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IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT CONTENT AFTER GRICE: A MAP

*Abstract*

According to Grice, we must distinguish between the proposition literally expressed by an utterance ('what is said' by the utterance, its literal truth-conditions) and the implicit meaning of the utterance ('what is communicated' by a speaker using the utterance): the former level is the object of semantics, the latter of pragmatics. Over the past thirty years, linguists and philosophers have started to underline the phenomenon of *semantic underdetermination*: the encoded meaning of the linguistic expressions employed by a speaker underdetermines the proposition explicitly expressed by the utterance. Pragmatic inference contributes to explicit content – even after disambiguation and reference assignment. On this point agreement among most pragmatic scholars is more or less established. Far less consensus surrounds the analysis of the *semantic* level of 'what is said', and the status of the *pragmatic* contributions of the proposition expressed. There are a wide variety of positions. Neo-Griceans think that all the pragmatic effects at the semantic level must be construed as a form of generalised implicature, acting locally and by default. Post-Griceans (Relevance theorists and Contextualists like François Recanati) see sentence meaning as too schematic and incomplete to determine a full proposition. Disagreement between Neo-Griceans and Post-Griceans mainly concerns whether it is necessary to postulate a minimal notion of 'what is said', apart from the enriched one.