible, intuitions are frequently divided. Indeed, one might want to say that the speaker of an utterance such as (29) produced in the context described has said something false and something true. How are we to account for this?

It is difficult to see how we can account for the variation in people's intuitions about truth conditions in a framework which assumes that every utterance expresses a single proposition which represents its truth conditions. By the same token, if we cannot assume that an utterance expresses a single proposition, there seems to be little justification for distinguishing between those linguistic expressions which contribute to the proposition expressed and those expressions which do not. As we shall see in the following two sections, those accounts which see meaning as either truth conditional or non-truth conditional have failed to provide a unitary account of the meanings of those expressions which are said to be non-truth conditional. This may not seem surprising, given the diversity of the range of the phenomena listed above. However, if the distinction between meaning which is truth conditional and meaning which is non-truth conditional is itself based on an assumption that cannot be maintained, then it would seem that the whole enterprise should never have got off the ground in the first place.

However, it did get off the ground. In sections 2 and 3 of this chapter we will look at the attempts that have been made to make sense of the truth conditional versus non-truth conditional distinction within a speech act theoretic framework. In section 4 we shall examine Bach's (1999) argument that once we abandon the assumption that each utterance expresses a single proposition, we can re-analyse some examples of expressions which have been treated as non-truth conditional as contributing to the truth conditional content of the utterances that contain them. However, as we shall see, not all of the expressions listed above are analysed by Bach in the same way, and Bach's proposals for accommodating the variations among intuitions about truth conditionality bring problems of their own.

2.2 Speech act theoretic approaches: indicating and describing

The aim of Bach's (1999) paper is to expose what he describes as the 'myth' of conventional implicature, a notion devised by Grice (1989) as part of his

so-called theory of conversation. However, as we shall see, Bach only rejects Grice's account as it applies to a limited range of non-truth conditional expressions, and he maintains a Gricean-style analysis for a significant number of so-called discourse connectives, illocutionary adverbials, attitudinal adverbials, illocutionary and attitudinal particles. One of my aims in this chapter is to show that Grice's influential account of non-truth conditional meaning had its origins in speech act theory, and that in spite of his rejection of conventional implicature, Bach's (1999) analysis of illocutionary and attitudinal adverbials continues this tradition.

Speech act theory has provided a means of accommodating non-truth conditional meaning within a truth conditional framework. There is a sense in which this seems odd. Speech act theory originated as an alternative to truth conditional approaches to meaning and hence as a move away from what many philosophers perceived as an over-emphasis on the descriptive uses of language. Thus in *How to do things with words* Austin drew attention to the fact that language is not just used to describe the world, but also to change it. For Austin, language was a social phenomenon embedded in social institutions. To speak was to act – to make a prediction, to give an order, to make a promise, to declare war etc. – and to give the meaning of an utterance was to describe the act that it was used to perform.

However, although speech act theory and truth conditional semantics would appear to be irreconcilable, one can see why it might be thought that speech act theory should provide the natural home for many of our problematic expressions. Consider how someone would explain the meaning of *but*, or utterance initial *well*, or particles like *eh* to a non-native speaker of English. They are much more likely to give illustrations of their uses than attempt an analysis of the contributions they make to the meaning of the sentence that contains it. An approach to language which viewed meaning as use might seem to provide the appropriate theoretical framework for their analysis.

The problem, then, is how one could maintain a truth conditional approach to meaning by incorporating speech act theoretic machinery.³ Originally, Austin saw the performative use of language as a complement to the descriptive use. Thus he distinguished between constative utterances, which truly or falsely described states of affairs, on the one hand, and performative utterances, which were used to perform felicitous or infelicitous speech acts. However, over the

³ The following is a thumbnail sketch of the development of speech act theory, and I have skimmed over and skirted around a number of complex issues concerning the way in which Austin's original proposals were interpreted by speech act theorists such as Searle (1968, 1969) and Strawson (1973). I refer the reader to Levinson (1983) for a more detailed overview.

course of *How to do things with words* he abandons this approach so that even constative utterances have a performative element. They could be used to perform felicitous or infelicitous assertions. Austin's ideas were developed (and modified) by Searle (1969), who argued that utterances could have both an illocutionary component and a propositional component. This allows us to say that utterances may share their propositional content while differing in their illocutionary force. Thus although (36a-c) would be said to have the same propositional or descriptive content, they would be analysed as having different illocutionary forces or performing different speech acts.

- (36) (a) Tom rides his bike to school.
 (b) Does Tom ride his bike to school?
 (c) Tom ride your bike to school.

This was taken to suggest that the role of the mood indicators in examples such as (36a-c) is not to contribute to the propositional content of the utterances that contain them, but is to indicate or show what speech act is being performed. In other words, they are indicators which encode illocutionary information.⁴

This idea has been applied to a range of phenomena which do not contribute to propositional content. Thus Austin (1962) proposes not only that performative verbs, such as the ones in (37), are indicators, but also that the functions of some of these constructions can be performed by expressions such as the ones in (38).⁵

- (37) (a) I conclude that Tom will not leave.
 (b) I bet that Tom will not leave.
 (c) I predict that Tom will not leave.
 (38) (a) Therefore Tom will not leave.
 (b) Probably Tom will not leave.

Urmson (1966) approaches so-called 'parenthetical verbs' such as the one in (39) in the same way, arguing that they are devices which 'prime the hearer to see the emotional significance, the logical relevance, and the reliability of our statements' (1966:197), and that they 'function with regard to a statement made rather as... the foot stamping and saluting can function in the Army to make it clear that one is making an official report' (1966:211-12).

- (39) They will, I suppose, arrive before 9.

⁴ See Sperber and Wilson (1995), Wilson and Sperber (1988), Clark (1991), Clark (1993), for a critical examination of speech act theoretic accounts of mood and mood indicators.

⁵ Recanati (1987) has argued that the analysis of performative verbs as indicators is mistaken, and that explicit performatives can be regarded as having descriptive (truth conditional) content. For discussion of Recanati's arguments, see Blakemore (1991).

Sperber and Wilson (1995) have drawn attention to a number of fundamental difficulties for the speech act approach to meaning (see also Wilson and Sperber 1988 and Clark 1991). Their critical assessment of the speech act theoretic analysis of non-declarative utterances has not only led to a re-analysis of mood and other so-called illocutionary force indicators, but also to a radically different approach to non-literal uses of language (see Sperber and Wilson 1995, 1985/6). However, most fundamentally, they have questioned the speech act theoretic assumption that language is a vehicle for social action and that the identification of speech acts is a prerequisite for understanding utterances, and have developed an alternative approach in which language is used for the communication of thoughts. From the point of view of this book, the importance of this move from language as action to language as a means of communicating thoughts lies in the way it allows us to abandon the speech act distinction between describing and indicating (outlined above) in favour of a cognitively grounded distinction between the ways in which linguistic form contributes to the inferential processes involved in utterance interpretation.

However, before we make this move, I would like to discuss the speech act distinction between describing and indicating as it has been applied to the analysis of sentence adverbials. As we shall see in the following chapter, sentence adverbials have played an important role in the argument that the speech act theoretic distinction between truth conditional meaning and non-truth conditional meaning is not co-extensive with the cognitive distinction just mentioned. However, their analysis is also central to the present chapter, for it contains ideas which are closely related to ones developed by Grice in his account of conventional implicature.

It is recognized that sentence adverbials do not perform the same function. Thus illocutionary adverbials such as the one in (40) are said to modify an illocutionary verb so that (40) is understood to communicate the proposition in (41).

- (40) Seriously, she is not here.
 (41) I am telling you seriously that she is not here.

Attitudinal adverbials such as *fortunately* are said to indicate the speaker's attitude to the proposition expressed, so that (42) is understood to communicate (43).

- (42) Fortunately, she is not here.
 (43) It is fortunate that she is not here.

Evidential adverbials are treated as indicators of the strength of the speaker's evidence for the proposition expressed, so that (44) is understood to communicate (45).

(44) Obviously, she is not here.

(45) It is obvious that she is not here.

And hearsay adverbials, which are sometimes treated as a sub-type of evidential adverbial, are said to indicate that the source of the information lies with someone other than the speaker, so that (46) is regarded as communicating (47).

(46) Allegedly, she is not here.

(47) It is alleged that she is not here.

In spite of these differences, all of these adverbials are analysed in the same way within a speech act theoretic framework: that is, they are all regarded as non-truth conditional and they are all analysed as indicators of the way in which the utterance containing them is to be interpreted. Thus Recanatì (1987) claims that deleting an attitudinal adverb like *fortunately* 'would not change the proposition expressed by the sentence... because the modification introduced by the adverb is external to the proposition and concerns the speaker's emotional attitude to the latter. This attitude is neither "stated" nor "described", but only "indicated"' (1987:50). Similarly, Bach and Harnish (1979) analyse illocutionary adverbials such as *seriously* as modifying the speech act that is performed. Urnson (1966) describes evidential adverbials as indicators of the reliability of our statements. And Palmer (1986) analyses hearsay adverbials as a sub-type of evidential, arguing that they are a means of indicating diminished speaker commitment.

As Bach and Harnish (1979) have shown, one of the advantages of this sort of analysis is that it enables us to explain the ambiguity of utterances such as (48).

(48) Seriously, is she here?

For according to their analysis, *seriously* could indicate either that the speaker is asking seriously whether she is here or asking the hearer to tell him seriously whether she is here. However, as we have seen, while non-illocutionary adverbials such as *fortunately* or *allegedly* might be analysed as contributing to a higher-level description of some kind, they cannot be analysed as contributing to a speech act description.

In fact, it has been argued that not all sentence adverbials can be analysed as non-truth conditional indicators. Ifantidou-Trouki's (1993) investigation of sentence adverbials is based on the test for truth conditionality which I discussed in the first section of this chapter, namely, embedding the adverbial under the scope of a logical operator such as *if...then*. Not only did she find that the

application of this test is not as straightforward as we are sometimes led to believe, but also she discovered that evidential adverbials (including hearsay adverbials) do in fact contribute to the truth conditions of the utterances containing them.

As Ifantidou-Trouki shows, the application of the standard truth conditionality test to attitudinal adverbials such as *fortunately* is unproblematic, and it seems to yield uncontroversial results. Thus she argues that the speaker of a conditional such as (49) would be understood to be saying that the circumstances under which they will play Monopoly do not include the state of affairs in (51), but only the state of affairs represented in (50).

(49) If she has unfortunately lost the cards, then we will play Monopoly.

(50) She has lost the cards.

(51) It is unfortunate that she has lost the cards.

However, she argues that while this test can be applied straightforwardly to hearsay adverbials such as *allegedly*, the results do not accord with the standard speech act story. Thus the speaker of (52) will be understood to be saying that the truth of (53) is a sufficient reason to call the police.

(52) If the cook has, allegedly, poisoned the soup, then the police should make an enquiry.

(53) It is alleged that the cook has poisoned the soup.

(Ifantidou-Trouki 1993:76)

Allegedly, it seems, is truth conditional and cannot be analysed as an indicator.

The application of the test to illocutionary adverbials and evidential adverbials is, according to Ifantidou-Trouki, much less straightforward. She identifies two problems. First, when illocutionary adverbials are used in conditional utterances, they are interpreted as modifying the whole utterance rather than the embedded clause. For example (54) is interpreted as (55) rather than (56).

(54) If Tom, frankly, continues to come home at 5 in the morning, then he will have to find somewhere else to live.

(55) I tell you frankly that if Tom continues to come home at 5 in the morning, then he will have to find somewhere else to live.

(56) If I tell you frankly that Tom continues to come home at 5 in the morning, then he will have to find somewhere else to live.

Second, there are some illocutionary and evidential adverbials which must be interpreted as VP adverbials when they are used in conditionals. For example,

Ifantidou-Trouki's example in (57) is interpreted as (58), which, as she says, is not the kind of interpretation we are interested in.

- (57) If Ben is evidently annoyed, then we will drop the subject.
 (58) If Ben is showing his annoyance in an evident way, then we will drop the subject.

Ifantidou-Trouki shows that the first problem can be solved by embedding illocutionary adverbials under the scope of factive connectives such as *because*. Since the speaker's use of *because* in (59) does not commit her to the truth of (60), the illocutionary adverbial *frankly* can be shown to be non-truth conditional as the speech act theoretic story predicts.

- (59) Anna should not be invited, because she frankly talks too much.
 (60) I tell you frankly that Anna talks too much.

Her solution to the second problem, however, shows that evidential adverbials do not conform to the speech act theoretic analysis. This solution hinges on the observation that manner adverbials and evidentials do not occur in the same kind of environments. For example, according to Jackendoff (1972), manner adverbials cannot occur before modals or aspect in US (and New Zealand) English. Thus in my (New Zealand) dialect, (61) can only be given an evidential interpretation.

- (61) The cook obviously will poison the soup.

Since *obviously* cannot be given a manner adverb interpretation in the conditional in (62), we can ask whether the speaker will be understood to be saying that the state of affairs in (63) is sufficient reason for going ahead with eating the meal.

- (62) If the cook obviously won't poison the soup, we can eat the meal without worrying.
 (63) It is obvious that the cook won't poison the soup.

Ifantidou-Trouki's verdict is that it is, and hence that, contrary to the speech act theoretic story, evidentials like *obviously* are truth conditional.

The final argument hinges on the distributional differences between an evidential adverbial such as *evidently* or *obviously* and their VP adverb analogues. While it is clear that there are environments in which, say, *evidently* cannot be given a manner adverb interpretation, it is not at all clear that the evidential *evidently* has a meaning which is completely unrelated to the meaning of the

VP adverb *evidently*. Similarly, it is not clear that the meaning of the VP adverb *frankly* is unrelated to the meaning of the illocutionary adverbial *frankly*. However, the speech act theorist is committed to saying that the meaning of the sentence adverbial is not equivalent to that of the corresponding VP adverb: the sentence adverbial is non-truth conditional while the VP adverb is truth conditional. If Ifantidou-Trouki is right, then sentence adverbials cannot be analysed uniformly in non-truth conditional terms in any case. However, apart from this, it simply seems counter-intuitive to say that *frankly* in (64) is not synonymous with *frankly* in (65).

- (64) Frankly, I don't give a damn.
 (65) She spoke to him frankly about his behaviour.

As we shall see in the following chapter, this problem can be solved in a framework which assumes that the bearers of truth conditions are not utterances but thoughts. However, we shall also see that within this framework, expressions such as sentence adverbials turn out to have nothing in common with other so-called non-truth conditional phenomena. In particular, they have nothing in common with the expressions which we turn to in the next section, namely, the ones Grice analysed in terms of conventional implicature.

2.3 Conventional implicature

In the last section we saw that the speech act theoretic distinction between describing and indicating has been applied to the analysis of a variety of non-truth conditional phenomena. Clearly, the validity of these analyses depends on the validity of the assumption which is central to the speech act theoretic programme, namely, that the interpretation of an utterance crucially involves the identification of the illocutionary act it performs. And as I have noted, this assumption has been questioned by Sperber and Wilson in their reassessment of the speech act theoretic approach to meaning. However, these analyses also depend on an understanding of what it means for an expression to indicate information rather than describe it. And as Rieber (1997:56) points out, writers who analyse expressions as indicators are much more concerned with what they communicate than how they communicate it.

The exception to this trend is Grice (1989). His answer to this question derives from his recognition that certain expressions presented a problem for his notion of saying and thus for his distinction between what is said and what is conversationally implicated. This distinction – between what is said and what is implicated – was itself a central component of Grice's attempt

to salvage a minimal truth functional semantics for the natural language versions of the logical connectives in the face of the attempts by the ordinary language philosophers to show that the semantics for natural language could not be based on the semantics of artificial logical languages. In this sense, Grice was moving away from the speech act theoretic tradition. However, as the following discussion shows, his treatment of the expressions which posed a problem for his notion of saying turned out to follow the speech act theoretic tradition outlined in the preceding section.⁶ In this section, I shall argue, first, that Grice's notion of conventional implicature fails to shed light on the question of what it means for an expression to indicate information, and, second, that Rieber's (1997) attempt to modify Grice's analysis within the speech act theoretic tradition only highlights the problems inherent in this approach.

Grice's most important contribution to the developments of modern pragmatics was to define a notion of speaker's meaning in terms of speaker intentions. Thus he claimed that: "'A meant_N something by *x*" is (roughly) equivalent to "A intended the utterance of *x* to produce some effect in an audience by means of the recognition of that intention"' and 'to ask what A meant is to ask for a specification of that effect' (1989:220). While it is clear that Grice wanted this notion of meaning to go beyond linguistically encoded or conventional meaning and that he saw inference as playing a key role in the identification of speaker meaning, it is equally clear that he intended the notion of conventional meaning as a special case of speaker's meaning. Hence his distinction between meaning something by *saying* it and meaning something by *implicating* it. While the identification of conversationally implicated meaning crucially involves inference and the assumption that the speaker is conforming to general conversational principles, his definition of 'what is said' (given below) circumscribes an area in which conventional meaning and speaker's meaning overlap.

(66) An utterer *U* says that *p* iff:

U did something *x* (1) by which *U* meant that *p*

(2) which is an occurrence of a type *S* which means '*p*' in some linguistic system.
(Grice 1989:88)

However, as Grice recognized, this definition applies to the suggestions carried by words such as *but*, *therefore* and *so*, suggestions which he did *not* want to

count as part of what is said. Consider, for example, what he says about the suggestion carried by *therefore* in (67).

(67) Bill is a philosopher and he is, therefore, brave.

Now I do not wish to allow that, in my favoured sense of 'say', one who utters (67) will have said that Bill's being courageous follows from his being a philosopher, though he may well have said that Bill is courageous and that he is a philosopher. I would wish to maintain that the semantic function of the word 'therefore' is to enable a speaker to *indicate*, though not to *say*, that a certain consequence holds. (Grice 1989:21)

Accordingly, Grice suggests that we should describe this suggestion as a *conventional implicature*. Why is it so important for Grice to exclude the suggestion carried by *therefore* from what is said? In *The Lectures on Logic and Conversation* (Grice 1989) he simply says that this sense of 'what is said', which excludes the meanings of words such as *therefore* and *but*, has greater theoretical utility than other definitions. Neale (1992) takes this to mean that Grice wanted his notion of what is said to coincide with the truth conditional content of the utterance. The problem is that he also wanted it to coincide with the conventional meanings of the words uttered.

In fact, as Sperber and Wilson (1995) and Carston (1988, 1998, 2002) have shown, Grice failed to recognize the extent of the gap between linguistically encoded meaning and truth conditional content – a gap which is filled by inference and pragmatic principles. Given the role of pragmatically constrained inference in the recovery of truth conditional content, the existence of conventional meaning which does not contribute to truth conditions might not seem so problematic.

However, Grice did see this as a problem, and enlisted speech acts as a means of solving it. He begins by distinguishing between two kinds of speech acts: *central* or *ground-floor* speech acts, which include making assertions and telling people to do something, on the one hand, and *non-central* or *higher-order* speech acts, which are the speech acts indicated by expressions such as *therefore* and *but*, on the other. On the basis of this distinction, he modifies his definition of 'what is said' thus:

(68) An utterer *U* says that *p* in uttering *X* iff *U* performs a central speech act with the content *p* and *X* contains some conventional device whose meaning is such that it indicates the performance of this central act.

(Grice 1989:121–2)

Since expressions such as *therefore* and *but* indicate the performance of non-central acts rather than central acts, they are excluded from what is said.

⁶ For an excellent outline of Grice's so-called theory of conversation and contribution to modern pragmatics, see Neale (1992).

Grice elaborates on the notion of a non-central speech act in his 'Retrospective epilogue' (Grice 1989:359-68). The speaker of an utterance such as (69), he argues, is performing two central speech acts of assertion and, at the same time, a higher-order speech act in which she is commenting on the performance of the central speech act. In this case, the effect of this comment is to indicate that there is a ~~contrast~~ ^{contrast} between the two assertions.

- (69) My brother-in-law lives on a peak in Darien; his great-aunt, on the other hand, was a nurse in World War I.

On this account, Grice claims, the fact that a hearer may find it impossible to establish a contrast between the two assertions does not mean that the speaker has said anything false. He would simply have committed a 'semantic offense' of misperforming the higher-order speech act. Similar analyses are suggested for 'therefore', which signals the performance of a higher-order speech act in which the speaker is commenting that one assertion is a conclusion derived from the other, and 'moreover', which signals that one assertion is additional to the other. In each case the misperformance of the higher-order speech act will never 'touch the truth value ... of the speaker's words' (Grice 1989:362).

If an expression such as *on the other hand* or *but* signals the performance of a non-central speech act, then that speech act, like all speech acts, must have an illocutionary force and a propositional content. It seems that Grice would want to say that the speech act whose performance is signalled by *but* or *on the other hand* in an utterance such as (69) has the content in (70), and hence that this is the conventional implicature carried by *but*.

- (70) There is a contrast between the assertion that the speaker's brother-in-law lives on a peak in Darien and the assertion that his great-aunt was a nurse in World War I.

But if this is the case, then it is not clear what the force of the act is. It cannot be the act of contrasting since the fact that there is a contrast is represented by the propositional content of the act. More generally, it is not clear whether 'contrasting', 'adding' or 'explaining', which, according to Grice, are associated with *but*, *moreover* and *so* respectively, are speech acts in the sense made familiar by classical speech act theory (Austin 1962, Searle 1969). Perhaps one could say that this higher-order act is simply an act of commenting. But then one would have to say that acts signalled by the non-truth conditional discourse connectives – for example, *but*, *so*, *moreover* and *after all* – are individuated not by their illocutionary properties but by their propositional content. That would mean that these expressions are not after all being analysed

as illocutionary force indicators, but are being treated as indicators of something propositional. And this would leave us with the task of specifying what exactly is the relationship between an expression such as *but* and the proposition in (70). For it is not clear that whatever is encoded by *but* appears in this proposition in the same way that, say, what is encoded by *great-aunt* or *lives* appears in the propositional content of the 'ground-floor' speech act performed by (69).

It seems that these questions might be answered by Rieber's (1997) modification of Grice's analysis of conventional implicature. According to his analysis, expressions such as *but* are *tacit performatives*. Thus he argues that (71) should be analysed as a conjoined proposition containing a parenthetical performative, that is, as (72):

- (71) Sheila is rich but she is unhappy.

- (72) Sheila is rich and (I suggest that this contrasts) she is unhappy.
(Rieber 1997:54)

The classical speech act theoretic argument that performatives do not have truth values is no longer universally accepted. Thus according to Recanati (1987) they are self-verifying declarations and hence must be regarded as having a value 'true'. However, Rieber claims that his analysis is compatible with either analysis. Since, according to the classical approach, the performative in (72) has no truth value and simply 'indicates' that the propositional content has the force of a suggestion, the truth value of (71) does not depend on whether there is a contrast between wealth and unhappiness. At the same time, since according to Recanati's (1987) analysis the performative in (72) is a self-verifying declaration that the speaker is suggesting there is a contrast, its truth is not affected by whether there is a contrast. Thus it would seem that on either approach Rieber's analysis 'gets the truth conditions right' (1997:54).

However, the question is whether in getting the truth conditions right Rieber has also explained what expressions such as *but* communicate and how they do it. As I have argued (Blakemore 2000, Blakemore and Carston 1999), it is not clear that Rieber's assumption that all utterances containing *but* express a conjoined proposition can be maintained (see chapter 4, section 1, for further discussion). The question here, however, is not whether *but* should be analysed as *and* plus 'something else', but rather whether Rieber's re-analysis of Grice's notion of conventional implicature takes us any further towards an account of what it means for a linguistic expression to indicate or signal information.

According to Rieber, his analysis is one in which 'what is non-truth conditionally expressed by the discourse connective is part of their *conventional*

*that is the
Grice does
non-truth
SA's have?*

non-verbal act of, say, deliberately opening the fridge door in order to show someone how empty it is.

In his discussion of indicating, Rieber links his notion of showing to Sperber and Wilson's (1995) notion of ostension. However, Sperber and Wilson define ostensive communication as behaviour which makes it mutually manifest to the audience and communicator that the communicator intends, by means of that behaviour, to make a set of assumptions manifest or more manifest to the audience. Rieber, on the other hand, is thinking only of those cases in which some assumption(s) become manifest to the audience even if she does not recognize that the communicator had not intended to make them manifest. The assumption that the fridge is empty might have become manifest to the audience even if she had thought that the communicator was opening the fridge for the purpose of seeing whether there was any milk.

This might suggest that Rieber's distinction between 'ordinary communication' and showing is a distinction between cases in which the communicator provides indirect evidence for information, on the one hand, and cases in which the communicator provides direct evidence for information, on the other. For example, while the act of opening the fridge door may have provided direct evidence that it is empty, the act of producing the utterance in (74) can make the communicator's intention to make an assumption manifest only if the audience has first recognized the communicator's intention to make this assumption manifest.

(74) There's nothing in the fridge.

For the relationship between the evidence produced (the utterance) and the assumptions conveyed is arbitrary, and it is only by discovering the communicator's intention to make particular assumptions manifest that the audience can discover, indirectly or inferentially, what these assumptions are.

However, Sperber and Wilson (1995:53) have argued that there is not a sharp dividing line between showing and saying that, but rather that there is a whole continuum of cases ranging from cases of showing to cases of saying that. *All* of these cases are cases of ostension in the sense that they involve making one's intention to convey information manifest, and they *all* involve inference. Thus even if the act of opening the door provides direct evidence for the information that the fridge is empty, there are other assumptions which are made manifest only indirectly – for example, that the communicator is trying to be relevant, that the communicator is aware that the fridge is empty. On this view, ostension is not just showing (to be contrasted with saying that), as Rieber seems to suggest, but a well-defined domain which covers all cases of human communication.

meaning' (1997:55, my emphasis). At first sight it is not clear whether meaning can be both tacit and conventional. It might seem that in saying that the conventional meaning of *but* is analysed in terms of a performative of the form *I suggest that p*, Rieber is saying that there is a linguistically determined relation between *but* and the information that its utterance constitutes the performance of the act of suggesting that *p*. On the other hand, it would seem that in saying that this performative is tacit, Rieber is suggesting that the utterance does not actually contain an expression which identifies the act being performed.

It seems that the apparent contradiction here stems from the assumption that 'tacit' means 'implicit', and hence that in the absence of an actual performative verb, *I suggest*, the hearer must infer the information that the speaker is performing the act of suggesting on the basis of the context and pragmatic principles in the same way as a hearer would infer that the speaker of (73) is issuing a warning.

(73) There's a bomb in that car.

In fact, it seems that Rieber does not intend 'tacit' to be construed in this sense, and that he is including *but* in that category of expressions which, according to speech act theoretic analyses, are conventionally performative, but which simply do not happen to contain a performative verb – for example, expressions such as *thanks* or *pardon*, which would be analysed as performatives *I thank you* and *I apologize* respectively.

From a speech act theoretic point of view, saying that *pardon* is equivalent to the explicit performative *I apologize* is illuminating only in the light of the constitutive rules for performing a successful act of apologizing. Analogously, saying that *but* is equivalent in meaning to a performative of the form *I suggest that p* is illuminating only to the extent that we understand what it means to perform the speech act of suggesting. Rieber does not give the constitutive rules for suggesting. Indeed, he is doubtful whether *suggest* is the most appropriate verb here, and proceeds instead to an account of what he means by signalling or showing or indicating.

According to this account, the act of showing consists of calling the hearer's attention to something 'that the hearer would believe were it brought to her awareness' (Rieber 1997:61). This sort of communication, he argues, is different from ordinary communication since 'the speaker does not need to stand behind her words; all he needs to do is to induce the hearer to notice something' (1997:61). This suggests that according to Rieber, the communicative act associated with the use of an expression such as *but* is analogous to the

In this discussion it has been assumed that all ostensive communication consists in providing evidence (for example, opening the door of a fridge, producing an utterance) from which the audience is intended to derive assumptions by inference (for example, that the communicator is being relevant, that the fridge is empty). Moreover, it has been assumed that the key to the notion of showing or indicating lies in the nature of the relationship between the evidence provided and the assumptions that are derived. However, it seems that not all communication consists in providing evidence for assumptions. Consider the case in which a communicator taps the audience on the shoulder and points in the direction of an oncoming bus with the intention of getting the audience to form the assumptions in (75).

- (75) (a) A number 86 bus is approaching the communicator and audience.
(b) We should get on the bus that is approaching.

In this case one would not say that the tap on the audience's shoulder or the pointing gesture are themselves evidence for (75a-b). Nor would one say that in making these gestures the communicator produces the evidence for (75a-b), as, say the act of opening the door could be described as producing the evidence for the assumption that the fridge is empty or the act of producing the utterance in (76) could be described as producing the evidence for the assumptions in (75).

- (76) An 86 is coming.

The evidence for (75a-b) is the sight of the approaching bus. On the other hand, one could say that these gestures alter the saliency of the bus so either it is accessible as a referent in the comprehension of a following utterance (for example (76)), or it is accessible as a referent in an assumption that the audience constructs for herself.

What distinguishes the act of pointing from the act of producing the utterance in (76) is not (*contra* Rieber) that it is designed to make the audience aware of information that she could have recovered for herself, but rather that it is not itself an act of producing the evidence from which information is derived. Pointing is, of course, a natural device rather than a linguistic one. The question is whether a linguistic expression such as *but* might be said to 'point' in this sense?

If using *but* is like pointing, then we have to be able to say, first, what information it makes salient, and second, what role this information plays in the derivation of communicated assumptions. Rieber's answer to the first question seems to be that it makes the information that there is a contrast between

two statements more salient. However, Rieber does not show what role this information plays in the derivation of assumptions from utterances containing *but* – except, of course, that it is not part of their propositional (truth conditional) content.

2.4 Is conventional implicature a myth?

The assumption that whatever is encoded by *but* is not part of the truth conditional content of the utterances that contain it, was the starting point not only for Rieber's analysis, but for the first part of this book. However, Bach (1999) has argued that this assumption is mistaken and hence that there is no need for any account of non-truth conditional indicators or conventional implicature.

As Rieber has pointed out, a speaker who uses *but* in an attitude context such as the one in (77) will not necessarily be taken to be suggesting that there is a contrast.

- (77) Tom thinks that Sheila is rich but she is unhappy. However, I have always thought that all rich people are unhappy.

Rieber is, apparently, happy to live with this problem. However, it is not clear that he should be. As Wilson and Sperber have pointed out, it seems that no speech act theoretic analysis can accommodate the fact that expressions such as *but* and *so* can occur within indirect thought reports, since the speaker is neither performing the speech act supposed to be signalled by these expressions nor attributing any speech act to someone else.

I shall return to Wilson and Sperber's point in the following chapter. My aim in the final section of this chapter is to discuss Bach's (1999) argument that the fact that *but* can occur in the *that*-clauses of indirect quotations shows that *but* cannot be construed as carrying a conventional implicature, and that it contributes straightforwardly to what is said. As Bach says, while it is true that an expression such as *but* can be used to make 'an editorial comment on what he is reporting as being said', it can 'also contribute to what is being reported' (Bach 1999:339, my emphasis). Accordingly, he argues that an expression such as *but* functions as an operator which combines with the rest of the sentence to yield a proposition which, although it is not part of the truth conditional content of the utterance, is nevertheless something which has truth conditions.

As Bach recognizes, it is difficult to pin down the exact contribution *but* makes to the interpretation of the utterances that contain it because it interacts with the context. In the following chapter, I shall argue that this elusive quality of *but*, and, indeed, of many other expressions that have been analysed as discourse

markers, can be explained in terms of the fact that it does not encode a concept. However, Bach is committed to an analysis in which *but* encodes conceptual information: according to him (and Grice 1989 and Rieber 1997), it encodes the information that there is some kind of contrast. The problem is that the nature of the contrastive relation seems to vary across contexts. Accordingly, his solution is to treat the information encoded by *but* as under-specifying the intended contrastive relation, or, in other words, as information which must be pragmatically completed or enriched by the hearer before she can identify the intended relation. This makes 'contrast' something like a blueprint for a concept, and Bach's treatment of *but* seems to follow the lines that he proposes for the analysis of indexicals. Unfortunately, Bach does not elaborate on this, and consequently, it is not clear either what the pragmatic processes which 'complete' the blueprint are or what the result of these processes is like in particular contexts.

Apart from this, there is a range of other expressions in English which have been treated as encoding a contrastive type of relation, but which are subtly different in meaning from each other and from *but* – for example, *however*, *nevertheless*, *although*, utterance-initial *yet* and *still*. Since Bach says very little, if anything, about these expressions, it is difficult to say how he would capture these subtle distinctions of meaning. He does note that *nevertheless* does not pass his indirect quotation test, and hence must be treated as a constituent of a higher-level speech act – that is, as a Gricean conventional implicature (see below). The effect of this, however, is not particularly illuminating: it simply amounts to saying that while *but* encodes a concept of contrast which is part of the propositional content of the utterance that contains it, *nevertheless* encodes a concept of contrast which is not part of the propositional content of the utterance that contains it. More generally, contrast seems to be just too crude for capturing the contributions of any of these expressions. Obviously, this is a problem not just for Bach, but for anyone who has analysed *but* in terms of contrast, and I will be returning to it in chapter 4 and in my discussion of coherence relations in chapter 5.

As Bach emphasizes, non-truth conditional analyses of *but* assume that its contrastive import is expressed in a proposition which is distinct from the conjoined proposition asserted. As we have seen, Grice's original suggestion was that *but* conventionally implicates the proposition that there is a contrast between the two statements. He then developed this analysis so that this extra proposition is a comment on the central speech act. Similarly, in Rieber's (1997) tacit performative account the contrastive import of *but* is expressed in a parenthetical

performative which is comma'd off from the asserted conjunction. I believe Bach is right to say that there is something wrong with an approach in which a single expression encodes a proposition. However, it is not clear that he has in fact offered a real alternative to the conventional implicature account. His argument is that we do not need to treat *but* as contributing an extra proposition if we analyse it as an operator on the rest of the sentence: it preserves the original proposition(s) while yielding a new proposition. Bach does not provide a detailed account of the way in which *but* affects the two propositions it operates on. However, it seems that although he does not treat the contrastive import of *but* as something that is expressed in an implicated proposition, he does still treat it as a constituent of a proposition. That is, it seems that Bach assumes that the hearer of an utterance containing *but* recovers a proposition with something like the concept CONTRAST as a constituent.

Clearly, Bach's claim that *but* contributes to what is said conflicts with the generally held claim that *but* does not contribute to truth conditions. For example, it would generally be accepted that the fact that there is no identifiable contrast between the segments of utterances such as (78) does not affect its truth value. It is true provided that the roses are flowering and that the speaker has had breakfast.

(78) The roses are flowering but I have had breakfast.

As we have seen in the first section of this chapter, intuitions about truth conditionality are not always straightforward. Not only do people's intuitions vary, but also the standard tests for truth conditionality are based on assumptions which cannot always be maintained. For Bach, this would not be surprising, since, according to him, these intuitions are the result of a forced choice. This choice, he argues, is based on the common misconception that every sentence expresses just one proposition. If we abandon the idea that a sentence can express one and only one proposition, then we can see how it could be partly true and partly false. Thus in (78) the 'primary propositions' that the roses are flowering and the speaker has had breakfast could be true, while the 'secondary proposition' that the fact that the roses are flowering contrasts with the fact that the speaker has had breakfast might be false (Bach 1999:328).

In fact, if Bach's claim that the information encoded by *but* does not fully determine the contrastive relation intended on a particular occasion, the 'secondary' proposition would not be the one given, but one derived by a process of pragmatic completion. Apart from this, it is clear that Bach's departure from the classical truth conditional position depends on the definition of a criterion

for deciding on a particular occasion which of the propositions expressed by an utterance is primary and which is secondary. On the assumption that this can be done, it is worth asking what would be meant by 'the truth conditions of the utterance' on Bach's approach. As Iten (2000b) points out, it seems that this would have to mean the totality of the propositions expressed (primary and secondary). At the same time, the scope tests that are standardly used for testing for truth conditional content would be inapplicable, since logical operators and factive connectives only take a single proposition in their scope. As Iten says, this leaves those accounts which wish to maintain a distinction between truth conditional content and implicated content without a tool for drawing the distinction.

As we shall see, the idea that an utterance expresses more than one proposition has also been explored in relevance theoretic semantics (see Ifantidou-Trouki 1993, Blakemore 1990). However, paradoxically, this analysis was proposed for expressions such as illocutionary adverbials, apposition markers and parenthetical verbs, which according to Bach (1999) are *not* like *but* since they do not pass his indirect quotation test. According to him, all of these should be analysed as indicators of higher-order speech acts – that is, as Gricean conversational implicatures. In other words, it seems that for these expressions, Bach wishes to retain the notion of conventional implicature.

Since Bach does not apply his indirect quotation test to the entire range of non-truth conditional phenomena listed in section 1 of this chapter, it is difficult to know what he would say about syntactic devices such as cleft constructions, such as the ones in (79).

- (79) Tom said that it was Ben who ate the cake.

Since the construction can occur within the speech report, it would seem that it would, by Bach's criterion, be part of what is said. This would leave Bach with the problem of specifying the secondary proposition yielded by the cleft construction. However, before anyone begins this sort of task, perhaps we should look more closely at Bach's assumption that an element following the complementizer in an indirect quotation contributes to something propositional.

It is generally recognized that what Banfield (1982) calls represented speech and thought may include expressions and constructions which although they can be attributed to the person whose thought is being represented, cannot be easily analysed as contributing to something propositional. Consider for example, the uses of 'oh' and the repetition in (80), and the reformulations and repetition in (81).

- (80) She mustn't let her connexion with him go; oh, she mustn't let it go, or she was lost, lost utterly in this world of riff-raffy expensive people and joy-hogs. Oh, the joy-hogs.

- (81) That was the way to live – *carelessly, recklessly*, spending oneself. He got to his feet and began to wade towards the shore, pressing his toes into the firm, wrinkled sand. *To take things easy, not to fight against the ebb and flow of life*, but to give way to it – that was what was needed. It was this tension that was all wrong. *To live – to live!*

(Katherine Mansfield, 'At the Bay', 206)⁸

It is true that the expressions and constructions which according to Banfield characterize free indirect speech cannot be indirectly quoted in embedded clauses as *but* can. However, the phenomenon of free indirect speech or thought does raise the question of what is meant by saying that a writer or speaker is representing a thought. If we say that *oh* in (80) or the repetition in (81) is being used to represent a character's thought, then it seems we cannot construe thoughts simply in terms of their (truth conditional) propositional content.

Moreover, it seems that there are devices, such as emphatic stress, which are generally considered not to contribute to propositional content and yet can be indirectly quoted in an embedded construction. Thus while the marked stress on *walking* in (82) would be understood as an editorial comment on the thought being reported, it seems that (83a) can be interpreted in much the same way as (83b) and hence that the emphasis on *needed* is being attributed to someone other than the speaker/narrator.

- (82) She says she is WALKING to the station, for God's sake. It'll take at least an hour and the train leaves at 8.

- (83) (a) John pointed out that they couldn't really afford a holiday. But no, she said that she NEEDED to get away.
(b) John pointed out that they couldn't really afford a holiday. But no, she NEEDED to get away.

These sort of phenomena suggest that Bach's argument that the use of *but* in indirect quotations is evidence that it contributes to the (propositional) content of utterances can be maintained only if either it can be shown that expressions such as *oh* and devices such as repetition and emphasis do not encode any

⁷ First published 1960; reprinted London: Penguin, 1961.

⁸ From *Selected Stories*, chosen and introduced by D. M. Davin. First published 1953; reprinted London: Oxford University Press, 1967.

aspect of a represented thought at all or it can be shown that they contribute to something with truth conditions. It would seem that the first option is difficult to reconcile with the way that examples of represented thought and speech are interpreted, while the second is difficult to reconcile with the notoriously vague (and sometimes poetic) effects of these stylistic devices.

In the following chapter, I shall argue that the hearer of an utterance containing *but* does not recover an implicated proposition (see Grice) or a parenthetical proposition (see Rieber) or a proposition containing a contrast operator (see Bach). I shall argue that if we approach the question of what kind of information an expression such as *but* makes salient from a cognitive point of view rather than a speech act theoretic point of view, then not only will we have an account of how this information contributes to the interpretation of the utterances containing it, but also we will be able to explain exactly how *but* and the devices such as stress and repetition can be used in the representation of an attributed thought.

3 *Relevance and meaning*

3.1 Relevance and the semantics/pragmatics distinction

Relevance theory is known as a theory of pragmatics, and, indeed, Sperber and Wilson regard their book as a result of their different interests in the study of contextual factors in verbal communication – in Wilson's case, an interest which began with her work on presuppositions (Wilson 1975), and in Sperber's, an interest in rhetoric and symbolism (Sperber 1975); (see Sperber and Wilson 1995: vi). However, as we have seen, it is impossible to have a view of pragmatics without having a view of semantics, or vice versa, and it is not surprising that the relevance theoretic approach to pragmatics comes with a view of semantics attached. My aim in this chapter is not to give a complete survey of relevance theory,¹ but to outline those aspects which underlie the account of non-truth conditional meaning which I shall be giving in the next chapter. This will mean that the focus will be on the relevance theoretic view of the semantics/pragmatics distinction, the distinction between explicit and implicit content and the relationship between linguistic form and relevance which derives, on the one hand, from the relevance theoretic commitment to a computational view of the mind, and on the other, from the principle which, according to relevance theory, constrains the inferences involved in understanding utterances.

Usually, pragmatics is defined after semantics. That is, its definition is thought of as being a consequence of the way one defines semantics. We have already seen an example of this – the view encapsulated in Gazdar's (1979) slogan 'PRAGMATICS = MEANING MINUS TRUTH CONDITIONS'. Let us instead start by looking at verbal communication as a whole.

As we have seen in the introduction to this book, there are different ways of looking at communication. According to the view advocated by, for example, Mey (1993), communication must be viewed as a social phenomenon, and a

¹ Sperber and Wilson have themselves published a number of paper-length outlines (see, for example, Sperber and Wilson 1987, Wilson 1994). In addition, there are encyclopaedia entries by Blakemore (1995) and Moeschler and Reboul (1994), and a textbook (Blakemore 1992).