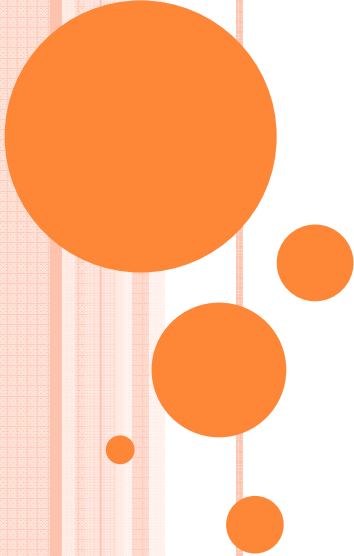




PRAGMATICS, PREFERRED MEANINGS, AND PROSODY



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WE NEED A “SCIENCE OF THE
UNSAID” (STEPHEN LEVINSON,
2000)



• PRAGMATIC PHENOMENA

- Although definitions of pragmatics are not agreed-upon, the phenomena studied by pragmaticists in general are.
- All contribute in some way to the “fleshing out” of (en)coded linguistic meaning
- Coded meaning highly underdetermines linguistic interpretation, broadly construed



• PRAGMATIC PHENOMENA

- A useful metaphor is to think of coded meaning (or “literal” meaning) as providing the basic skeleton, and pragmatic information as providing the muscles, skin, organs, etc.

(3) Q: Do you wanna go out tonight?
 A: I have to study.

- In a literal sense, B’s answer is non-sensical, but once we combine the coded meaning with the context, including our world-knowledge, we can easily understand it as a refusal.



• IS PRAGMATIC INFORMATION ENCODED?

- In order to use many linguistic expressions appropriately, we need access to pragmatic information, i.e. the meaning of these expressions **MUST** make some reference to contextual information:

(4) Even Billy came to class today.

- What does the meaning of ‘Even’ in this sentence force us to interpret? Can we understand the meaning of ‘Even’ without knowing how it relates to contextual information?



• IS PRAGMATIC INFORMATION ENCODED?

- What kind of contextual information must we have access to in order to understand the meaning of *let alone*, as in a sentence like:

I can't remember the title of the book we were supposed to read, let alone the details of the story.

- Try to separate out the coded (=semantic) aspects of meaning from the inferential (=pragmatic) aspects of meaning. It's not that easy...



• ANGLO-AMERICAN VS. EUROPEAN PRAGMATICS

- Anglo-American view of pragmatics is very much phenomena-centered: implicature, deixis, anaphora, presupposition, speech acts...
- European view is much broader, and conceives of pragmatics as ANY use of language in context, including what we would normally call sociolinguistics, and into other fields beyond linguistics
- Note however that anyone from anywhere can adopt one or the other perspective



THREE TENDENCIES IN PRAGMATICS (PORTOLÉS 2004)

- Pragmatics = Meaning – Truth Conditions
- Pragmatics as the study of pragmatic (or communicative) competence [Similarities to Huang’s “European Continental” approach]
- Pragmatics as a “perspective” on language, “que se ocupa de la relación entre las distintas formas lingüísticas y su uso” (2004:28)
- I take the same position as Portolés and adopt the third, “perspectival,” view (≠ Huang’s!)



THREE TENDENCIES IN PRAGMATICS (PORTOLÉS 2004)

- Another way that pragmatics has been delimited from semantics is on the basis of a code/inference distinction (e.g. Ariel 2008)
- This is promising in theory, however often it is difficult to determine whether (some aspect of) a meaning is encoded or inferred
- In semantic change, inferred meanings > encoded meanings, not vice-versa, and these may be impossible to disentangle at particular stages



• SOME KEY CONCEPTS IN PRAGMATICS

- Linguistic Underdeterminacy (Property)

El cuadro de María ‘María’s picture’

- Pragmatic Enrichment (Process)

Cuando él viene aquí, todo se estropea

‘When he comes here, everything gets ruined’

- Reference Assignment



SOME KEY CONCEPTS IN PRAGMATICS

- Propositional Content
 - Semantics or Pragmatics or Both?
 - Same proposition, many sentences
 - Same sentence, many propositions
- Context(s)
- Truth Value vs. Truth Conditions
- Entailment
- Defeasibility
- Felicity
- Commutation test (cf. Amaral & Schwenter 2005)



• BACK TO LINGUISTIC UNDERDETERMINACY AND PRAGMATIC ENRICHMENT

- Underdeterminacy is gradient:

-La Argentina tiene una extensión de 2.766.890 km²

-La casa tiene una ventana rota

-Ella lo agarró

-En casa

- “Se puede afirmar que todo enunciado está subdeterminado desde el punto de vista de lo exclusivamente codificado en la lengua” (Portolés 2004: 147)



• BACK TO LINGUISTIC UNDERDETERMINACY AND PRAGMATIC ENRICHMENT

- Portolés (2004, ch. 8) provides an exhaustive list of types of pragmatic enrichment:

- Saturation processes (e.g. domain restriction, ellipsis)

Han venido todos

Ana tiene coche pero Beatriz no

- “Free” enrichment (unarticulated constituents)

No te vas a morir

Antonio bebe

- Disambiguation processes

Rafael ama a su esposa y Martín también

A Marta le gustaría la casa si fuera alegre



METHODS IN PRAGMATICS

- There is no one method shared by pragmaticists (no PragVARBRUL or PragPraat or PragToBi)
- Somewhat paradoxically, at least in the Anglo-American tradition, analyses of constructed data have been the norm
- In this sense, A-A pragmatics has not strayed very far from its philosophical roots
- But things are actually changing rather quickly...



METHODS IN PRAGMATICS

- Harris & Potts (2009): “We think that the investigative strategy of reporting basic intuitions about individual cases has run its course in this area [appositives and expressives]. More and different evidence is needed.”
- Beaver (2007): “Much of the time, generalizations based on artificial examples and our own intuitions are wrong!”
- Experimental Pragmatics has exploded in the last 5 years or so



WHERE IT ALL BEGINS...

- H. P. Grice... Most (if not all) of what is now at the forefront of pragmatic research started with his *Logic and Conversation*
- Model of rational behavior, focused on intentional, speaker-based meaning (-nn)
- Distinguishes between “What is Said” and “What is Implicated”, with the determining factor being truth-conditional vs. non-truth-conditional meaning



WHERE IT ALL BEGINS...

- Despite what many people assume, Grice's bipartite distinction did not necessarily draw the line between semantics and pragmatics
- Even Grice saw the need for pragmatic processes in determining the content of "What is Said"
- Much debate about how much pragmatics is involved, when it enters the process, etc., but everyone seems to agree on its inclusion



GRICE: CP AND CONVERSATIONAL MAXIMS

- **The Cooperative Principle** (Grice 1975:45)

Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

- **Grice's Maxims** (Grice 1975:45-46)

Quality: Try to make your contribution one that is true.

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.



GRICE: CP AND CONVERSATIONAL MAXIMS

- *Quantity*

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

- *Relation*

Be relevant.

- *Manner*

1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
4. Be orderly.



GRICE: CP AND CONVERSATIONAL MAXIMS

- People expect cooperation!!!
- “Dummy” nouns (“thingamajig/thingamabob”, “whatchamacallit”, “chisme”, etc.) take advantage of an addressee’s inclination to be cooperative
- There have many attempts to reduce Grice’s Maxims (but relatively few to expand them), to three (Levinson), two (Horn), or even one (Sperber & Wilson) “principle(s)”, mainly due to the overlap (whether entailed or implicated) among Grice’s original formulations



GRICE'S MEANING TREE



IMPLICATURE

- Speaker meaning conveyed beyond the Gricean “What is Said”. Arises through our combined interpretation of “what is said” and the contextual circumstances, and our assumptions that our interlocutors are standardly observing Grice’s Cooperative Principle and Maxims

- (1) Tengo un hijo.
- (2) Sacó la llave y abrió la puerta.
- (3) The ham sandwich left without leaving a tip.
- (4) Se casaron, tuvieron tres hijos y vivieron muy felices.



IMPLICATURE

- Simons, Mandy. 2007. Presupposition and cooperation. Ms., Carnegie Mellon

(5) Ann: Are we going to have a picnic?

Bob: It's raining.

“Bob has failed to give a directly relevant yes or no answer to Ann's yes/no question. The assumption that Bob intends to be relevant leads Ann to assume that his utterance can be interpreted as an answer. So, by some process of inference, she concludes that by telling her that it is raining, he means to convey that they should not have a picnic.”



IMPLICATURE

- “There is an additional inference which Ann must make in order to grasp Bob’s communicative intention. In order to derive the implicature, Ann must also be able to recognize that Bob is assuming a particular relationship between picnics and rain: namely, that one does not picnic in the rain. It is *only* if Ann can identify this assumption that she can calculate the intended conversational implicature.”
- This further assumption is normally considered a “presupposition”



IMPLICATURE

(6) Ann: Are we going to have a picnic?

Bob: There's a pear tree in my garden.

- Lacking an assumption (ps) about pear trees and their relationship to picnics, Bob's response is difficult to interpret
- But, and this is crucial for the Gricean view of pragmatics, we invariably try to make one, because we are following the CP, or more accurately, presuming that it is in effect



IMPLICATURE

- Under “normal” circumstances, speakers “observe” the Maxims
- But the Maxims can also fail to be observed by speakers in the following ways:

1. Violations

2. Opting out(s)

3. Clashes between Maxims

4. Flouts (“Exploitations”)



IMPLICATURE: ITS PROPERTIES

○ Huang (2007) provides the following list of six properties of conversational implicature (pp. 33-34):

1. Defeasibility/Cancellability (& Suspendability)
2. Non-Detachability
3. Calculability
4. Non-Conventionality
5. Reinforceability
6. Universality



PCIs and GCIs

- Particularized Conversational Implicatures: nonce (= “one time”) implicatures that arise through the interaction of “what is said” and the discourse context.
- No *necessary* correlation with linguistic form, though certain combinations of form and context may become conventionalized implicature triggers.



PCIs and GCIs

- Generalized Conversational Implicature: “stable” conversational implicatures that are associated with linguistic forms across discourse contexts, but still defeasible (“cancelable”) in the appropriate discourse context.
- The main focus of implicature research since Grice’s original formulation. Levinson’s book *Presumptive Meanings* (2000) is the first detailed attempt to provide a theory of GCIs.
- Relevance Theorists (among others) deny the existence of GCIs.



PCIs and GCIs

- Traugott (2004): Denying the existence of GCIs is not possible from a diachronic perspective, since semantic change typically arises through the **gradual** association of conversational implicatures with linguistic forms.
- Thus, there is actually a **continuum** from meanings that are not associated at all with form, to those which are “encoded” in form. A theory that permits GCIs must be adopted to account for both synchronic and diachronic phenomena.



PCIs and GCIs

- The same utterance can give rise to both PCIs and GCIs:

If it starts to sprinkle, I'm going to stop playing

PCI +> The speaker is a big wimp/can't get wet, etc.

GCI +> If it doesn't start to sprinkle, the speaker is not going to stop playing

The Implicature “If not-p, then not-q” from “If p then q” is a GCI that will arise **unless** there are special contextual circumstances blocking it.



PCIs and GCIs

- Note however that GCIs are not invariably linked to the same forms. A different kind of conditional sentence will not give rise to the GCI:

Waiter: *If you need anything, my name is James*

(No implicature: “If you don’t, it isn’t”)

Mother: *If you’re hungry, there’s leftover pizza in the fridge*

(No implicature: “If you’re not, there isn’t”)

- The **type** of conditional is sensitive to GCI status



Conventional Implicatures

- Do NOT derive from Grice's Cooperative Principle and associated conversational maxims.
- At the same time, for Grice, they do NOT contribute to the truth conditions or to the propositional content of the utterance.
- As a result, they do not contribute to “what is said”, in Grice's “meaning tree”, but rather to “what is implicated”.



Conventional Implicatures

- The basic differences between conventional implicatures and conversational implicatures can be summarized in the following fashion:

	Conversational Implicatures	Conventional Implicatures
<i>Cancelable?</i>	YES	NO
<i>Calculable?</i>	YES	NO
<i>Universal?</i>	YES	NO
<i>Detachable?</i>	NO	YES



Conventional Implicatures

- This may leave open the question as to what is the difference between conventional implicatures and **presuppositions**. The standard view is that presuppositions are not detachable from the form used but conventional implicatures are:

(6a) María dejó de fumar. (ps: “she used to smoke”)

(6b) María paró de fumar. (ps: “she used to smoke”)

(6c) María ya no fuma. (ps: “she used to smoke”)

(6d) María no fuma más (ps: “she used to smoke”)

(6') María ya no fuma, #pero nunca fumaba.



Conventional Implicatures

- The meaning-type difference between focus particles *even* and *only* is usually considered to depend on the existence of conventional implicatures (see König 1991):

(8a) A: Incluso JUANA vino a la fiesta.

B: No es verdad, {ella se quedó en casa/
#nosotros esperábamos que viniera/#otras
personas más “inesperadas” vinieron
también}



GRICE'S INFLUENCE

- Grice's view of language in a nutshell
 - an intentional conception of meaning;
 - conversation as rational, cooperative behavior;
 - communication (as we know it) is possible because it is an instance of rational behavior.
- “In his *William James Lectures*, Grice put forward an idea of fundamental importance: that the very act of communicating creates expectations which it then exploits.” (Sperber and Wilson 1995:37)



GRICE'S INFLUENCE

- Horn, Laurence R. 1990. Hamburgers and truth: Why Gricean explanation is Gricean. *BLS* 16.454-71.
- Many forerunners of Grice anticipated his conversational “maxims” (including George Washington!).
- BUT: “[T]he forerunners never explicitly anticipate Grice’s Cooperative Principle ... It was Paul Grice who put it all together” (Horn 1990:463).



GRICE'S INFLUENCE

- “Grice’s model of conversational interaction and nonlogical inference is most dramatically distinguished from competing accounts by his emphasis on how the exploitation of shared tacit principles allows an interlocutor to map what was SAID into what was MEANT based on what was NOT said” (Horn 1990:465; emphasis in original).



Grice's Legacy: Neo-Gricean Pragmatics

- Various attempts over the last 15+ years to reduce the Gricean maxims to three (Levinson 1987, 1995, 2000) or two (Horn 1984, 1989) principles (few attempts to increase maxims, but see Leech 1983). Despite reductionist line, research still done very much in the "spirit" of Grice.
- "unless Quality ... obtains, the entire conversational and implicatural apparatus collapses" (Horn 1984:12).



Grice's Legacy: Neo-Gricean Pragmatics

- Intentional Quality violations → lying
- Intentional Quantity violations → misleading
- Intentional Relation violations → unhelpful

- A courtroom witness in the USA must "swear to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth", i.e. to obey Quality and Quantity. Violations of Relation (Relevance) "lead only to a possible lawyer's objection or judge's scolding" (Horn 1984:14).



Grice's Legacy: Neo-Gricean Pragmatics

- Clear overlap between Gricean maxims:
 - Grice builds Relation into Quantity 1: "Make your contribution as informative **as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange)**".
 - The formulation of Quantity 2 is at least implicated by Quantity 1: "Do not make your contribution more informative than is required".
 - Quantity 2 also appears to incorporate Relation: "what would make a contribution more informative than is required, except the inclusion of material not strictly relevant to the stage of the exchange at which it occurred?" (Horn 1993:40).



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics à la Horn

- Horn's neo-Gricean “reduction”
- Two competing forces identified by Zipf (1949): Speaker's Economy and Auditor's Economy. Horn takes these as underlying the Gricean maxims more generally
- Horn (1984) reformulates the "maxims" into two competing "principles", "with no commitment to an exact mapping between [his] principles and Grice's maxims" (Horn 1993:39)



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics à la Horn

The Q-Principle	The R-Principle
Hearer-Oriented (i.e. hearer has to do less work than the speaker)	Speaker-Oriented (i.e. speaker has to do less work than the hearer)
Make your contribution sufficient	Make your contribution necessary
Say as much as you can (Given both Quality and R)	Say no more than you must (Given Q)



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics à la Horn

- The implicatures that arise via the Q-Principle:
 1. Are upper-bounding: “what has been said/conveyed and nothing more”
 2. Are negative: arise from the failure to use another expression instead of the one that was chosen
 1. Are scalar: the failure to use a stronger expression than the weaker one that was chosen



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics à la Horn

- Horn-Scales: <Strong, Weak>: lower-bounded by entailment (S entails W), upper-bounded by conversational implicature (W implicates NOT S)
- <todos, la mayoría, algunos>, <4, 3, 2, 1>, <seguro, probable, possible>, <conseguir, intentar>, etc. (see also Hirschberg 1985).
- A speaker who utters W conveys the interpretation “It is not the case that S” or “I don’t believe that S” or more generally that no stronger value on the same scale can be asserted



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics à la Horn

- (1) **Algunos** amigos tuyos estuvieron en la fiesta.
(+> No todos tus amigos estuvieron)
- (2) **La mayoría** de los mexicanos comen picante.
(+> no todos los mexicanos comen picante)
- (3) Tengo **dos** hijos.
(+> No tengo más de dos hijos)
- (4) **Posiblemente** haya vida en Marte.
(+> No es probable ni seguro)
- (5) Juan **intentó** llegar a la cima de la montaña.
(+> No lo consiguió)



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics à la Horn

- R-based inferences “enrich” the content of what was said, i.e. are positive; are non-scalar; are lower-bounding in nature

(13) I broke a finger yesterday.

+> The finger that I broke was mine.

(14) John was able to solve the problem.

+> John solved the problem.



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics à la Horn

- Division of Pragmatic Labor: "The use of a marked (relatively complex and/or prolix) expression when a corresponding unmarked (simpler, less "effortful") alternate expression is available tends to be interpreted as conveying a marked message (one which the unmarked alternative would not or could not have conveyed)" (Horn 1984:22).
- The unmarked form, by R implicature, is associated with the unmarked use;
- The marked form, by Q implicature, is associated with the marked use.



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics à la Horn

(7a) Marta causó la muerte de Pablo.

(Q+> in an unconventional way)

(7b) Marta mató a Pablo.

(R+> “normally”, with a knife or a gun)

(8a) ¿Puedes pasarme la sal?

(R+> a request)

(8b) ¿Tienes la capacidad de pasarme la sal?

(Q+> a true information question)

(8c) [Doctor to patient with a broken arm]

¿Puedes pasarme la sal?



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics--Levinson

- A similar, but more recent, attempt at a Gricean reduction is Levinson's (1995, 2000), who reduces Grice's Maxims to three principles or "heuristics": Q(antity), I(nformativeness), and M(anner) (Earlier: Q1, Q2, and M [Levinson 1995]).
- More explicitly than Horn, Levinson constructs his theory to account for GCIs but not PCIs. Why? Because there is a key distinction between the two types of conversational implicatures (Levinson 2000:16)



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics--Levinson

- Two-way distinction between sentence-meaning (semantics) and utterance-meaning (pragmatics)
- Supplement this distinction within pragmatics with a subdivision between utterance-type meaning and utterance-token meaning
- Certain expressions will TEND to be associated with specific implicatures across contexts, ergo utterance-type meaning (but expressions or utterances?)



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics--Levinson

- A theory that only takes PCIs into account will underestimate the "regularity, recurrence and systematicity of [...] pragmatic inferences" (p. 93)
- Need for a third layer, intermediate between coded meaning and nonce-meaning, utterance-type-meaning, based on general expectations about how language is normally used.
- **IMPORTANT:** this third layer/level is not uniquely identified with GCIs, but rather with a range of pragmatic phenomena



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics--Levinson

- An implicature i of an utterance U is considered **particularized** iff U implicates i as a result of specific contextual assumptions that do not arise invariably or even normally
- An implicature i of an utterance U is considered **generalized** iff i implicates U **unless** there exist specific contextual assumptions to defeat that implicature



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics--Levinson

- For Levinson, GCIs are “default” implicatures (and inferences!) and basically predictable, but PCIs depend on specific contextual information in a given communicative situation

(9) A: ¿Nos vamos al cine?
 B: Estoy un poco enfermo.

PCIs: No voy contigo/No quiero contagiarte/
Necesito descansar, etc.

GCI: No estoy muy enfermo
(ni tampoco muriéndome).



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics--Levinson

- Levinson's Three Pragmatic Heuristics (2000: 35-39):
 - Q: What is not said isn't the case (Grice's Q1)
 - I: That which is expressed simply is to be interpreted in a stereotypical way (Grice's Q2)
 - M: That which is expressed in non-normal fashion is to be interpreted in a non-normal way (Grice's Manner, especially M1 and M4)



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics

- “Clausal implicatures” (Gazdar 1979; Levinson 2000), from epistemic uncertainty the speaker implicates lack of knowledge of the stronger epistemic position

(6) **Si** hay mucho tráfico, tenemos que tomar el metro.

(+> the speaker doesn't know if there is going to be a lot of traffic or not)

(7) Yo **creo** que llegan mañana.

(+> the speaker doesn't know for sure; <saber que p, creer que p>



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics

- In Schwenter (1999) it is argued that the “uncertainty” or “hypotheticality” supposedly encoded by conditional conjunctions like *si* is not actually part of their inherent semantics but rather a GCI that is cancelable in an appropriate context:

(6b) [A y B miran por la ventana a la avenida que
pasa por su casa]

A: ¡Mira la cantidad de tráfico que hay ahora!

B: Ay, es verdad... Bueno, pues, si hay mucho tráfico tenemos que tomar el metro.



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics

- This analysis helps to explain not only conditional constructions, but also “factual” uses of *si*, such as:

A: Parece que está lloviendo

B: ¡(Pero) Si hace un día buenísimo!

A: Tu padre está en casa, si su coche está allí mismo!

- In Schwenter (2000) I showed how these distinct uses of *si* can all be understood as interrelated if we analyze the “hypotheticality” so often described as conventional in its meaning as a



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics

- The conditional conjunction *si* forms a Horn scale with semantically “factual” conjunctions such as *yaque*: <yaque, si>
- A scalar implicature analysis has also been proposed for the contrast between indicative and subjunctive moods in Spanish: <indicativo, subjuntivo> (Reyes, Graciela. 2002. *Metapragmática*. Valladolid: Univ. de Valladolid)
- A common analysis of the subjunctive mood is that it conveys “hypotheticality” or “irreality”, and thereby contrast with the “reality” of the indicative



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics

(10) Espero que **lleva** mañana.

(11) Si lo **hubieras** sabido, te lo habrías dicho.

- Nevertheless, contexts of alternation between subjunctive and indicative are also very common, as in:

(12a) Aunque **haga** sol vamos a quedarnos en casa.

(12b) Aunque **hace** sol vamos a quedarnos en casa.



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics

- The first version with subjunctive is compatible with both “irreality” and with “reality”. Outside of context, we interpret it as irrealis and referring to future time. But in the appropriate context it can also be understood as referring to a realis situation:

(13) Juanito: Papá, mira, ¡yahace sol!

Papá: Lo siento, Juanito. Aunquehaga sol nosvamos a quedar en casa...



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics

- This interpretational flexibility is surprising for analyses that try to integrate the “irrealis” meaning into the coded semantics of the subjunctive.
- Examples like this, which are of course very frequent, show that this meaning is actually cancellable in an appropriate context.
- In other words, the “irrealis” meaning so closely associated with the subjunctive is not part of its coded meaning but rather a conversational implicature, a preferred meaning that is nonetheless not invariable.



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics

- The cancellability of the “irrealis” meaning becomes even clearer in examples like this one:

(15) El hecho de quees/sea marzopodría llevarnos a dudar del tiempo.

- Here the subjunctive form *sea* could NEVER be interpreted as referring to irrealis. It does however mark the relative clause as given information, as opposed to the indicative *es* which would mark it as new information



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics

- The conditional conjunction *si* and the subjunctive mood share the characteristic of being compatible with both irrealis and realis situations, despite common analysis that attempt (sometimes at all costs) to assign them an irrealis semantic value.
- The “factual” uses of these forms should not be considered anomalous, but rather a consequence of their interpretational flexibility for conveying “*asercionessuspendidas*” (Reyes 2002). The reasons behind their choice in each case are not always the same, but are unified by their pragmatic value



Neo-Gricean Pragmatics

- The “default” interpretation of both forms is irrealis, but depending on discourse context this interpretation can be cancelled
- This is exactly what we would expect if the irrealis meaning were a conversational implicature, and indeed they seem to provide a classic example of Gricean quantity implicature
- But more importantly for our purposes, these phenomena illustrate the usefulness of an analysis that takes preferred meanings (GCIs) into account



ON TO PROSODY: AN (OLD) EXAMPLE

- Ward and Hirschberg (1985) in *Language*
- Examine a contextually-circumscribed use of fall-rise intonation, as in question-answer pairs like this:

A: Do you have a quarter?

B: I have a \dime/

- Contrast this fall-rise pattern with the simple rise, as in:



AN (OLD) EXAMPLE

A: Do you have a quarter?

B: I have a \dime

- Note that the difference between the two responses hinges on speaker B's beliefs about speaker A's desires (does she want/need a quarter ONLY, or is the request just one for money)
- In the first example with the fall-rise, speaker B believes that speaker A could actually make use of a dime instead of a quarter



AN (OLD) EXAMPLE

- In the second example with the simple fall, speaker B assumes that a dime will not suffice for speaker A, who has asked for a quarter
- Ward and Hirschberg claim that the fall-rise contour expresses “uncertainty” on the part of speaker B, in the case of the example, about whether a dime will be of use to speaker A
- Their (neo-)Gricean analysis of this form-meaning correlation is that it constitutes a **conventional** implicature



AN (OLD) EXAMPLE

- Their main evidence in favor of this analysis is that it is not possible to cancel the “uncertainty” meaning, e.g. it is not possible to append a phrase such as:

I have a \dime/, #though I know that won't work for you

- However, this only seems to be the case when, as they argue, there is a partially ordered set (poset) of possible responses, e.g. {quarter, dime, nickel, penny}



AN (OLD) EXAMPLE

- This same fall-rise contour CAN be used in other contexts without necessarily conveying uncertainty, e.g.

A: What are John's best qualities?

B: Well, he is \funny/, and I know that you think that is especially important

- If the fall-rise CONVENTIONALLY implicated uncertainty, then such an example would be infelicitous, but it isn't...



ANOTHER EXAMPLE

- The rising intonational contour in English
- In absence of other contextual cues, utterances with this contour will most likely be interpreted as questions
- Thus, the contour seems to show the hallmark property of a GCI
- However, the rising contour is found in a number of other discourse functions



ANOTHER EXAMPLE

- Uptalk: native speakers characterize this as “talking in questions” → GCI-like claim!
- “X much?” constructions (Armstrong, Carmichael, & Schwenter 2011): infelicitous without the rising intonational contour, but have illocutionary force of an assertion, not a question.
- But: VERY specific contextual constraints and restricted to constructions with “X much?” form



CONCLUSION

- Prosody/Intonation is an ideal realm of linguistic phenomena to apply the notion of preferred meanings
- Degrees of conventionality are GRADIENT; some contours are restricted to particular illocutionary forces or discourse functions, while others are merely strongly associated with such forces or functions and can be realized in other contexts where their preferred meanings are cancelled.



CONCLUSION

- By taking into account both preferred meanings and contextual flexibility at the same time, more illuminating interconnections can be made among different uses of intonational contours, thereby avoiding the “laundry-listing” of contours and meanings that is so prevalent in the literature
- By doing so, pragmatic explanation can become more rigorous in work on prosody, and more fruitful exchange of ideas can become the norm across the two fields of study



MOLTES GRÀCIES!!

