UNDERDETERMINACY IN LANGUAGE

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Thoughts and Utterances: The Pragmatics of Explicit Communication,

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1. Introduction

The present volume derives from Robyn Carston’s Ph.D dissertation, submitted to University College London, in 1998. Publication of this dissertation has waited four years, during which time Carston has broadened and lengthened it, with the result that the earlier version of 282 pages has turned into a 418-page book. The way the work has ‘evolved’ can be seen in the titles and the subtitle of the two publications. The title of Carston’s dissertation is Pragmatics and the Explicit-Implicit Distinction, in which equal weight seems to be put on explicit and implicit linguistic communication. In the present subtitle of The Pragmatics of Explicit Communication, it is clear that emphasis is given to the explicit aspect of communication. Moreover, the main title of Carston’s book, Thoughts and Utterances, suggests that her interest has extended to more general aspects of the mental activity of human beings.

In this paper I will first try to give a brief review of the present

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book, then make comments on truth conditionality and similes in the following two sections. In section 5 I introduce Recanati’s view of pragmatic processes of recovering ‘what is said,’ and finally I will argue in section 6 that underdeterminacy concerning metarepresentational processes may vary from language to language, providing evidence from the Japanese language.

2. A Brief Survey of Thoughts and Utterances

In the book’s introduction, recent developments in cognitive pragmatics are surveyed with frequent mention of theories of mind, the personal/subpersonal distinction, modularity, and so on, which underlie the discussion in the rest of the book. Five chapters and two appendices follow.

2.1. Chapter 1: Pragmatics and Linguistic Underdeterminacy

It is generally assumed that what a person says does not correspond to what she/he means, but not many people realize that ‘what is said’ in Grice’s sense is not equivalent to what is explicitly communicated. By the linguistic underdeterminacy thesis Carston means that linguistic meaning underdetermines what is said or the proposition expressed (Carston (2002b: 19)). Before going into details, she explains the terminological difference between ‘underdeterminacy’ and ‘indeterminacy,’ the latter term being used when we cannot determine correct referents, intended implicatures, or exact counterparts in translation or interpretation. That is, ‘indeterminacy’ means ‘no conclusion can be drawn because there is none to be drawn’; ‘underdeterminacy,’ on the other hand, entails that “it cannot be determined by linguistic meaning alone” (Carston (2002b: 20–21)). Underdeterminacy is seen, for example, in the everyday utterances in (1).

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(1) a. } & \text{It is raining. } <\text{When and where?}> \\
\text{b. } & \text{He is too young. } <\text{For what?}> \\
\text{c. } & \text{Something has happened. } <\text{Something significant has happened!}> \\
\text{d. } & \text{There’s nothing on telly tonight. } <\text{There’s nothing on the telly worth watching tonight.}>
\end{align*}
\]

The position Carston takes is that “there are no sentences which encode a proposition or thought which is constant across all contexts,” from which it follows that “the linguistic underdeterminacy of the proposition
expressed by an utterance is an essential feature of natural language” (Carston (2002b: 42)). Thus, for example, it is not possible to interpret an utterance like (1a) without information about where it is raining.

Toward the end of this chapter Carston notes that there is also underdeterminacy between natural language and Mentalese as language of thought. We, thus, also need a ‘powerful’ pragmatic inferential mechanism to bridge the gap between the encoding of a natural-language utterance and the thought expressed.

2.2. Chapter 2: The Explicit/Implicit Distinction

Grice proposed a simple dichotomy of ‘what is said’ and ‘what is not said.’ By ‘what is said’ he meant linguistically realized constituents; on the other hand, what is not realized is the implicit import which he called ‘implicature.’ Carston firmly rejects such a distinction and takes an essentialist view that the proposition expressed by an utterance, which is her way of characterizing ‘what is said,’ is not fully determined by the linguistic expression.

Carston, of course, takes a relevance-theoretic approach and persuasively argues that pragmatic inferences contribute not only to implicatures but to the recovery of what is explicitly expressed. The richer version of ‘what is said’ is called ‘explicature,’ the definition of which varies slightly from that originally proposed by Sperber and Wilson (1986/95). Carston’s definition follows:

(2) An assumption (proposition) communicated by an utterance is an ‘explicature’ of the utterance if and only if it is a development of (a) a linguistically encoded logical form of the utterance, or of (b) a sentential subpart of a logical form.1 (Carston (2002b: 124))

Base-level explicatures cover part of ‘what is implicated’ in Grice’s sense and contribute to the truth-conditional content, while implicatures are the outcome of inferential interaction with explicatures and contextual assumptions. Base-level explicatures are crucially differentiated from implicatures in that the former are truth-conditional while the latter are non-truth-conditional.2

1 See Nishikawa (2005) for a relevance theoretic view of ‘logical form.’

2 Higher-level explicatures have truth conditions of their own but do not contribute to the truth-conditions of the utterances as a whole (Wilson and Sperber (1993: 16)).
Touching upon various approaches to aspects of the explicit/implicit distinction such as Travis’s, Recanati’s, and Bach’s, she finds none of these approaches fully satisfactory and introduces ‘saturation’ and ‘free enrichment’ in addition to ‘disambiguation’ in the process of recovering explicatures. Saturation is a pragmatic process that fills in variables and/or slots contained in the logical form or semantic representation of an utterance, and the reason ‘enrichment’ is modified by ‘free’ is that “the impetus for the pragmatically derived material is entirely cognitive, not indicated by any linguistic element” (Carston (2002b: 188)).

Carston is successful in proving that pragmatic inferences make a much greater contribution than Grice originally anticipated to construing what the speaker intends to express. The procedure for deriving the proposition expressed follows without exception the relevance theoretic comprehension strategy ‘Construct interpretations in order of accessibility (i.e. Follow a path of least effort) and stop when your expectation of relevance is satisfied’ (cf. Carston (2002b: 143)).

2.3. Chapter 3: The Pragmatics of ‘And’-Conjunction

This chapter is entirely devoted to the analysis of ‘and.’ As is well known, there are various uses in ‘and,’ one of which is to express time sequence as in (3).

(3) He handed her the scalpel and she made the incision.

Grice suggested that the status of the logical ‘and’ remains here and an additional sense of ‘and then’ is pragmatically derived as a conversational implicature. But the same temporal meaning is observed in (4), where two utterances are juxtaposed.

(4) He handed her the scalpel. She made the incision.

Based on these facts Carston proposes that ‘and’ contributes not to implicatures but to explicatures, which implies that ‘and’ is truth-conditional. She also illustrates that an utterance with ‘and’ conjuncts is interpreted as a single unit while corresponding juxtaposed utterances without ‘and’ are not confined to a limited sense but are interpreted as expressing various relations such as explanation, evidence, reformulation, elaboration, etc.

Again, this reflects the linguistic underdeterminacy view because encoded linguistic meaning is supplemented by pragmatic inference to obtain base-level explicatures.
2.4. Chapter 4: The Pragmatics of Negation

In this chapter Carston first of all recognizes the generally held view that there are two distinctions in negation, the scope distinction and the predicative distinction. The former concerns whether the scope is wide or narrow; the latter whether negation is used descriptively or metarepresentationally, i.e. metalinguistically. As in dealing with ‘and’ in the previous chapter, Carston rejects the position that the word ‘not’ is semantically ambiguous and favors the view that negative sentences should be interpreted as “cases of pragmatic narrowing of the proposition expressed” (Carston (2002b: 288)).

She goes on to controversial metalinguistic negation, as in (5).

(5) a. Jane doesn’t eat tom[eiDouz]; she eats tom[a: touz].
   b. The points aren’t at different locuses; they’re at different loci.

She argues that these ‘not’s are essentially the same as descriptive uses of ‘not,’ which means that ‘not’ in natural language is both univocal and truth-conditional, as in the case of ‘and’ in Chapter 3, and that ‘not’ basically receives wide-scope interpretation. The other interpretations, including narrow-scope negation, can be explained in terms of enrichment.

2.5. Chapter 5: The Pragmatics of On-line Concept Construction

The main theme in this chapter is ‘ad hoc concepts,’ which are constructed pragmatically in the course of utterance comprehension. The basic characteristic of an ad hoc concept is that it entirely depends upon a particular situation and is pragmatically derived via narrowing or broadening. The italicized words in (6) and (7) are cases of narrowing and broadening respectively.

(6) a. Ann is happy.
   b. I want to meet some bachelors.
   c. Tom has a brain.

(7) a. There is a rectangle of lawn at the back.
   b. This steak is raw.
   c. On Classic FM, we play continuous classics.

The words in italics represent ad hoc concepts. ‘Brain’ in (6c), for example, narrows the truism that human beings have a brain to the specific fact that Tom is clever. ‘Raw’ in (7b), on the other hand, does not mean ‘really raw’ but broadens the concept to the one meaning ‘much less cooked than the speaker wishes.’ Using persuasive dia-
grams, Carston argues that narrowing and broadening are not asymmetric but symmetric processes.

The introduction of *ad hoc* concepts has an important effect on the theory of relevance. Metaphor was originally treated as a case of loose use. The utterance *This room is a pigsty* was not regarded as communicating ‘This room is a pigsty’ as an explicature (Sperber and Wilson (1986/95)), but treating the interpretation of metaphor in terms of *ad hoc* concepts has made it possible to say that ‘This room is a PIGSTY*’ (where the asterisk indicates an *ad hoc* concept) is the proposition expressed and contributes to the truth-conditionality of the utterance.

3. Truth Conditionality and the If-test

Truth conditionality is frequently discussed both in semantics and in pragmatics and the if-test is sometimes used as a test frame for judging whether certain lexical items contribute to the truth conditions of utterances. Carston (2002b) also uses the if-test for the same purpose without discussing its validity. In this section I raise questions concerning the if-test.

3.1. Implicature Derivation and the If-test

In order to show that conversational implicatures do not contribute to truth-conditionality Carston gives the following example (Carston (2002b: 193–194), cf. Carston (2004)):

(8) Ann: Does Bill have a girlfriend these days?

Bob: He flies to New York every weekend.

Bob’s reply implicates that Bill probably has a girlfriend in New York. If this is the implicature, it should not fall in the scope of a condition-
al. This is confirmed because the implicature does not occur if we apply the if-test to Bob’s utterance as in (9).

(9) If he flies to New York every weekend he must spend a lot on travel.

So far, so good. But Nishiyama (2004: 58–59) correctly points out that it is possible to find cases where implicatures in the antecedent of if-
conditionals influence the interpretation of the main clause. Suppose Bill’s wife happens to hear the conversation in (8) and utters (10).

(10) If Bill flies to New York every weekend, I will divorce him.

(Nishiyama (2004))

In (10) the implicature that Bill has a girlfriend in New York does fall
in the scope of the if-clause. Blakemore (2002: 37) also has doubts about the view that ‘only truth conditional material can fall under the scope of a logical operator,’ citing example (11):

(11) Peter: Would you like to go to the cinema?
    Mary: I’m tired.

The implicature of Mary’s utterance is that Mary doesn’t want to go to the cinema. We surely use this implicature in interpreting the following if-conditional.

(12) If Mary is tired, then Peter won’t book cinema tickets.

It is rather easy to fabricate similar examples:

(13) a. If Tom is French, I’ll ask him to cook.
    b. If coffee keeps you awake, I’ll give you tea.
    c. If you don’t drive expensive cars, why don’t you try this smaller car?

If the argument above holds, we are put in the situation of deciding whether implicatures contribute to the proposition expressed or whether the if-test is inappropriate as a framework to judge truth conditionality. I would like to take the latter position.

3.2. Higher-level Explicatures and the If-test

Wilson and Sperber (1993) introduce an extra layer of explicatures and, to exemplify this, point out that (15a–c) are higher-level explicatures of utterance (14b).

(14) a. Peter: Can you help?
    b. Mary (sadly): I can’t.

(15) a. Mary says she can’t help Peter to find a job.
    b. Mary believes she can’t help Peter to find a job.
    c. Mary regrets that she can’t help Peter to find a job.

Higher-level explicatures reflect speech act descriptions such as (15a) and propositional attitudes as in (15b) and (15c). Another important feature is that they do not generally contribute to the truth conditions of their associated utterances. In the case above Mary’s saying, believing, or regretting does not contribute to the truth conditions of ‘Mary can’t help Peter to find a job.’

Their non-truth conditionality elegantly describes the behaviors of some types of sentence adverbs. For example, illocutionary adverbs such as ‘seriously’ and ‘frankly’ make no contribution to the truth conditions of the proposition ‘I can’t help you.’

(16) a. Seriously, I can’t help you.
b. Frankly, I can’t help you.

(16a) corresponds to the higher-level description in (17a), and (16b) corresponds to (17b).

(17) a. Mary says seriously I can’t help you.
   b. Mary says frankly I can’t help you.

Use of ‘frankly’ as a manner adverb, on the other hand, clearly differs from its illocutionary use. In an utterance like (18) ‘frankly’ clearly does influence the truth conditionality of the utterance.

(18) Mary said frankly to Peter that she couldn’t help him.

Attitudinal adverbs such as ‘unfortunately’ and ‘happily’ as in (19) are also regarded as non-truth conditional (Wilson and Sperber (1993), Ifantidou-Trouki (1993)).

(19) a. Unfortunately, I can’t help you.
   b. Happily, I can’t help you.

The fact that these adverbs are non-truth conditional leads to the conclusion that they contribute to the higher-level explicatures of the utterance. There are two aspects in higher-level explicatures: a propositional attitude description and a speech act description. As the word ‘attitudinal’ suggests, attitudinal adverbs “indicate the speaker’s attitude to the statement” (Ifantidou-Trouki (1993: 70)).

There is another group of sentential adverbs, evidential adverbs. These adverbs in (20) belong to this group:

(20) a. Evidently, Bill has cheated in the exams.
   b. Obviously, the ball was over the line.
   c. Clearly, you are responsible for the damage.

Candidates for the base-level explicatures of (20a), (20b) and (20c) are (21a), (21b), and (21c), respectively.

(21) a. It is evident (evidently true) that Bill has cheated in the exams.
   b. It is obvious (obviously true) that the ball was over the line.
   c. It is clear (clearly true) that you are responsible for the damage.

Evidentials as well as illocutionary adverbs can be interpreted as manner adverbs. In order to avoid the ‘manner’ interpretation, Ifantidou-Trouki (1993) chooses the sentences in (22), which have only an evidential interpretation.

(22) a. The driver has clearly died.
   b. The cook obviously won’t poison the soup.
Applying the if-test to (22) as in (23), Ifantidou-Trouki (1993) sees whether (22a) contributes to the truth conditions of (24a) or (24b), and whether (22b) contributes to the truth conditions of (25a) or (25b).

\[(23)\]
\[a. \] If the driver has clearly died, you need not hurry for an ambulance.
\[b. \] If the cook obviously won’t poison the soup, we can eat the meal without worrying.

\[(24)\]
\[a. \] The driver has died.
\[b. \] It is clear that the driver has died.

\[(25)\]
\[a. \] The cook won’t poison the soup.
\[b. \] It is obvious that the cook won’t poison the soup.

She concludes that evidential adverbs are truth conditional because (24b) and (25b) contribute to the truth conditions of (23a) and (23b) respectively.

Ifantidou (2001), however, presents a different view. She calls apparently and seemingly weak evidentials and obviously and clearly strong evidentials and states that evidential adverbials “alter the truth-conditional status of the ground-floor proposition” in the way the speaker’s commitment to the proposition expressed is weakened or strengthened and that they “will be perceived as making an essential contribution to truth conditions” (Ifantidou (2001: 153)).

Carston (2002b) appears to hold the same position as Ifantidou (2001). Consider (26) to (28). (27a) is a base-level explication of (26a) and (28a) is a base-level explication of (26b).

\[(26)\]
\[a. \] Obviously, I’m going to miss the deadline.
\[b. \] Possibly, we’re too late.

\[(27)\]
\[a. \] It is obvious (obviously true) that the speaker is going to miss the deadline.
\[b. \] The speaker strongly believes that she is going to miss the deadline.

\[(28)\]
\[a. \] It is possible that the speaker and X are too late [for \ldots].
\[b. \] The speaker weakly believes that she and X are too late [for \ldots].

Among the possible higher-level explicatures for (26a) is (27b). (26b) is parallel: (28b) can be regarded as one of the higher-level explicatures for (26b).

Citing (26)–(28), Carston (2002b: 121) says:

\[(29)\] Evedentials comment on what the speaker sees as the degree
of evidential support for the proposition expressed, which may in turn affect the degree of conviction she represents herself as having in the truth of the proposition expressed (that is, the propositional attitude explicature). (my italics)

This statement clearly indicates that evidential adverbs can contribute to higher-level explicatures; in other words they are non-truth conditional in the sense of Ifantidou-Trouki (1993).

Determining whether evidentials are truth conditional or not is not Carston’s main objective in her discussion. She goes on to say that the original definition of higher-level explicatures is not sufficient and proposes an expanded version of the definition (See (2) in 2.2 above). My point here is that if we use the if-test in order to judge truth conditionality of evidential adverbials following Ifantidou-Trouki (1993), it turns out that they are truth conditional, while they are non-truth conditional based on Ifantidou (2001) and Carston (2002b).

I have raised two problems concerning the if-test, which has been considered “a standard test for distinguishing truth-conditional from non-truth-conditional meaning” (Ifantidou-Trouki (1993: 73, 2001: 102)). My conclusion is that the if-test may not be an appropriate test frame for either implicature derivation or sentential adverbs.

4. Ad hoc Concepts, Metaphor and Simile

In this section I argue that ad hoc concept construction can be applied to explain simile as well as metaphor.

Carston compares metaphor to simile (Carston (2002b: 357–359)). She admits that the implicatures we get from an example of metaphor are probably the same as those for similes, the only difference being the presence or absence of the lexical item ‘like.’ Thus, both (30a) and (30b) might convey implicatures that Mary is understood to be obstinate, single-minded, insensitive to other people’s feelings, etc.

\[(30)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a. Mary is a bulldozer.} \\
\text{b. Mary is like a bulldozer.}
\end{align*}
\]

Then Carston points out several differences. While metaphor is a case of literal falsehood, simile describes a state of affairs which is trivially true since there is some degree of similarity between any two entities. Metaphor constructs ad hoc concepts from the encoded public words, as discussed in detail in Chapter 5, but simile does not undergo such a process. Carston proposes (31a) and (31b) as candidates for the propo-
sitions expressed by the simile in (30b):

(31)  
   a. MARY IS LIKE A BULLDOZER*  
   b. MARY IS LIKE A BULLDOZER

She argues that the characterization in (31a) is implausible because 'there is no more sense in claiming that she is like a BULLDOZER* than that she is like a human being (given that she is one) (Carston (2002b: 357–358)).' That is to say, like a BULLDOZER* is redundant in a sense. She then concludes that it is not necessary to introduce the *ad hoc* concept BULLDOZER* in explaining similes and, instead, lexically encoded concepts are preserved.

Such sentences as ‘Mary is a human being’ and ‘A pear is a fruit’ are probably not counted as metaphorical. A typical metaphor results in category-crossing, as exemplified in (30a): Mary does not belong to the same category as bulldozers. Consider the following pair:

(32)  
   a. John is a soldier.  
   b. John is like a soldier.

We can use (32a) literally, metaphorically, and even ironically (Sperber and Wilson (2002: 4)); (32b), on the other hand, is an example of simile, where John is not a soldier. According to Carston, the proposition expressed by (32b) should be something like (33), (34) being rejected in the same way as in (31a).

(33)   JOHN IS LIKE A SOLDIER  
(34)   JOHN IS LIKE A SOLDIER*

I would like to propose, however, that *ad hoc* concepts are also constructed in the case of similes: the *ad hoc* concept in (32b) would be [LIKE A SOLDIER]*. The concept LIKE A SOLDIER* is, as Carston suggests, redundant, but [LIKE A SOLDIER]* is more specific than LIKE A SOLDIER*. Let me support this proposal (See also Uchida (2002)). Consider another type of simile ‘X like Y’ as in (35).

(35)   I saw an animal like a wolf last night.

It can be said that the Pattern ‘X like Y’ is a typical schema which expresses *ad hoc* concepts. The schema can be used when we cannot find appropriate public words. In (35) it may be the case that it was impossible for the speaker to identify the animal. In this way, ‘like’ connects X with Y, implying that there is some kind of resemblance between the two. Thus, it may be reasonable to assign the schema the *ad hoc* concept [X LIKE Y]*. Such words as like, as, as if, and similar to, are typically used to relate X to Y loosely.

In the case of ‘like Y’ ‘X’ is omitted: ‘like a soldier’ is derived from
"a man like a soldier" or [A MAN LIKE A SOLDIER]*. If we can posit that the ad hoc concept [LIKE A SOLDIER]* is obtained from [A MAN LIKE A SOLDIER]* in the same way as we get 'like Y' from 'X like Y,' we can treat metaphor and simile along the same lines: both of the tropes involve ad hoc concept constructions. Then in what respect does metaphor differ from simile?

There is a difference between metaphor and simile which comes from the difference in form. In the basic pattern of 'X is Y' it is explicitly asserted that X is Y, while in the pattern of 'X is like Y' it is not entailed that X is Y. This is a fundamental and crucial difference between metaphor and simile.

As pointed out above, pragmatic implications of these tropes seem to be hardly different at all, especially in stereo-typical cases such as (36), but we still detect a subtle difference. (36a) may be more direct and forceful than (36b) as Carston suggests (Carston (2002b: 357)).

(36)  

a. John is a lion.  
b. John is like a lion.

Now consider 'creative' tropes in (37), borrowed from Wilson (2002).

(37)  
a. Taking my driving test was a picnic.  
b. Taking my driving test was like going on a picnic.

In (37a) it may take some time to connect 'taking my driving test' with 'a picnic.' More effort is needed but we can get more effects, as guaranteed by the Communicative Principle of Relevance.³ In (37b), on the other hand, it is rather easy to follow the interpretation intended by the speaker. We don't need extra effort: relevance would be achieved without it. In other words, metaphor opts for more-effect strategies, and simile follows less-effort strategies (Uchida (2002b)).

³ Principles of relevance are defined as follows (Carston (2002b: 379); also see Sperber and Wilson (1995: 260-279)):

First (Cognitive) Principle of Relevance:  
Human cognition is geared towards the maximization of relevance (that is, to the achievement of as many contextual (cognitive) effects as possible for as little processing effort as possible).

Second (Communicative) Principle of Relevance:  
Every act of ostensive communication (e.g. an utterance) communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance.
5. Explicatures and Primary Pragmatic Processes

In Chapter 2 Carston compares the relevance-theoretic distinction between explicitness and implicitness with distinctions drawn in other approaches such as those of C. Taravis, F. Recanati, and K. Bach. Among these I examine Recanati here, because in his latest book (Recanati (2004)) he responds to the claims raised by Carston (2002a, b). I focus here on the sequence or order of pragmatic interpretations.

According to relevance theory, the strategy for comprehending utterances is as follows:

(38) Consider interpretations (disambiguations, saturations, enrichments, implicatures, etc) in order of accessibility (i.e. follow a path of least effort in computing cognitive effects); stop when the expected level of relevance is achieved.

(Carston (2002a: 139))

In relevance theory inferences are made rapidly, on line and in parallel (Sperber and Wilson (2002), Carston (2002a)), which implies that relevance theorists do not see the comprehension process as sequential from explicatures to implicatures. They assume that ‘interpretive hypotheses about explicit content and implicatures are developed in parallel, and stabilise when they are mutually adjusted, and jointly adjusted with expectations of relevance.’ (Wilson and Sperber (2000: 236))

Recanati, on the other hand, claims that there are distinctive steps in pragmatic processing: primary and secondary pragmatic processes (Recanati (1993, 2002, 2004)). The former mainly consist of obligatory saturation and optional free enrichment and they will “take place at a sub-personal level in an automatic and non-reflective manner” (Recanati (2002: 114)). The secondary pragmatic processes are responsible for implicatures, and, unlike the primary processes, take place at a personal level. The secondary processes are constrained by the ‘Availability Principle.’

(39) Availability Principle

In deciding whether a pragmatically determined aspect of utterance meaning is part of what is said, that is, in making a decision concerning what is said, we should always try to preserve our pre-theoretic intuition on the matter.

(Recanati (1993: 248))

To be brief, “the interpreter has to be aware of what is said, aware of what is implied, and aware of the inferential connection between them”
The Availability Principle is scrutinized in Carston (2002b: 166–170). Her conclusions are that the Principle puts too much weight on intuitions and that intuitions cannot be "a criterion for distinguishing what is said from what is implicated in contentious cases" (Carston (2002b: 169–170)).

Carston (2002a) mainly argues against the claim that explicatures precede implicatures, maintaining the relevance-theoretic mutual adjustment position. She quotes an example of a bridging implicature:

(40) a. The picnic was awful. The beer was warm.
    b. The beer was part of the picnic.

In order to identify what 'the beer' in (40a) refers to, we have to access the bridging implicature in (40b). This implies that in this particular case we derive the implicature first and then the saturation takes place, which is strong evidence against the 'explicatures come first' hypothesis.

Recanati responded to Carston in his latest book (Recanati (2004: 45)). First of all, he defends his position saying that his notion of conscious inference does not quite correspond to that of relevance theory. He goes on to say, "[I]t would be wrong to claim that conscious inferences are necessarily effortful, slow and under voluntary control. Among conscious inferences as I have just defined them, some ... are typically spontaneous: the inference is drawn more or less automatically" (Recanati (2004: 42)). He claims that 'spontaneous inferences' in relevance theory (i.e. in the sense of Sperber (1997)) are 'conscious inferences' in his theory. Sperber's example is that when we hear the doorbell ringing we spontaneously infer that there is someone at the door. Recanati interprets this inference as a 'conscious' one because the perceptually gained information was available to us, in accordance with the Availability Principle above.

Let us consider the nature of information we get through perceptions. Recanati mentions inferences we may make when we see something. For example, we may infer that Bill is still at his girlfriend's when we see his car there. According to Recanati, this is an example of conscious inference because the Availability Principle is satisfied. But availability does not always entail consciousness. Various noises are available to us, we see things around us, we smell something odd even if we are not as sensitive as dogs. We may 'select' some of these noises, for example, not consciously but, if we use a relevance theoretic
term, in accordance with the Cognitive Principle of Relevance. The perceptual information that Bill’s car is at his girlfriend’s will not be relevant to us unless the contextual implication that Bill is still there does mean something to us. Not every piece of perceptual information is relevant to us.

Another point is that there is no communicative intention in the car example. With the doorbell example, on the other hand, we detect a communicative intention. It seems to me that the inference involved with the former case is freer because there is no particular constraint on interpreting it, while the latter is to be processed following the relevance-theoretic comprehension strategy. If we wish to make more perfect the analogy between ostensive-inferential communication and (visual) perception, we should put them both under the same conditions.

On bridging implicatures as in (40) above Recanati (2004) explains that ‘the beer’ undergoes the process of bridging ‘enrichment’ not of bridging ‘implicature,’ and claims that the enrichment interpretation, which belongs to primary pragmatic processes, comes first. Nonetheless the problem with this view is that he regards other enrichment cases as the same kind of ‘bridging enrichment.’ He deals with sentence (41) in the same way as the beer case.

(41) She took out her key and opened the door.

This sentence is usually interpreted as conveying (42).

(42) She took out her key and opened the door with the key.

Recanati says that it is also an instance of bridging enrichment as a primary pragmatic process. But (40) and (42) seem a bit different from each other. The explicitly stated proposition ‘She took out her key and opened the door with it’ still sounds OK. But it seems impossible to incorporate ‘the beer was part of the picnic’ into (40a). The following discourse sounds awkward: ‘The picnic was awful. The beer we always bring to picnics was warm.’

He also compares ‘the beer’ with ‘the table,’ saying that “[t]he enrichment of ‘the beer’ into something like ‘the beer that was part of the picnic’ is just like the enrichment of ‘the table’ into ‘the table of the living room’” (Recanati (2004: 45)). But this comparison is not valid; the association of beer with picnics comes from encyclopedic

4 See note 3 above and note that the Cognitive Principle of Relevance is applied unconsciously.
knowledge but the enrichment of ‘the table’ depends not only on encyclopedic knowledge but also on contextual information.

Relevance theory and Recanati’s approach are very similar as both sides clearly state (Carston (2002b: 170), Recanati (2004: 38)). They agree especially on the point that ‘what is said’ in Grice’s sense should be modified, but disagree on how this should be done. My conclusion in this section is that Carston argues her position more persuasively and more consistently using relevance theoretic strategies.

6. Universality of the Underdeterminacy Thesis

The underdeterminacy thesis advocated and discussed throughout Carston’s book should, if it is a general thesis, apply to any language. What underlies the thesis is the human cognitive tendency to understand what the speaker intended to convey in terms of the proposition expressed. It is our metarepresentational ability that enables us to obtain what the communicator intends to convey from the ‘minimal’ sentence meaning. It is plausible to assume that our cognitive tendencies and metarepresentational ability are universal and that any differences concern contexts and the specific form of utterances. In this section I discuss how metarepresentational processes are realized in Japanese compared with their counterparts in English and suggest that there exists another aspect of linguistic underdeterminacy.

6.1. Metarepresentation and Relevance Theory

Recent papers in relevance theory are particularly concerned with metarepresentational aspects of communication. Sperber (1994) seems to be the starting point, and substantial discussions are found in Sperber (2000), Wilson (2000), Sperber and Wilson (2002), and Carston (2002b: 42–47).

Inference is essential in verbal and even in non-verbal communication in order to understand the speaker’s intended meaning. In the process of inferring we are eventually involved in mental activity directed toward determining what the speaker is thinking, wants to do, intends the hearer to do, and so on. In other words, in most communication the main task of the hearer is to represent what the speaker is communicating. This aspect of metarepresentation has been much discussed recently under the heading ‘theory of mind’ in psychology.

A metarepresentation is “a representation of a representation: a high-
er-order representation with a lower-order representation embedded within it" (Wilson (2000: 411)). Sperber (2000: 3) focuses on linguistic metarepresentation and presents four types of metarepresentation as in (43).5

(43) a. mental representations of mental representations
   b. mental representations of public representations
   c. public representations of mental representations
   d. public representations of public representations

‘Public’ means actually worded in speech. Instances of each type are given in (44).

(44) a. the thought ‘John believes that it will rain’
   b. the thought ‘John said that it will rain’
   c. the utterance ‘John believes that it will rain’
   d. the utterance ‘John said that it will rain’

Thus, if, for example, we assume that John believes that it will rain, then we are representing John’s belief; if we think John said that it will rain, then we are representing John’s actual utterance, and so on. In each case we can attribute the thought or utterance to John.

6.2. Higher Level Explicatures and Metarepresentations

In 3.2 I explained how higher-level explicatures are derived. The dialogue referred to these and candidate higher-level explicatures are repeated here.

(45) Peter: Can you help?
     Mary (sadly): I can’t.

(46) a. Mary says she can’t help Peter to find a job.
   b. Mary believes she can’t help Peter to find a job.
   c. Mary regrets that she can’t help Peter to find a job.

It is clear that the higher level explicatures in (46) are closely connected with linguistic metarepresentations. In the case of (46) the process of metarepresentation is reflected by the phrases ‘Mary says,’ ‘Mary believes,’ and ‘Mary regrets,’ and can be paraphrased as in (47).

(47) a. [Mary says [Mary can’t help Peter to find a job]]

5 Wilson (2000) presents another kind of metarepresentation as in ‘Dragonflies are beautiful’ is a sentence of English.’ She calls it ‘abstract metarepresentation,’ in which we cannot attribute the thought or utterance ‘Dragonflies are beautiful’ to a particular person.
b. [Mary believes [Mary can’t help Peter to find a job]]
c. [Mary regrets [Mary can’t help Peter to find a job]]

Seen from a metarepresentational perspective, (47a) is an example of public representation of a public representation, while (47b) and (47c) are mental representations of public representations. That is, in (47) Peter represents Mary’s public representation. In other words, Peter metarepresents what Mary said. Let us call primary metarepresentation the phenomena that the hearer metarepresents what the speaker herself/himself says or thinks.

Secondary metarepresentation will be involved when a third party intervenes. Suppose that Peter says (48) to Mary.

(48) Peter: Can Tom help me?
Mary: He said he can’t.

Some higher level explicatures that might be derived from Mary’s utterance are given in (49).

(49) a. Mary says Tom says he can’t help Peter to find a job.
b. Mary believes Tom says he can’t help Peter to find a job.

The following are instances of the metarepresentational process for (49a) and (49b).

(50) a. [Mary says [Tom says [he can’t help Peter to find a job]]]
b. [Mary believes [Tom says [he can’t help Peter to find a job]]]

Mary’s primary metarepresentation is reflected by the two inner brackets, [Tom says [he can’t help Peter to find a job]], and the most outer bracket reflects the secondary metarepresentation in that Peter represents Mary’s primary metarepresentation. Again, (50a) is an example of public representation of a public representation, while (50b) is an example of mental representation of a public representation.

6.3. Metarepresentations in Japanese

Japanese sentence final particles have attracted much discussion, but no one has suggested an approach based on metarepresentations. We can say from the arguments so far that some sentence final particles in Japanese carry metarepresentational information. Suppose that Mary says (51) to Jane.

(51) Mary: He’s coming toward us.

Utterance (51) can convey several speech acts, which are given in the
schemata below.

(52) a. [Mary informs [He’s coming toward us]]
    b. [Mary warns [He’s coming toward us]]
    c. [Mary confirms [He’s coming toward us]]
    d. [Mary expects [He’s coming toward us]]

These different speech acts are reflected in sentence final particles in Japanese, as seen in (53).

(53) a. (kare-ga) Kochira ni kuru yo. (informing)
    (he-Nominative) here/us toward come Particle
    ‘He is coming toward us.’
    b. (kare ga) Kochira ni kuru zo. (warning)
    c. (kare ga) Kochira ni kuru ne. (confirming)
    d. (kare ga) Kochira ni kuru sa. (expecting)

What is involved in (53) is Jane’s primary metarepresentations.

Reported speech is a typical case of public representation. There are words and phrases in language which explicitly show public representations. English, for example, has a range of quotative devices which imply metarepresentational processes. Wilson (2000) gives phrases such as (54).

(54) a. hearsay adverbs: allegedly, reportedly
    b. adjectives: self-confessed, so-called
    c. particles: quote-unquote
    d. parenthesis: as Chomsky says, according to Bill
    e. noun phrases: Derrida’s claim that, the suspect’s allegation that

These are all lexical items which have conceptual meanings and we find their lexical counterparts in Japanese. It is, however, not always the case that there is a one-to-one correspondence between English and Japanese. Suppose Peter says to Jane the utterances in (55). The italicized parts can be presented as something like (a) to (d) in (56).6

(55) a. John has left, in case you haven’t heard.
    b. Why is Paul leaving, since you know so much?
    c. If that’s John, I’m not here.
    d. Mary was pretty rude to me. I am neglecting my job!

(56) a. Jane: John has left, [Peter says this [because he thinks

6 The paraphrases are based on the idea of ‘double speech-act account’ (Carston (2002b: 128–134)).
[I may not have heard about it]]

b. Jane: Why is Paul leaving, [Peter asks this [since he knows [I know so much]]]

c. Jane: If that’s John, [Peter says [he pretends [he is not here]]]

d. Jane: Mary was pretty rude to me. [Peter says [Mary says [Peter is neglecting Peter’s job]]]

Notice that the verb phrases denoting speech acts, saying and asking, are presented in the schemata of metarepresentations in (56), but they are covert in the linguistic expressions in (55). In other words, they correspond to speech act descriptions in the component of higher-level explicatures. Another interesting linguistic fact is that attributed thoughts are reflected in ‘he thinks’ in (56a) and attributed utterances in ‘Mary says’ in (56d), for example. They are secondary metarepresentations from the viewpoint of the speaker.

Putting these sentences into Japanese, we have:

(57) a. Kiite-nai-to ikenai node iimasu-ga, John-wa
Hear-not-that in case say-but John-Topic
deteiki mashita.
left
‘In case you haven’t heard I tell you John has left.’

b. Kimi-wa nandemo shitte-iru kara kiku-noda-kedo,
you-Topic everything know since ask you
doshite Paul-wa deiteiku-no?
why Paul-Topic are leaving-Particle
‘Since you know everything, I ask you why Paul is leaving.’

c. Moshi John dattara, watashi-wa inai-kara-ne.
if John is I-Topic not here-Particle
‘If that’s John, (say that) I’m not here.’

d. Mary-tara totemo shitsurei nanda. Ore-ga
Mary-Particle very rude was I-Nominative
surubeki koto-wo shite inai-to iunda.
to do job-Accusative not do-that said
‘Mary was pretty rude. She says that I’m neglecting my job.’

The underlined phrases above are obligatory, which is consistent with the view in Uchida (2002a) that higher-level explicatures are explicitly realized in Japanese. This is in sharp contrast with the situation in (55).
The Japanese language even has linguistic devices of inflection to realize metarepresentation. The English Verb ‘want’ can be expressed in two ways, with ‘tai’ or ‘tagatteiru,’ but the choice seems to be subject to a ‘principle.’ The simplest case is that ‘-tai’ appears when the subject of the verb phrase is first person as in (58), and ‘-tagatteiru’ occurs with third person subjects as in (59). That is, in (58) it is Tom, the speaker, who wants to marry Jill; hence primary metarepresentation is involved. In (59), on the other hand, a third party, Bill, comes in, which brings secondary metarepresentation, as clearly shown in (59b).

(58) a. Tom: watashi-wa Jill-to kekkon shi-tai/-tagatteiru.
I-Topic Jill-with marry want
‘I want to marry Jill.’

b. [Tom says [Tom wants to marry Jill]]

(59) a. Tom: Bill-wa Jill-to kekkon shi-tai/-tagatteiru.
Bill-Topic Jill-with marry want
‘Bill wants to marry Jill.’

b. [Tom says [Bill wants to marry Jill]]

But (60) to (62) show that the behaviors of ‘tai/-tagatteiru’ are not so simple. In (60) and (61) Bill is third person but cooccurs with ‘-tai,’ and in (62) ‘-tagatteiru’ is appropriate even if the subject is first person.

(60) a. Tom: Bill-wa Jill-to kekkon shi-tai/-tagatteiru-to
Bill-Topic Jill-with marry want-that
itta.
said
‘Bill said he wants to marry Jill.’

b. [Tom says [Bill said [Bill wants to marry Jill]]]

(61) a. Tom: Bill-wa Jill-to kekkon shi-tai/-tagatteiru-to
Bill-Topic Jill-with marry want-that
omotteiru.
think
‘Bill thinks he wants to marry Jill.’

b. [Tom says [Bill thinks [Bill wants to marry Jill]]]

(62) a. Tom: Bill-wa watashi-ga Jill-to kekkon
Bill-Topic I-Nominative Jill-with marry
shii-tai/-tagatteiru-to itta.
want-that said
‘Bill said I want to marry Jill.’

b. [Tom says [Bill said [Tom wants to marry Jill]]]

In (60a) and (61a), the person who wants to marry Jill and who says so
or thinks so is the same person, Bill. That suggests that the inner two brackets in (60b) and (61b) show the primary metarepresentation of Tom. In (62), on the other hand, the person who wants to marry Jill is different from the man who reported that Tom wants to marry Jill. Thus, (62) concerns Tom’s secondary metarepresentation.\(^7\)

I have argued that the metarepresentational processes can be regarded as almost the same in English and Japanese, but that the linguistic realization of those aspects differs in the two languages. The implication may be theoretically important.

Carston (2002b: 28) summarizes a range of ways in which linguistic meaning underdetermines the proposition expressed as follows;

\[\text{(63) a. multiple encodings (i.e. ambiguities)}\]
\[\text{b. indexical references} \]
\[\text{c. missing constituents} \]
\[\text{d. unspecified scope of elements} \]
\[\text{e. underspecificity or weakness of encoded conceptual content} \]
\[\text{f. overspecificity or narrowness of encoded conceptual content} \]

We can add to the list covert attributive thoughts or utterances. Typical examples are illustrated in (56) above (repeated here for convenience).

\[\text{(56) a. Jane: John has left, [Peter says this [because he thinks [I may not have heard about it]]]} \]
\[\text{b. Jane: Why is Paul leaving, [Peter asks this [since he knows [I know so much]]]} \]
\[\text{c. Jane: If that’s John, [Peter says [he pretends [he is not here]]]} \]
\[\text{d. Jane: Mary was pretty rude to me. [Peter says [Mary says [Peter is neglecting Peter’s job]]]} \]

In order to understand correctly what Peter wants to communicate, we have to recover the parts ‘he thinks’ in (56a), ‘he knows’ in (56b), ‘he pretends’ in (56c), and ‘Mary says’ in (56d). The verb ‘want’ in English is another typical case where the metarepresentational processes are not linguistically realized. It is an interesting but open theoretical question as to what status these primary or secondary metarepresenta-

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\(^7\) For further discussion see Uchida (2004b).
tions have in English, while, as has been shown, they belong to base-
level explicatures in Japanese.

7. Conclusion

This is, I should say, not an introductory book on relevance theory or
on cognitive pragmatics. Carston presents only as much of the theory
as is necessary to her arguments, leaving fundamental theoretical expla-
nations aside. Almost everyone who has read or is now reading the
book would admit that it is difficult to follow, but at the end of every
section and chapter, Carston has provided summaries and points to be
discussed in the following pages, which serve the reader as signposts
along the way. The reader is also supposed to consult the two appen-
dices: one is a relevance theory glossary and the other a brief introduc-
tion to Gricean maxims. In the main text of the book substantial dis-
cussions are developed throughout, mentioning a host of linguists and
philosophers. Among others, H. P. Grice, F. Recanati, N. Burton-
Roberts, S. Levinson, and K. Bach are frequently referred to, most of
the time critically. Carston has succeeded in arguing against their
claims from a relevance-theoretic viewpoint and is consistent in keeping
to her view that linguistic meaning underdetermines explicature.

I have discussed several points above, but they do not reflect reserva-
tions about Carston’s main arguments: her firm theoretical position
never fails. No one would disagree that the present volume is a signif-
ificant work not only in relevance theory but also in pragmatics in gener-
al. For those who share the view of relevance theory this is an indis-
ispensable book surveying many important developments of the theory: it
will serve as a major point of orientation for generations to come. Since
Carston’s arguments are both responsive to the existing literature
and very clearly drawn, advocates of other approaches will also find
much here that is stimulating. For such readers the book is likely to
prove re-examination of long held positions.

In my view, Thoughts and Utterances is the second monumental
achievement by Carston, the first being her ambitious 1988 paper “Implicature, explictur and truth-theoretic semantics,” where various
original ideas on explicatures, implicatures, and conjuncts, and the like,
were already presented. In the present book these research topics have
been fine-tuned, supplemented, where necessary, and elaborated into a
unified underdeterminacy thesis. The underdeterminacy thesis derives
initial plausibility from the seemingly unobjectionable observation that public words are limited in number while mental representations are unlimited. Carston’s meticulous development of this thesis will no doubt occasion a great deal of further research in this and neighboring areas. 

REFERENCES


8 Typographical errors are rather few in number for a voluminous book like this, but the following crucial ones should be noticed: ‘conventionally’ (p. 112, l. 31) should be ‘conversationally’ and ‘If she loves him she does not love him.’ (p. 304, l. 34) ‘If she loves him she loves him.’

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