

Multifunctionalism via Minimalism

A Radical Pragmatic Account of Quotation

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Outline

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Quotation Marks and Speaker Meaning
- 3 Minimal Pragmatic Indicators
- 4 Outlook and Conclusion



1. Introduction

Varieties of Quotation

- (1)
- a. “This theory is difficult to understand” is a sentence.
pure quotation (PQ)
 - b. Alice says, “This theory is difficult to understand.”
direct quotation (DQ)
 - c. Alice says that this theory “is difficult to understand”.
mixed quotation (MQ)
 - d. This “theory” is difficult to understand.
scare quotes (SQ)
 - e. (headline of today’s newspaper) Alice’s “new” theory!
emphatic quotes (EQ)

Definition

- Quotation: an expression between quotation marks (QM)

Aim

- Provide an account that is able to include all types of quotation sketched in (1).

Theses

- QM are implicature-triggering devices.
- QM do *not* have a proper semantic “meaning”.

2.1. What is said?

The Indirect Quotation (IQ) Test

(Bach 1999)

An element of a sentence contributes to *what is said* in an utterance of that sentence *iff* there can be an accurate and complete indirect quotation of the utterance (in the same language) which includes that element, or a corresponding element, in the *that*-clause that specifies *what is said*.

Application of the IQ-test

- (2) a. Markus' Porsche is pink *but* stylish.
b. Elke said that Markus' Porsche is pink *but* stylish.
- (3) a. *Before I forget*, I like your pink Porsche.
b. # Elke said that *before she forgets*, she likes my pink Porsche.

The IQ-test for quotational constructions

- (4) a. Elke said that Markus' taste in colors is “difficult to understand”. (MQ)
 b. # Peter said that Elke said that Markus' taste in colors is “difficult to understand”.
- (5) a. Jörg really “enjoyed” his logic class. (SQ).
 b. # Markus said that Jörg really “enjoyed” his logic class.
- (6) a. Charles G. Taylor is “Innocent”. (EQ)
 b. # The Association for the Legal Defense of Charles G. Taylor said that Taylor is “innocent”.

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Preliminary conclusion I

Quotation marks do not contribute to *what is said*. They rather seem to trigger an implicature conveying additional non-semantic meaning.

2.2. What is conventionally implicated?

Central features of conventional implicatures (Potts 2005)

- Conventional implicatures are independent of what is said.
- Conventional implicatures are speaker oriented.
- Conventional implicatures yield multidimensional content.
- Conventional implicatures are not context sensitive.



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Multidimensional content: appositives

(7) Markus, a linguist, loves his pink Porsche.

at-issue: Markus loves his pink Porsche.

CI: Markus is a linguist.

Multidimensional content: expressives

(Potts 2005)

(8) Bush says the damn republicans deserve public support.

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Multidimensional content in quotation (SQ)?

(9) Peter's bagels are "fresh".

at-issue: Peter's bagels are fresh.

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Multidimensional content in quotation (MQ)?

(10) Elke said that Markus is a "philodoofer".

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- We need a mechanism to 'overwrite' ordinary semantic material.

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Context independence of QM?

- (11)
- a. I get sick every time I eat Peter's bagels.
Yeah, Peter's bagels are always "fresh".
 - b. Peter's bagels are the freshest in the whole town.
Yes indeed, they are always "fresh".
 - c. Here is what I read in *Coffee & Bagels*:
Peter's bagels are always "fresh".

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Conventional implicatures revisited

- QM-triggered implicatures are independent of what is said. ✓
- QM-triggered implicatures are speaker oriented. ✓
- QM-triggered implicatures yield multidimensional content.
- QM-triggered implicatures are not context sensitive.

2.3. What is conversationally implicated?

Central features of conversational implicatures

- Conversational implicatures are context dependent.
- Conversational implicatures are reinforceable.
- Conversational implicatures are calculable.
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Reinforceability of the implicature triggered by QM

- (12)
- a. Peter's bagels are "always fresh".
 - b. I get sick every time I eat them. (SQ)
 - c. They are the freshest in the whole town. (EQ)
 - d. That's what I've read in *Coffee & Bagels*. (MQ)

Preliminary conclusion II

Quotation marks do not contribute to *what is conventionally implicated*. However, some central features of *conversational implicatures* are met. We will scrutinize on the remaining features while developing our account.

3. Minimal Pragmatic Indicators

Minimal Pragmatic Indicators (MPI)

MPIs are:

- *Minimal* (M): They do not have a proper semantic meaning.
- *Indicators* (I): Using a MPI indicates something regarding the utterance or the context.
- *Pragmatic* (P): What is indicated by the use of a MPI is the need of further pragmatic inferences, e.g., conversational implicatures, etc.

We propose:

- Quotation marks are MPI, i.e., QM have no “meaning” at all. They only indicate the need for processing conversational implicatures.
- This interpretation of QM is inspired by Reinhard Klockow’s (1980) characterisation of QM as “Implikatursignal” (*implicature signal*).

3.1. Calculating the Quote-Triggered Implicature

Cooperative principle

“Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.” (Grice 1989: 26)

Q-Principle

Say as much as you can (given I). (cf. Horn 1984)

I-Principle

Say no more than you must (given Q). (cf. Horn 1984)

Calculability

Interaction of QM and conversational implicatures:

- From a reader's perspective, quotation marks indicate that further pragmatic inferences are necessary to grasp the interpretation intended by the writer.
- From a writer's perspective, they are used to convey that a non-standard interpretation of the quoted expression is required.

Horn's division of pragmatic labour

“Unmarked forms tend to be used for unmarked situations and marked forms for marked situations.” (Horn 1984: 26)

The well known example

(McCawley 1978)

- (13) a. Black Bart killed the sheriff.
b. Black Bart caused the sheriff to die.

The basic idea

An expression between QM is more marked than the same expression without QM. Therefore, putting an expression between QM increases its markedness.

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Consider the following example:

(14) Peter's new "theory" is difficult to understand.

The pragmatic inference – Part 1:

- (15)
- a. The writer (W) wrote *Peter's new "theory" is difficult to understand*.
 - b. By (a) W said that Peter's new theory is difficult to understand.
 - c. If W only meant that Peter's new theory is difficult to understand, W would have violated (I) as she provided more information than necessary.
 - d. Given W is cooperative, she will not violate (I).
 - e. W wanted to convey something more/other than that Peter's theory is difficult to understand.
 - f. I must not interpret *theory* in a naïve way.

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 - f. I must not interpret *theory* in a naïve way.

- Up to this point, the effect produced by QM could best be regarded as triggering a generalized conversational implicature (GCI) conveying that the reader has to do some additional pragmatic reasoning.
- The reader still needs to flesh out the “target of the quotation” (Klockow 1980) or what Recanati calls the “point of quotation” (Recanati 2001).
- This “target” is inferred by means of a particularized conversational implicature (PCI).

The pragmatic inference – Part 2:

- (16)
- a. I know that W is a very critical scientist and has a very strict understanding of the term *theory* in scientific contexts.
 - b. W wrote (17) in a scientific context.
 - c. I can infer from this utterance that she does not take the proposal in question to be a theory at all.
 - d. W knows that I can infer this from her use of QM and she has not stopped me from inferring that.
 - e. Therefore, by uttering (17), W implicates that Peter's new proposal is only a wannabe-theory.

To see how this might be spelled out in other contexts, remember Peter and his bagels:

Quotation: GCI & PCI

- (17) a. What did *Coffee & Bagels* say about Peter's bagels?
b. Well, Peter's bagels are always "fresh".
+> GCI: Peter's bagels are always fresh-in-a-non-standard-way.
+> PCI: Peter's bagels are fresh according to *Coffee & Bagels*.

3.2. Quote-Triggered Implicatures and Cancellability

Cancelling Implicatures

- (18) a. Mary has three children.
+> Mary has exactly three children.
- b. Mary has three children. In fact, she has even five.
+✗ Mary has exactly three children.

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The problem of cancelling QM-implicatures

- (19)
- a. Urgh, every time I eat a bagel at Peter's I get sick!
 - b. Well, Peter's bagels are always "fresh".
+> Peter's bagels are not fresh at all.
 - c. # Peter's bagels are always fresh, but I do not want to say that they are not fresh at all.

Consider this "subtractive implicature"

(Levinson 2000)

- (20)
- a. C: [Towards an obviously not well-rested colleague.]
 - b. You are looking great today!
+> You are looking bad today!
 - c. # You are looking great today but I do not want to say that you are not looking great today.

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4. Outlook and Conclusion

- The explanation of omissions of QM is straightforward:
- If the context of an utterance is rich enough, the same implicature might arise even without quotation marks.

Omission of quotation marks

- (21) a. I have read “Chomsky’s” new manuscript.
b. I have read Chomsky’s new manuscript.

A rich context

- (22) One of Peter’s colleagues is pretty pretentious and thinks of himself as an outstanding linguist. He repeatedly states that the book he is writing will be as influential as the work of Noam Chomsky. Now suppose that *a)* this colleague convinced Peter to proofread his manuscript, *b)* Peter and his friend John both know this and *c)* both know that the other one knows that.

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Further extensions:

- The account sketched so far can be extended to direct quotation and pure quotation as well.
- The inference sketched can be stated more formally.
(e. g. by applying Bidirectional OT, Gametheory)

Advantages:

- The MPI-account is not theoretically biased.
- It offers a unified explanation of all types of quotations addressed in (1)
- It can explain omissions.
- It is not dependent on a specific view of the semantics/pragmatics distinction.

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