Chapter 1

Introduction: Explicit Communication and Relevance Theory Pragmatics[1]

Esther Romero and Belén Soria

This volume of papers has its origin in a workshop on 'Explicit Communication' held in Granada in early June 2006. The invited speaker was Robyn Carston and the other participants gave presentations that focused on one or another aspect of her work on explicit communication and comprehension, in particular as presented in her 2002 book *Thoughts and Utterances*, but also in a series of papers, both preceding and following the book. In the relevance-theoretic (RT) framework, within which Carston's work on pragmatics is set, explicit communication concerns those proposition(s) that are communicatively intended by the speaker and are derived by the hearer through a combination of linguistic decoding and pragmatic inference. These are known as the 'explicatures' of the utterance and are distinct from those proposition(s), known as 'implicatures', which are implicitly communicated and derived wholly by inferential pragmatic processes. Together, the explicatures and implicatures of an utterance comprise the speaker's meaning or communicated content.

In her study of explicit communication, Carston (2002) clarifies and extends the relevance-theoretic notion of explicature first developed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson (1986a/95). In her view, the hearer's recovery of this type of proposition is always dependent on pragmatic inference, as entailed by the semantic underdeterminacy thesis, according to which the linguistically encoded meaning of an utterance inevitably underdetermines its explicitly communicated propositional

content.[2] The decoded 'semantic' representation associated with the sentence uttered, its logical form, is claimed to be seldom, if ever, fully propositional and the basic explicature is often equated with the propositional (truth-conditional) content of the utterance, that is, the basis on which the utterance is evaluated as true or false. According to Carston, this underdeterminacy is not resolved merely by determining intended referents and intended senses of ambiguous expressions until a propositional form is reached, as a Gricean might argue, but usually also requires further processes of pragmatic enrichment: supplying of linguistically unarticulated constituents and/or the adjusting of encoded conceptual content. These are 'free' pragmatic processes in as much as they are not mandated or controlled by elements in the decoded linguistic meaning. In this respect, the relevance-theoretic position (at least as presented by Carston, Sperber and Wilson) falls into the broad camp known as radical contextualism (for discussion, see Recanati 2004).

A distinctive characteristic of work in relevance theory from its inception has been its focus on a range of loose uses of language and its inclusion of certain figurative uses, in particular metaphor, in this class of cases. In Carston's view (1996, 2000, 2002), the comprehension of loose and metaphorical uses should be construed as involving the same kind of free pragmatic process as cases of content enrichment and thus as playing a role in shaping the explicit content communicated by the speaker. This idea marked an important departure from the early work of Sperber and Wilson on loose use and metaphor (1986a/95, 1986b), according to which the proposition expressed by the utterance was not communicated, but served as just a vehicle for the communication of a range of implicatures. The symmetric account of narrowing/enrichment and broadening/loosening has now become established within the mainstream of relevance theory, in particular within the

domain of 'lexical pragmatics' (see Wilson and Sperber 2004; Wilson and Carston 2006, 2007). In the rest of this short introductory chapter, we take a closer look at these developments within relevance theory over the past 25 years, focusing on Carston's contributions, and then briefly outline the contents of the individual chapters in this volume, all of them geared, one way or another, to an examination of the way in which linguistic meaning (logical form) and pragmatic processes interact in the derivation of explicitly communicated utterance content.

1 Relevance Theory, Explicature and Implicature

Verbal communication is achieved through the use of a code (a linguistic system which maps sounds to meanings) together with a highly context-sensitive capacity for pragmatic inference. Building on insights of Paul Grice (1975/89) concerning the inferential nature of human communication, Sperber and Wilson (1986a/95) developed an account of how a communicator, in producing an utterance, makes it mutually manifest to audience and communicator that she has a particular informative intention. The explanatory power of their approach rests on giving shape to the notion of relevance, which they characterise as a property of inputs (stimuli or assumptions) to cognitive processes, by means of which it is possible to account for how information is mentally represented and how it is inferentially processed. Utterances (and other ostensive stimuli) are a special kind of input in that they come with a presumption of their own relevance.

Quite generally, the relevance of any input is a positive function of its contextual (or cognitive) effects and a negative function of the processing effort expended in deriving them. There are at least three types of effects that a new input

can have on a context (consisting of existing mentally represented assumptions): (i) the derivation of new assumptions as contextual implications, that is, as conclusions derivable from the new information and the context together but from neither alone; (ii) the strengthening of existing assumptions; and (iii) the contradiction and elimination of existing assumptions. Other things being equal, the greater the cognitive effects and the smaller the effort required to derive them, the greater the relevance of the input to the individual at that time. The special nature of utterances (and other acts of ostensive communication) is such that they automatically raise particular expectations of relevance in their addressees. The most general of these expectations is that they will achieve a level of 'optimal relevance', that is, that they will yield at least enough cognitive effects to justify the processing effort they require. This is captured by the Communicative Principle of Relevance (CPR), which is discussed in detail in Sperber and Wilson (1986a/95), and summarised here:

> every act of overt communication conveys a presumption of its own optimal
> relevance. To be optimally relevant, an utterance (or other act of overt
> communication) must be at least relevant enough to be worth processing, and
> moreover the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities
> and preferences. (Wilson and Carston 2006: 407-8)

In order to determine the content of the speaker's informative intention, the hearer employs the comprehension strategy licensed by the CPR: he follows a path of least effort in accessing and testing interpretative hypotheses and stops when his expectations of relevance are satisfied. The assumptions/thoughts inferred by the

addressee in accordance with this relevance-driven comprehension procedure constitute the interpretation of the utterance.

There are two kinds of communicated assumptions/thoughts, *explicatures* and *implicatures*, distinguished primarily by the way in which they are derived. Here we will briefly survey how these constructs and the relation between them has evolved over the lifetime of relevance theory, making a broad division between early and current RT. Sperber and Wilson define *explicitness* as follows: 'an assumption communicated by an utterance *U* is *explicit* [hence is an 'explicature'] if and only if it is a development of a logical form encoded by *U*.' (1986a/95: 182), adding that any other communicated assumption is communicated implicitly (so is an 'implicature'). An explicitly communicated propositional form is a combination of linguistically encoded and contextually inferred conceptual components. The inferential processes not only complete the logical form (rendering it propositional) but further elaborate and adjust it so as to identify the intended (speaker-meant) explicit content of the utterance.

Consider the following example, from Carston (1988/91):

(1) [Bob asks Sue how Jane is feeling after her first year at university and Sue utters:] She didn't get enough units and can't continue.

Let us assume, as seems plausible, that the following two thoughts/propositions fall within the informative intention that Sue makes mutually manifest to Bob and herself (which she communicates):[3]

(2) a. [JANE₁ DIDN'T PASS ENOUGH UNIVERSITY COURSE UNITS TO QUALIFY

FOR ADMISSION TO SECOND YEAR STUDY]ₚ & AS A RESULT OF P JANE₁

CANNOT CONTINUE WITH UNIVERSITY STUDY

  b. JANE₁ IS NOT FEELING HAPPY

Of course, neither of these constitutes the encoded (standing) meaning of the sentence that Sue used, although it appears to be the skeletal framework on the basis of which the proposition in (2a) has been constructed. The proposition in (2b) is an uncontroversial case of a conversational implicature (an indirect answer to the question asked), inferentially derived from (2a) and other accessible contextual assumptions about the likely feelings of someone who has failed their university courses.

What is of primary interest here is the range of pragmatic tasks required in the derivation of (2a), taking the encoded linguistic content (the logical form) of the sentence Sue used as the basis. It includes the following:

i. Fixing the referent of 'she'

ii. Disambiguating (or narrowing down) the meaning of 'get'

iii. Completing the content of 'enough units' (enough for what?)

iv. Narrowing down (specifying) the very general nominal 'units'

v. Providing an object of the verb 'continue'

vi. Imputing a cause-consequence relation between the states of affairs

described in the two conjuncts.

The central drive of Carston's earliest work in relevance theory was to establish the role of 'free' pragmatic processes, that is, processes that go beyond establishing minimal propositionality or just responding to linguistically encoded variables or parameters which indicate the necessity for a contextual contribution (hence a pragmatic 'saturation' operation), as in the case of 'she' or 'enough' in (1). 'Free' pragmatic processes are free from linguistic mandate or trigger so that they are, as it were, doubly pragmatic: it is not only that a pragmatic process supplies a component of truth-conditional content (as it does in saturation cases) but that the process is also entirely pragmatically motivated (or 'top-down'), that is, it is prompted by the search for an optimally relevant interpretation.

One of Carston's strongest cases for free pragmatic enrichment is the pragmatically inferred causal connection in 'and'-conjunctions, as also illustrated above in (1), which, unlike the temporal sequence relation, also often taken to hold between conjuncts, cannot be reduced to a case of saturation (see Carston 1988/91). One of the sources of evidence she gave in support of her position and against the Gricean account of this connection as a case of generalized conversational implicature concerned the truth-conditional contribution such conjunctions make when embedded in the scope of logical operators, such as conditionals, negation, and disjunction. For example, when (3a) is embedded as the antecedent of a conditional, as in (3b), the intuitive consensus is that the cause-consequence relation contributes to the truth-conditional content of the conditional:

(3)   a. Ann insulted Jim and Jim resigned.

       b. If Ann insulted Jim and Jim resigned then Ann is in trouble.

       c. If Jim resigned and Ann insulted him then Ann is in trouble.

Ordinary unreflective native speaker intuitions agree that (3b) and (3c) can differ in truth value, that is, that Ann's being in trouble depends not only on the truth of the two discrete conjuncts (the 'insulting' event and the 'resigning' event) but also on the latter having been a consequence of the former. From this (and other considerations), Carston concluded that the cause-consequence connection is an instance of 'free' pragmatic enrichment: it is a pragmatic contribution to explicature (truth-conditional content) which is inferred on wholly pragmatic grounds. It is not required in order to derive a minimal truth-conditional content (a conjoining by '&' of the two propositions expressed by the conjuncts is sufficient for that) and there is no parameter or variable in the linguistic form triggering the pragmatic inference. Her wholly pragmatic account hinged on the low cost and prevalence of such causal inferences in human cognition coupled with their often rich yield of cognitive implications (see, in particular, Carston 2002: chapter 3).

The cause-consequence component of meaning in the explicature of the 'and'-conjunctions in (3a), (3b) and Sue's utterance in (1) is what is known as an 'unarticulated constituent' of content (UC), that is, it is not only phonologically unrealised in the sentence used but it is not articulated in the linguistic logical form as any kind of invisible/inaudible covert element either (as compared with, say, PRO or any other syntactically-evidenced empty linguistic categories). The existence of such elements is controversial and much disfavoured by semanticists who take it as fundamental to the enterprise of formulating a systematic account of how native speaker/hearers grasp truth-conditional content that there should be a one-to-one isomorphism between linguistic elements and contributions to truth conditions (see, for instance, King and Stanley 2005; and discussion of this kind of objection in

Carston 2002, this volume). For Carston, though, there is another kind of free enrichment, one which does not require the postulation of UCs. This is known as lexical adjustment or meaning modulation and what it does is take an encoded concept and modify it in some way such that the resulting denotation is distinct from, but overlaps with, that of the original lexical concept. A possible example of this in (1) above is the narrowing of the meaning of 'unit' to a more specific concept paraphraseable as 'university course unit', which picks out a small subset of the denotation of the very general lexical concept UNIT. This kind of free enrichment is favoured by Carston because it preserves the sentence-proposition isomorphism, so that it becomes an interesting question to what extent alleged cases of UCs can be reconstrued as cases of such concept adjustment. Carston (2000) has pointed out that, whatever the ultimate answer to this question, the essence of free pragmatic enrichment is that the process is triggered by the search for a pragmatically satisfactory interpretation rather than by a linguistic parameter and this is preserved in her conception of free enrichment as lexical adjustment. This kind of free enrichment is central to Carston's account of loose use and we will return to it when we discuss loose use in the next section.

In their early work on explicature, Wilson and Sperber (1993) pointed out that, as well as the developments of logical form that result in the truth-conditional content of the utterance, there are other, 'higher-level', explicatures that may also be communicated. Typically, these involve embedding of the proposition expressed in the scope of a speech act or propositional attitude description, as in (4), where Mary's utterance in (4a) could communicate not only the basic explicature in (4b) but also the higher-level ones in (4c) and (4d):

(4)   a. [Mary:] He's the best.

    b. TONY IS THE BEST APPLICANT FOR THE JOB

    c. MARY BELIEVES THAT TONY IS THE BEST APPLICANT FOR THE JOB

    d. MARY IS SAYING THAT TONY IS THE BEST APPLICANT FOR THE JOB

Certain utterances may not communicate any explicature except for the speech act type, exemplified in (4d). For instance, if Mary's utterance in (4a) is ironical she won't communicate either of (4b) or (4c), and if she had asked a question ('Is he the best?') the only explicature would be: MARY IS ASKING WHETHER TONY IS THE BEST APPLICANT FOR THE JOB.

Carston (2002: 120-5) further observed that there can be 'lower-level' or embedded explicatures, as in utterances of the following:

(5)   a. Mary worked on her paper and Bill watched a video.

    b. Kim shouldn't pass the module because, frankly, she hasn't done any work.

Her claim is that a (non-ironical) utterance of (5a) communicates not only the conjunctive proposition (once properly pragmatically developed) but also the two constituent propositions expressed by the individual conjuncts and that these are 'explicit' (hence not implicatures). Similarly, the explicatures communicated by an utterance of (5b) include the following (once suitably enriched, which is not attempted here):

(6) a. KIM SHOULDN'T PASS THE MODULE BECAUSE SHE HASN'T DONE ANY

      WORK

    b. KIM SHOULDN'T PASS THE MODULE

    c. KIM HASN'T DONE ANY WORK

    d. THE SPEAKER IS SAYING FRANKLY THAT KIM HASN'T DONE ANY WORK

Carston goes on to point out that the intuition of explicitness is not confined to communicated entailments, as might seem to be the case from the examples so far, but extends to the embedded proposition in cases such as the following:

(7) a. I'm telling you that it's not possible.

    b. I assure you that Jane will complete her thesis on time.

What this range of cases indicates is that the definition of 'explicature' needs to be amended to accommodate multi-clausal utterances where the speaker clearly endorses the embedded proposition(s), that is, where they fall within the set of assumptions/propositions that she communicates (that is, that she makes mutually manifest her intention to inform the addressee of). Carston suggests the following amended definition, while recognizing that there might be technically better ways of formulating it:

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

An interesting consequence of this refinement of the notion of explicature is that, while certain communicated entailments of the basic explicature are themselves explicatures, it seems that others are not. Carston discusses cases like the following where, she claims, an entailment is an implicature rather than an explicature:

(8) [A asks B if he has invited any men to the meeting and B utters:] I've invited my brother, Simon.

Explicature: B HAS INVITED B'S BROTHER SIMON TO THE MEETING

Implicature: B HAS INVITED AT LEAST ONE MAN TO THE MEETING

The second communicated assumption here does not meet the definition of explicature: it is not a development of any logical form (or sentential subpart) encoded by the linguistic form that B has used, so it must be an implicature. As Carston (2002: 140-1) points out, this analysis is based on a particular view of word meaning: that monomorphemic words encode atomic concepts, so 'brother' maps onto the unstructured concept BROTHER and the move from BROTHER to MAN is mediated by an inference rule (or meaning postulate). Lexical decompositionalists may object and insist that since 'brother' is decomposable (definable, in fact) this proposition is really part of the explicit content. However, as well as defending the atomic stance on lexical meaning, Carston maintains that there is a clear intuitive difference between the communicated entailments in (5)-(6) and those in (8): the former are communicated directly and are perceptually available in the sentence uttered, while in (8) there is a degree of indirectness in B's answer to A's question (she could have responded more directly by uttering 'Yes' or 'I've invited one man'),

which is typical of implicated propositions. Furthermore, while the explicated entailments in (5) and (7) cannot but be communicated (given communication of the complex proposition of which they are a part), whether an entailment such as the one in (8) is communicated or not is an occasion-specific matter (in (8) it follows from the presumption that the relevance of B's utterance turns on its being a response to A's question). These ideas about the way in which the explicature/implicature distinction cross-cuts the class of entailments have been little remarked on and remain to be further developed.[4]

In the next section, we focus on loose use (including certain kinds of figurative use, such as hyperbole and metaphor) and its effect on the explicature/implicature interplay. This is an area of language use where Carston's work has played a major role in a revision to part of the relevance-theoretic framework.

2. Relevance Theory and Loose Use

Consider an utterance of the following sentence:

(9)   It's freezing.

This could be meant and understood literally (suppose the location involved is a refrigerated storehouse in which meat is kept), or approximately (suppose the 'it' refers to very cold water which may not, however, be actually at freezing point), or hyperbolically (said of a room which is much cooler than the speaker expected, though far from actually freezing, in order to communicate the urgent requirement of

some heating), or metaphorically (for instance, given as a response to a query about the current state of a deteriorating relationship between two people). According to Sperber and Wilson (1986a/95: 231-7, 1986b), the last three possibilities are all cases of loose use, which they characterise in the following way: a speaker produces an utterance whose propositional form is in a relation of non-identical resemblance with the propositional form of a thought (or thoughts) that she wants to communicate, where interpretive resemblance between propositional forms is a matter of sharing logical and contextual implications. So, for instance, in the case of an approximating use of (9), the speaker's thought might share with the proposition expressed by the utterance such implications as that the water is very cold, is painful to the touch, cannot be used for bathing or washing, and so on. However, her thought does not entail that the temperature of the water is 32 F (or lower), nor that it has solidified into ice, both of which are implications of the proposition expressed by the utterance. A similar account can be given of the hyperbolic and metaphorical cases, for which the set of shared implications (and hence the interpretive resemblance) will be somewhat different and will not include all of the implications of the approximating use.

The formative idea here is that quite often a speaker should not and does not produce an utterance whose propositional form is identical to that of a thought she intends to communicate (that is, has exactly the same set of logical and contextual implications) because it is not optimally relevant to do so. Rather, the communicative situation is such that the hearer will be able to recover the intended cognitive implications more economically (with less processing cost) from an utterance which is a non-literal interpretation of the speaker's thought rather than from one that is a literal interpretation. In the approximation case, it might be that a fully literal

utterance would be somewhat circumlocutionary ('not far off freezing', 'if not actually freezing, close to it') and require unnecessary decoding and inferential work on the part of the hearer. In the metaphorical case, there might simply be no word or phrase whose literal encoded meaning would capture the state of tension, strain and disconnection the speaker wants to communicate about the relationship under discussion and so a non-literal use of 'freezing' is the best vehicle for the job. The hearer computes implications in order of their accessibility, which in turn depends on the accessibility of contextual (encyclopaedic) assumptions, until the presumption of optimal relevance is satisfied. Unintended implications are either never processed (because insufficiently accessible) or, if accessed, are discarded as patently not speaker-meant. This view, then, is consonant with Sperber and Wilson's fundamental claim that utterance interpretation is constrained by a general presumption of optimal relevance and not by any maxim or presumption of literal truthfulness.

This account was one of the first to tackle the pragmatics of loose use as a general phenomenon and it offered a completely new approach to certain figurative uses, in particular metaphor. Metaphorical use is claimed to be on a continuum with other cases of loose use and thus its comprehension requires no special interpretive abilities or procedures, but exploits the same relevance-oriented pragmatic capacity for recognizing intended implications as is employed in the understanding of both literal uses and other cases of loose use.[5]

Nevertheless, the account remained, in one key respect, quite Gricean in its outlook. Recall that, on Grice's treatment of figurative uses and of floutings of his first maxim of truthfulness more generally, the speaker does not 'say' anything but merely 'makes as if to say' the proposition her utterance expresses. Within relevance theory, the proposition expressed by an utterance differs from Grice's notion of what

is said in being considerably more pragmatically enriched, but, on this early account of loose uses and metaphor, it shared with the Gricean notion the significant property of not being communicated (not being speaker-meant). That is, it was not an explicature. The only explicature of such utterances was the one concerning the speaker's speech act: S has said that the room/water/ relationship is freezing. All the communicated or speaker-meant content of the utterance is taken to be (conversationally) implicated, with the proposition explicitly expressed functioning merely as a vehicle on the basis of which the hearer can infer the intended implications.

As Carston (1996, 2002) pointed out, this makes for an asymmetry in the account, since cases of strengthening or enriching the linguistically encoded meaning are taken to contribute to explicit content while cases of relaxing or broadening it are not. She found this asymmetry questionable, since the two kinds of interpretive effects appear to simply reflect the two directions in which a lexically encoded concept may be pragmatically adjusted, hence to be, in a sense, the same process. Furthermore, it is difficult to see why a hearer would undertake processes of pragmatic enrichment in order to derive a proposition that he does not take to be part of the speaker's communicated content. But, of course, if we were to abandon that aspect of the account and assume that enrichments, like loosenings, only emerge at the level of implicature, we would be returning to a view of explicit utterance content as minimally propositional, semantically-oriented and often not communicated/meant; that is, the very view that relevance theory had rejected.

These concerns led Carston to consider whether loosened content should not also be construed as contributing to explicature. She argues (1996, 2002) that both enrichment and broadening depart from strict literality, albeit in opposite directions,

and that it is fully in keeping with the pragmatic (rather than semantic) nature of explicature that both kinds of effect should be understood as making constitutive contributions to it, though both, of course, mark departures from sentence semantics. Looked at in this way, narrowing and broadening (and combinations of the two) are simply different outcomes of a single pragmatic process of meaning modulation or lexical concept adjustment. This coheres well with the relevance-theoretic view of the explicature/implicature distinction according to which implicatures are derived by a global inferential process whereas explicatures are derived by local inferential developments of sub-components of the logical form (decoded linguistic content). Loose use is typically a local affair just as much as enrichment is. Furthermore, this move makes it possible to dispense with the unsatisfactory situation of having two levels of uncommunicated meaning: the linguistically encoded logical form and the proposition expressed. On Carston's account, there is a single representational entity which functions as the vehicle by means of which, together with contextual assumptions, intended content is communicated: that is, linguistically encoded meaning.

Let us compare narrowing and loosening by looking at the examples in (10) and (11), focusing on the use of the word 'bachelor' in each case:

(10) [Ann wants to settle down and have children but all the men she has met recently are already married. In this background, Ann utters:] I want to meet some bachelors.

(11) [Jane is Ken's wife of many years. In this background, Jane utters:] Ken is a bachelor and he always will be.

In the case of (10), it is mutually manifest to speaker and hearer that Ann doesn't want to meet just anyone who falls in the category of unmarried men (which includes celibate priests, homosexual men, and so on); rather, she wants to meet unmarried men who are eligible for and inclined toward marriage. So the explicature she communicates here does not contain the lexically encoded concept BACHELOR but a narrower *ad hoc* (pragmatically inferred) concept BACHELOR*, whose denotation is a subset of the denotation of the lexical concept.[6] In the case of (11), it is mutually manifest to speaker and hearer that Ken is technically married and that what concerns his wife is his behaviour and attitudes, so that, again, what is communicated is not the encoded concept BACHELOR but an *ad hoc* concept BACHELOR**, whose denotation is broader than that of the lexical concept in that it includes some married men, those who behave in a way that is associated with stereotypical bachelors (not taking on family responsibilities, uncommitted to their partner, and so on).

So we have here two uses of the word 'bachelor' where the concept it contributes to the explicitly communicated content is distinct from the concept it lexically encodes, although the encoded concept and its associated logical and encyclopaedic entries provide the essential basis for the relevance-driven process of concept modulation.[7] In the second case, a logical or definitional property of the concept BACHELOR has been dropped (NOT MARRIED) and this is typical of cases of loose uses. While that would be unacceptable if dealing with natural language semantics, it is entirely at one with the nature of communicated/meant utterance content and, in fact, is inevitable once the machinery of pragmatic modulation and *ad hoc* concepts is taken on board. Carston points out that the concept communicated by the use of 'bachelor' in (11) most likely involves not only a loose use (a broadening of the set of entities denoted), but also a narrowing, since the denotation of the

concept that Jane appears to have in mind would not include bachelors who do not exhibit the irresponsible, uncommitted behaviour and attitudes of a certain kind of stereotypical bachelor. This gives additional support to the position that loosening contributes to explicit content, since there is no principled reason to suppose that while the narrowed aspect of the concept BACHELOR figures at this level, the simultaneously achieved widening is registered only at the level of implicature.

Since metaphorical use is viewed within RT as being on a continuum with other cases of loose use (although more extreme in its broadening and usually also involving some narrowing), it follows from the symmetric account that metaphorical content must also contribute to explicature. Controversial though this has seemed to many, Carston argues that there is, in fact, evidence to support it, including the standardly local nature of metaphorical meaning (frequently it is just one constituent of the sentence uttered that is used metaphorically and often just a single word), and strong intuitions that metaphorical content embeds in the scope of logical operators such as conditionals and negation (Carston 2002: 349-59). Looking back now to example (9) and the possible loose uses of 'freezing', the idea is that whether we end up with what pre-theoretic intuitions categorize as an approximation, a hyperbole or a metaphor is simply a matter of the relevant implications on the particular occasion of use. In the process of on-line comprehension, the encoded concept FREEZING is adjusted so that the explicature of the utterance (together with contextual assumptions) properly warrants those relevant implications, with the result that an *ad hoc* concept (FREEZING*, FREEZING**, or FREEZING ***) is one of the constituents of explicit utterance content. Carston's proposal may seem a radical departure from longstanding assumptions in the pragmatics literature that consider loosening and, in particular, metaphor, to communicate only conversational implicatures, but,

according to her, it is the inevitable final move in developing a consistent notion of explicitly communicated content.

She points out a welcome consequence of the revised picture. Recall that, according to the earlier approach, the property of non-literalness was taken to reside in the relation between the thought(s) the speaker wanted to communicate and the proposition expressed by her utterance. This was the cause of some confusion among readers at the time since it is clearly specific linguistic expressions that are being used loosely (non-literally), for example 'freezing', 'bachelor', in the examples above. The *ad hoc* concept account re-establishes this intuitive locus of non-literality: a speaker uses a word or phrase to communicate a concept that is different from the one encoded by that expression. It is *language* use that is literal or loose. This leaves the essence of the important Sperber/Wilson notion of interpretive resemblance untouched since, quite generally, propositional forms can resemble each other to a greater or lesser degree depending on the extent of overlap of their logical and contextual implications; this point has many applications in pragmatics, including in an account of indirect reports and other cases of attributing thoughts and utterances to others. For further discussion of the consequences of the move to a symmetric treatment of enrichment and loose use in terms of *ad hoc* concepts that contribute to explicature, see Carston (2002: 337-49).[8] These ideas have now been adopted into the mainstream of relevance theory and have motivated recent work aimed at developing a unitary account of how word meanings are adjusted in context (Carston 2005, 2007; Wilson and Carston 2007).

While supporting the loose use view of metaphor, Carston was critical of one further aspect of the existing RT account, a point which applied equally to the earlier 'no explicature' account and to the revised account in terms of explicitly

communicated *ad hoc* concepts. In her view, the description of the process of
deriving metaphorical meaning via a relevance-driven search through logical and
encyclopaedic entries did not give a sufficiently explanatory account of how that
meaning was recovered for a range of standard cases of metaphor, in particular those
that seem to involve a domain switch (from the physical to the psychological, from
animals/machines to humans, and so on). The worry focused on what are known as
'emergent properties', that is, properties that are attributed to the metaphor's target
but do not seem to have come from the metaphor vehicle. Consider, for example, the
understanding of 'freeze over' and 'butcher' in the following two examples:

    (12) a. Their relationship froze over long ago.

        b. The eminent professor butchered his rival's theory.

We may understand (12a) as communicating that the relationship in question has for
a long time been lacking in any sign of strong feeling or intimate contact between the
two people, is devoid of empathy, reciprocity, and so on, and from (12b) we may
take it that the professor was able, with a few incisive remarks, to show his rival's
theory to be incoherent, poorly constructed, and so on. Both are, of course, open to
somewhat different interpretations, depending on details of the wider context in
which they occur. The point, though, is that the properties a hearer understands as
intended by the speaker do not seem to be available either from the linguistic
meaning of 'freeze over' or 'butcher' or from the encyclopaedic information
associated with the concepts they lexically encode: FREEZE OVER and BUTCHER.
These concern, respectively, a physical change that occurs when water is at a
particular temperature and an action of killing an animal and/or cutting up its flesh

for meat. No doubt, the information about these events stored in encyclopaedic entries is quite detailed and complex, but it does not include properties pertaining to human feelings/relationships or to arguing against and defeating ideas/theories. So Carston's question was: where do these properties, which are understood to be predicated of the relationship in (12a) and of the professor in (12b), come from?[9]

This concern has led to further work both within RT and beyond. While some metaphor theorists think a fully adequate account must employ special (metaphor-specific) processes or mechanisms such as domain-mapping (Black 1954; Indurkhya 1986; Romero and Soria 2005, 2007), relevance theorists have continued to work towards an account given wholly in terms of standard relevance-driven pragmatic inference operating on properly rich encyclopaedic information, which can include components of imagistic and phenomenal representation embedded in propositional content (see, for instance, Wilson and Carston 2006).

Finally, whether all cases of metaphorical use, including extended and/or highly creative/poetic instances, can be adequately treated in terms of loose use and *ad hoc* concepts remains an open issue (for discussion, see Carston 2002: 358-9, forthcoming).

3 Survey of the Contributions to this Volume

The chapters of the book are organized into three groups. The first set focuses on the notion of logical form in Carston's work, both its (alleged) non-propositionality and the nature of the lexically encoded meanings that comprise its basic constituents (chapters 2-6). The second group examines the central construct in her relevance-theoretic account of explicit communication, *explicature*, and compares it with other

notions of primary (non-implicated) speaker meaning (chapters 7-9). The third group tackles issues concerning the internal structure of explicature and the phenomena and processes claimed to contribute to it (chapters 10-13).

In his chapter, 'Pragmatics and Logical Form', François Recanati looks at several different ways in which the notion of logical form has been conceived and their implications for the claim that there are 'free' pragmatic processes, that is, processes that contribute contextual meaning without any linguistic mandate. To make room for these processes, he argues, we need to distinguish the logical form of an utterance (lf), in the standard sense, and its *modified* logical form (lf*), affected by free pragmatic processes. This distinction can be interpreted in three different ways. In the first possible explanation, favoured by Gennaro Chierchia, lf is conceived as a conceptual representation in the language of thought strictly determined by the grammar and when it is shaped by extra-linguistic factors we get lf*. But they are both complete propositions, that is, semantic objects. In the second, the relevance-theoretic view, lf is an incomplete conceptual representation resulting from linguistic decoding and lf* is a representation that results from the development of lf and thus it is a syntactic object and not a semantic one. This view, Recanati says, is syntactic in the sense that lf* is a representation, a sentence in the language of thought. In the third, there are not two systems: the linguistic and the mental. The lf* is simply the bare logical form of another sentence and both are within the same system where thought is nothing but inner speech. Then, we can account for lf* without appealing to a second system in addition to the language system. On one manifestation of this construal, which allows optional covert elements in logical form, there appear to be no free pragmatic processes since any pragmatically supplied content cannot but be linguistically mandated. However, Recanati concludes

that what this really amounts to is simply another syntactic construal of free pragmatic enrichment.

Agustín Vicente and Fernando Martínez-Manrique argue, in their chapter 'On Relevance Theory's Atomistic Commitments', that Carston's strong commitment to the linguistic underdeterminacy thesis is undermined by her support for an atomistic view of lexical concepts. They point out that a consequence of linguistic underdeterminacy is 'rampant polysemy' and an atomistic lexical semantics faces considerable difficulty in accounting for polysemy. They suspect that Carston is aware of this issue and this leads her to oscillate between the standard RT espousal of lexical atomism and a less orthodox position on which lexical meanings are concept schemas or pointers to conceptual addresses. However, Vicente and Martínez-Manrique argue that a better approach is to treat word meanings as decompositional. For them, words express variable complexes of concepts made out of a finite list of typically abstract primitives.

Begoña Vicente Cruz also supports a decompositional view of word meaning, but the main thrust of her chapter, 'The Role of Pragmatic Inferencing in Compositional Semantics', is to argue that the relevance theorists, including Carston, need to abandon the implicit assumption that all the compositional structure supplied by the language system comes from syntax. She puts the case for a language-internal semantic component with combinatorial power that is syntax-independent, supporting her view with evidence from the resolution of anaphoric dependencies, lexical presupposition, ellipsis and lexical coercion. An important consequence of this is that the language system supplies a much richer input to the inferential pragmatic system than is generally assumed in relevance theory. In particular, many, if not all, of the alleged instances of 'free' pragmatic enrichment can in fact be

reanalysed as either linguistic semantic procedures or as pragmatic processes responding to linguistic requirements.

In his chapter 'Linguistic Meaning and Propositional Content', Manuel García-Carpintero agrees with Carston and other relevance theorists that logical forms are standardly nonpropositional. However, he points out that they, nonetheless, determine (minimal) propositions and that these have logico-semantic properties (entailment, contradiction, and so on) that are part of native speakers' knowledge of their language (their linguistic competence). Thus, although these 'character' – associated propositional forms may not play a role in the psychological processes of utterance comprehension, they are nonetheless psychologically real and must be accorded a place in a complete account of human linguistic abilities.

Barry Smith brings a different perspective to the linguistic under-determinacy thesis. In his chapter, 'What we Mean, What we Think we Mean, and How Language Surprises us', he claims that there are instances where, contrary to appearances, there is no disparity between what the speaker says and what her words mean. The supporting data he calls on are cases involving two speakers who disagree about the truth of a statement made by an utterance using a predicate of taste, for example 'This wine is perfectly balanced'. Possible explanations are that either one of them is wrong (at fault) or that they are not, in fact, having a genuine dispute since they are predicating different properties of the wine. Smith rejects both of these solutions, maintaining that neither of the speakers is at fault and they are both saying the same thing of the wine. Rather, he claims, this is a situation in which the two speakers are selectively attending to just one of the various ways in which the truth conditions of the sentence (what it says) can be met, so that the disparity lies with a difference

between what the speakers think they are asserting and what they are actually asserting (that is, the truth-conditional content of the sentence).

We move now to the chapters that focus centrally on explicature and its relation to other notions of explicitness or primary speaker meaning. In his chapter 'Explicature, What is Said and Gricean Factorization Criteria', José E. Chaves compares explicature with the Gricean notion of what is said. He identifies and specifies the criteria that Grice employed in making his saying/ implicating distinction and points out the ways in which they differ from the commitments motivating the explicature/implicature distinction in relevance theory. He concludes that, given these differences, there is no incompatibility between the philosophical notion of saying and the cognitively-oriented concept of explicature and the two can usefully coexist in an overall account of semantics and communication.

In his paper 'Impliciture *vs* Explicature: What's the difference?', Kent Bach compares Carston's notion of explicature with his own notion of impliciture. He concedes that they are very similar (and not only from an extensional point of view): the central properties of both notions are that they are speaker-meant (communicatively intended) and they are built on the encoded linguistic content but go well beyond it (via an array of pragmatic processes). However, he argues that some deeper differences emerge when the two notions are situated in their respective theoretical frameworks (relevance-theoretic versus Gricean) with their somewhat different conceptions of what is involved in linguistic communication.

Noel Burton-Roberts discusses in some detail the criterion of cancellability, originally put forward by Grice as a characteristic of conversational implicatures. In his chapter 'Cancellation and Intention', he takes issue with Carston's claim that some elements of explicatures (those that are pragmatically inferred) are cancellable.

He finds the possibility of cancelling explicatures logically questionable and presents some specific data to illustrate that it is, in fact, empirically incorrect. He goes on to raise some questions about the very idea of cancelling communicatively intended content, whether explicatures or implicatures, and concludes that the only possibly cancellable components of communicated meaning are generalized conversational implicatures.

The final set of chapters home in on the way in which pragmatic processes, in particular *ad hoc* concept construction, are claimed to contribute to explicature. In 'Metaphor Comprehension: Some Questions for Current Accounts in Relevance Theory', Adrian Pilkington criticises some aspects of the relevance-theoretic account of metaphorical use in terms of *ad hoc* concepts constructed through a process of parallel mutual adjustment of explicature and implicature. In his view, this kind of account cannot capture the 'emergent properties' typical of metaphor, in particular its apparently non-propositional sensory and affective effects. He explores some ideas for complementing the propositional account with analogue representations, including mental imagery and phenomenal concepts, concluding that it may simply not be possible to provide a fully explanatory naturalistic account of all aspects of verbal communication.

In his chapter '*Ad Hoc* Concepts and Metaphor', Manuel Hernández Iglesias also discusses Carston's view that metaphorical meaning is a case of lexical pragmatic adjustment (crucially involving broadening) and results in an *ad hoc* concept that contributes to explicit content. He argues that this kind of account faces two related difficulties: (i) it entails a too radical difference between corresponding similes and metaphors; and (ii) while it may provide a good explanation for conventional metaphors, it seems less well suited to capturing the effects of creative

metaphors. He concludes by pointing out a sense in which Carston's account is surprisingly close to a stance of scepticism about metaphorical meanings.

The general aim of our chapter, 'Phrasal Pragmatics in Robyn's Carston Programme', is to explore a subfield of pragmatics that we call 'phrasal pragmatics'. We claim that sometimes complex concepts (typically expressed by phrases) must be pragmatically derived in order to determine their contribution to truth-conditional content (explicature) and that this task cannot be achieved by means of Carston's lexical pragmatics in which only the pragmatics of atomic concepts is considered. We look at cases of complex (hence compositional) concept adjustment (for example, for some metaphorically used definite descriptions) as well as at cases where the recovery of unarticulated constituents occurs at the phrasal level (for example, in the interpretation of incomplete definite descriptions and referential metonymies). Phrasal pragmatics can account for some pragmatic effects on explicatures that lexical pragmatics cannot elucidate, a clear case is metonymy.

The chapter 'Uttering Sentences Made up of Words and Gestures' by Philippe De Brabanter looks at the rich variety of non-linguistic resources speakers exploit in their face-to-face acts of verbal communication, including facial, vocal and other bodily gestures. These can make a crucial contribution to the utterance's truth-conditional content (explicature) and there are interesting questions about the way in which such constituents of an explicature are mentally represented (conceptually or perceptually). However, De Brabanter's main concern is to argue that sometimes some of these non-verbal elements of an utterance actually play a linguistic role. That is possible because language use is highly structured and, if a given utterance displays enough linguistic structure, a non-linguistic 'demonstration' can be incorporated as part of that structure in much the same way as cases of quotation can

be. He points out that, while the relevance-theoretic stance on explicature as a linguistic-pragmatic hybrid can account for this, the relevance-theoretic view of these cases as multi-modal utterances would not allow attribution of a linguistic role to non-verbal stimuli and that this all-out non-linguistic approach has at least the undesirable consequence that it has nothing to say about the essential connection between non-verbal demonstration and quotation.

In the final chapter of the volume, 'Explicit Communication and "Free" Pragmatic Enrichment', Robyn Carston presents a sustained case in support of the primary role of pragmatic inference (by no means always linguistically triggered) in the determination of explicitly communicated content. In the process, she responds to many of the comments and criticisms on her work presented in the preceding chapters, focusing in particular on alternative accounts of apparently linguistically unarticulated constituents of explicit content and on issues concerning the pragmatic adjustment of linguistically encoded concepts. She argues that, as far as the on-line processes of utterance interpretation are concerned, a wholly pragmatic account of certain contributions to explicature is preferable to one that posits optional covert linguistic elements. Although she continues to advance the idea of *ad hoc* concept construction as contributing to explicature, she points out that there are some important questions yet to be tackled, concerning both the nature of these concepts and the extent to which this sort of construct is fully satisfactory in explaining the effects of the metaphorical use of language. Finally, she suggests that, although the relevance-theoretic approach to verbal communication is broadly at one with contextualist approaches to semantics in the philosophy of language, there are some important differences of emphasis and orientation that need to be recognized.

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Notes

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[2] This underdeterminacy is at the core of Carston's work and it is in the search for solutions to the problems it raises that her main contribution arises. There are two other linguistic underdeterminacy theses, which are much less controversial (Carston 2002: 19): (a) linguistic meaning underdetermines what is meant and (b) what is said (explicit utterance content) underdetermines what is meant. In this introduction, we will use the term 'underdeterminacy' in the more restricted sense of linguistic or semantic underdeterminacy of what is said (or explicature). This is the way in which Carston (2002) uses it.

[3] We follow the notational convention established in the relevance-theoretic literature of representing thoughts/propositions (and conceptual representations generally) in small capital letters, while the linguistic expressions uttered are in lower case.

[4] This proposal, nevertheless, would involve a radical change in the Gricean notion of implicature. According to Grice (1961: 127, 130 and 131), the notion of implicature has the property of 'the posibility of falsity': the utterance that communicates the implicature might be true even if the implicature were false. If some implicatures were entailments, this essential feature of implicatures would drop out.

[5] A further important and novel aspect of Sperber and Wilson's account was the idea that intended implications (implicatures) can be communicated more or less strongly and that the evocative or poetic impact of certain metaphors (and other figurative uses) can be explained in terms of their having a wide range of weak implicatures rather than a few strong ones (see Sperber and Wilson 1986a/95: 221-2, 235-7).

[6] The notion of an *ad hoc* concept or category comes from Barsalou (1983) and has been adopted into the more recent account of explicature in relevance theory. The pragmatic tasks discussed in early RT as involved in deriving the proposition expressed were disambiguation, saturation and enrichment (or specification of content), while the revised version recognizes the additional task of pragmatically constructing *ad hoc* concepts as part of explicature derivation (see Carston 2002; Wilson and Sperber 2004; Wilson and Carston 2006). We follow the recently established RT convention of using asterisks to indicate that a concept is *ad hoc* (pragmatically inferred) rather than simply lexically decoded.

[7] In RT, concepts are psychological objects and each consists of a label or address. The mentally stored information that is directly accessible to/from a particular conceptual address falls into three distinct types: logical, encyclopaedic and lexical. While the encyclopaedic entry consists of all of an individual's stored knowledge about and experience of the property or entities that fall in the extension of the concept, the logical entry consists of a set of deductive rules (or meaning postulates) which apply to logical forms of which that concept is a constituent. For more detail, see Sperber and Wilson (1985a/95: chapter 2).

[8] Many of the examples of loose use discussed in the early relevance-theoretic literature involved numbers, times, distances and locations (for example, 'I earn 1000 euros a month', 'The meeting ended at 2pm', 'She lives in Oxford'), where all the intended implications follow from the strictly false proposition expressed which requires less processing effort than the strictly true one would have done (for example, 'I earn 1017 euros', 'It ended at 1.57pm', 'She lives in a village very close to Oxford'). It has not yet been made clear whether, on the more recent symmetrified account of narrowing and broadening, these cases are taken to succumb to the mechanism of *ad hoc* concept formation (1000* euros, OXFORD*) or are better understood as involving an unarticulated constituent such as 'approximately' or 'in the close vicinity of', and so on.

[9] The relevance-theoretic proposal that metaphor involves a process of loosening is and has always been for us a part of the metaphorical mechanism. It is the starting point to account for the kind of transfer needed in metaphor interpretation. Nevertheless, in order to solve the 'emergent property' issue, metaphor has to be seen as a means to create emergent properties in a way that non-metaphorical

utterances do not. Metaphor cannot be explained merely with loosening (see, for more details, Romero and Soria 2007; Recanati 2007).