

CANCELLATION AND INTENTION

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Abstract

Carston (2002) has claimed that explicatures can be cancelled. I argue that *cancellation* of explicature is logically impossible and empirically incorrect. Instead, it should be thought of as *clarification* of speaker's intended explicature.

However - even in respect of implicatures - it may be asked:

- What exactly is cancellation?
- Is there in fact any difference between cancellation and clarification?
- Is 'cancellation', as distinct from clarification, actually possible?

While Carston aligns cancellability with what is pragmatically derived, the present paper develops the suggestion that *speaker's intention* is the crucial feature. Cancellation of *intended implicature* - more generally, cancellation of intention - is impossible. What was intended *was intended* - end of story. 'Cancellation' must then mean 'cancellation without contradiction of intention'.

'Cancellation' of implicature, then, is only viable if we can accept the idea that implicatures can arise independently of speaker's intentions. This might seem an odd notion since, for Grice, implicature is a matter of intention and recognition of intention. Nevertheless, the idea might be viable if we attend to the distinction between hearers' inferences and speakers' intentions. In aid of this, I appeal to Grice's distinction between generalised and particularised implicature (GCI vs. PCI) and the treatment of GCIs as default inferences (Levinson 2000). In the light of this, I suggest and present evidence that, paradoxically, GCI is indeed cancellable but that PCI (the least controversial case of implicature) is not cancellable.

1. The Pragmatic Cancellation Principle.

Carston (2002:138) articulates a general principle: "it is pragmatic inference quite generally that is cancellable/defeasible". I'll call this 'The Pragmatic Cancellation Principle' (**PCP**).

It might seem that Carston is simply articulating an acknowledged basic principle of Gricean pragmatics here. Gricean pragmatics is about - all about - derivation of implicatures (*conversational* implicatures; I'm ignoring conventional implicature here). As such, it is about what implicitly communicated. Since the relation of implicatures to what is said is a non-truth-conditional relation, implicatures are - by definition - cancellable. In Gricean terms, *semantics vs. pragmatics* is isomorphic with *saying vs. implicating*, with *explicit vs. implicit* and with *truth-conditional vs. non-truth-conditional*. Hence, for Grice, cancellability is a (if not the) hall-mark of pragmatic inference, consistent with the PCP.

¹ This is the text of a paper I was invited to give at a Workshop on Explicit Communication, hosted by the University of Granada, Spain (June 2006). It will appear in a forthcoming issue of *Newcastle Working Papers in Linguistics* and a revised version (possibly) in a possible proceedings of the Workshop.

However, Carston is articulating the PCP in the context of Relevance theory. And, in that context, she is absolutely right when she writes (ibid.) that it “alters the terms of the discussion completely.” In that context, it has dramatically different implications. What I want to do first is to show that, in respect of explicature, continued adherence to the PCP in that context is logically questionable and empirically incorrect. Then I raise some questions about the very idea of cancellation – and here I focus on implicature.

2. The problem of cancellable explicature.

Relevance theory (RT) - among other pragmatic frameworks - has shown that pragmatic inference by the hearer is as much involved in his recovery of what is explicitly expressed by the utterance of a linguistic expression as in his recovery of what is implicitly communicated by it. Constitutive aspects of what is explicitly said (in some important sense of ‘said’) are not linguistically encoded but have to be pragmatically inferred. In RT terms, it is the ‘explicature’ of the utterance that has to be pragmatically inferred. An extreme, though perfectly commonplace, illustration of this is Bill’s response to Ann in (1):

(1) Ann: Did Susan return the Chomsky book to the library? Bill: Yes.

Undeniably, Bill has explicitly said (‘explicated’) that Susan returned the given book to the given library. This is not encoded but has to be pragmatically inferred in the context of Bill’s utterance, the context constituted by Ann’s question.

Since pragmatic inference is involved in the recovery of both explicit content of utterances (explicatures) and their implicit content (implicatures), we cannot appeal the Gricean isomorphisms to sort out - either intuitively or by test - what is explicit (explicated) and what implicit (implicated). So, if the explicit~implicit distinction has theoretical significance, it is important that some new criterion for the distinction be offered, some definition of what it is to be explicated rather than implicated.

Carston (2002:124) offers the following:

‘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 sub-part of a logical form’ (my emphasis).

The problem with this and other definitions of ‘explicature’ that depend on the notion of ‘development’ is that no definition of ‘development’ is anywhere given. In Burton-Roberts (2005) I tried interpreting ‘development’ in terms of entailment, a line of enquiry suggested by Carston (1988).² I won’t pursue that further here because it yields inconsistent results and poses other problems (discussed in my (2005)). So I’ll ignore ‘development’ in what follows.

² Recall that Carston there analysed several (indeed most) of Grice’s Generalised Conversational Implicatures (GCIs) as *entailing* what is linguistically encoded (mistakenly, I believe - see Recanati (1989: note 11)) and on that basis argued that they could not be analysed as implicated. Well, if Gricean GCIs are communicated but not implicated - and if explicature vs implicature is an exhaustive division of communicated assumptions (as in RT, where an implicature is defined as a communicated assumption that is not explicated) - it follows that a communicated assumption that entails what is linguistically encoded must be an explicature. It was this that suggested ‘development’ might be cashed out in terms of entailment.

In trying to pin-point what an ‘explicature’ is, I’ll rely on other hints from the theory and Carston’s informal, intuitive remarks about it.

Carston - and RT in general - avoids Grice’s term ‘what is said’ for the very good reason that it is so ambiguous. In ordinary parlance (and ordinary parlance is a good indication speaker intuitions – important given Recanati’s (1989) Availability Principle) there are two distinct senses of ‘saying’ and Grice appears to conflate them.³ In explaining the problem in my teaching, I refer to these as ‘**A-saying**’ and ‘**B-saying**’ (the advantage of which is that ‘saying’ figures in both). To report what someone has ‘A-said’ we must quote their very utterance: in respect of (1) above, for example, we will report Bill as having said “Yes”. Here we report on a [**saying-of-“P”**], where P is some expression. By contrast, reporting what Bill has thereby ‘B-said’ involves an assessment of the thought he intended to explicitly communicate. Here we report on a [**saying-that-P**] and would report Bill as having said that Susan returned the book by Chomsky to the library. We cannot in general report a B-saying simply by reduplicating an A-saying. The oddity of *He said that “yes”* (or *He said that yes*) bears witness to this.

I assume Carston’s ‘explicature’ reconstructs ‘What is B-said’. This is certainly consistent with her discussion of ‘explicating’ in terms of ‘expressing... commitment’ (2002:123) and her gloss of ‘communicating...the proposition expressed’ (i.e. explicating) as ‘overtly endorsing’ it (p. 124). This is an accurate account of what Bill is doing in (1) with regard to the thought that Susan returned the book by Chomsky to the library.⁴

So understood, ‘explicature’ is a (minor) improvement on Grice’s ‘what is said’: at least it pins down one sense of ‘what is said’. I’m not suggesting that any of this provides a definition of explicature, since it depends on notions which, while intuitive enough, are not formally defined. I’m merely trying to get at the intuitive idea behind ‘explicature’.

Here’s the problem. Explicatures, we have seen, are not linguistically encoded but have to be pragmatically inferred. According to the PCP, then, they should be cancellable. And Carston argues that they are indeed cancellable. I shall deal first with a problem of principle in this connection and then with some empirical (or at least intuitively manifest) facts.

The problem of principle is this. Cancellation is generally taken to be *cancellation without contradiction of what is said*. The question is: which sense of ‘said’ is involved in ‘cancellation without contradiction of what is said’ - A-said or B-said? I don’t see that it can be either A-saying or B-saying.

It can’t be A-saying because ‘what is A-said’ amounts, for RT, to ‘what is linguistically encoded’ and RT insists that what is linguistically encoded does not yield a truth-evaluable proposition. Pragmatic processes - disambiguation, reference assignment, and the supplying of elliptical or otherwise unarticulated constituents - are required for a truth-evaluable proposition to be derived. So, since what is linguistically encoded is not a truth-evaluable proposition, nothing could possibly contradict what is A-said. Contradiction is a truth-theoretic (logical) relation holding between truth-evaluable propositions.

So ‘...without contradiction of what is said’ must mean ‘...without contradiction of what is B-said’. But if ‘cancellation’ is ‘cancellation without contradiction of what is B-said’ - and if ‘explicature’ reconstructs ‘what is B-said’ - then cancellation of explicature is clearly

³ But see Grice 1989: 25, 118 for some acknowledgement of the distinction.

⁴ Although this identification of ‘explicating’ with ‘B-saying’ works for Carston’s informal account of ‘explicature’, RT’s positing of ‘higher level explicatures’ does rather obscure the picture. Thanks for Francois Recanati for discussion of this.

impossible as well. To allow that an explicature is cancellable would be to allow that an explicature can be cancelled without contradicting that explicature (that what is B-said can be cancelled without contradicting what is B-said). This looks straightforwardly contradictory. Furthermore, assuming a normal understanding of what it is to be ‘committed’ to a proposition, what it is to ‘overtly endorse’ it and to ‘express commitment’ to it, it is clearly impossible for a speaker to cancel what she has explicated without contradicting herself.

In illustration, consider a putative explicature-cancellation that Carston (p. 138) offers:

(2) She’s ready - but Karen isn’t ready to leave for the airport.

It is true that (2) is not contradictory. But it couldn’t possibly be: *She’s ready* and *Karen isn’t ready to leave for the airport* are merely (non-propositional) linguistic encodings. The same goes, more vividly, for

(3) She’s ready but she’s not ready.

This can’t be assessed for contradiction until we have ascertained the intended reference of each occurrence of *she* and made good the ellipsis in each clause (ready for what?).

Contradiction can only be assessed at the (propositional) level of explicature. Assume that the explicature of the utterance of the second clause of (2) is (4).

(4) KAREN_[K] IS NOT READY AT TIME_[U] TO LEAVE FOR THE AIRPORT_[A].

We cannot know whether (4), as the explicature of the second clause in (2), is cancelling the explicature of the utterance of *She’s ready*, without knowing what the explicature of the utterance of *She’s ready* was. Here are some candidates:

- (5) (a) PAT_[P] IS READY AT TIME_[U] TO LEAVE FOR THE AIRPORT_[A].
 (b) KAREN_[K] IS READY AT TIME_[U] FOR BREAKFAST.
 (c) KAREN_[K] IS READY AT TIME_[U] TO LEAVE FOR THE AIRPORT_[A].

(4) contradicts neither (5a) nor (5b). However, it doesn’t *cancel* them either. The only candidate explicature that could be regarded as cancelled by (4) is (5c). So (5c) must be the explicature that Carston has in mind here. But it is precisely (5c) that is *contradicted* by (4). In short, either (5c) *was* the explicature of the utterance of the first clause of (2) but is *not cancellable* without contradiction, or it was *not the explicature* in the first place.

Take another example discussed in my (2005):

- (6) Ann-i: That fellow’s playing is lamentable.
 Bill: Too right. Cruelty to cellos, I call it.
 Ann-ii: Not the cellist - the trombonist!

To derive the explicature of Ann’s first utterance we need to assign reference to Ann’s “that fellow”. This reference must be pragmatically inferred. According to the PCP, then, the reference, and thus the explicature, of Ann’s first utterance should be cancellable. But is this really how we are to analyse what Ann is doing by her second utterance - cancelling the

explicature of her first utterance? This seems just wrong. It requires us to assume that Ann *was* in fact explicating that the cellist's playing was lamentable. You can't cancel an explicature unless there *is* an explicature to cancel in the first place. But she clearly wasn't explicating any such thing. Her second utterance makes it abundantly clear that she was explicating it was the *trombonist's* playing that was lamentable.

The assumption that Ann's second utterance is an explicature-cancellation requires us to accept that what a speaker explicates is entirely in the hearer's (in this case, Bill's) gift - his decision and only his. This is what might be thought to be suggested by saying that explicature is "pragmatically determined". Now is true that a hearer has to engage in pragmatic inference in 'determining' reference and thus explicature - but only the sense of 'ASCERTAINING' the explicature. In the other more relevant sense of 'determine', reference and thus explicature is not determined pragmatically or by the hearer - it is wholly determined by speakers and their intentions. The hearer and his pragmatic inferences are involved only in his attempts to recognise/ascertain the speaker's intention.⁵ Wilson and Sperber themselves acknowledge (2006) that for RT - as much as for Grice himself - pragmatics is all about intention (that is, *speaker's* intention) and the recognition of intention. Recognition of speakers' intention may be successful or, as in the case of (6) above, unsuccessful. The same applies with ambiguity, as in (7) - surely not a case of explicature-cancellation.

- (7) Ann-i: I suggested to Jim that he turn it down
Bill: Well, he's taken no notice. It's as loud as it ever was.
Ann-ii: The job offer from UCL! I suggested he decline it.

Generally, an intention actually executed in the act of utterance - particularly an intention-to-explicate (or B-say) so executed - cannot be cancelled. As we all know to our cost, what's been said cannot be unsaid.

In the most obvious and uncontroversial cases of pragmatically inferred explicature - cases involving disambiguation, reference assignment, and the supplying of elliptical or otherwise unarticulated constituents, as in (2), (6) and (7) - it seems clear to me that is going on is not *cancellation*, but *clarification*, of the speaker's (necessarily intended) explicature, given the hearer's failure to identify it.

Treating the relevant phenomenon as clarification rather than cancellation seems an obvious solution to an otherwise serious problem of principle with explicature. If we stick with cancellation of explicature, we are going to have to abandon Carston's intuitive account of explicature in terms of expressing commitment to and endorsement of a proposition. And this would leave us without even an intuitive pretheoretical account of what explicature is.

Of course, insisting that explicature can only be clarified, not cancelled, means abandoning the PCP, the principle that what is pragmatically inferred is cancellable. This seems to me inevitable and unproblematic: although possibly coherent in Gricean terms - or possibly not, see below - the PCP makes little sense in a post-Gricean context.

⁵ This (speaker vs. hearer) ambiguity of 'determine' correlates with a (speaker vs. hearer) ambiguity of 'what is said'. From the speaker's perspective 'what is said' is a free relative clause ('That which is said'). From the hearer's perspective it is an interrogative clause ('What (on earth) was said?'). Pragmatic inference is used in 'determining' the answer to that interrogative but it does not thereby determine 'That which is said'. See Burton-Roberts (1994) for discussion.

Furthermore, abandoning the PCP is anyway indicated on empirical grounds. Take Kent Bach's (1994) famous example, (8a).

- (8a) Ann: You won't die! (said to little Billy, who's just cut his finger).
(b-i) Billy won't die FROM THAT CUT
(b-ii) Billy is immortal
(c) !You won't die - but you will/might die from that cut.

It is intuitively manifest that, in uttering (8a), Ann has said (i.e. B-said) - explicitly expressed and endorsed (explicated) – what is represented in (8b-i), not (8b-ii). This explicature is not linguistically encoded but has to be pragmatically inferred. Nevertheless it is not cancellable without contradiction, as (8c) clearly shows. Similarly for (9a): the explicature (9b) is not cancellable without contradiction, as (9c) clearly shows.

- (9) (a) I haven't had breakfast
(b) I haven't had breakfast TODAY
(c) !I haven't had breakfast - but I have had breakfast today.

Furthermore – should it be thought that uncancellability of pragmatically inferred explicature arises only with negative examples – it clearly goes for example (1) above as well:

- (1) Ann: Did Susan return the Chomsky book to the library?
Bill: !Yes – but she didn't return it.

3. Cancellation - the very idea.

In principle, the idea of clarification renders cancellation actually unnecessary in this context - a misapplication of the term 'cancellation', I suggest. In practice, however, a problem remains, for RT at least. As is well known, RT (and Carston) analyses at least some of Grice's GCIs as explicatures. Since we independently know that GCIs are cancellable, RT is empirically committed to cancellation of explicature:

- (10) (a) He shrugged and left.
(b) He shrugged and THEN left.
(c) He shrugged and left - but not in that order
- (11) (a) He has three kids.
(b) He has EXACTLY three kids.
(c) He has three kids - and in fact he has four

If I am right in claiming that explicature is not cancellable (but may be subject to clarification), it might seem that we have a simple choice here.

Either (i): allow that (10b)/(11b) indeed *are explicature* and insist, on that basis, that what is going in (10c)/(11c) is not cancellation but *clarification* (of intended explicature).

Or (ii): accept that that (10c)/(11c) are genuine cases of *cancellation* and therefore insist that (10b)/(11b) are *not explicature* - but implicated - by the utterance of (10a)/(11a).

Were there no problem with option (i), we could go home. But I find it difficult, intuitively, to think of what is going in (10c)/(11c) as clarification (of explicature) rather than as a genuine cancellation - and thus as cancellation *of implicature*. For me, option (ii) is indicated. But there's a problem with option (ii) as well. This brings me to the point of the paper.

I have been assuming that we know what cancellation is - or at least know enough about it to know that clarification and cancellation are indeed distinct. But this is, after all, only an assumption. We should at least inspect it. Is there in fact any distinction between clarification and cancellation? Could it be that what we have been calling 'cancellation' was in fact clarification all along, i.e. that 'cancellation' *generally* - not just cancellation of explicature - doesn't pick out a real phenomenon but is a misnomer?

In respect of explicature, I have rejected cancellation in favour of clarification because, in part, an explicature must be *intended*, and an intention actually implemented in an act of utterance can't be undone (cancelled). On this showing alone - leaving aside questions of commitment/endorsement in connection with explicature - I suggest it is, more generally, *implemented intentions* that can't be cancelled.

Pragmatic theory's concern with intention and its recognition is not limited to explicature. Implicature, as much as explicature, is intended. An implicature is a communicated assumption - and a communicated assumption is one that is intended as such by the speaker and recognised as thus intended by the hearer.

How then is it possible even for an *implicature* to be cancelled? As with explicature so with implicature: EITHER the speaker intended by her utterance to implicate that P - and therefore *did* - in which case she cannot undo (or 'cancel') that, OR she *did not* so intend, in which case there is no implicature to cancel in the first place.

My point is very simple: for Grice at least, there is no such thing as an *unintended* implicature - hence there should be no such thing as *cancellation* of implicature.

4. Intention, cancellation and the GCI-PCI distinction.

If we want to maintain the very idea of cancellation as a coherent notion - and I do - then cancellation must be more than 'cancellation without contradiction of what is said'. It must, more generally, be 'CANCELLATION WITHOUT CONTRADICTION OF WHAT IS INTENDED'. Cancellation without contradiction of what is said is just a special case of cancellation without contradiction of what is intended (since what is said must be *intended* to be said).

In the light of this, furthermore, if we want to allow that *implicature-cancellation* is a real phenomenon - and I do in respect of (10) and (11), for example - we are going to have to entertain the idea that *implicatures can arise (in some sense of 'arise') independently of speakers' intentions*.

I am not defending a notion of 'unintended implicature' exactly. This would indeed be thoroughly contrary to the whole of intention-based pragmatic theory. The idea of an *actual*

implicature being *unintended* is pretty much a contradiction in terms. In defending the idea that *implicatures can arise independently of speakers' intentions*, we need a more modal notion of 'implicature' and 'arise'. This is still contrary to Gricean intention-based pragmatic theory, but then, surely, so is the very idea of 'cancellation' (the notion I want to defend). However, in connection with the more modal notion of 'implicature' and 'arise' I have in mind (as needed to support the notion of implicature-cancellation) Grice's distinction between generalised and particularised conversational implicature (GCI vs PCI) is relevant.

Sperber and Wilson have suggested "there is no evidence that [Grice] saw the distinction as theoretically significant" (1987:748). Against this, Grice (1981:185) wrote that GCIs - in contradistinction to PCIs - "are the ones that seem to me more controversial and at the same time more valuable for philosophical purposes", which suggests he did attach importance to the distinction.

More strongly, Hirschberg has claimed that the distinction "is a false one, an artefact of the inventiveness of analysts" (1985:42, quoted by Levinson (2000:380)). But there is a surely obvious distinction between them. Both GCIs and PCIs are context-dependent in the sense that they are - or are supposed to be - cancellable in, and by, the context of utterance. The *difference* between them lies in the fact that GCIs are context-dependent *only* in that (negative) respect. PCIs, by contrast, are context-dependent in the further (positive) respect that they depend on a particular context *to arise in the first place*. In other words: with GCIs, context plays a purely *destructive* (filtering, cancelling) role whereas, with PCIs, the particular context plays a necessarily *constructive* role. That's what makes them 'particularised'. Withdrawn from any context of utterance, PCIs simply don't arise. By contrast, even when - indeed especially when - an utterance that gives rise to a GCI is decontextualised, the GCI does still arise intuitively.

In the light of this, I suggest that, if we want to defend a notion of intention-independent implicature, GCI is where we should look - GCI in contradistinction to PCI. I am suggesting, in other words, that the distinction between GCI and PCI is no mere "artefact" but correlates non-accidentally with a distinction between (i) and (ii):

- (i) implicatures that can arise *independently* of any intention of the speaker (GCI)
- (ii) implicatures that arise only *in virtue of* the speaker's intention to implicate (PCI).

Since I have argued that 'cancellation' must, at its most general, be construed as 'cancellation without contradiction of intention', it follows that only GCIs - not PCIs - are cancellable. There are two ideas to be defended here: (i) GCI as implicature that can arise independently of intention; (ii) PCI as uncancellable implicature.

4.1. GCI as intention-independent implicature.

This is not such a new idea, in fact, but a new slant on ideas already available. Neither Gazdar (1979) nor Levinson (2000) actually discuss intention or the lack of it in their treatments of GCI, as against PCI. Nevertheless, intention (and the lack of it) correlates with and underpins their treatments of GCI as against PCI.

Gazdar brings out the modal character of GCI. In modelling GCI, he posited 'potential implicatures' ('im-dash-implicatures'). 'Potential implicatures' are assigned *automatically* -

that is, independently of any intention-to-implicate - to linguistic expressions, purely on the basis of their semantic representation. These 'potential implicatures' only become actual implicatures - i.e. get to be actually implicated by a speaker - when the relevant expressions are uttered, and then only if they are consistent with the context of utterance. If they are not consistent, they are thereby cancelled. Presumably, inconsistency with the context of actual utterance - and thus cancellation - means that they cannot have been intended. A 'potential implicature', then, is an implicature that arises independently of speaker-intention. If not intended, it is cancelled. That is, it only becomes an actual implicature through not being cancelled. Assuming the speaker has as good a representation of the context of utterance as the hearer does (i.e. that the context of utterance is mutually manifest), the hearer's best evidence that the (potential) implicature was *not* intended is its inconsistency with the context of utterance.

Comparable ideas are developed in Levinson's (2000) account of GCI as a *default* inference and as arising from 'utterance types' rather than 'utterance tokens'. This too can be cashed out in terms of intention and the lack of it. GCIs are 'default' inferences in the sense that they will be assumed to be intended in default of evidence that they are not intended. Evidence that they are not intended - i.e. any mutually manifest inconsistency with the context of utterance - cancels them. They 'arise' (in the relevant modal sense, necessarily) from 'utterance types' (which, not being acts, have no particular context) rather than 'utterance tokens', i.e. actual utterances, which (as acts) by definition do have a particular context. Utterance types have - and, as types, can *only* have - what Gazdar called 'potential implicatures'. Gazdar's 'potential implicatures' and Levinson's 'implicatures of utterance types' - i.e. generalised conversational implicatures - are implicatures that arise independently of the intentions of the speaker.

In some sense, then, the existence of a generalised implicature is ontologically prior to the issue of intention. The speaker's intention - her responsibility for the implicature - engages only in the act of utterance and only in the matter of whether an antecedently assigned 'implicature' is intended or not. At that point, it is a matter wholly of (as it were, post hoc) cancellation.

If this antecedently assigned 'implicature' *is* intended, there is nothing further for the speaker to do: it will be communicated. If it is *not* intended, and if the existing context anyway makes manifest that it is not intended, the existing context will of itself cancel the implicature. Again, there is nothing to do. In these two cases, cancellation is a matter of logical *fact* (assuming that the context is mutually manifest). It is not an *act*.

Cancellation as an *act* occurs when the potential implicature is not intended but the existing context does *not* make manifest that it is not intended. In that case, the speaker herself must take steps (i.e. act) to *get* it cancelled - by contributing to the context a proposition that is inconsistent with the implicature. This is what would be going on in (9c)/(10c) above. In thus cancelling the implicature, she is making manifest that it was not intended - in other words, that the (potential) implicature assigned to the *expression* she uttered (independently of her intention to implicate) is not to be assigned to her *utterance* of that expression. I suggest that it is only in respect of such modal (potential) implicatures that the notion of cancellation makes sense.

It might be objected at this point that the speaker's very choice of expression - *some* rather than *all*, *P&Q* rather than *Q&P*, *three* rather than *four* etc - commits her to the implicature. That is true, but it has to be squared with the general agreement - even among

those who analyse the relevant implicatures as explicatures - that assumptions thus communicated are indeed cancellable.

4.2. PCI as uncancellable implicature.

Gazdar's treatment of implicature was only intended to apply - and could only apply - to GCIs, not PCIs. His is a model of the *filtering* of a species of implicature that is assignable (modally at least) independently of intentional acts of utterance and hence independently of context. PCI has no such predictability-in-principle. It is not a modal phenomenon in the way the GCI is. It arises only from actual utterances in their actual context (Levinson's 'utterance tokens'). There is no question, with PCI, of the implicature in any sense (modally) 'arising' independently of the speaker's intention.

My claim is that PCIs *must* be interpreted as intended and therefore cannot be cancelled. That is, they cannot be cancelled without contradiction of what is intended. This correlates with an obvious intuition: the more evident or manifest a speaker's *intention* to implicate, the less cancellable the implicature will be. I want to show that, given the character of PCI - as against GCI - the *intention* to implicate is (and must be) evident to an extent incompatible with PCIs being cancellable.

Consider an example from Wilson and Sperber (1981):

- (12) Max (to Ann): Do you ever speak to Charles?
Ann (to Max): I never speak to plagiarists.

Assuming Ann's utterance is intended as a response to Max's question, it implicates that Charles is a plagiarist (and taking what was said and what was implicated as premises, we can deductively conclude that she never speaks to Charles). Now, if cancellation simply means 'cancellation without contradiction of what is said', Ann's implicature should be cancellable. But how should she cancel it? Having responded as she did, could she add "I am not suggesting that Charles is a plagiarist, mind you - in fact I love talking to him"?

Not possible, surely. Despite her added protestation, nothing could more evident than her suggestion that Charles is a plagiarist. What would be the point of responding in that way *except* to implicate that? Having chosen to respond to that question in that particular way, how could she not be *committed* to having implicated that Charles was a plagiarist? Since the implicature arises from and only from her actual utterance in that context - i.e. is a PCI - she has sole responsibility for it, i.e. she must have intended it. And the one thing, I am suggesting, that is not cancellable is intention manifestly executed in and by the act of utterance. Consider also.

- (13) A: There's no milk!
B: The milkman's ill.
 PCI: There is no milk because the milkman is ill
 !! The milkman is ill - though that's not why there's no milk. He's on holiday
 in the Bahamas this week.
- (14) A: I'm out of petrol.
B: There's a garage round the corner.

PCI: You can get petrol at the garage round the corner
!! There's a garage round the corner - unfortunately, it closed down last year
and we now have to go 5 miles into Barchester.

When I present the plagiarist example to students, the less biddable and more observant among them regularly object that it is not cancellable. My response has been to explain again the (Gricean) notion of 'cancellation' - i.e. 'cancellation without contradiction of what is said'. This I now believe is an inadequate response. If the notion of cancellation is to be coherent, we need a notion of 'cancellation without contradiction of what is intended', of which 'cancellation without contradiction of what is said' is a special case.

I have suggested that cancellation of explicature is inconsistent with both the general (intention-based) and the specific (said-based) notions of cancellation. Here clarification rather than cancellation is indicated. I have suggested that cancellation of particularised implicature is inconsistent with the more general (intention based) notion of cancellation and that, if cancellation is possible at all, it is possible only with generalised conversational implicature. This yields an interesting and surprising reversal: in Gricean terms, a good test for implicature is cancellability but it is the most controversial species of implicature – i.e. generalised CI – that is most clearly cancellable while the least controversial species - i.e. particularised – is not.

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