Reply to Richard and Reimer

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1. Reply to Richard

We begin our discussion of Richard by comparing his and our aims. Richard argues for and begins to develop an account of a connection between the semantic content of (an utterance of) a sentence and correct indirect reports of it. He submits that by doing so he refutes us, but that's just not so. We never challenged the existence of every such connection. Surely there is *some* connection (probably many). Our paper attempts to show that one alleged connection does not obtain. We articulated two central goals, one specific (1), and one more general (2).

(1) We cite a number of philosophers who posit a connection between semantic theory and indirect reporting. We try to show their claims mistaken, and locate the source of the mistakes in a failure to attend to our actual indirect reporting practices.

(2) Our more general aim can be put either as (2.1) or as (2.2).

(2.1) Intuitions about correct indirect reports do not provide untainted, pre-theoretic evidence for a semantic theory, nor do they provide the starting point for such theories.

(2.2) There is no complete overlap between technical terms semanticists employ and the English verb 'say' (or related locutions).

Richard seems to agree with both (1) and (2). He clearly grants our specific criticisms (he goes further in calling the views we criticize 'silly'), and his own augmented version of MA supports both (2.1) and (2.2). To see this is so, notice that Richard constrains an adequate semantic theory to render MR1 true. Call his adequacy condition on a semantic theory (R). (R) imposes the following constraint on a semantic theory E for a natural language.

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> If u is an utterance of sentence S in context c, I is a non-extensionalized indirect report of S also in L, u_1 is an utterance of I in context c_1, v_1 is the semantic value E assigns to the complement clause of u_1 in c_1, and v_2 is the semantic value E assigns to u in c, then v_1 and v_2 must be related as follows: either v_1 and v_2 are DET related, or v_2 is an implicature of u.

To constrain different components of a semantic theory to relate to each other in a specific way (the components being the semantic values of utterances of indirect reports, on the one hand, and the semantic values of all utterances, on the other) cannot assist anyone who seeks untainted data or an intuitive beginning. Nor will (R) enlighten us as to how to get a semantic programme started, i.e. how to find the semantic values of the components. Richard's (R) therefore supports our bold conjecture that no account of indirect speech will breathe virgin air into the smoke-filled backrooms of semantic theorizing.

Richard's aim is to:

> sketch the beginnings of a case that what a sentence can be used to say is in *some* sense (partially) determined by what it literally says. Each of the modifications to (MR) which we made involves a 'process'— which underlies conversational implicature, that which takes us from p to the q's such that p DET q—such that if S literally says p and the process in question may be applied to p to yield q, then S may be used to say q. (p. 613)

This is very much in the spirit of our paper. We classified various examples according to just such procedures, but we didn't claim that these could be used to provide both necessary and sufficient conditions for indirect reports. We don't think Richard's attempt so to use them is successful. And when we begin to canvass the defeats it's natural to conclude we simply are not dealing with the sort of phenomenon that will lend itself to even a long untidy exhaustive list of disjunctive necessary and sufficient conditions.

There is also what must be only an apparent problem with Richard's discussion. Initially, he presents MR1, as a necessary condition on correct indirect reports, but when he summarizes MR in the passage cited above, he seems to be treating it as a sufficient condition. We will discuss only the version under which it is a necessary condition.[1] To see that MR is not necessary, consider the following cases.

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[1]   It's obvious that MR1 doesn't work as a sufficient condition: we give that argument in our paper.

1.2 First Example: Pragmatic Features Incorporated into Indirect Reports

Many of our examples incorporate what we loosely called 'non-semantic features' of an utterance into reports of that utterance. Richard wants to treat all such non-semantic features as implicatures. That won't work. Consider (1).

> (1)   At 11:05 p.m. I put on a white shirt, a blue Yojhi Yamamoto suit, dark socks and my brown Bruno Magli shoes.

It is easy to imagine contexts in which (2) would be a correct report of an utterance of (1).

> (2)   He said that he dressed up in some fancy clothes late in the evening.

Let p be the proposition expressed by some utterance of (1), and q be the proposition expressed by the complement clause in an utterance of (2). q is not an extensionalization of (2), and it is not DET related to p. (We don't have a full account of Richard's DET relation, but based what he says there is no indication that p DET's q.) Nor need q be an implicature of the utterance of (1). We don't know which theory of implicatures Richard has in mind, but if it is Gricean, then an implicature must be something the speaker intended her audience to work out. To conversationally implicate that q, the speaker must, for starters, intend her audience to figure out that she can only be observing the conversational maxims and the Principle of Cooperation on the assumption that she thinks that q.

No such assumption about (1) is needed in order to accept (2) as a correct report of (1). (1) could be uttered to a police officer with no prior knowledge of, or interest in, fancy clothing (if so, the speaker would not implicate q). (2), on the other hand, could be uttered in a context where the quality of clothing was important.

There is a good reason why implicatures are not the sole non-semantic features that can affect indirect reporting. Implicatures are relativized to *the audience of the utterance*, the background knowledge and context they share with the speaker. Indirect reports, on the other hand, are often made by someone not of that original audience or to a new audience with different expectations and background knowledge, and in a radically different context.

By varying the background knowledge, and the context of the reporter and his audience, it is easy to imagine contexts under which (2.1)–(2.3) are correct reports of (1).

> (2.1)   He said that he changed his clothes right after 11 (said in a context where it is shared knowledge that he was wearing a different set of clothes before 11).

(2.2)   He said that he stopped exposing himself to the neighbours right after 11 (said in a context where it is common knowledge that he was standing naked in front of his window before 11).

(2.3)   He said that he gave the sign at 11:05 (said in a context where it is common knowledge that putting on the brown Bruno Magli shoes is a sign).

We venture another bold conjecture: there is no set of rules that captures the non-semantic features to which indirect reports are sensitive.

1.3 Second Example

Suppose Alice utters (3).

(3) Cornelius bought the picture.

To someone who is interested in the nationality of the buyer, but has no idea who Cornelius is, we, who know Cornelius is Norwegian and also know that the picture is a Munch, can report (3) with (4).

(4) Alice said that a Norwegian bought a Munch.

Since we need not assume that Alice knows Cornelius's nationality, (4) need not incorporate an implicature of (3). Even if she did know that he is Norwegian, we need not assume that she intended to convey the content of the complement clause of the utterance of (4) to the audience of the utterance of (3).

Since 'a Norwegian' is not coextensive with 'Cornelius', it is not an extensionalization of (3), nor can the DET relation underwrite the transition from an utterance of (3) to the complement clause of an utterance of (4). Notice that if your intuitions are like ours in thinking that (4) can correctly report Alice's utterance of (3), then Richard's (P1) is false.

P1: If *that* could be true although a Norwegian did not buy the picture, then *that* does not (literally) say that a Norwegian bought the picture (where the italicized 'that's demonstrate Alice's utterance (3)).

The connection between (3) and (4) provides a counter-example to (P1) because if Cornelius became Spanish (which is possible; it is not a necessary truth that Cornelius is Norwegian, just as it is not, as Richard points out, a necessary truth that Berkeley is in California—see note 14), then (3) can be true even though a Norwegian did not buy the picture. Richard includes the qualifier 'literally' only to rule out implicatures, since (4) need not be an implicature of (3), that qualification does not rule out (3)–(4) as a counter-example.

That P1 fails shows that something is fundamentally wrong with a basic

assumption in Richard's approach, namely that 'what a sentence's utterance says determines the utterance's truth conditions, so that a sentence utterance could not say something which might be false in a situation in which the sentence as uttered was true' (p. 611). The principle is incorrect as a description of our practice of indirect reporting.

2. Reply to Reimer

Reimer's main complaint about our paper is that we focus on the wrong set of intuitions. Semanticists should be concerned with intuitions about what sentence types mean relative to contexts of utterance, she says, and not with intuitions about what is said by an utterance of a sentence.

Again, we emphasize how important it is to keep in mind the goals of our paper. From our objections to a certain alleged connection between the semantic content of utterances and their indirect reports, it does not follow that we can have no intuitions about the literal meaning of sentence types.[2]

Reimer agrees with us that we 'do not have a practice of reporting… sentence-types relativized to contexts' and that 'whatever intuitions we have about the contextually relativized content of sentence-types are derived from what we think about utterances of sentence in contexts' (p. 603). Such intuitions, she thinks, provide the pre-theoretic basis for semantics.

There are two ways to understand her latter claim.

On a strong reading, it requires that our intuitions are capable of systematically distinguishing between those features of true indirect reports that reflect the literal meaning of the uttered sentence-type from those that do not. For reasons offered in our paper and pursued in our reply above to Richard, we doubt that such an account is forthcoming.

On a weaker interpretation, all it says is that if we think about what was said by an utterance, we will end up with intuitions about the literal meaning of utterance types. Though no doubt true (we'll end up with all sorts of intuitions), this cannot provide the basis for a systematic connection between semantic content (of sentence-types) and indirect speech.

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[2] One of us thinks that all philosophical appeals to intuitions are suspect, a view not argued for in 'On an Alleged Connection'. See Cappelen and Winblad 'Intuitions', forthcoming.