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## Are explicatures cancellable? Toward a theory of the speaker's intentionality<sup>1</sup>

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An explicature is a combination of linguistically encoded and contextually inferred conceptual features. The smaller the relative contribution of the contextual features, the more explicit the explicature will be, and inversely. (Sperber and Wilson 1986: 182).

### *Abstract*

*The aim of this paper is to reflect on the necessity of pragmatic development of propositional forms and arrive at a better understanding of the level of meaning which Sperber and Wilson and Carston call 'explicature'. It is also argued that the pragmatically conveyed elements of explicatures are not cancellable—unlike conversational implicatures. While Capone (2003) addressed the issue of the cancellability of explicatures from a merely empirical point of view, in this paper a number of important theoretical questions are raised and discussed. In particular it is proposed that the analysis of the notion of intentionality and the nature of pragmatic intrusion will settle the question of the cancellability of explicatures. An explicature can be considered a two-level entity. It consists of a logical form and a pragmatic increment that the logical form gives rise to in the context of an utterance. However, both the initial logical form and the pragmatic increment are the target of pragmatic processes. Consequently, we need a pragmatic process to promote the initial logical form to an intended interpretation and another pragmatic process to derive further increments starting from the initial logical form as promoted to an utterance interpretation.*

### **1. Introduction**

The boundary between semantics and pragmatics has been the object of much recent linguistic theorizing and discussions. It is an outcome of

dialectical conflicts that better theories emerge, in which a number of errors are purged, arguments are refined and perspectives are broadened. The aim of this paper is to reflect on the necessity of pragmatic development of propositional forms and to arrive at a better understanding of the level of meaning which Sperber and Wilson and Carston famously call “explicatures” (or “explicature”) and to support the claim that explicatures are not cancellable—unlike conversational implicatures<sup>2</sup>. This paper is intended to advance the discussion on the semantics/pragmatics debate acknowledging the importance of relevance theorists’ contribution to the issue. While the notion of explicature is originally Sperber and Wilson’s (1986), Carston (1999, 2002a, 2002b, 2004a, 2004b) has further refined the notion by ample discussion. If, however, my assumption that explicatures are not cancellable is correct, a number of its connected ideas must be changed, and it is possible that this theoretical move will precipitate positive consequences on the theory as a whole as claimed in Capone (2003, 2006) in a discussion of “Grice’s circle.” Here, for the sake of simplicity of discussion, I propose to divorce the issue of “explicatures” from that of “Grice’s circle.” While Capone (2003) addressed the issue from a merely empirical point of view, in this paper a number of important theoretical questions are raised and discussed. In particular I think that the analysis of intentionality and the nature of pragmatic intrusion will settle the question of the cancelability of explicatures. An explicature can be considered a two-level entity, in that it consists of a logical form and a pragmatic increment found in the context of the utterance. However, both the initial logical form and the pragmatic increment are the target of pragmatic processes, in that we need a pragmatic process to promote the initial logical form to a serious intended interpretation and another pragmatic process to derive further increments as promoted to a serious utterance interpretation.

## 2. The cancelability of conversational implicatures

I propose to settle the issue of the cancelability of conversational implicatures before considering the issue of the cancelability of explicatures, as the two issues are connected. Through both implicatures and explicatures, a speaker intends to have a certain meaning recognized by a recipient. In both cases we are faced with intended messages.

That things are not always easy can be shown by using one of Paul Grice’s celebrated examples (1989: 33). A is writing a testimonial about a candidate for a philosophy job, and his letter reads as follows: “Dear Sir, Mr. X’s command of English is excellent and his attendance at tuto-

rials has been regular. Yours etc.” Surely A cannot be unable to say more, since the man is his pupil; moreover, he knows that more information than this is wanted. He must, therefore, be wishing to impart information that he is reluctant to write down, thus implying that he thinks Mr. X is not a good philosopher.

Granting that the teacher manages to convey some message above what is literally said and that the quantity of what is said is an element in the interception of the communicated message, one may contend that the implicature is not cancelable. I doubt that the teacher may write a second letter saying “I apologize for that cryptic message; Mr X would have deserved a longer letter (. . .) In fact, I recommend Mr X for the philosophy job in question.” Implicated messages cannot be retracted, in *official circumstances*; intentions cannot be “disintegrated” (or unimplicated) by further messages if the circumstances are such that these intentions are unequivocally calculated.

An objection may be raised to such considerations. One may say that the interpretation of the philosopher’s revision is tricky: though A could deny not having supported his student, he certainly could not assert his support. Implicature cancellations are connected with the capacity to deny having implicated that Q by asserting P, but not the capacity to assert Q as a possible repair to having asserted P. This objection is based on the assumption that the implicature is somehow different from the one noted by Grice, that the writer is not supporting Mr X. On this interpretation, it makes sense to deny the implicature. Assuming that this is a reasonable interpretation, why is it that the philosopher’s revision cannot explicitly support Mr X? Presumably the reason is that, in addition to the implicature that the writer was not supporting Mr X’s application, there is another implicature salient, namely that A thinks X is a poor philosopher. This is not an implicature that can be denied. The problem of this tricky example lies in the fact that language is embedded in a social situation, in which rules of conduct partially determine the meanings which words—or their absence—have.

It may be useful to distinguish here between generalized and particularized conversational implicatures. Generalized conversational implicatures are default inferences (Levinson 2000) that get through in a default context, in the absence of clues about what the context is like, in which context plays a negative role and can cancel an inference in case a conflict arises between contextual cues and the default implicature. In the neo-Gricean framework advocated by Levinson, the common ground is thought of as a bucket containing all the facts mutually assumed through common knowledge or assertion. The defeasibility of implicature generation is explained in the following way: We add the content of a new

assertion in the bucket strictly in the order below only if each incrementation is consistent with the contents of the bucket:

Entailments;

Quantity Generalized Conversational Implicatures

Clausal;

Scalar;

Manner Generalized conversational implicature;

Generalized conversational I-implicatures [due to the principle of minimization]. (Levinson 2000: 90).

Particularized conversational implicatures, instead, are inferential augmentations in which contextual assumptions loom large in determining/fixing a communicative intention through reasoning. There may be disagreement as to the level or degree of conscious reasoning actually occurring in the calculation of particularized conversational implicatures. Relevance theorists, for example, prefer to see these inferences as occurring at a subconscious level. I do not exclude that both modes of inference are available and that we have to distinguish, case by case, between conscious pragmatic reasonings and subconscious pragmatic interpretative processes.

Scholars such as Burton-Roberts believe that particularized conversational implicatures, cannot be cancelled without contradiction of what is intended. This correlates with the intuition that the more salient a speaker's intention to implicate, the less cancellable the implicature will be. (Burton-Roberts 2006: 10)<sup>3</sup>.

### **3. Why is the issue of implicature cancellation relevant to the issue of explicature cancellation?**

The issue of implicature cancellation is relevant to the issue of explicature cancellation because the cases of explicatures analyzed by Wilson and Sperber (2002) and Carston (2002a) are cases of inferences in particular contexts. Consider the following utterance produced by Mary in reply to an invitation to join us for dinner. When she says "I've already eaten," at the level of the propositional form we assign a constituent involving a temporal concept and we understand her intention of saying that she has eaten at a time interval ranging from a couple of hours to a few minutes ago. We certainly do not interpret Mary as saying that she ate three days ago, since this information would no longer count as an explanation for her refusal to have more food. Why is this the case? Intentionality is an

important factor in our decision and since intentionality cannot be ascertained telepathically (to use an expression from Wedgwood 2007), we must rely on features of the context to direct us toward the right intention. We discard the hypothesis that Mary means that she ate days ago, as this would hardly be relevant to our invitation. A move that is relevant to an invitation to eat is either acceptance or refusal. Since no acceptance has been issued, Mary's utterance can only count as an explanation (of her decision to have no more food) and the explanation must rely on the assumption that she has eaten immediately before the invitation as human beings cannot eat when their stomach is crammed. Try now to nullify this inferential work. You will be unable to do so, because inferential communication is due to pragmatics and pragmatics cannot be overruled by pragmatics<sup>4</sup>. If this were the case, then there would be no rational way of communicating with people.

In both particularized implicatures and explicatures, we are faced with the same problem. Pragmatics cannot be overruled by pragmatics. Only semantics can be overruled by pragmatics. In both cases, we are faced with intentionality, evinced through the pragmatic resources of the language, that cannot be retracted because pragmatics cannot be overruled by pragmatics. It is not just the question of intentionality, as Burton-Roberts puts it, that decides the issue. Intentionality, on its own, is inert. It is in the mind of the speaker and not telepathically transmitted to the hearer. Only through communication is the intentionality of the speaker inferentially relevant to attributions of intentionality on the part of the hearer; in the (actual) pragmatic process no room is left for cancelability of particularized implicatures or explicatures.

The reason particularized implicatures cannot be cancelled is the same that prevents explicatures from being cancelled. When a strong intentionality is projected, it can no longer be retracted. Implicatures only arise if intended and recognized if intended. But then it should be impossible to cancel an implicature: how would it be possible to withdraw/cancel what was intended to be implicated and was recognized as intended? An implicature could only be withdrawn/cancelled if it were NOT intended. But then it wouldn't BE an implicature (since implicatures by definition are intended); in other words, there would BE no implicature to cancel. This is relevant to the issue of explicature cancellation only in this: presumably, explicatures must be intended and must be recognized as intended. So the above applies to explicatures as much as to implicatures. And this consideration of regarding explicatures as uncancelable is IN ADDITION to the other considerations which you and I advance for saying that explicatures specifically cannot be cancelled. (Burton-Roberts, personal communication).

Should we abandon the cancelability test altogether (thus avoiding considering cancelability the hallmark of conversational implicature)? It is amazing that Grice, who seemed happy about coupling his notion of conversational implicature with his notion of intentionality, did not notice the impasse that the two notions were leading to. The only cases of conversational implicatures that are really cancellable are those in which the intention to communicate an assumption *p* is least obvious, evident, and recognizable. Presumably these cases, by strict standards, as Burton-Roberts seems to imply above, should not even be categorized as conversational implicatures. If so, then it is reasonable to assert the strong hypothesis that conversational implicatures are not cancellable (in practice<sup>5</sup>), which carries the implication that explicatures are not cancellable. Explicatures too, in fact, are inferences which must be intended and recognized as intended.

However, we should find it useful to limit ourselves to the claim that only particularized implicatures are not cancellable, involving the recognition of certain intentions (by the speaker) on the part of the hearer. These are the cases in which the pragmatic resources of the language point towards an unequivocal intention, making it awkward or difficult to cancel the intention.

One such case is that of the attribution of a serious intention to a speaker in virtue of having proffered “*p*”. Deciding whether the speaker seriously intended to assert “*p*” is no minor matter, clearly showing the nexus between pragmatic processing and arriving at a non-cancellable intention. It should be noted, following Bach (2001), that the semantic resources of a language are not sufficient to project intentionality. This is a point reiterated also by Recanati (2007: 37), who says (following Frege) that if a sentence lacks the force of a serious assertion, making the content of the sentence more complex by means of operators such as “It is true that” or “I assert that” will not change the situation, since whether or not an utterance is serious is a pragmatic matter—a matter of force and not content.

Suppose I say “Bush will be remembered for giving prosperity to USA” (here in the written text there is no disambiguating intonation). Although everyone will grant that I am using the conventions of English in expressing my thought, it is not clear that literal meaning is a firm guide to the speaker’s intentions. You will not just look at the words I used, but will most certainly embed the sentence in the context in which it was produced. Given the mismatch between the semantic content of the sentence and the current state of the US economy, you will use your reasoning abilities to decide that my intention really cannot be serious. Now, Bach’s considerations are nice because they imply that no semantic device can

settle the issue of the seriousness of the speaker's intentions. Suppose I then say: "Look, I am seriously telling you that Bush brought prosperity to USA". It could be useful to use the word "seriously" to indicate that I speak with serious intentions. The hearer will give the speaker another chance and will try to find out again whether such intentions match with the propositions usually accepted in the broad context of the conversation. Yet, after the search has produced no context in which the intentions could be serious, the hearer will give up the search and will settle for an interpretation in which the speaker could not be serious. The truth is that if literal meanings are not sufficient to guarantee that the communicative intention behind the sentence is serious, no use of literal devices for expressing a serious intention will do. They will be undermined by the applicable pragmatic resources.

Now if this consideration is plausible, it is clear that the matter of inferring the speaker's intentions given a context of utterance and the clues used by the speaker is such that it is not at all easy to retract intentions. As an example, consider the case of a politician who harasses his female secretary by making an indecent proposal. Suppose he later asserts that he did not really intend his message. After all, if what Bach says is true and we need pragmatic processing in ascertaining whether someone seriously intended to assert "p", this line of defense would not be totally unreasonable. Here a problem opposite to the one noted by Bach arises. The problem is not so much how to prove that the speaker's intentions were serious, but whether one could, instead, prove in court that one's intentions were not serious. The problem has to do with what kind of interpretation an utterance is given in a context, given that it is clear to the speaker that the contextual resources of the language will lead a hearer to infer a certain intention and that the context in which the utterance was produced will make it impossible to deny that intention. Pragmaticians have not given enough thought to this kind of problem. They take for granted that conversational implicatures (or explicatures) are cancellable, but in a number of contexts it is not possible to lead the hearer to infer a certain intention allowing her the freedom to cancel that inference. The fact is, as discussed in Capone (2005), we should give attention to a number of linguistic phenomena in which individual intentionality is expressed by resorting to the social intentionality involved in performing a certain action. In Capone (2005) I claimed that a number of inferences arise in context and are simply not cancellable. This is because there are conventions or rules of semantic interpretation based on discourse practices and contextual clues. These pragmatic phenomena are inferential contributions on par with conversational implicatures, yet being based on actual aspects of context, they have all the features of particularized



implicatures, and, hence, cannot be cancelled. Consider utterances such as “I saw you” in the classroom. The teacher notices that Michelangelo (his favourite student) whispers the answer to a question to his desk mate. The teacher says “I saw you”. This is not just an accusation, but an order to Michelangelo to stop what he is doing. How can this speech act be transformed into the speech act “stop prompting”? It is the social situation with the rules and expectations governing students’ obligations and teachers’ tasks that promote the *inhibitive interpretation* of “I saw you”. In this context, it is out of the question that the utterance could count as a compliment—such an interpretation simply cannot occur. In fact, no matter how highly the teacher thinks of Michelangelo it is unlikely that the hearer will choose the tortuous path of individual interpretation and proceed from considerations of his teacher’s high esteem for him to the interpretation that the speech act counts as a compliment. Michelangelo will almost certainly choose the social path of interpretation to his own individual path (Jaszczolt 1999). Thus, he is able to work out that the teacher, despite his high opinion of him, actually wants him to stop whispering answers to his desk mate. This is clearly a case in which, when the communicative intention is fixed, it should not be retracted.

Consider a case in which individual intentionality and social intentionality clash. Pippo De Lorenzo wrote a letter to the University Chancellor, protesting against a certain number of injustices after imputing them to the Head of the Faculty. In this letter he threatened to appeal to the judiciary system. A lot of trouble was caused by this letter, as the letter caused strong resentment on the part of the Head of Faculty. After a few years, Pippo De Lorenzo, meeting a mutual friend, tells him:

- 1) If you meet the head of the faculty, please pass him my regards and tell him that I sincerely wish him well.

On reflection, there is a clash here between the individual path of interpretation and the social path of interpretation (the resulting irony). We do not know whether Pippo De Lorenzo is sincere in expressing his intentions. However, let us suppose that he is. In this case, the social intentionality prevails over the individual intentionality and no matter how sincere his words can be and how laborious Pippo De Lorenzo’s efforts to emphasise his sincerity by using words such as “sincerely”, the conventional effects of the words are undone by the pragmatic inferences that arise in context as a result of the social intentionality.

If he really cares to communicate a serious message of reconciliation, Pippo should either abort his intentions or carry out some reparatory moves such as the following:

Making peace with the head of the Faculty;  
 Ensuring that his apologies are accepted;  
 Creating a cordiality context that justifies his sincere expression of the words he wants to utter through (1).

I assume that some will take this example as supporting a view of pragmatics based on the hearer's reconstruction of communicative intentions. On the contrary, the example above supports the idea that there can be no communicative project unless the individual and the social intentionality work in tandem. When there is a divorce between the two, the communicative project has to be abandoned. Pippo De Lorenzo should, in fact, either abort his communicative project or ensure that the individual and the social intentionality work in tandem, by altering the context through the steps proposed above.

#### 4. Explicatures as developed logical forms

Levinson (1983) opts for a negative definition of pragmatics—pragmatics deals with non-truth conditional meaning. This view is tidy and orderly: semantics is the basis for conversational implicatures (Levinson accepts the slogan pragmatics = meaning – truth-conditions). However, as a final note, Levinson (1983) voices some doubts that this tidy and simplistic picture can be maintained, mainly due to examples provided by radical pragmaticists.

Although various authors have talked about the role played by pragmatic inference in constructing a propositional form (e.g. Bach 1994; Levinson 2000; Recanati 2004; Stainton 1998), in this paper I shall concentrate on Carston's (2002) idea of pragmatic contribution to the proposition expressed, which has something distinctive because, unlike Bach, she believes that pragmatics contributes to what is said and, unlike Levinson (2000), she believes that the inferences that develop logical forms into propositional forms are explicatures, not implicatures<sup>6</sup>. The examples that show the role played by pragmatics in fleshing out a propositional form are roughly of the following type:

- (2) I am feeling better today;
- (3) On the top shelf (uttered by a speaker who realizes that the hearer, making his breakfast, needs the marmalade);
- (4) He wasn't wearing his glasses and mistook his wife for a hat-stand;
- (5) This fruit is green;
- (6) It is raining.

To express a full proposition, (2) must imply a comparison between the present and a previous state (how the speaker was feeling, say, yesterday). (3) is clearly an elliptical utterance: it is not grammatically complete and requires the addition of a subject and of a verb. (4) is a case in which conjunction contributes a causality notion to the full proposition expressed. (5) also needs pragmatic intrusion, as without contextual knowledge we are left in doubt as to whether the outside of the fruit is green or whether the interior is so; (6) also says that it is raining here, in the location where both the speaker and the hearer are situated.

Carston (2002a, 17) believes that examples such as the ones above demonstrate that, in addition to a speaker meaning more than she says, the “what is said” of the utterance may involve more than the mere meaning of the linguistic expression used. Thus we have to distinguish two notions: the linguistic meaning encoded in the lexical-syntactic form employed, and the thought or proposition which it is being used to express, that is, what is said.

This exemplifies the underdeterminacy thesis, the view that the meaning encoded in the linguistic expressions used underdetermines what is said. The hearer must resort to pragmatic inference in order to work out the proposition expressed by an utterance.

Carston proposes the Isomorphism Principle, a recent formulation of which is the one in Fodor and Lepore (1991):

If a sentence S expresses the proposition P, then the syntactic constituents of S express the constituents of P.

This approach allows that pragmatic processes can supply constituents to what is said solely on communicative grounds, without any linguistic pointer, in which case the Isomorphism Principle does not hold. The move of abandoning the Isomorphism Principle is welcome, because it allows us to assign a proposition constituents which do not appear in the corresponding sentence’s logical form.

#### 4.1. *An alternative view (Bach 1994).*

According to Bach (1994: 124), what is said does not correspond to a full proposition determined through pragmatic inference, but corresponds to a minimal proposition or to a propositional radical and is constrained by the following assumption:

The elements of what is said must correspond to elements in the linguistic expression (the sentence under consideration).

Bach's test for distinguishing what is said is provided by the following schema: "S said that . . ." He claims that only those elements of the original utterance that can be embedded without infelicity in the schema above are part of what is said.

Otherwise, Bach agrees with Relevance Theorists that pragmatics is needed to flesh out the proposition a speaker intends to express. He calls such pragmatic inferences "implicatures," and distinguishes between two pragmatic processes involved in the working out of implicatures: completion and expansion. Completion is required for those sentences which do not express a full proposition. Expansion is required for those cases in which a sentence does express a full proposition but this cannot be considered to be the proposition a speaker really intends to express.

I think that Bach's picture is not incoherent, albeit an approach that considers "what is said" to be a propositional level of thought commends itself more. Perhaps a testing case for which notion of what is said must be adopted is furnished by ironic utterances. Here, in the absence of rich contextual clues (the original context in which the words were proffered), it would be misleading to quote the words contained in the original utterance, as these may lead to a misrecognition of the communicative intention accompanying them. In any case, I accept that the expression "what is said" may be understood in two senses: what is A-said, the words uttered, and what is B-said, the thought communicated.

#### 4.2. *A paradoxical example of explicature*

Cappelen and Lepore (2005: 64–65) are unconvinced by the standard examples of radical pragmaticists. They believe that if the standard examples of explicature do not have invariant truth-conditions, it could be shown that no sentence has invariant truth conditions. Consider the sentence:

(7) John went to the gym.

One could argue that this sentence is not truth-evaluable since one could always ask: how did he get to the gym? Did he walk to the vicinity? What did he do in the gym? I think that the authors assert that if we think hard enough, then every example of language use will exhibit semantic underdetermination, simply because we set the standards of truth-evaluability too high.

Montminy (2006: 14), commenting on Cappelen and Lepore's work, writes that this treatment of Incompleteness Arguments conflates *lack of full specificity* with *incompleteness*, contrasting cases in which a sentence

is not completely informative with cases in which the standing meaning of a sentence does not determine a complete, truth-evaluable proposition.

The point Montminy probably misses is that there is such a wide gap between the interpretation of (8) as (9) and of (9) as (10)

- (8) John went to the gym;
- (9) John went to the vicinity of the gym:
- (10) John went into (inside) the gym,

One is tempted to say that this too is a case of semantic underdetermination: the full(er) proposition provided by enriching the propositional radical ought to be something like the following (if we accept Cappelen and Lepore 2005):

John went (in)to an area vast enough to include the gym and its close vicinity.

Determining this proposition requires some narrowing down, that is to say the addition of some concept. A move open to Montminy, which he does not make, is to take what Cappelen and Lepore say for good and argue that this is a case in which pragmatics intervenes to enrich a truth-evaluable proposition; and there is nothing wrong about this. Yet, this would not be like saying that no proposition at all is expressed by (12).

An alternative move would be to deny the acceptability of the data provided by Cappelen and Lepore. In any case, Montminy does not appreciate the real point of Cappelen and Lepore's discussion, which is, a refinement of the question: how do we know when something is a full proposition? Is not there some latitude in deciding whether an interpretation (whether semantically or pragmatically accessed) is a full proposition? Could we not push this latitude further up in our search for complete propositions? Finally, what does the expression "a complete proposition" mean?<sup>7</sup> This final question is important, since all researchers in the semantics/pragmatics debate propose the priority of pragmatic inference on the grounds that semantic interpretation does not provide a full proposition. Presumably, a full proposition is the minimal proposition that is truth-evaluable. However, if we are pedantic enough, we could always say that a proposition is not truth-evaluable and that we need (further) pragmatic inference to arrive at a truth-evaluable proposition. The problem is: where do we stop? It may be worth noting that truth-conditions mean something different for minimalists and contextualists. Minimalists are not interested in what the world would have to be like for the sentence/utterance to be true (which they call verification procedure), but merely in the formal procedure: "p" is true iff p, even if p is incomplete. Given this distinction, it goes without saying that contextualists are more exigent when deciding whether a sentence expresses a full

proposition. However, as Lepore (personal communication) says, minimalists are not at all surprised to find out that many of the propositions we communicate are absurd, illogical, a priori falsehoods and they do not think that it is the task of semanticists to account for these uses.

The considerations so far are applicable to Carston's work as well. Is it possible that if one thinks hard enough, every linguistic example requires pragmatic development into a proposition? Carston is not scared of this consequence, as she professes to be interested in knowing whether the gap between linguistic meaning and what is said is a contingent or necessary property of verbal communication (Carston 2002a, 15) and she has a chapter in which she discusses whether pragmatic intrusion is a necessary feature of human communication.

#### 4.3. *Explicatures*

Explicatures (those assumptions which are required to make a proposition truth-evaluable) must be differentiated neatly from implicatures. The notion of "explicature" is originally due to Sperber and Wilson (1986: 54) who write:

- (I) An assumption by an utterance U is *explicit* (hence an "explicature") if and only if it is a development of a logical form encoded by U.
- (II) An assumption communicated by U which is not explicit is *implicit* (hence an "implicature").

Carston (2002a: 117) argues that, along with pragmatic processes triggered by linguistic expressions, there are "free" pragmatic processes that determine certain elements of the explicature on a purely contextual basis. She believes that the content of explicatures comes from two distinct sources, the linguistic expressions used and the context, and it is derived in two distinct ways depending on its source. She claims that the logical form, which is the output of the decoding phase, is solely a schema for the inferential construction of fully propositional assumptions.

Burton-Roberts speculates that Carston implies that explicatures are a development of the logical form L of the sentence uttered, if and only if P (asymmetrically) entails L<sup>8</sup>. For example, if I say "He shrugged and left" meaning (via explicature) "He shrugged and then left," it must be the case that the latter proposition implies that the explicature entails the encoded form it is a development of. Burton-Roberts (2005: 397) contends that "If the encoded form can be entailed, it must deliver a truth-evaluable proposition" and this could be a problem with the notion of development. Below, I discuss that cases of loosening cause a problem for

the notion that an explicature entails the logical form from which it takes input.

## 5. Are explicatures cancellable?

Both Burton-Roberts (2006) and Capone (2006) converge on the idea that explicatures cannot be cancelled. In the following sections, I discuss Burton-Roberts (2006) and Capone (2006), in the hope to extend that discussion.

### 5.1. *Burton-Roberts (2005) on the non-cancelability of explicatures*

It is interesting to see what Burton-Roberts (2005: 400–401) has to say on cancelability (of explicatures) in his review of Carston (2002a). The author claims that it is not possible, in Carston's own terms, that explicatures should be cancellable. In fact, Carston says that the implicated assumptions that constitute the explicature are part of the proposition expressed and, thus, are truth-conditional in nature. On this view, [+truth-conditional] does imply [–cancellable]. If none of the truth-conditional content of the explicature can be cancelled, the explicature itself should not be cancellable. Cancellable implicature, then, is a logical impossibility according to Burton-Roberts<sup>9</sup>.

Carston may find the idea that explicatures cannot be cancelled unpalatable because if her notion of explicature is to focus on the central role of pragmatics in human communication, freezing the implicatures in the notion of non-cancellable explicatures will amount to a non-insignificant concession to truth-conditional semantics. Readers may notice that Burton-Roberts' objections (to Carston) come from the perspective of truth-conditional semantics.

Burton-Roberts considers an example Carston discusses on p. 138:

(11) She's ready but Karen isn't ready to leave for the airport.

Carston says that the explicature of "She's ready" can be cancelled, because the sentence (11) is not contradictory. Burton-Roberts, correctly argues that the sentence (11) cannot be contradictory; it is statements that are contradictory: "contradiction must be assessed at the (propositional) level of explicature". Burton-Roberts' position is in line with my own considerations. He is right saying that (11) is not evidence in favor of the cancelability of explicatures. In particular, he believes that "She is ready" in (11) can be interpreted in three ways:

- (12) Pat is ready at time *t* to leave for the airport  
 (13a) Karen is ready at time *t* to leave for the airport *x*;  
 (13b) Karen is ready for something (though we do not know what).

If interpretation (12) holds, the second clause of (11) surely does not contradict it. If interpretation (13b) holds, the second clause of (11) does not cancel it either. So (13a) must be the explicature Carston has in mind. But it is precisely (13a) that is contradicted by the second clause of (11).

### 5.2. *Further considerations of non-cancellable explicatures*

Burton-Roberts (2006) distinguishes between *A-saying* and *B-saying*. *A-saying* is taken to be the literal words expressed in an utterance, which can be reported in abstraction from the original context in which they were produced (presumably to fix an intention). Roughly, *A-saying* corresponds to the words actually proffered by a speaker in communication (Burton-Roberts 2005 says that to report what a speaker has *A* said we must [and need only] quote her utterance); *B-saying*, instead, involves the assessment (the individuation) of the thought the speaker explicitly intended to communicate, and this may involve putting together both the words used and pragmatic assumptions of the context to arrive at explicatures and to add these to what was literally expressed. *B-saying* involves fixing the speaker's communicative intention. Burton-Roberts (personal communication) adds:

In fact, to report a *B-saying* you don't have to use any of the actual words that were *A*-said. Thus, to accurately report what you *B*-said when you *A*-said "Fa caldo" (It's warm in here) I can report you as having said that it was hot. Similarly a person who *A*-says "It's at 12 o'clock" can be reported by "She said the meeting was at noon."

Burton-Roberts notices that Carston's claim that explicatures are cancellable shifts emphasis from the speaker's intentions to the hearer's reconstruction of these intentions, a move that is dubious in his opinion, since both for Grice and Sperber and Wilson (1986; 2005) pragmatics is all about intention. Burton-Roberts' insistence on the logical impossibility of cancelling explicatures is something that is immediately appealing. Yet, we have to ponder a bit what it means to endorse or commit oneself to an explicature. Carston says that a speaker endorses explicatures, and that she commits herself to them—yet what is it to endorse a proposition, what is it to express commitment to it? Much depends on the way we define "commitment" and "endorsing a proposition." In a sense a speaker commits herself and endorses a proposition through conversational implicature as well—and if we go along with what Burton-Roberts says then



there is no subtle difference between particularized implicatures and explicatures (actually Burton-Roberts [personal communication] stresses that he only said that with PCI a speaker commits herself to having implicated the proposition). If a proposition is actually implicated, it cannot be unimplicated, that is cancelled without contradiction of the executed intention to implicate). Particularized implicatures are quite strong commitments to a proposition.

We may want to distinguish between potential explicatures and actual explicatures. Explicatures (without the asterisk) are those that a speaker commits herself to and explicitly endorses. Explicatures\* are only potentially endorsable, things which a speaker potentially commits herself to. Thus explicatures\* are cancellable (so Carston would say) while explicatures are not. So, in a sense both Carston and Burton-Roberts are right. Yet, I do not despair that (only) Burton-Roberts is right if explicatures are a more restricted class than what Carston takes to be (a move that circumvents some problems noted by Cappelen and Lepore 2005). Suppose that we confine ourselves to calling “explicatures” those inferential increments that are meant to supply a full proposition, where none is supplied by bare semantics, or to rescue a proposition from contradiction or logical impossibility (absurdity). These explicatures are in no obvious way “potential explicatures”. They are necessitated by the contingencies of communication and by the fact that logical forms are too fragmentary or present wide lacunae. Since in these cases there are no explicatures\*, Burton-Roberts is right in saying that explicatures cannot be cancelled.

Capone (2006) considers some examples of pragmatic intrusion such as (14), (15) and (16):

- (14) If the king of France died and France became a republic, I would be happy, but if France became a republic and the king of France died, I would be unhappy;
- (15) Take these three plates to those three people over there;
- (16) You will die (said to John who has just cut his arm).

Capone (2006) asserts that cancelling a causality implicature, which allows us to make sense of an otherwise contradictory statement, results in an unacceptable utterance: hence in this case it is not possible to build the propositional form while allowing for pragmatic intrusion, and then cancel the related implicature without rendering the discourse incoherent. While in ordinary cases of implicature cancellation, the speaker can still be considered to have said something intelligible; in cases where pragmatics contributes in a decisive way to the propositional form, such a contribution cannot be withdrawn without causing havoc.

It may be suggested that a crucial way of proving that explicatures are not cancellable is to point out that they are part of a speaker's intentions. Presumably one of Carston's reasons in claiming that explicatures are cancellable is that she thinks the hearer entertains the proposition conveyed by the speaker with a high degree of probability but never with certainty (he can go wrong in the process of utterance interpretation). As Saul (2004) and Burton-Roberts (2005) point out, relevance theorists focus on utterance interpretation, rather than on utterance production, and this may very well lead them away from recognizing the central importance of a speaker's communicative intentions, which must be a guide to utterance interpretation in so far as it manifests itself through semantic clues and pragmatic strategies (see also Bach 1998). Since intentions in some cases are fixed, it goes without saying that explicatures, which are the correlate of those intentions, should be non-cancellable. Saul points out that the speaker's manifest intentions are fixed and that while the process of interpretation may provide one or more interpretations which are or are not in line with the original intentions, the communicative process started with those intentions and it is those that crucially matter. We should not be surprised, therefore, that there are loci in conversation where failure to attribute a certain communicative intention deprives the utterance of truth-evaluability and making the case of non-cancellability compelling.

If Carston replies that some cases of explicatures are the correlates of intentions but are nevertheless cancellable, one may reply that intentionality comes in various degrees and that we have some weaker and stronger forms of intentionality. Explicatures correlate with the stronger level of intentionality. If there is a stronger level of intentionality, then explicatures cannot be cancelled, because they express intentions of the strongest type.

Is it reasonable to assume that there are different degrees of intentionality and that, specifically, intentionality comes in the weaker and stronger variety? Although I do not see this point discussed in the literature on communicative intentions in great detail, I think we could appropriate of ideas by Castelfranchi and Paglieri (2007) on a constructive theory of intentions. Although the intentions they discuss are not specifically communicative, they are mainly intentions to act. For example, I may form the intention to send a paper to JL for publication or I may form the intention to write a book. It may be safely assumed that communicative intentions are a subtype of the intentions Castelfranchi and Paglieri discuss, as it is possible for someone to form the intention to communicate P to H to inform her of the truth of P. Telling or informing someone of P can be seen as a form of acting. Castelfranchi and Paglieri

provide a detailed analysis of the role of beliefs in goal processing—that resides in the cognitive transition from a mere desire (what they call a “pro-attitude”) to a proper intention. The main point of the paper is that goal processing and intention revision are largely determined by belief revisions and that, in order to activate, promote, drop, or suspend a goal, an intention, or an intentional action, one has to provide or modify the appropriate beliefs. Surely such a constructive theory of intentions presupposes that intentions come in various degrees. Concerning the action A, one can have stronger or weaker intentions. Stronger intentionality, as the authors say, is activated by the provision of beliefs—so the greater the connection between an intention and a set of beliefs, the greater the likelihood that such beliefs will have an influence on the intention and will modify its degree of intentionality by allowing it to move from the sphere of potential intentionality to the sphere of actual intentionality. I assume that as we move from one sphere to the other, one can find different degrees of intentionality. Now, on the assumption that communicative intentions are a subclass of the intentions Castelfranchi and Paglieri discuss—and this assumption is not implausible for a theory in which we stress the connection between language and action—we should suppose that beliefs interact with intentions not only at the level of intention formation, but also at the level of intention reconstruction by the hearer. A process analogous to the intention construction occurs, and the beliefs assumed to be in the head of the speaker, which are mutually manifest to the hearer, can play a role in allowing the hearer to infer the degree of intentionality involved in the communicative action.

Now we return to explicatures. The reason why explicatures correlate with a stronger form of intentionality is that they arise in circumstances where there cannot be an “out” for the speaker, where the communicative intention proceeds along the only path available, outside which imputing different intentions becomes so implausible as to impair rational communication. Explicatures are not there to rescue the utterance from defective communicative effects, such as lack of informativeness, lack of relevance, or lack of quality, but are there to furnish an uttered proposition, the condition *sine qua non* for evaluating all other communicative deficiencies. The kind of deficiencies which explicatures have to remedy have to do with the lack of a truth-evaluable proposition or with the lack of a plausible truth-evaluable proposition, one which is not irredeemably contaminated by “a priori” contradiction or logical absurdity. It is exactly these cases which shape intentionality within the strict mould of the rational assessment of the thought the utterance must be taken to express.

On the relevance-theoretic view, we should also consider higher-order explicatures, which are the processes assigning illocutionary force to an utterance. Now, I think that if what we have said about the intentionality of explicatures is true, it must be applicable to higher-order explicatures. I have discussed the issue of the non-cancellability of inferences in discourse at length in my paper “Pragmemes” (Capone 2005), where I provided various cases of non-cancellable inferences. I would, nevertheless, like to point out, that questions of truth are not at stake in higher-order explicatures. In such cases we miss the connectedness between non-cancellability and pragmatic intrusion. We might also have a somewhat different story, considering the fact that utterances can be multi-functional at the level of illocutionary force. I do not expect that all considerations concerning pragmatic intrusion are applicable to higher-order explicatures.

### 5.3. *On the connection between non-cancellability of explicatures and pragmatic intrusion*

Suppose it is accepted that explicatures are cancellable. Then we have problems explaining how explicatures are part of the truth-conditional content of a sentence. Surely, one of the advantages of claiming that an inference is truth-conditional is that it is part of the entailments of a sentence (thus, non-cancellable). If we do not want the content obtained through pragmatic intrusion to be part of the entailments of the sentence, why make so much fuss about pragmatic intrusion? After all, we could have a very orderly picture like that of Cappelen and Lepore (2005) in which what is said is mainly associated with linguistic semantics. The various contextual phenomena which we claim to be part of the truth-conditional content of a sentence could be easily assigned at the level of the utterance. Is this what we want? Presumably a radical contextual claim is one that assigns constituents derived through pragmatics inside the sentential content. Considering explicatures non-cancellable is more coherent with the view that pragmatics provides constituents of thought that intrude into the sentential level of meaning, since entailments are not entailments unless one cannot deny them. One of the classical tests for entailments is the one by Strawson: if S entails P, one cannot utter S and say not P. So now my question is, do we have enough courage to argue in favor of full pragmatic intrusion? If we have, then we should accept that explicatures cannot be cancelled.

It may simplify matters if we consider the explicature as a two-level entity, consisting of the entailments of the sentence uttered and the pragmatic increment that goes into the explicature. This segregational approach will not do, because both the entailments and the pragmatic

increments are subject to pragmatic processing. The entailments of the sentence uttered are promoted to being part of the speaker's commitment only after pragmatics rules out, e.g. ironic interpretations. The pragmatic increments are combined with the semantic entailments of the sentence uttered only after such entailments are promoted through pragmatics to intended meaning. At this point, there is no more reason for segregating the constituents of the explicature, the semantic entailments deriving from the sentence and the pragmatic increments based on them and on contextual assumptions.

The objection I expect at this point is the following. But then, if this is the way things are, why also accept that conversational implicatures are non-cancellable? First of all, I only confined myself to the claim that particularized conversational implicatures are not cancellable. Second, the question is not whether it is advantageous to consider conversational implicatures cancellable, but whether it is fruitful to consider explicatures non-cancellable. The difference in the argumentation in favor of non-cancellable particularized implicatures and of non-cancellable explicatures is that there are theoretical reasons due to pragmatic intrusion for insisting that explicatures are non-cancellable, whereas in the case of particularized conversational implicatures we can only resort to arguments based on intentionality. Thus there are stronger theoretical reasons in the case of explicatures for claiming that they are non-cancellable.

## 6. Refining the notion of explicature further

Let us accept the following assumptions by Grundy (2000: 53).

- A. Explicatures amount to constitutive aspects of what is explicitly said;
- B. Explicatures are not linguistically encoded but have to be pragmatically expressed;
- C. Speakers are committed to the explicature of an utterance;
- D. Explicatures are part of what is communicated and, thus, are overtly endorsed by a speaker.
- F. Explicatures are motivated by the indeterminacy of language.

Given all the previous discussion, one should add that explicatures are inferences that partially use linguistic meaning and partially use contextualization clues in order to determine the speaker's unequivocal intention. An explicature is, therefore, the reconstruction of an intention on the basis of what a speaker says in communication in response to the need to reach a full proposition. The full proposition reconstructed by the hearer is one that cannot be cancelled explicitly and one that can be dis-

tinguished from implicatures due to the fact that implicatures are additional increments on top of explicatures. Explicatures are more fundamental increments, as without them the proposition expressed would be either contradictory or false or communicatively very inefficient even at the sentential level. Explicatures are explicit in that they cannot be denied.

We should distinguish real explicatures from potential explicatures. Potential explicatures, like potential implicatures, are not cases of real intentionality (or of real intentionality assignment) but are hypothetical cases of intentionality assignment. When one deals with potential implicatures and potential explicatures one says something like: On the basis of “S” (the syntactic and semantic features of S) and on the basis of the fact that the speaker had a reason to use S (and did not use an alternative to S), the speaker intends that P, unless F, where F is some proposition to be derived from the assumptions manifest in context. The clause UNLESS F focuses on the hypothetical nature of potential implicatures and \*explicatures. However, as far as actual explicatures are concerned there can be no “UNLESS F” clause. The calculation process in actual explicatures is quickly over and nothing else can be done with it. We can no longer think of it and process it further in the light of other assumptions. The process leading to explicatures should be finite (both in the sense that we usually do not spend a long time in coming to an explicature, and in the sense that when we acquire the propositional elements that are relevant to the case, we process the utterance, come up with an explicature and close the interpretation process for good). An explicature case is not like a reasoning case where the evidence is sifted and then the experts come to a decision and the decision process could be reopened at any moment like a trial in which new evidence may determine a completely different outcome. An explicature case is closed when the communicative exchange moves beyond the next utterance. Thus, the evidence that is relevant to the communicative process is the evidence available at  $t$ , where  $t$  is some temporal variable that is indexed to the time of the utterance whose explicature we seek to elucidate and is upper-bounded by  $t'$ , where  $t'$  is indexed to the utterance next to it. By the time  $u'$  is uttered, the explicature of  $u$  is calculated on the basis of the evidence available *at the moment* and the case is not opened further. If we sought further evidence and if  $u$  were contextualized say at different moments,  $t'$ ,  $t''$ ,  $t'''$ , etc. the explicature could very well be different. So an utterance could, in theory, be associated with distinct explicatures. In order to avoid this inconvenience, we have to keep the interpretation process finite. This is in line with the point that an explicature captures a *unique* intention. If the utterance were considered at different moments, different interpretative possibilities should arise (given the fact that different evidence might be available at different

moments). But this is not possible since we have said that the intention to be assigned must be unique.

These considerations are compatible with what Sperber and Wilson (1986) say about utterance interpretation. They also argue that the interpretation process is finite and instantaneous—in other words, when the best interpretation is obtained the process stops. I think that my considerations on the intentionality of explicatures make these considerations cogent and provide further justification for them.

It will not be accepted that relevance-theory should be just a theory about the hearer's interpretations. The main reasons in favor of non-cancelability of explicatures also favor taking RT as a theory of speaker's and hearer's interpretations, a theory which has sufficient power to guarantee that the speaker's intentions and the intentions inferred by the hearer match. They must match because the speaker and the hearer rely on the same principles, because their minds are similar in their constitution and because they share the same cognitive inputs as well as a number of contextual assumptions that are mutually manifest.

The issue of the non-cancelability of explicatures is inherently connected with the issue of the match between speaker and hearer's (assigned) intentions. It's easy to prove this. If there were, say, no speaker-hearer's match in intentions, we should allow for the possibility that the speaker's and the hearer's (inferred) intentions could go along separate paths. It would thus be possible to cancel at least one type of intentions. But the idea that explicatures are not cancellable simply denies that either one type or the other type of intention can be denied. To accept that explicatures are not cancellable in the sense of accepting that the hearer's intentions are not cancellable (without mentioning the speaker's intentions) leads to nowhere, since one reason the hearer's intentions are not cancellable is that they aim to reconstruct the speaker's intentions. Once we give up the idea that the hearers' intentions aim to reconstruct the speaker's intentions, there is no reason to stick to the idea that explicatures are not cancellable. From the hearer's point of view they could very well be cancellable, as in the circumstances in which a hearer evaluates different readings of an utterance without being under pressure to uncover the speaker's intentions.

Returning to the issue of whether the relationship between an explicature and the logical form giving input to it is one of entailment, one should consider that an explicature consists of both a logical form and of some implicated materials which are added to the logical form (let us suppose that logical conjunction is what serves to connect the two in the most simple cases; instead, subtraction is the logical operation involved in cases of loosening). Now, if this is the notion of explicature we adopt, it

clear that it should entail the logical form it derives from in the cases where explicature is an operation based on conjunction. Of course, an explicature under this view should be subject to strong constraints including that the implicated materials be compatible with the logical form the explicature is a development of.

For an explicature to be non-cancellable we need to assume that both the implicated part and the explicit logical form to be developed are non-cancellable elements of meaning. In a sense, even the logical form that is being developed is subject to pragmatic inference, since it must be mapped to a serious intention and the assignment of serious intentions is primarily a matter of pragmatics. On the basis of this pragmatic process of intention assignment, some implicated materials are assigned to the explicature and made compatible with the logical form that gave input to them. It is inevitable that this should be a two stage process, with a double assignment of intentionality.

There are pragmatic processes that contribute to explicatures, such as loosening (“Sicily is a triangle”) in which one cannot proceed in this way. Surely one cannot map the logical form “Sicily is a triangle” to a serious intention and the implicated materials “Sicily has vaguely the shape of a triangle” when they are added to the logical form that gives input to them require a loosening of the intentionality mapped tentatively to the logical form “Sicily has the shape of a triangle.” Compatibility must be maximized and this is done by loosening one level of intentionality. We must accept that the explicature must have only one level of intentionality and that conjunction is, therefore, not the right logical operation in the case of explicature derivation in cases of loosening. Explicature derivation sometimes involves addition, sometimes involves subtraction. If addition is involved (ordinary conjunction) then two levels of intentionality clearly merge into one level of intentionality. If subtraction is the logical operation involved in explicature derivation then we have two levels of intentionality (non-serious; serious), but only one of them prevails. The implicated materials prevail over the literally stated logical form. In this case, the intentionality of the explicature is inherited from the intentionality of the implicated materials. Therefore, explicature derivation requires some (pragmatic) compositionality at the level of the levels of intentionality, due to the assumption (we have accepted) that the two components of the explicature must be compatible. (Pragmatic) compositionality means we must have some principles determining which level of intentionality prevails. In the case of conjunction, compositionality derives from the logical operation “logical conjunction” and the compatibility assumption. In the case of subtraction, compositionality derives from the compatibility assumption plus the assumption that at least one



level of intentionality must project at the strongest global level. The intentionality “Sicily has roughly the shape of a triangle” has a stronger level of intentionality than “Sicily is a triangle” given that, due to shared knowledge, it cannot be the case that Sicily is a perfect triangle. Having decided which is the stronger level of intentionality, this will project at the level of the global explicature. The fact that the explicature, broadly speaking, cannot be cancelled logically implies that in case the two components of the explicature are constituted by two distinct incompatible levels of intentionality, only one can project: they cannot both project as this would jeopardize the notion that the explicature is not cancellable.

A consequence of the discussion so far is that cases of explicatures based on loosening, in so far as they use the logical operation of subtraction, jeopardize the definition that explicatures entail the logical forms they are developments of. In fact, a loose triangle obviously does not entail a triangle. Nevertheless, there should be a logical operation requiring that the explicature entails *something like* the logical form it is a development of. To be more precise, the explicature “Sicily has the rough shape of a triangle” requires that we look at a triangle to see what the real shape of Sicily is like.

Thus an explicature is a process of the following kind:

Starting from a logical form  $S$ , develop  $S$  by bearing the Principle of Relevance into account and add the feature  $Te$  (truth-evaluability) to  $u(S)$  as a consequence of the consideration that  $u(S)/Te$  has greater contextual effects and fewer cognitive costs than  $u(S)/\neg Te$ .

The approach so far is minimally distinct from Sperber and Wilson or Carston's, who argue that in specific cases the search for relevance leads to the construction of explicatures. Instead, I argue on general grounds that explicatures that maximize truth-evaluability are preferable on the grounds of the Principle of Relevance.

I would like to tie the notion of explicature to that of assertion in communication. We will not make much progress in pragmatics unless we recognize that explicatures are part of assertions. The considerations so far significantly cohere with what Stainton (1994: 280) says about assertions, revising considerations by Sperber and Wilson (1986):

An utterance  $U$  is an assertion that  $P$  if and only if:

- (a) Either  $P$  is the propositional form of  $U$  (i.e.  $P$  results merely by completing the Logical Form of  $U$ —i.e. by disambiguating it, enriching it and assigning it reference) or  $P$  could result merely by completing the Logical Form of  $U$  and conjoining it with another manifest Logical Form of the appropriate semantic type: and

- (b) P is consistent with the presumption of optimal relevance (i.e. U actually communicates P).

In other words, Stainton too believes that explicatures form part of the asserted proposition and, thus, is implicitly committed to the non-cancellability of explicatures.

## 7. Conclusion

This paper has assumed that pragmatic intrusion is a rather general phenomenon in language use and that Carston's notion of "explicature" is very important. This notion may need refinement, and I have shown what kind of facts have to be taken into consideration for this purpose. Cancelability seems to me to be an important fact leading to some theoretical revision. Furthermore, the fact that in some cases it is difficult to distinguish between implicatures and explicatures if merely empirical facts such as cancellation are considered, will inevitably lead us to tighten up the definition of explicatures.

Jaszczolt (personal communication) says that Carston may find the idea of non-cancellable explicatures problematic in that it goes against the idea of nonce-inference (context-driven inference) and makes explicatures more akin to unmarked, default meanings—not Levinson's highly cancellable defaults, but certainly Asher and Lascarides (2003) or Jaszczolt's (1999) defaults.

This is not necessarily an implication of what I have written so far. In Capone (2006) I have amply discussed a case of explicature that required some kind of contextual inference. Explicatures are uncancellable not because they necessarily correspond to a level of default reference, but because the purpose they fulfill is such that it makes them uncancellable. If they were easily cancellable, then it would be hard to see what role they could play in establishing the full truth-conditional meaning of an utterance. While it makes sense to say that a potential implicature leaves an "out" for the speaker, it is not very reasonable to say that explicatures give the speaker an "out." The purpose of committing oneself to a proposition is to leave no room for disagreement as to what the speaker actually means.

## Notes

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2. I put forward this claim in my 2003 paper, revised and reprinted in 2006.
3. PCI = particularized conversational implicatures; GCI = generalized conversational implicatures.
4. I am not, however, saying that a specific pragmatic heuristic principle cannot be overruled by manifest contextual assumptions. I am only saying that the ultimate pragmatic process cannot be undone.
5. I remain open to the view that potential implicatures can be cancelled in the sense that their potential is not fully in practice in real conversation.
6. It is fair to acknowledge that radical pragmaticists such as Cohen (1971) also discussed the phenomenon of pragmatic intrusion. Yet, I think their contributions were only programmatic, while Carston's contribution to this issue is systematic and fully-developed.
7. Burton-Roberts finds that talk of full propositions is bizarre. A proposition, by definition, cannot be non-truth-evaluable. He also asks: Why should a full proposition be the minimal proposition? Well, I agree that something is either a proposition or isn't and if it is must be truth-evaluable. Presumably the expression "a full proposition" is redundant.
8. Burton-Roberts (personal communication) says he is just speculating that Carston, in fact, thinks of explicatures as definable in terms of entailment (A is a development of B iff A entails B). This is a reasonable speculation. Her earlier Principle of Functional Independence had it that A cannot be an implicature of B if A entails B. Since a communicated assumption is EITHER an explicature OR an implicature (for RT), it follows that any communicated assumption that entails the encoded logical form must be an explicature. So, with explicature defined in terms of "development", it is reasonable to speculate that development should be defined in terms of entailment.
9. This reminds us of a worry already expressed in Levinson (2000, 166).

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