

lecture 04, issues in translation: assertability and implicature

phil1012 introductory logic

overview

this lecture

- issues that arise with respect to translating English sentences into PL
- first in a series of 'mini-lectures' on the issues
- assertability and implicature

learning outcomes

- after doing the relevant reading for this lecture, listening to the lecture, and attending the relevant tutorial, you will be able to:
 - explain the difference between what is said, what is implied, and what is implicated by the utterance of a sentence
 - distinguish between what is said, the proposition expressed by an utterance of a sentence in a context, and what is merely implied or implicated by an utterance of a sentence in a context

required reading

- section 6.1 of chapter 6

a little bit of philosophy of language

truth and appropriateness

- there is a distinction between **sentences** and **utterances**.
- a speaker might utter a sentence, and express a proposition, which may be true or false.
- the act of uttering a sentence is itself called an **utterance**.
- an utterance can be **appropriate** or **inappropriate**.

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- consider the following exchange:
 - you: where is the general lecture theatre?
 - me: through the main entry, across the lawn, and on the right.
 - my utterance is **true** and **appropriate**.

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- consider the following exchange:
 - you: Where is the general lecture theatre?
 - me: # in Sydney.
 - my utterance is **true** and **inappropriate**
 - in what sense was my utterance inappropriate?
 - it was uncooperative

- what are the rules governing appropriate utterances?
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- H. P. Grice:

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 p. 26)

- Grice attempted to capture the ideal of cooperative conversation with a series of maxims
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- maxims of quantity:
 - make your contribution as informative as required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
 - do not make your contribution more informative than required.
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- maxim of quality:
 - try to make your contribution one that is true.
 - do not say what you believe to be false.
 - do not say something for which you lack adequate evidence.
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- maxims of relation:
 - be relevant
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- maxim of manner:
 - be perspicuous
 - avoid ambiguity of expression
 - avoid ambiguity
 - be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)
 - be orderly
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- consider the earlier example again:
 - you: where is the general lecture theatre?
 - me: # in Sydney.
 - which maxim(s) did I violate?
 - the maxim of quantity (or relevance? or both?)
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- we distinguish between . . .
 - what is **said**
 - what is **implied**
 - what is **implicated**
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- consider another example:
 - you: Did you pass the exam?
 - me: If I didn't, I'm fool.
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- what is **said**: if I didn't pass the exam, I am a fool.
 - *P*: I passed the exam.
 - *F*: I am a fool.
 - ($\neg P \rightarrow F$)
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- what is **implied**: either it is not the case that I didn't pass the

- exam, or I am a fool.
- P : I passed the exam.
 - F : I am a fool.
 - $\neg\neg P \vee F$
 - $\neg P \rightarrow F \models \neg\neg P \vee F$
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- what is **implicated**: I passed the exam.
 - P : I passed the exam.
 - F : I am a fool.
 - P
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- there is a distinction between **conversational implicatures** and **conventional implicatures**
 - conversational implicatures follow from the assumption that the utterance is appropriate
 - conventional implicatures follow from assumptions about the norms governing particular words
 - the word 'but' in 'Jane is tall but smart' conventionally implicates a contrast between being tall and being smart
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- conversational implicatures can be **cancelled**
 - you: did you pass the exam?
 - me: if I didn't, I'm fool. so, I hope I didn't.
- no longer implicates that I passed the exam.

wrapping up

this lecture

- we looked at some important distinctions in the philosophy of language which can help us with our translations
- we are aiming, in our translations, to capture only what is said, not what is implied or implicated by an utterance

next lecture

- lecture 05, the semantics of PL