# On Translating 'What Is Said': *Tertium Comparationis* in Contrastive Semantics and Pragmatics[*]

K.M. Jaszczolt
University of Cambridge

Author's address:

Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages
University of Cambridge
Sidgwick Avenue
Cambridge CB3 9DA

kmj21@cam.ac.uk
http://www.cus.cam.ac.uk/~kmj21/

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*1. Levels of Equivalence*

This paper consists of the following parts: it (i) introduces one of the main problems of theoretical contrastive linguistics, namely the issue of the platform of comparison, (ii) postulates an adequate unit of comparison for contrastive semantics and pragmatics, (iii) discusses the controversy surrounding the semantics-pragmatics boundary and, finally, (iv) assesses the impact of this dispute on translation theory.

First, some terminological remarks are needed. It has been widely acknowledged that contrastive analysis has to comprise theoretical linguistic research on all of the levels of linguistic study, as well as psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic studies (cf. Sajavaara 1984; James 1980). The term 'contrastive analysis' stands for applied contrastive studies (henceforth: ACS) which deal with the practical consequences of differences between contrasted languages for teaching purposes, bilingual analysis or translation. The theoretical linguistic component of ACS is very important and it gave rise to theoretical contrastive studies (henceforth: TCS). TCS can be performed on the level of phonology, lexicon, syntax, semantics, pragmatics or text linguistics. Such theoretical studies deal with a universal category and the ways this universal category is realized in contrasted languages. In phonology, for example, the functioning of phonological features is contrasted (cf. Fisiak *et al*. 1978).

The main problem of TCS is how to contrast languages, i.e. against what criterion of measurement. Depending on the platform of reference called by Krzeszowski (1990: 15) 'tertium comparationis', two objects of analysis may appear either similar or different. Also, it is obvious that each level of linguistic analysis will have its own criterion of comparison. For pragmatics, it is common to contrast the illocutionary force. For example, sentences (1) and (2) can be contrasted as responses to a speech act of complimenting on one's appearance in English and in Polish.

(1)     Thank you.
(2)     To tylko stara sukienka. (It's only an old dress.)

Semantically, syntactically and lexically they hardly exhibit any similarities which would justify a comparison. But they may both constitute answers to a speech act of complimenting: thanking in English, and self-denigrating in Polish (cf. Jaszczolt 1995a, b). So, when we talk about an equivalence for example in translation, it is necessary to distinguish syntactic, semantic and pragmatic equivalence. It may well be the case that there is also an overall equivalence which is a function of these (cf. Kalisz 1981), but in this paper I intend to concentrate on semantic and pragmatic equivalence and on the difficulty with defining the unit of analysis for each level. As I

shall demonstrate, since semantics does not have a clear boundary with pragmatics but rather they overlap, the translator's decision as to whether to adopt semantic or pragmatic equivalence will not always be possible.

It has been acknowledged at least since the 1960s and Nida (1964), that 'faithful' translation means translating the author's intentions, assumptions, rather than structures and style (see Gentzler 1993, p. 58). So, since "...the *equivalence* between a text and its translation can be neither in form nor lexical meanings, but only in the *experience of text receivers*" (De Beaugrande 1980: 291), we want to know how this identity of experience is to be achieved in the multi-layered process of translation. The semantic layer alone won't do; since the meaning is often culture-bound, we need the socio-cultural layer. For instance, a Russian idiomatic greeting 'with easy steam' can only reasonably be translated as a comment 'I hope you had a good bath', and even for non-idiomatic expressions we have to resolve what situation (state, event) the sentence refers to.

Superficially, contrastive pragmatics may seem unproblematic: conversational effects should be kept constant and one should look at the contrast between the ways languages achieve these effects. Here the obvious areas of study are illocutionary forces of exclamations, differences in levels and meaning of self-assertion, differences in terms of address, and many other culture-bound phenomena. Now, in order to contrast languages on the pragmatic level, one has to decide what the equivalence of contrasted structures on the pragmatic level means. The following definition was proposed by Oleksy (1984): pragmatic equivalence holds between two expressions in $L_1$ and $L_2$ if they can be used to perform the same speech act in these two languages. All we have to do now is to keep speech acts steady and look at the sets of strategies used in $L_1$ and $L_2$ to perform these acts. The problem arises as to whether to admit indirect speech acts. As has been frequently pointed out in the pragmatic literature, the direct/indirect distinction for speech acts is untenable. Sperber and Wilson (1995: 245) give the following example:

(3)     The weather will be warmer tomorrow.
(4)     The speaker is predicting that the weather will be warmer tomorrow.

Sentence (3) can successfully function as a prediction without the speaker's intending to communicate the information in (4). Indeed, (4) need not be recovered by the hearer at all for (3) to function as a prediction. On the other hand, in (5), the act of bidding has to be communicated, either directly or by inference.

(5)     (I bid) two no trumps.

Speech acts are either institutional, social, like bidding in bridge or thanking, or performed without being recognized as such, e.g. warning, threatening, or their category can be recognized and universal, as in the case of saying, telling and asking. Also, as is well known from the collapse of the performative hypothesis and the literal force hypothesis (Levinson 1983), there is no reliable correlation between the sentence type and speech act type on the one hand, and the meaning of the performative verb and the type of speech act on the other (see also Sperber & Wilson 1995, pp. 246-247). Hence, instead of relying on speech acts, it may be more adequate to follow Sperber & Wilson and talk about the recovery of the propositional form of the speaker's utterance which is an interpretation of a mental representation of the speaker's and which is entertained with an appropriate attitude to render assertions, questions, requests, and advice (cf. Sperber & Wilson's diagram in 1995, p. 232). Also, since there is no clear-cut definition of directness, there is no one-to-one correlation between sentences and acts, even within one language. Cross-linguistically, the situation becomes more complicated due to the fact that an illocution in one culture can be a perlocution in another (cf. Wierzbicka 1991). So, the speech act is not an adequate *tertium comparationis*, we need a different unit of pragmatic equivalence.

*2. Semantic and Pragmatic Equivalence*
We can say that expressions are pragmatically equivalent if they communicate the same content. They are not necessarily also semantically equivalent. In a language in which metaphors are a common means of expression, one may use a metaphor instead of speaking literally. Here I would like to concentrate on cases of literal meaning. Grice proposed a well-known distinction between what is said and what is implicated, distinguishing truth-conditional aspects of meaning as what is said, and conventional and conversational implicatures as what is implicated (cf. the diagram in Horn 1988, p. 121). In this distinction, semantics and pragmatics overlap: there is no clear-cut boundary. Conventional implicatures, such as the meaning of contrast in 'but', the conclusion to premises in 'therefore', or overcome difficulty in 'manage', do not contribute to the truth-conditional content of sentences and yet are part of word meaning. Generalized conversational implicatures, such as enrichment from 'three' to 'exactly three', do not require context for their occurrence and are default interpretations, regarded by some as (i) semantic, e.g. in the framework of Discourse Representation Theory (Kamp & Reyle 1993) or Default Semantics (Jaszczolt 1999a, b), by others as (ii) belonging to the middle level of meaning (Levinson 1995, 2000), and (iii) are denied the default status and classified as context-dependent nonce-

inference by relevance theorists. So, they can be regarded as either semantic or pragmatic, unlike particularized conversational implicatures which are context-dependent and certainly arrived through pragmatic processes of inference.

Bearing this difficulty in mind, I suggest trying the following hypotheses:

($A_1$)    Semantic equivalence is the equivalence of *what is said*.
($A_2$)    Pragmatic equivalence is the equivalence of what is implicitly communicated.

These definitions are not very informative as they stand. Since the problem of the fuzzy boundary between semantics and pragmatics is unresolved, we are only pushing the terminological difficulty one step on to the equally problematic notions of 'what is said' and 'what is implicated'. But there is an advantage to be gained. What is said and what is implicated have been subject to extensive studies and heated debates in the last decade (Carston 1988, 1998a; Récanati 1989, 1993; Bach 1994a, b; Levinson 1995, 2000; Jaszczolt 1999a, b). The starting point to the debate is the observation that Grice seriously underestimated the role of pragmatic processes in establishing the representation of the utterance of the sentence which can be subject to the provision of truth conditions, i.e. the propositional form. In addition to reference assignment and disambiguation which he acknowledged, there are many processes of enrichment of the proposition, or patching up of the incomplete propositional form, which have to be performed in order to arrive at the relevant, truth-evaluable representation. For example, the sentential connective 'and' can be enriched to include the indication of temporal sequence or causal consequence and this enrichment is relevant to the truth conditions of the proposition, which can be tested, for example, by placing the sentences in the scope of logical operators such as negation or implication. I shall return to the tests for contributions to truth conditions in Section 6. Suffice it to say that *what is said* and *what is implicated* seem to constitute a promising departure for the improvements on the definitions of semantic and pragmatic equivalence in translation.

To sum up, there have been various proposals of how to draw the boundary between what is said and what is communicated. The main standpoints can be summarized as follows:

(i)     Some sentences are semantically ambiguous. This traditional view was advocated, among others, by Russell.

(ii)    There is no semantic ambiguity. The differences in meaning between the two (or more) readings can be attributed to implicated information.

This is Grice's postulate of unitary semantics complemented with conversational implicatures.

(iii)    There is no semantic ambiguity and the differences in meaning belong to what is said rather than what is implicated. Semantics is underspecified as to these aspects of meaning. The process of supplementing the semantic form with pragmatic information is called completion (saturation) and expansion (strengthening; cf. Bach 1994a, b; Récanati 1989).

(iv)    There is no semantic ambiguity, semantics is underspecified, but the differences in meaning belong to the middle level located between what is said and what is implicated. The main proponent of this view is Levinson (e.g. 1995, 2000) and the idea is that there are default meanings arrived at through the three heuristics, Quantity, Informativeness and Manner, corresponding to his re-arrangement of Grice's maxims of conversation.

In addition, in my other work (e.g. Jaszczolt 1997, 1998a, b, c, 1999a, b, 2000 and especially *forthcoming*), I presented arguments against both underspecification and ambiguity positions by demonstrating that within the frameworks that espouse the dynamic approach to meaning construction, such as Discourse Representation Theory (henceforth: DRT, Kamp and Reyle 1993) or File Change Semantics (Heim 1988), a non-ambiguous interpretation ensues without the need for the level of underspecified semantics. In other words, I demonstrated that the term 'underspecification' has been grossly overused and its application should be confined to the context of ambiguous logic (see van Deemter 1998).[1] Instead, there are default representations arrived at throught he interaction of the propositional form with the intentions in communication. Hence, the fifth option is the

(v)    Default Semantics.

In this paper, I shall put the differences between (iii), (iv) and (v) aside and examine how the fact that pragmatic processes contribute to the proposaitional representation affects the definitions of semantic and pragmatic equivalence.

As a result of this multitude of standpoints, instead of talking directly of the semantics/pragmatics boundary, I shall now attempt to delineate what is said and what

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[1]Ambiguous logic is a logic for underspecified representations, used for the purpose of demonstrating to what extent the system has to disambiguate the representation for logical reasoning to proceed. Disambiguation stops as soon as the representation becomes sufficiently specific to act in further reasoning.

is implicitly communicated. What is said is a proposition, an entity which is either true or false. Hence, we can try the following:

(A'$_1$)   Two sentences are semantically equivalent if they correspond to the same proposition.

(A'$_2$)   Two sentences are pragmatically equivalent if they render the same set of implicatures, triggered by rules of conversational inference[2].

'Corresponding to' the same proposition can be investigated by comparing the propositional form and, usually, the truth conditions.[3] A'$_2$ is obviously context-dependent. But, so is A'$_1$. Firstly, there are intensional contexts such as belief contexts ('A believes that B φs.') in which the mode of presentation of the referent contributes to the truth conditions (cf. Schiffer 1992, Jaszczolt 1998a). Secondly, not all sentences express full propositions, and not all propositions expressed by sentences are sufficiently informative to be taken as what is said without enrichment, to quote only (6) and (7).

(6)     Steel isn't strong enough      [for what?].
(7)     I haven't eaten                [since when?].

(from Bach 1994a: 268). Sentence (6) does not express a complete proposition, although syntactically it is complete, it has a complete logical form (which is the output of grammatical analysis). In order to provide truth conditions, an essential pre-condition has to be fulfilled: we have to have a proposition, a unit to which we can assign truth conditions. Hence, we have to *complete* (6) by stating what it is that steel is not strong enough for.

Sentence (7) is different: it expresses a complete proposition, but it is a proposition which is blatantly false and dubious as a candidate for what the speaker intended to communicate. Assigning truth conditions to (7) is unproblematic: the proposition is true just in case there is no time prior to the time of the utterance when the speaker (here we need reference assignment to the indexical expression 'I') ate. But just as it is easy, so it is pointless to do so. Rather, we should infer the speaker's assumptions first, expand the proposition to make it include all contextually salient information pertaining to this particular proposition, and only then assess the expanded proposition as to what would make it true or false. Logical form as the

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[2] Be it Gricean, neo-Gricean, or relevance-theoretic.

[3] 'Correspond to' is left deliberately vague: the proposition expressed by the sentence may have to be enriched to arrive at what is said. 'Usually' is intended as a disclaimer to account for tautologies: analytic sentences (in the wide sense) are always true.

output of syntactic rules will not suffice to draw the boundary between semantic and pragmatic equivalence.

So, all in all, I shall talk about *what is said* instead and its pragmatic constituents (or: 'what is implicitly stated') – completing and expanding, respectively, the logical form of the sentence.[4] In order to preserve the definition of semantic equivalence in $A_1$, one has to resolve these difficulties of enrichment and completion. $A_1$ is worth preserving because there does not seem to be a more adequate definition of sentence meaning than that provided by truth-conditional semantics. So, what is said is partly semantic and partly pragmatic, as is what is implicated: implicatures have their own logical forms and hence their own semantics, but they are the product of pragmatic processes of inference.

*3. Cultural Rationalism*

Now, in order to accept $A_1$ and $A_2$ we need to specify one further theoretical commitment. Namely, we accept that *propositions* are recognizable cross-culturally, that is, that it is not the case that people of different cultures live in different worlds. In other words, we accept cultural rationalism (and realism) against cultural relativism and in this way give pragmatic equivalence access to a universally, cross-culturally valid theory of implicature of any post-Gricean flavour. But this commitment is not driven by the need to ease the task of defining pragmatic equivalence, this move would be circular. The justification comes from the strength of the independent arguments for realism. Presenting them is the task to which I shall now turn.

At first glance, it may seem that relativity is the dominant orientation in linguistics, brought to the fore by cognitivists (e.g. Lakoff 1987), standing in direct opposition to universalism. Sperber (1985, 1996, 1997) takes universalism and cultural relativism further. He approaches culture as follows:

"Ideas can be transmitted, and, by being transmitted from one person to another, they may even propagate. Some ideas – religious beliefs, cooking recipes, or scientific hypotheses, for instance – propagate so effectively that, in different versions, they may end up durably invading whole populations. Culture is made up, first and foremost, of such contagious ideas."                    Sperber (1996: 1)

So, in order to explain culture, one has to explain how it happens that some ideas are 'contagious'. This enterprise is dubbed by Sperber (1996: 1) an 'epidemiology of representations'. During the process of transmission, the original information is affected by the receiver's memory and set of assumptions. In other words,

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[4] The logical form is derived through linguistic semantics. See Récanati 1989, Carston 1988, 1998a, b.

communication normally slightly transforms the message. Now, explaining cultural beliefs boils down to explaining the distribution of ideas in population, explaining how individual processes of adopting an idea contribute to its dissemination. It is essentially a Darwinian approach, linked to these of Cavalli-Sforza and Dawkins, where the Darwinian idea of selection is applied to culture. Sperber calls it a 'naturalistic approach' because social issues are approached through the study of cognition, or through psychological processes of individuals who combine to form a society.

Ideas propagate and change, sometimes they are understood, sometimes misunderstood or half-grasped. Since memory and communication transform original ideas, the ideas are stored as *representations of the world or of the speaker's representations*[5]. In other words,

"Social-cultural phenomena are (...) ecological patterns of psychological phenomena. Sociological facts are defined in terms of psychological facts, but do not reduce to them."                                                    Sperber (1996: 31).

The idea is that people have representations of situations in the form of memory, belief, or intention. Representations can also be public – for example written texts whose function is communication are such public representations.

Now, some of these representations are repeated, communicated more often than others and become cultural representations of a social group. These are shared beliefs, norms, myths, techniques, or classifications. Such representations are conveyed by producing another representation, which is either a *description* or an *interpretation* of the original representation (cf. the diagram in Sperber & Wilson 1985, p. 232). Interpretation occurs when, for example, the receiver has to expand on the content of some tribal belief in order to make it understandable.

In other words, we make partial and often speculative interpretations in order to understand others, especially representatives of different cultures. Then we attribute beliefs, desires and intentions to people or communities in a way which makes them look rational. And that is why we need interpretations:

"The anthropologist must (...) go beyond mere translation: only then can she hope to understand what she hears, and thus be genuinely able to translate it. She must speculate, synthesize, reconceptualize."                          Sperber (1996: 39).

Putting aside the status of the modal verbs in the quotation, we can summarize Sperber's proposal as follows. To understand cultural phenomena, the observer/hearer

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[5] So, in discussing culture we have to access cognitive psychology.

can either (i) generalize over them through making an interpretation of one phenomenon wider and wider, applicable to other phenomena; (ii) look for common patterns, themes or relations between these patterns in a structuralist manner; (iii) show how a cultural phenomenon is beneficial for the group by way of a functional explanation, or (iv) answer the question why some representations are more successful than others and become shared, cultural representations, i.e. undergo epidemiology of representations (cf. Sperber 1996, p. 50).

What is of interest for the search for a translation equivalence is the idea that representations are not reproductions of what was said but rather construction by the hearer of his/her own thoughts which are normally related rather closely to the thoughts represented by what is said (cf. Sperber 1996, p. 58). So, if a tribesman strives to understand a representative of a different culture, he/she will store some of the representations in a semi-understood way, hoping to fill them in with the intended meaning at a later stage. For example, if a tribesman says that there are dragons in the woods, we take this proposition literally and assume that it is stored in the native's memory not in a fully decomposed way but rather semi-propositionally, as a semi-understood idea, as a belief about some representation, rather than about a perceptually verifiable fact. We do that rather than jumping to the conclusion that the worlds of the two cultures are incompatible. It is a metarepresentation, a representation of someone else's representation. Such rationalism allows for comparing propositions cross-culturally.

Rationalism acquires additional support from Sperber's account of concept formation which is compatible with epidemiology:

"...we have an innate disposition to develop concepts according to certain schemas. We have different schemas for different domains: our concepts of living kinds tend to be taxonomic; our concepts of artefacts tend to be characterized in terms of function; our concepts of colour tend to be centred on focal hues; and so on. Concepts which conform to these schemas are easily internalized and remembered. Let us call them *basic concepts*. A large body of basic concepts is found in every language. Of course, basic concepts differ from one language to another, but they do not differ very much. The basic concepts of another language tend to be comparatively easy to grasp, learn and translate."                                      Sperber (1996: 69).

So, there are universal schemas for basic concepts, rules for forming representations and universal patterns of their spread. The point of difficulty for delimiting pragmatic equivalence seems to be located in assessing the *type* of representation formed by the hearer.

Now, we can summarize Sperber's account by saying that humans can represent not only the sensory input and experience, but also someone else's and their own representations and mental states. This is called *metarepresenting* and allows us to have, for example, an attitude of disbelief or doubt towards a representation. Metarepresenting also allows us to store representations which are not  fully understood. Some such half-understood ideas are not steps towards full understanding but rather create mysteries which spread in the community. Representations which fit best with other mental representations, and which *cannot* be interpreted, are most successful. They lead to what we see as irrational cultural beliefs. But, when we consider them to be semi-understood ideas, then they are only apparently irrational (cf. Sperber 1996, p. 73).

Sperber (1985, p. 35) gives the following example. A tribesman of Southern Ethiopia comes to Sperber and asks him to kill a dragon whose heart is made of gold, who has a horn on his neck, is golden all over and lives somewhere nearby. Sperber believes the tribesman to be a sensible, respectable person, but how would a sensible person believe that there was a dragon living within walking distance? This is an example of an apparently irrational belief. Many anthropologists would say that people of different cultures live in different worlds, that beliefs in dragons may appear rational to some cultures; others advocate symbolism. Sperber rejects these views. Instead, he believes in rationalism. He says that people can have various types and degrees of commitment to beliefs -- beliefs are not all held in the same way, and so the criteria of rationality can also differ. (As if to confirm the claim by intuitions, Sperber's immediate response was saying apprehensively that he hasn't got a gun!)

Belief has normally been regarded, at least since Russell, as a type of propositional attitude, an attitude to an entity which is either true or false. But:

"...the objects of our 'propositional attitudes', the ideas we hold or otherwise entertain, are not always strictly propositional in character. Just as it would be mistaken to define 'speaking' as 'uttering *sentences*', it is mistaken, I suggest, to define thinking in terms of attitudes *to propositions*: many of our utterances do not match sentences but semi-grammatical strings; similarly, many of our thoughts are what we might call semi-propositional, they approximate but do not achieve propositionality. (...) [I]f it were true that the objects of belief necessarily were propositions, then we could only believe ideas which we fully understand. I am arguing that we can also hold as beliefs incompletely understood ideas."                               Sperber (1985: 51),

– such as the belief about a golden dragon. So, there are propositional representations which correspond to fully understood ideas, and semi-propositional representations

which correspond to ideas which are not fully understood. These are conceptual representations which do not identify a unique proposition – some concepts are missing. Such semi-propositional representations are useful for storing information which is not fully understood. These metarepresentations are not factual beliefs, but representational beliefs. Hence, there are four potential classes of beliefs: factual beliefs with propositional content which are rational, observation-based; factual beliefs with semi-propositional content which do not normally occur; representational beliefs with propositional content (metarepresentations, including also scientific assumptions not fully believed); and finally representational beliefs with semi-propositional content, such as religious beliefs, mysteries (cf. Sperber 1985, p. 58). Cultural beliefs are such representational beliefs.

Including its recent developments, Sperber's explanation of cross-cultural differences and similarities is as follows: there are two types of beliefs, intuitive (factual) and reflective (representational)[6]. Intuitive beliefs are based on innate, universal mechanisms, based on perception and inference, and hence are similar across cultures. Reflective beliefs are not factual, not basic, they are, so to speak, 'in quotes': they are believed because they are embedded in intuitive beliefs. They may be half-understood and leading either to scientific knowledge or to mysteries, often religious. These mysterious beliefs are the ones that vary cross-culturally and may even appear irrational from another culture's point of view (cf. Sperber 1996, pp. 91-92). In other words,

"...explaining cultural beliefs, whether intuitive or reflective, and if reflective, whether half-understood or fully understood, involves looking at two things: how they are cognized by individuals and how they are communicated within a group; or to put it in the form of a slogan: Culture is the precipitate of cognition and communication in a human population."                                                         Sperber (1996: 97).

This discussion is particularly relevant for our study of semantic and pragmatics equivalences as it demonstrates clearly the need to look at human behaviour, including verbal behaviour, in the context of an anthropological culture to which it belongs. It demonstrates that there are types of beliefs which, when externalized, cannot be easily interpreted by members of other communities (here also linguistic communities) because they are metarepresentations. Although it does not seem to be true that people of different cultures live in different worlds, we have to know something about the culture to be able to classify and represent beliefs.

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[6] For the new distinction into intuitive and reflective beliefs see Sperber 1996, 1997.

We can suggest tentatively at this stage that when a belief is semi-propositional, and *a fortiori* the sentence uttered does not have the backing of a proposition, the translator's task is not to elaborate on the degree of awareness of the proposition; this is the anthropologist's task. The translator has to substitute a sentence in the target language which is a successful representative of this proposition, whether it is understood fully or partially by the speaker[7] – unless culture-specific implicatures intervene. This is the next problem to be discussed.

*4. What Is Said*

As can be seen from the discussion in Section 3, in order to arrive at what is said, world knowledge and the assumption of cultural rationalism are required more than a detailed insight into the anthropological culture of the speaker: what is said is available cross-culturally. Semi-propositional beliefs can immediately strike the hearer as problematic, as in the case of the belief in golden dragons, but they are equally puzzling for the holder of the belief and the hearer of the expression of belief. So, the best strategy seems to be to preserve what is said unless the rule $A'_2$ dictates otherwise.

The next step is to delimit what is said. There is no consensus regarding its scope. The first difficulty is engendered by the fact that people often speak loosely, non-literally, because it is more efficient to do so; such utterances require less processing effort on the part of the hearer. For example, a mother assures a child who cut his finger:

(8)    You are not going to die, Peter.

(from Bach 1994a: 267). The meaning of this proposition is that there is no time following the time of utterance at which the addressee will die. This proposition is obviously false. What was communicated instead was an expanded proposition (9).

(9)    You are not going to die from this cut, Peter.

The mother did not say (9) because it was obvious. So, did what she said differ from what she meant, or did she *say* that Peter was not going to die from this wound? Here opinions differ. While some pragmaticists claim that what was *said* was the expanded proposition with its pragmatic constituents (cf. Récanati 1989), others maintain that what was said was the minimal proposition and the mother was speaking loosely,

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[7] For criticism see Récanati (1997: 93): "Sperber's claim concerning semi-propositionality can (...) be constructed as a claim concerning the epistemical state of the user, rather than a claim about semantic content." In other words, underdetermination is epistemic rather than semantic.

non-literally (Bach 1994a, b). Similarly, (7) is used non-literally. (7) and (8) have literal meaning and express propositions with clear truth conditions: that the speaker has never eaten and that the boy is immortal, respectively. This is the *minimal proposition*, and from its obvious falsehood it is clear that the speaker meant instead an *expanded proposition*. Similarly, when a proposition is very obviously true, the speaker is taken to mean an expansion of it, as in (10) and (11).

(10)    The park is some distance from where I live.
(11)    It will take us some time to get there.

(from Carston 1988: 164). The expansions are, respectively, 'a rather long way away' and 'a rather long time'. Now, all this additional information is *not* in the form of additional propositions but rather it is an expansion of the original proposition, and this information contributes to the truth conditions. It is then of the level of semantic equivalence.

Examples (7) and (8) have to be kept apart from (6). Sentence (6) is different. This sentence does not have clear truth conditions, it does not express a complete proposition. It is semantically general, underdetermined. The meaning of this sentence is only a so-called *propositional radical* which requires completion to become a full proposition: 'strong enough for what?'. Here opinions vary again as to what the speaker said.[8] Some pragmaticists claim that what is said includes the pragmatic completion (cf. Récanati 1989). For example, (6) expresses (12).

(12)    Steel isn't strong enough for spare parts for this machine.

Others maintain that what is said is the propositional radical, and the completion is *meant*, implicit in what is said (cf. Bach 1994a, b). Grice did not talk about these processes of expansion and completion, although they require precisely the same pragmatic processes as these involved in implicatures.

Bach (1994a: 270) observes that "...there is no *line* to be drawn between what is said and what is implicated. Instead, there is considerable middle ground between them." The middle ground consists of implicitly stating the completions and expansions (a.k.a. saturation and strengthening, Récanati 1989). Relevance theorists subsume this middle ground under explicature – the proposition expressed, the elaboration of the logical form of the sentence.[9] But this decision is only theoretical,

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[8] Experiments have been performed concerning speakers' intuitions as to what is said but so far they have been inconclusive: two sets of experiments led to opposite results. See Gibbs & Moise 1997, Nicolle & Clark 1999.

[9] Récanati calls it 'pragmatic constituents of what is said'.

dictated by the fact that all this information contributes to the truth conditions of the original proposition. This enriched proposition is called by Bach *impliciture*:

"Implicitures go beyond what is said, but unlike implicatures, which are additional propositions external to what is said, implicitures are built out of what is said."

Bach (1994a: 273).

Bach's argument against calling implicitures part of what is said is as follows. (7) uttered by a robot in a science-fiction story can mean that there is no time prior to the time of utterance at which the speaker ate. So, the minimal, *not* the expanded proposition is here what is said. Hence, *what is said* would have to differ from one situation to another, which is methodologically unsatisfactory. If we accept that *what is said* is uniformly the expanded proposition, then what is meant would have to be less than what is said, which is counterintuitive. So, the remaining option is that there are pragmatic aspects of what is said, but these are implicit in what is said.

Be that as it may, what is of interest here is the coarsely-grained, broad notion of what is said. Whatever contributes to the proposition expressed rather than constituting a separate proposition (implicature) is the domain of what is said and of truth-conditional semantics. Naturally, such embellishments of the original proposition can be endless. When the intuitively plausible proposition is reached, we say that this truth-conditionally relevant embellishment is completed.[10]

Let us take stock. The problems with semantic equivalence based on sentence meaning and the notion of what is said are three-fold: (i) the proposition expressed by the speaker's utterance of a sentence is obviously uninformative and obviously true or blatantly false, which triggers the search for an enriched proposition that would be a better candidate for what the speaker intended to convey; (ii) the sentence uttered by the speaker does not correspond to a full proposition and hence has to be completed; and (iii) the sentence uttered by the speaker, although informative, does not correspond to an attributable proposition in either the literal or non-literal interpretation. The hearer concludes that the speaker holds a semi-propositional, representational belief (cf. Sperber 1985, table on p. 58).

It seems that sentences falling under (iii) have to be rendered in translation by adhering to semantic equivalence (as usual, unless $A'_2$ intervenes). It will be equally diaphanous to the reader of the source text as to the reader of the target text that the corresponding belief is semi-propositional: this is the gain from accepting cultural rationalism.

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[10] Here Carston (1988) refers to the principle of relevance in establishing the upper boundary on the development of the logical form of the sentence.

*5. Which Equivalence?*

Coming back to the definition of semantic equivalence in translation, we want to ensure that *what is said* is preserved. Hence, if it is not obvious to the addressee of the translation that (8) communicates an expanded proposition, this expansion should be explicitly stated (and this applies both to spoken and written discourse). The test can be the obvious falsehood or the blatant truth of the literal meaning. Similarly with propositional radicals, if the completion is not obvious in the translation whereas it is obvious in the original discourse, it has to be explicitly stated. Semi-propositional beliefs have propositional form of the corresponding sentences which translates across cultures and hence can be left unattended to: a speaker who holds a semi-propositional belief communicates a proposition willingly, knowing that it does not correspond to a propositional belief but rather to a belief in something being the case where this 'something' is stored for possible future understanding.

The solution would be simple indeed if not for implicatures. By saying (8) the speaker communicates a range of implicatures, the most obvious ones being "There is no need to worry", "The wound is not serious", "The wound will heal quickly", etc. Attaining pragmatic equivalence requires preserving these obvious implicatures. And in order to do so, the semantic equivalence may have to be compromised: sentence (8) may have to be replaced with (13) or another set phrase dictated by particular socio-cultural, linguistic conventions.

(13)    It's not a big deal, Peter.

So, the translator has to juggle these two levels of equivalence.

Gutt (1991), who advocates the view that translation is part of communication, observes that translation in communication theory has normally been treated through the 'code model' of communication, where communication is a matter of encoding and decoding messages. But the subsequent suggestion of Sperber & Wilson's (1995) that inference is a more essential element of communication should, according to Gutt, percolate to translation theory (cf. Gutt 1991, pp. 21-22). The idea is, however, not completely new. We can trace it back to Nida (1964, Nida & Taber 1969) who developed the notion of *dynamic equivalence*:

"Dynamic equivalence is (...) to be defined in terms of the degree to which the receptors of the message in the receptor language respond to it in substantially the same manner as the receptors in the source language. This response can never be identical, for the cultural and historical settings are too different, but there should be a

high degree of equivalence of response, or the translation will have failed to accomplish its purpose."                                      Nida & Taber (1969: 24).

This was applied to Bible translation but seems to be widely applicable.

Coming back to the standpoints on the what is said/what is communicated debate, it seems that the Default Semantics (option (v)) gains some support from the theory and practice of translation in that when the inferences are obvious, they need not be translated. And being obvious includes being natural, primary, unmarked. It has to be borne in mind in the translating exercise is that not all inferences in conversation (or written text) are pragmatic. There are default interpretations, the level of so-called utterance-type meaning, located between sentence meaning and utterance-token meaning:

"This third layer is a level of systematic pragmatic inference based *not* on direct computations about speaker-intentions, but rather on *general expectations about how language is normally used*. These expectations give rise to presumptions, default inferences, about both content and force..."          Levinson (1995: 93).

Hence, some expansions and completions may proceed through a default interpretation, guaranteed by socio-cultural and linguistic conventions and the phenomenon of pragmatic constituents is not as uniform as it would appear to be: sometimes we need pragmatic processes, sometimes conventions and defaults, and sometimes merely semantics to arrive at what is said. As I argue elsewhere (Jaszczolt 1997, 1999a, b), the propositional representation can combine with the default senses guaranteed by the default presence of various types of intentions in communication.

Now, the problem arises as to whether the translator should supply the contextual assumptions if it is obvious that the reader will lack them. Nida & Taber (1969, p. 205) claim that only linguistically implicit information from the original can be made explicit. As we would say now, it is probably the information which can be recovered through maxims of conversation. Hence, contextual assumptions and implications are largely excluded when they pertain to cultural information. Other theorists allow for the inclusion of cultural information (see Gutt 1991, p. 81). As Gutt (1991: 94) says, following relevance theory, a translation "...should convey to the receptors all and only those explicatures and implicatures that the original was intended to convey." But this is untenable: conveying the same message will depend on the context and inferences, and these cannot be kept steady (cf. Gutt 1991, p. 99). At best, we can aim at an approximation.

All in all, achieving complete interpretive resemblance may not be attainable, or at least there may not be a steadfast rule as to how to achieve it. Devices may have to be changed even within one text (cf. Gutt 1991, pp. 185-186). In general, if translation aims at successful communication, we may not be able to distinguish semantic and pragmatic equivalence but only communicative and cognitive. The boundary may only be constituted by the distinction between these 'implicatures' that can be called expansions and completions of the original proposition, and genuine implicatures which have their own logical forms. Since implicatures force a decision as to whether to make them explicit or hope they will be derived, there may be a boundary, if implicatures that pertain to expansion and completion are treated as a separate phenomenon of impliciture, explicature, or pragmatic constituents of what is said, in other words: as the domain of semantics. And this is the idea I followed in this paper. If translation is communication, then a theory of communication will do for defining equivalence. That is why we have to distinguish explicit from implicit communication: what is said and what is implicated. This is how we can assess motivations for choices e.g. between direct and indirect translation. 'Direct' means here literal, preserving not only meaning, but also the way it was expressed (cf. Gutt 1991, p. 125); 'indirect' means free translation.

The idea that translation is communication and includes what is said and what is implicated has very respectable roots in the philosophy of language, notably in the work of Rudolf Carnap, dating back to the 1940s. Carnap analysed semantic meaning as follows: intralingually, two sentences are equivalent if both are true or both are not true, and the individual expressions must stand for the same thing to be equivalent (Carnap 1942, 1947). Equivalence can be either material, where there is equivalence of objects and facts, or logical, where the truth of the sentence can be deduced from the semantic rules. We also need the equivalence of intensions, i.e. the way of thinking about objects and events, not only the equivalence of events. For this stronger equivalence the identity of structure is required, i.e. intensional isomorphism. For example, 'three' and 'the square root of nine' are L-equivalent but do not have the same intensional structure. Carnap's approach failed because it was behaviouristic: he defined mental attitudes such as belief that $p$ as dispositions to assent to sentences intensionally isomorphic with $p$, which is obviously inadequate. But this is how intensions gave rise to possible worlds and to contemporary semantics: there are intensional contexts in which the identity of truth conditions will not guarantee semantic equivalence, such as belief and other propositional attitude contexts. But this is a topic for a different occasion (see Jaszczolt 1997, 1998a, c, 1999b).

*6. Intuitions and 'What Is Said'*

Let us come back to the fuzziness of the boundary between semantics and pragmatics. The category of semantic underdetermination, sentences expressing propositional radicals, is somewhat eclectic. Examples (14) and (15) quoted after Bach (1994a) do not seem to be clearly underdeterminate, as opposed to (16) which is very obviously incomplete.

(14)　?She is leaving　　　[from where?]
(15)　?She wants a taxi　　[to do what with?]
(16)　I am too tired　[to do what?]

The matter would be easier to handle if all propositional radicals had slots in their syntactic representation to be filled, as in the case of ellipsis in (17).

(17)　Bill wants pie for dessert and Bob ø pudding ø.

(from Bach 1994a: 281). Also, the elided material in (17) can be easily recovered, unlike in the case of underdetermination in (14)-(16). Similarly, in the case of indexicals, there is a slot for reference assignment as in (18).

(18)　*I* am happy.

Propositional radicals do not have such syntactic gaps. The syntactic forms are complete and the logical forms are incomplete (cf. Bach 1994a, p. 283). Hence, completion is largely arbitrary.

　　　Coming back to the Gricean distinction between semantics and pragmatics (see Horn's diagram in 1988, p. 121), its oversimplification is obvious. According to Grice, the propositional form results from the conventional meaning of the sentence, and disambiguation and reference assignment to referring expressions. But as we can see from Bach's, Récanati's and Carston's examples, propositions may also require expanding or completing. And this resulting proposition differs from implicatures which are independent from it functionally and logically.

　　　It remains to ask about the scope of this contribution of pragmatic processes to what is said. Even the meaning of the connective 'and' can be regarded as partly arrived at through such an enrichment where 'and' is temporal or consequential, as demonstrated in the contrast between (19) and (20) on the one hand, and (21) and (22) on the other.

(19)　They got married and had a baby.

(20)     They had a baby and got married.
(21)     2 + 2 = 4
(22)     I like cheese and wine.

The order of conjuncts is free in (21) and (22), but it is fixed in (19) and (20) where 'and' reads as 'and then'. Changing the order changes the truth conditions, as can be tested by (i) the functional independence principle mentioned above or by (ii) embedding the sentences in the scope of logical operators such as negation and implication ('if...then'):

(23)     If the old king died of a heart attack and a republic was declared Sam will be
         happy, but if a republic was declared and the old king died of a heart attack,
         Sam will be unhappy.

(cf. Cohen 1971, p. 54; Carston 1988, p. 172).

These tests of functional independence and scope do not always work. It has been proposed (Récanati 1989) that what is said should be delimited on an intuitive basis instead. Récanati agrees with Grice that postulating semantic ambiguity is methodologically unsatisfactory and instead we should allow for pragmatic processes to contribute to the semantic representation of the utterance. This is what came to be known as the principle of Modified Occam's Razor. But he says that we can only tell whether pragmatic information is necessary for what is said if we already *know* what is said. And this is circular. Instead, what is said is determined intuitively:

"In deciding whether a pragmatically determined aspect of utterance meaning is part of what is said, that is, in making a decision concerning what is said, we should always try to preserve our pre-theoretic intuitions on the matter."

Récanati (1989: 106).

He calls this suggestion the Availability Principle. What is said is consciously accessible, we appeal to common sense to determine it. Generalized conversational implicatures are subsumed under what is said: numerals are strengthened from the meaning 'at least *n*' to 'exactly *n*' and disjunction is strengthened from inclusive to exclusive 'or'.

All in all, there are various ways of delimiting what is said and hence delimiting the unit of semantic equivalence in translation. Now, the choice as to whether to follow semantic, pragmatic, syntactic or stylistic equivalence can perhaps never be resolved; it is widely acknowledged that the preferences may change even

within one text. But delimiting *tertium comparationis*, the platform of reference, is a necessary pre-condition for making such choices.

## 7. Concluding Remarks

As is well known, some philosophers of language claim that objective translation is impossible. Quine (1960) makes translation dependent on a 'translation scheme' or a theory[11]. But it has been widely accepted that propositions, units of meaning, are language-independent. So, they constitute, in our terms, *tertia comparationes*, a universal semantic category, realized as sentences of particular languages. Sentences have their own logical forms which may require further development into a full propositional form. This propositional form is the unit of semantic equivalence in translation. When the aim is to preserve communicative equivalence, the decisions may have to be made as to whether it is best done by preserving the semantic or pragmatic equivalence, the first relying on the syntactic equivalence and sameness of logical form.

Semantic equivalence is not attainable for the comparison of grammatical constructions. It has to be text-bound rather than systematic (involving the comparison of grammatical and lexical systems, cf. Krzeszowski 1989, Jaszczolt 1995a, p. 2), just as semantics has to incorporate the pragmatic constituents of what is said. It was also suggested that preserving semantic and pragmatic equivalence may not be compatible: the decision has to be made as translation progresses. This approach is taken to be applicable both to spoken and written discourse.

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[11] "...manuals for translating one language into another can be set up in divergent ways, all compatible with the totality of speech dispositions, yet incompatible with one another."     Quine (1960: 27).

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