

## Scalar Implicatures - Session of Study at the Semantics/Pragmatics Interface

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### CURRENT WORK ON IMPLICATURES: AN OVERVIEW

The intuition that something can be unsaid, but still communicated is widely shared. What else would we mean by "reading between the lines"? However, how we accomplish "reading between the lines" is currently subject to an intense debate in linguistics, philosophy and psychology. The debate is focussed on a narrow class of cases of reading between the lines -- the "scalar implicatures" -- but has broad implications for our view of how the mind works. On one side of the debate, scientists since Grice have attempted to spell out principles of general common sense reasoning that explain how we derive implicatures. The Gricean view therefore assumes that humans can reason quickly and almost without effort when it comes to reading between lines. The other side of the debate, however, regards implicatures as the result of automated, hard-wired processes similar to grammatical processes and independent of common-sense reasoning. On this "grammatical view", common sense reasoning itself may only be an illusion created by interlocking special purpose, automated processes. I begin with a presentation of the Gricean view based on Sauerland (2004). For the exposition of the opposing grammatical view I rely on Chierchia et al. (in print). Against this background, I introduce the some of the more or less recent contributions on the debate, especially the discussion of disjunctions (e.g. Sauerland, to appear), the free-choice puzzle and its treatments by Fox (2007) and Geurts (to appear), as well as recent discussions of experimental data by Chemla (2009), Sauerland (2010), and Chemla & Spector (to appear).

**QUALITY AND QUANTITY** The maxims of quality and the first maxim of quantity (see below) are the essential assumptions from which any Gricean account of implicatures proceeds. However, there are more possibilities to construe this interaction than is standardly assumed, and I want to argue for a novel variant of the Gricean approach promoting quality 1 over quality 2. The standard Gricean account assumes that listeners assume in a violation of quantity 1 that the speakers need to satisfy quality 2 was the reason. But this runs into trouble with free choice phenomena as especially Fox (2007) has shown. I introduce instead an approach that assumes the primarily quality 1 is blamed for violations of quantity, and only if that assumption is unreasonable, listeners revert to quantity 2. I show that the new approach solves the free choice problem within the Gricean approach. Time allowing, I also address repair implicatures, a second issue that has been considered problematic for the Gricean approach. Grice's (1989) maxims: **QUALITY**: Try to

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make your contribution one that is true. 1. Do not say what you believe to be false. 2. Do not say that for which you lack evidence. QUANTITY: 1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).

REFERENCES (mostly available online, recommended readings with \*\*\*):

Chemla, Emmanuel. 2009. Universal implicatures and free choice effects: Experimental data. *Semantics and Pragmatics* 2(2). 1–33. doi:10.3765/sp.2.2.

Chemla, Emmanuel & Benjamin Spector. 2009. Experimental evidence for embedded scalar implicatures. Ms. IJN & LSCP.

\*\*\*Chierchia, Gennaro, Benjamin Spector & Danny Fox. To appear. The grammatical view of scalar implicatures and the relationship between semantics and pragmatics.

Fox, Danny. 2007. Free choice and the theory of scalar implicatures. In Uli Sauerland & Penka Stateva (eds.), *Presupposition and implicature in compositional semantics*, 71–120. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Geurts, Bart. to appear. *Quantity implicatures*. Oxford University Press.

Grice, Paul. 1989. *Studies in the way of words*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

\*\*\*Sauerland, Uli. 2004. Scalar implicatures in complex sentences. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 27. 367–391. doi:10.1023/B:LING.0000023378.71748.db

Sauerland, Uli. 2010. Embedded implicatures and experimental constraints: A reply to Geurts & Pouscoulous and Chemla. *Semantics & Pragmatics* 3. 2:1–13. doi:doi: 10.3765/sp.3.2

Abstracts

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Sauerland, Uli. to appear. Disjunction and Implicatures: Some Notes on Recent Developments. (attached)