

Full but not saturated. The myth of mandatory primary pragmatic processes*

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Abstract

On the issue of how much pragmatics has to do with what is said, philosophers and linguists divide into the minimalist and contextualist camps. Most members of both camps agree that in utterance comprehension, there are clear cases of 'pragmatic intrusion.' The consensus is practically universal, when it comes to utterances containing indexicals, demonstratives and context-sensitive expressions in general. The basic idea is that without pragmatic provision of appropriate referents, no proposition is determined, so the hearer cannot very well

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understand what the speaker said (the proposition expressed or the explicature). Even 'radical' minimalists like Cappelen and Lepore (2005) concede this.

Recanati (2004) calls such pragmatic intrusion into the business of reference, 'saturation'. Saturation is a *mandatory primary* pragmatic process. It is primary, in contrast with secondary processes of implicature inference. It is mandatory, in contrast with optional primary processes such as free enrichment.

We will argue that the mandatory nature of saturation is a myth. Saturation is not needed to determine a truth-evaluable proposition. Indeed, at times it is not even required for an adequate understanding of what a speaker means by her utterance. We will offer several examples involving context-sensitive expressions that make perfect sense of an unsaturated but truth-conditionally complete propositional content.

1. Introduction

There are few assumptions in contemporary pragmatic theory as universal as what we will call 'incompletism'. With this ugly word, we refer to the claim that, in utterance comprehension, in the absence of the operation of certain pragmatic processes, an utterance often fails to determine a complete, fully truth-evaluable proposition. It delivers only an *incomplete* proposition, something that in and by itself cannot have a truth-value. This may be identified as a subpropositional 'logical form', a 'partial' or 'gappy' proposition, a propositional 'fragment', 'schema', 'radical', 'skeleton', 'template', 'matrix', or 'scaffolding.'¹ All serve as

¹ We lack the scholarly instincts to track each term to its original author, but we think it is fair enough to say they collectively belong to Kent Bach (1994), Robyn Carston (2002), François Recanati (2004), Dan Sperber & Deirdre Wilson (1986), Ken Taylor (2001) and others.

propositional *function*, to use a more traditional term. Unless values are given for this entity's variables ---or gaps or slots--- it will not have a truth-value, i.e., it will not be a (full) proposition.²

The ubiquity of *incompletism* is a matter of dispute. It depends on (i) the number of context-sensitive expressions admitted and (ii) the nature of context-sensitivity envisaged as well as (iii) what is taken to be a complete, fully truth-evaluable proposition. Cappelen & Lepore (2005) are a good example of a minimalist position on the first two issues: the number of context-sensitive expressions is limited to what they call 'the Basic Set', namely, the pronouns 'I', 'you', 'he', 'she', 'it', 'this', and 'that' in all their cases and number, the adverbs 'here', 'there', 'now', 'today', 'yesterday', 'tomorrow', 'ago', 'henceforth', the adjectives 'actual' and 'present', tense words and morphemes, nouns like 'enemy', 'outsider', 'foreigner', 'alien', 'immigrant', 'friend', and 'native', and adjectives like 'foreign', 'local', 'domestic', 'national', 'imported', and 'exported'. Hence, the only kind of context-sensitivity admitted is indexicality (which alludes to the context-sensitivity proper of indexicals, demonstratives and contextuials). About the third issue, they are almost alone in holding that, for example, an utterance of 'It's raining' expresses a complete proposition even without the pragmatic provision of a location for the raining-event; and so does an utterance of 'Tipper is ready' even without knowing what she is supposed to be ready for. When pressed, they are happy to answer in the following terms:

² Bach claims that there is no much sense in talking about *incomplete* propositions: "An incomplete proposition is no more a proposition than a sentence fragment is a sentence or a rubber duck is a duck" (Bach 2006: 441-2). That's why he opts for the term 'propositional radical'. Nevertheless, Bach himself talked about incomplete propositions in 'Conversational Implicature' (1994) and many other places.

- An utterance of 'It is raining' expresses the proposition that it is raining, which is true if and only if it is raining.
- An utterance of 'Tipper is ready' expresses the proposition that Tipper is ready, which is true if and only if Tipper is ready.

Most people disagree with Cappelen & Lepore, and think that locations must be provided for weather reports, and some other parameters are required by gradable adjectives, relational adjectives and a variety of expressions that show, at the same time, that there are more kinds of context-sensitivity besides indexicality. Among those who disagree are contextualists such as Charles Travis (1997), François Recanati (2004), Dan Sperber & Deirdre Wilson (1986) and Robyn Carston (2002).³ But there is a point on which all, minimalists and contextualists alike, come to terms: the case of indexicals and demonstratives.⁴

Suppose that suddenly, without any given context, somewhat out of the blue, you hear the utterance

(1) I am French.

As long as you have a basic knowledge of English, and you assume that the speaker is talking literally, with the ordinary meaning of those words and their composition, and that she is making an assertion and not, for instance, just reading aloud a poem she just wrote, there is a sense in which you can rightly say that you understood the utterance. You understood the words uttered but you didn't understand what the speaker said, in the philosophers' and linguists' usual favored sense of the verb 'to say'. The fact that you have no clue about the context of the

³ Indexicalists such as Jason Stanley and Zoltan Szabo (2000) take the set of indexicals to be much larger than the Basic Set but they add a new kind of context-sensitivity: hidden indexicality.

⁴ There is no consensus about contextuials, and we won't deal with them in this paper.

utterance that permits you to identify the speaker of (1) makes your understanding of (1) incomplete. You cannot assign a referent to the speaker's use of 'I', so you don't understand what the speaker said in uttering (1). Your understanding falls short of determining a complete proposition. Instead, you just get an *incomplete* proposition. Something like

(2) *x* is French.

Given this, pragmatic processes of provision of referents would be mandatory to obtain a fully truth-conditional proposition, or, what amounts to the same thing, to get a candidate for the proposition that counts as what is said by the utterance.

Recanati (2004) calls the pragmatic processes that 'intrude' in the determination of *what is said* 'primary' pragmatic processes and claims that, among them, there is one kind, which he calls 'saturation', which is mandatory, unlike all the other pragmatic processes, which are optional. Not everybody agrees that there is a fundamental distinction to be made between primary and secondary pragmatic processes; Sperber & Wilson (1986, 2002), Carston (2007) and Curcó (2013) argue against Recanati on this point. But they all agree, minimalists and contextualists alike, that saturation, whatever you call it and however you characterize it, is a mandatory pragmatic process. And it is mandatory for the sole reason that, otherwise, the utterance would provide only an incomplete proposition.

In this paper, we argue against this consensus opinion. We argue that 1) there are no mandatory primary pragmatic processes; because 2) even without the provision of referents for referential expressions (or locations for weather reports) an utterance does determine a complete proposition. This proposition will typically not be 'the proposition expressed' or

'what is said' by the speaker. But it is a complete proposition that captures truth-conditions for the utterance. Thus, primary pragmatic processes are not needed to have such a proposition. If primary pragmatic processes are mandatory it is not due to *incompletism*.

We'll start by summing up the differences between primary and secondary pragmatic processes according to Recanati (2004) and the allegedly mandatory nature of some of the former. Then we'll focus on the assumptions behind the main argument for that mandatory nature: together with incompletism, it depends on semantic underdeterminacy and propositionalism. We will show, in section 4, what's wrong with these assumptions or, rather, what's wrong with the use of these assumptions in arguing for incompletism. Their force ends when we recall that we are dealing, not with mere sentences, but with utterances of them. With that in mind, it is natural to consider a variety of truth-conditions or contents beginning with a level that is clearly complete but not saturated: the utterance-bound or reflexive content. In section 5, we'll consider various objections: (i) that the utterance-bound content is saturated after all (ii) that it's not sufficient for understanding and (iii) that it should be ignored, since it plays no role in a theory of utterance comprehension. Needless to say, we'll rebut all these charges. In section 6, we'll show how our view fits perfectly with Grice's view on what is said and, perhaps despite appearances, with the relevance-theoretic notion of explicature. We'll end by drawing some general conclusions.

We need to emphasize that we are adopting the hearer's perspective on utterance contents and truth-conditions. That is, we are talking about the understanding rather than the production of utterances. When we take the speaker's point of

view and think about utterance planning and production, the debate does not make much sense. In all the relevant cases under discussion here the speaker does have a complete thought, i.e., a belief or another doxastic attitude with a complete truth-conditional content she intends to express via her utterance: there is no primary or secondary pragmatic process to be undertaken by the speaker. Typically she will know the (intended) referents for her referential expressions before they are uttered. The present debate, as many others in pragmatics, concerns utterance comprehension, but that shouldn't hide the fact that pragmatics is also concerned with what the speaker means and does in uttering what she does.

2. Recanati on pragmatic processes

Recanati (2004) has insisted on the distinction between primary and secondary pragmatic processes and its importance. Against this, some other authors, like Sperber & Wilson (1986, 2002), Carston (2007) and Curcó (2013), have argued that there is no significant psychological difference between them, even if some theoretical distinction may be justified.

According to Recanati (2004), primary pragmatic processes (henceforth PPPs) are those involved, together with the semantic meaning of the sentence uttered, in determining the proposition expressed or *what is said*. These include disambiguation, reference fixing and, depending on your minimalist or contextualist allegiances, other processes of 'enrichment'. In other words, PPPs belong to what Korta & Perry (2011b) called 'near-side pragmatics', as they are prior to the determination of *what is said*. Secondary pragmatic processes (henceforth SPPs), belong to 'far-side pragmatics', given that, of course, they go farther than what is said:

"In contrast, *secondary* pragmatic processes are ordinary inferential taking us from what is said, or rather from the speaker's saying of what is said, to something that (under standard assumptions of rationality and cooperativeness) follows from the fact that the speaker has said what she has said."
Recanati (2004, p. 17)

Recanati makes a related distinction that concerns the level of operation of the pragmatic processes. Given that PPPs intervene on sentence meaning to jointly determine the proposition expressed, they can be said to work at the *pre*-propositional level. SPPs, on the other hand, typically take the proposition expressed, *what is said*, as input; so, in that sense, they operate at the *post*-propositional level.

A third difference has to do with the kind of cognitive system responsible for the process. Thus, PPPs typically are not available to consciousness, but rather belong to sub-personal cognitive processes. In contrast, the determination of implicatures, typically with *what is said* as input, occurs at the personal level, and so it is available to consciousness.

This is related to the fact that SPPs are inferential processes, while PPPs would be blind, mechanical, i.e., non-inferential and mostly associative. This is always the case according to Recanati (2004). Sperber & Wilson (1986), among others, argue that pragmatic processes are all inferential and guided by considerations of relevance. Given this, the distinction between PPPs and SPPs does not make much sense; it would concern only the level of utterance content to which these processes contribute: the level of what is said (or the *explicature*, in their terms) or the level of implicatures. However, practically all authors, including Sperber & Wilson, agree that there are some pragmatic processes that are

mandatory, and that those are processes that contribute to *what is said*, that is, they are PPPs, if the distinction is to be kept.⁵

PPPs	SPPs
Involved in determining what is said	Take what is said as input
Work at the pre-propositional level	Work at the post-propositional level
Operate at the sub-personal level (they are not consciously available)	Operate at the personal level (they are consciously available)
Blind, mechanical	Inferential
Mandatory (saturation) or optional (enrichment)	Optional

TABLE 1. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PPPs AND SPPs ACCORDING TO RECANATI

Recanati, being a contextualist about *what is said*, admits that some PPPs such as enrichment are optional as all SPPs are. But he insists that some PPPs are mandatory, since they are required for the utterance to express a complete proposition. Recanati's label for these PPPs is 'saturation.' Under this label he includes not only reference assignment and disambiguation but

⁵ The optionality of SPPs and PPPs other than saturation seems related to the cancelability of pragmatically determined aspects of content. Grice (1967a, 1967b) indicated that conversational implicatures are cancelable, and Sperber & Wilson (1986), Carston (2002), Recanati (2004) and many others extended it to all pragmatically determined elements. Now, if saturation is mandatory, it is inconsistent to claim that an element determined by saturation is cancelable, if we interpret being cancelable roughly as being eliminable, and not as being merely revisable (see Korta 1997, for discussion).

also the provision of unarticulated constituents, when they are needed to get a full proposition:

"Saturation is the process whereby the meaning of the sentence *is completed and made propositional* through the assignment of semantic values to the constituents of the sentence whose interpretation is context-dependent (and possibly through the contextual provision of unarticulated constituents, if one assumes, as some philosophers do, that such constituents are sometimes needed to make the sentence fully propositional)." (Recanati 2004, p. 7. Our emphasis).

The critical function of the process of saturation is, then, to complete what otherwise would be incomplete and pre-propositional. The key is then to provide the elements to get a complete proposition. And that's the reason why saturation is a *mandatory* process:

"Whenever saturation is in order, appeal to the context is necessary for the utterance to express a complete proposition: from a semantic point of view, saturation is a *mandatory* contextual process. (*Idem.* His emphasis)

Recanati's 'saturation' is very similar to Kent Bach's 'completion':

"When a sentence is in this way *semantically under-determinate*, understanding its utterance requires a process of *completion* to produce a full proposition." (Bach 1994, p. 125)

Without completion (or saturation), no full proposition, *ergo* no understanding. That's the claim.

3. Underdeterminacy, propositionalism and incompletism

The main argument for the obligatory nature of saturation or completion is incompletism. But the route from incompletism to mandatory PPPs goes through two other widely held assumptions: semantic underdeterminacy and propositionalism. Semantic underdeterminacy has been much discussed in relation to the contextualist/minimalism debate, and it has been interpreted in related but significantly different ways. In particular, the following three somewhat different failures have been labeled 'semantic underdeterminacy':

1. the linguistic meaning of the sentence uttered fails to determine a complete proposition; or
2. the linguistic meaning of the sentence uttered fails to determine the literal truth-conditions of the utterance; or
3. the linguistic meaning of the sentence uttered fails to determine the intuitive truth-conditions of the utterance.

There are various positions regarding underdeterminacy. If you are a contextualist, for instance, you probably think that all three varieties are pervasive in natural language; that the role of context in identifying propositions is not limited to indexicals, and that there is no coherent notion of literal meaning separable from the intuitive truth-conditions of the utterance, which linguistic meaning systematically underdetermines. But you don't need to be a contextualist to embrace semantic underdeterminacy. And we are not going to take sides in the debate. We will deal with the non-controversial part of semantic underdeterminacy, namely, 1). This is always true when we consider sentences containing indexical and demonstratives ---the meaning of the sentence does not provide a complete proposition. Nobody denies that, nor do we. In fact, it sounds very much like a truism; the contextualist truism:

sentences do not express propositions, utterances of sentences (that is, speakers uttering sentences) do. What we call "incompletism," and deny, is version 1) of indeterminacy applied to utterances.

The second leg of the argument for the mandatory nature of saturation is propositionalism, the idea that the performance (and understanding) of a full speech act like an assertion, a command or a promise involve the expression (and understanding) of a complete proposition. Of course, we are leaving aside *wh*-interrogatives and other cases that may induce more or less controversy. We do not argue against it. So, we deny neither underdeterminacy nor propositionalism, but the assumption that they jointly lead to incompletism. The key to our objection requires attention to the distinction between sentence meaning and utterance content(s).⁶

4. Sentence versus utterance

Consider again the sentence uttered in (1), namely, 'I am French'. The sentence itself does not determine a complete proposition. If we adopt a token-reflexive account of indexicals and assume that the meaning of 'I' is something like 'the speaker of *this* utterance' then, at most we will have a 'gappy' proposition with a slot to be filled in by a particular utterance of that sentence, something like:

(3) The speaker of x is French.

This is indeed a propositional function, that is, an incomplete proposition. That's the most an indexical sentence can aspire to provide in propositional terms: a semi-gappy-incomplete propositional function-radical-template.

⁶ The reason for the parenthetical plural is that as a natural consequence of our discussion, we will argue that the utterance, not the sentence, has a variety of contents or truth-conditions.

Now, as soon as we consider not just sentences but utterances of sentences, that is, acts performed by a certain agent, the speaker, at a certain time, in a certain place, things are crucially different. To begin with, if we take again utterance (1), we don't have just a propositional function like (2) or (3), but a full proposition like

(4) THE SPEAKER OF (1) IS FRENCH.⁷

Even if you heard (1) out of the blue, without any chance to identify the speaker, not even to guess her or his gender or age, this is available to you given your knowledge of the English language, the identification of the sentence uttered, and your perception of the utterance or, in some cases, your inference that there was an utterance.

In face-to-face communication you are usually able to directly identify the speaker, the time and the place of the utterance you're hearing. You may not know the speaker's name, or what time is it, or where exactly is, but you have direct knowledge of those parameters, and they permit you to close the propositional function provided and have access to further contents. If you had the speaker of (1) in front of you, you would be able to grasp the following proposition:

(5) THE PERSON IN FRONT OF **ME** IS FRENCH,

and even, given your perceptual identification of the speaker, the following one:

(6) **THIS GUY** IS FRENCH,

⁷ We'll follow the notational convention of Perry (2012) and use boldface to indicate that the propositional constituent is the referent itself and not any identifying condition on it. On the other hand, we will use small capitals for propositions, contents or truth-conditions.

with the speaker himself, not any identifying conditions on him, as a constituent. This is usually considered as the proposition expressed by the utterance, what the speaker said in uttering (1). We also consider it so ---usually (see Korta & Perry 2007, 2011 and 2013).

When not communicating orally or face-to-face, often we do not perceive the utterance itself; we do not perceive the act of uttering a sentence, but only its product, what Perry (2012) calls a 'token'. In that case, we might be unable to identify the speaker of the utterance, or the time, or the place, independently of the utterance --- which may itself only be identifiable as "the production of *this* token". Hence we talk of "utterance-bound" identification of the speaker, the time, the place, and in fact of the truth-conditions of the utterance.

Suppose you find an anonymous hand-written note, apparently slid under your office-door, that reads

(n) You are Spanish.

You don't have any hint about its author,⁸ its addressee or addressees, the time it was written or placed there, or its purpose. The utterance-bound truth-conditions, or utterance-bound content, of (n), however, is available to you:

(7) The addressee(s) of **n** meet the conditions the author of **n** means by 'Spanish' at the time of being said.

Whether the referent of 'you' is a sole person, all the occupants of the office or just some of them and who exactly he, she or they is/are is a matter of the speaker's intention that goes further than the facts determining the minimal utterance-

⁸ We should rather say its user, since being a token, can be used and re-used by other people other than its author; that's why the relevant time is the time of sliding the note (or perhaps even the time the user expect the addressee to read the note; see Perry 2003).

bound content. About the meaning of 'Spanish' opinions can differ about whether it denotes a perfectly identifiable current European citizenship quite permanent in time, or it involves few things other than a passport which makes the denotation more intention-dependent and temporary. (7) stands for the latter option. Anyway, we know that the note has an author and has an issuing time, and that's all we need to existentially close our propositional function and have a complete proposition.

Coming back to (6), we call it the referential content or referential truth-conditions of the utterance, as we take utterances to have a variety of truth-conditions or contents; a variety of truth-conditions or contents that are set relative to various kinds of facts:

- the utterance-bound truth-conditions; set by the meaning of the sentence uttered plus the fact that an utterance has been produced.
- the speaker-bound truth-conditions; set by the above facts plus the identity of the speaker.
- the network-bound truth-conditions; set by the above facts plus the notion-network supporting the use of a certain proper name.
- ...
- the referential truth-conditions; set by the above facts plus facts about the speaker's intentions and contextual facts that set the values for context-sensitive expressions as well as unarticulated constituents.
- ...

and some other truth-conditions that can be distinguished as the product of all the various facts about conventions, intentions and circumstances involved. To our present purposes, however, it is the first level of truth-conditions which is critical: the level of utterance-bound or reflexive truth-conditions, for they provide the proof that incompletism is false. It is false that without saturation we do not have a complete proposition. And thus it is false that saturation is mandatory to get a complete proposition.

5. Against utterance-bound or reflexive content

Suppose you are quite convinced by our arguments, but still you wish to defend that saturation is mandatory. You might try to object as follows. The closure of the incomplete parameters through the utterance parameters of speaker, time and place is just another way of saturating the incomplete proposition delivered by sentence meaning. If right, this would be a fatal objection to our argument, we would be just begging the question by an excessive narrow interpretation of 'saturation', and we wouldn't have refuted incompletism.

Remember that we deliberately choose to discuss only the non-controversial cases, indexicals and demonstratives. These are supposed to leave, in virtue of their context-sensitive meaning, a 'gap', 'slot' or a free variable that is to be saturated to have a complete proposition. Saturation in this case amounts to providing the referents for the indexicals and demonstratives, their 'semantic' values as they are often called (misleadingly, since their determination is not semantic, but pragmatic, as it involves intention recognition). Utterances containing indexical or demonstrative pronouns express singular

propositions, with their referents as constituents, and saturation, as far as indexicals and demonstratives are concerned, is the process of fixing them. That is at least what Recanati (2004) clearly has in mind. Saturation provides the referents for indexicals and demonstratives. Without saturation we are left with gaps, slots or free variables.

In other words, our utterance-bound content, by definition, involves no saturation. Recanati (2004) himself acknowledges this when he takes the utterance-bound or reflexive proposition as the only coherent notion of minimal proposition:

"[T]he reflexive proposition is determined before the process of saturation takes place. The reflexive proposition can't be determined unless the sentence is tokened, but no substantial knowledge of the context of utterance is required to determine it. Thus an utterance u of the sentence 'I am French' expresses the reflexive proposition that the utterer of u is French. That it does not presuppose saturation is precisely what makes the reflexive proposition useful, since in most cases saturation proceeds by appeal to speaker's meaning." Recanati (2004: 65. Our emphasis.)

Saturation and existential quantification are two different ways of getting from sentence meaning to a complete proposition. It is contrary to Recanati's understanding of his own term, and unhelpful, to use the term 'saturation' with this portmanteau sense.

Another possible objection could go along the following lines:

"Ok, let's accept that your utterance-bound or reflexive content is a complete proposition that is determined before saturation. Incompletism is false. *But the utterance-bound content does not*

amount to what is said, so understanding the utterance-bound content does not count as understanding the utterance. So, even if saturation is not mandatory for reasons of incompletism, it is mandatory for reasons of full understanding of the utterance".

This is not an objection but a concession of our main claim: incompletism is false, so saturation is not mandatory for that reason. But it can be used as a preliminary move to a further point: that the utterance-bound content has no role in a psychologically plausible account of utterance understanding.⁹

Concerning the first point. The notion of utterance-bound content is not intended to capture 'what is said' or 'the proposition expressed'. Quite the opposite, we claimed that typically what is said corresponds to what we call the 'referential content' of the utterance. Typically, but not always. For example with identity statement the referential content seldom captures what the speaker means to convey.

Recanati himself does not take the reflexive proposition to be what is said:

"The reflexive proposition is admittedly distinct from that which the speaker asserts ... but why is this an objection? [The reflexive proposition] comes as close as one can get to capturing, in propositional format, the information provided by the utterance in virtue solely of the linguistic meaning of the sentence 'I am French.'" Recanati (2004: 66)

⁹ These two objections are the transposition of Recanati's objections to the minimalist notion of what is said à la Cappelen & Lepore or Bach. Obviously, for a contextualist that notion does not correspond with an adequate notion of what is said; and, according to Recanati (and others like Sperber & Wilson or Carston) it plays no role, anyway, in a psychologically plausible explanation of utterance understanding. For some experimental work on the psychological role of (not so) minimal propositions, see Bezuidenhout & Cooper Cutting (2002).

However, we think that equating full understanding of an utterance with understanding of what is said is incorrect. Leaving aside that *full* understanding is most likely a chimera, we'd like to show, first, that understanding what is said is not necessary to adequately understand an utterance. Consider the following example:¹⁰

In New Orleans, after the Katrina, Davis McAlary checks regularly his ex-girlfriend's mailbox since she moved to New York City. This time he sees the front door is open, it has been forced; he enters; there is a mess; he hesitates; he hears a noise upstairs; he utters "Who's that? Who's that? Anybody there? Hey! This is the Police! Anybody up there?"; he takes his cell phone from his pocket and holding it like a gun he shouts "I'm a cop with a gun, seriously!"; more noises upstairs; he runs out like crazy.

Consider McAlary's last utterance:

(8) I'm a cop with a gun, seriously.

Forget about 'seriously'. Now, what is the relevant content? Perhaps, it's a gappy proposition like

(9) X IS A COP WITH A GUN.

We can discard that already. What he said by (8) is surely

(10) **DAVIS McALARY** IS A COP WITH A GUN.

But was saying this Davis's goal? Whatever counts as identifying an individual in a singular proposition, it involves identifying the individual in other ways than as the referent of the uttered referential expression; that is, not simply in an utterance-bound way. Either directly, seeing him, for instance, or by a

¹⁰ From the TV series *Treme*, second season, third episode (2011), entitled 'On your way down'.

description like 'the sweet but hopeless music lover who is an heterodox radio DJ and a frustrated musician'. Any of these would be fatal for McAlary's purpose. He wants the hearer to think that there is an armed policeman downstairs, where the utterance clearly takes place. Anyone who sees him or has heard about him would definitely not be scared and would not fly from the scene. It seems clear that in this case the content that McAlary intends to convey to the hearer is rather

(11) THE SPEAKER OF (8) IS A COP WITH A GUN,

i.e., the utterance-bound content. That's what they are to grasp, and from which they are to infer that there is an armed policeman in the house, and it's best to leave the house.¹¹

The example shows that the objections are misguided if directed to utterance-bound content. It doesn't amount to what is said ---we never said that--- but it explains what understanding consists in in many cases and, hence, it plays an important role in explaining utterance understanding.

Thus, understanding what a speaker says in uttering a sentence is not necessary to understand the communicative act. And it is not sufficient either. This morning the first words Kepa told his friends were:

(12) I am Basque.

They looked at him with puzzled faces. His communicative plan was to exploit the widely recognized fact that Basques are punctual, and so to complain that they were late and accuse them

¹¹ One can build alternative explanations like: "they just heard an utterance; they didn't even understand the sentence; hearing a voice downstairs did all the work; Davis could have just uttered "*Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühen?*" and the robbers would have run all the same". These are all possible stories, but not the story we are using as an example. Our story is possible, and that's all that matters.

thereby for not being good Basques. It was probably too complicated early in the morning. Kepa failed. But no doubt they understood what he said. The problem is that they didn't understand what he meant, that is, they didn't understand why Kepa said what he said or, what amounts to the same thing, which the implicatures of his utterance were.

This reveals a curious tendency in contemporary pragmatics: After 50 plus years of Gricean (and Austinian) pragmatics, the attention is centered on *what is said* (and its neighbor contents) rather than on *implicatures*. As we like to put it, the focus in pragmatics started on the far-side and then slowly slowly moved to the near-side. That is, it started by calling attention to phenomena and concepts that went far beyond what is said (illocutions, implicatures, presuppositions...) and came to scrutinize the notion of what is said and facts in its vicinity. This is not good or bad in itself, research on both-sides pragmatics is surely important. But it could be the sign of a regress to the old code model of communication, a model that, as it is shown by Grice's work, is essentially insufficient to account for human communication and demands to be supplemented (or substituted, depending how you interpret it) by a model that takes language as action. This emphasis on what is said as the measure of utterance understanding, forgetting about the importance of implicatures is, in our humble opinion, a remnant of the code model that we should discard.

6. True Neo-Griceans (or Neo-relevantists).

Perhaps contrary to appearances, our view on utterance contents is well-rooted in Grice's seminal work. It is also in substantial agreement with relevance theory, an important

contemporary theory of utterance understanding that is rooted in Grice's ideas.

Our utterance-bound content sounds as an echo of the following passage of 'Logic and Conversation', in which Grice is discussing what is said by an utterance of 'He was in the grip of a vice':

"Given a knowledge of the English language, but no knowledge of the circumstances of the utterance, one would know something about what the speaker had said, on the assumption that he was speaking standard English, and speaking literally. One would know that he had said, about some particular male person or animal x, that at the time of utterance (whatever that was), either (1) x was unable to rid himself of a certain kind of bad character trait or (2) some part of x's person was caught in a certain kind of tool or instrument (approximate account, of course)." Grice 1967a/1989: 25. Our emphasis.

This is precisely how we characterize utterance-bound content: the content determined by the knowledge of the language and the fact that an utterance has been made, nothing else. Referents for referential expressions are not assigned, the time of the utterance is not determined and ambiguities are not resolved. It is not what is said, but it looks like a complete content. So, leaving implicatures aside, Grice seems to explicitly admit at least two contents for the utterance: what we call the utterance-bound and referential contents. The others are admitted implicitly since they derive naturally as the remaining information is 'loaded'.¹²

As for relevance theory, the relevant comparison seems the one between our variety of contents and their 'explicature'. The

¹² For a discussion of Grice's notion of what is said see Korta (2013).

explicature has often been taken to be a proposition that results from processes of ambiguity and vagueness resolution, reference assignment and other pragmatics processes (roughly called enrichment processes) performed on the 'logical form' of the sentence uttered. Or, following Recanati's distinction, it is the result of applying the mandatory PPPs and, eventually, the optional PPPs to the initial ---and incomplete--- proposition that is the product of decoding. The 'fully developed' proposition would constitute the input for the inference of implicatures. Cappelen & Lepore, to cite just one case, assume just that:

"We agree with her [Carston] that you need a contextually shaped content to generate implicatures in all of the cases she discusses... What's needed in order to derive the implicature in these cases is a contextually shaped content, i.e., a contextually shaped what-is-said." (Cappelen & Lepore 2005: 180)¹³

But we don't think this is the right interpretation of the input of implicatures within relevance theory. Instead, as we understand the theory, it is assumed that both explicatures and implicatures are derived fast, on-line and parallel, and the inferences are carried out following what they call the Relevance-theoretic comprehension strategy:

- (a) Follow a path of least effort in constructing an interpretation of the utterance (and in particular in resolving ambiguities and referential indeterminacies, in

¹³ To be honest, in this passage they agree with Carston in "these cases", the cases presented by contextualists in favor of an enriched notion of what is said. It's not clear what Cappelen & Lepore think about other cases, but we think it is fair to say that many authors identify the concept of relevance-theoretic explicature with the fully enriched proposition. For instance, Yan Huang tells this in his entry on explicature: "An explicature corresponds roughly to the American philosopher Kent Bach's notion of implicature and the French philosopher François Recanati's notion of pragmatically enriched said." Huang 2012: 110-111.

going beyond linguistic meaning, in supplying contextual assumptions, computing implicatures, etc.).

(b) Stop when your expectations of relevance are satisfied.

(Wilson & Sperber 2012, p. 7. Emphasis added)

Interpreted according to our view, the hearer might well stop at the utterance-bound content, without "going beyond linguistic meaning" and without "resolving referential indeterminacies", because the utterance-bound content is relevant enough---as in the McAlary example. Or she might go a bit further and stop at the speaker-bound content, or the network-bound content, without going through the process required to fix the referents of referential expressions. This is all that is needed for the inference of implicatures (which can be on-line, and in parallel), and other perlocutionary effects the speaker intends to generate. There is nothing that demands the PPPs to operate at all, because the utterance-bound content might be relevant enough, and being complete, there is no necessity of any saturation process to work.

7. Conclusions

We think it is now sufficiently clear that incompletism is false, and that, consequently, it does not justify the claim that saturation is mandatory. Reasons of 'full' utterance understanding are also wanting. Understanding 'what is said' is neither necessary nor sufficient to understand an utterance, and we believe that insisting on the contrary is the product of the old code model of human linguistic communication, according to which successful communication consists in transmitting a proposition from the speaker's mind to the hearer's mind.

In our picture, what the speaker says, or, rather, the referential content of an utterance, is one content among others, and may or may not be the appropriate content to grasp in order to understand further contents of the utterance like implicatures and other perlocutionary contents. This seems to be much more in line with Gricean and Austinian views of language as action.

Our pluralistic view on contents seems the only way to naturally explain actual communicative phenomena and overcome sterile debates caused by 'monopropositionalism' and other remnants of the code model.

It is true that abandoning incompletism even for the case of utterances containing indexicals and demonstratives would deprive both minimalism and contextualism of one of their few points of agreement. However, they would each gain on significant issues. The level of utterance-bound or reflexive content offers the minimalist a truly minimal, pragmatics-free kind of semantic content. Its determination does not require any appeal to context or to the speaker's intention. Semantic content is immune to pragmatic intrusion. The price to pay is to admit that the minimal content does not amount to what the speaker says, but that's a bullet most minimalists are ready to bite for their pragmatically-blended semantic content, anyway.

As for contextualism, the case for the pragmatic determinants of what is said remains strong. Anything beyond the utterance-bound content requires pragmatic processes (be they primary non-inferential or secondary inferential), so what is

said by a speaker in uttering a sentence, our referential truth-conditions, would be highly context-dependent.¹⁴

What both minimalism and contextualism would lose together with incompletism is the mandatory nature of any pragmatic process. There is no mandatory PPP or SPP. At least not for reasons of incompletism. And if we consider reasons of good utterance understanding, PPPs are neither sufficient nor necessary.

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¹⁴ For our position regarding the minimalism/contextualism debate, see Korta & Perry (2007b).

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