The Pragmatic Behaviour of Implicative Relations in Political Discourse

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Abstract:

Political discourse may be analyzed from a pragmatic perspective by considering the way in which politicians make use of "implicative relations ". By implicative relations is meant those aspects of meaning which go beyond the surface structure i.e. the underlying aspects of meaning. It is noted that implicative relations frequently lead to inferences and not statements of fact. In this sense implicative relation would seem to provide public figures in general and politicians in particular with an important communicative tool in their efforts to present the world in any specific ideological manner. For political analysts it would seem to be important, then, they are capable of locating and analyzing implicative relations and their use in specific political contents.

This paper presents an example of actual political discourse and provides a pragmatic analysis for it making use of a number of implicative relational types. The aim is twofold: first, to clarify, by example, how a pragmatic analysis of political contexts might proceed; second, to introduce a number of basic and significant pragmatic concepts which underlie the analyses to be presented in our corpus.

The data come from a question and answer session in the British House commons, which took place in 7 May 1986 concerning U.S.A. military aids to the Contras and international terrorism.

The paper comes up with several conclusions the most important of which is that in political discourse the way the politician manipulates language is no less important than the content he wants to convey and here pragmatics enters.

التصرف التداولي للعلاقات التضمينية في الخطاب السياسي

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ملخص البحث:

يمكن تحليل الخطاب السياسي من منظور تداولي بدراسة الطريقة التي يستفيد منهــا الساسة من العلاقات التضمينية ويلاحظ غالبا أن هذه العلاقات تقود إلـــى الاســتنباط ولــيس بيانات حقيقية. وبهذا المفهوم تقدم العلاقات التضمينية للشخصيات الهامة وللساسة على وجـــه الخصوص، أداة تواصلية مهمة سعيا لعرض العالم وفق أي منهج أيدلوجي معين.وقـــد يبـــدو الأمر مهما أيضا بالنسبة للمحليين السياسيين، لأنهم بذلك سيكونون قادرين على تحديد وتحليل العلاقات التضمينية إضافة إلى قدرتهم على استعمال تلك العلاقات في سياقات سياسية محددة.

يتناول البحث مثالا من الكلام السياسي الحقيقي كما ويعرض تحليلا تداوليا" له مستفيدا من عدد من العلاقات التضمينية أن الهدف وجهان: الأول لتوضيح كيـــف يجـــري التحليـــل التداولي للسياقات السياسية؛ والثاني للتعريف بعدد من المفاهيم التداولية الأساســية والمهمـــة الكامنة وراء التحليل.

جاءت بيانات البحث من جلسة سؤال وجواب في مجلس العموم البريطاني المنعقدة في ١٩٨٦/٥/٧. وركز التحليل على الأسئلة الموجهة لوزير الخارجية وشؤون الكومنولث (السيد جيفري هاو)، بشأن المساعدة الأمريكية العسكرية للكونترا في نيكاراكوا (في المثـــال الأول أجاب السيد تم إيجار وكيل وزير الخارجية وشؤون الكومنولث البريطاني) ومـــسائل بـــشأن قضية الإرهاب الدولي.

يخرج البحث بنتائج عدة أبرزها أن:

* اللغة السياسية هي شكل من أشكال المعالجة البارعة العملية التي تفتح المجـــال لتفـــسيرات محددة محتملة.

* من الضروري التأكيد على أنها محتملة وليست أكيدة لان باستطاعة المستمعين تحديد مبادئ براعة المعالجة.

* إذا أراد المرء فهم ما يبغي الساسة عندما يستفادون من النظام اللغوي لأهداف أو وظائف معينة، وإذا رغب امرؤ تقويم ميزان السلطة عليه الانتباه ليس فقط للمحتوى ولكن للــشكل أيضا وان تفاعل هذين العاملين في سياقات معينة من الإنتاج يعني إن على المرء إن يعمل بالتداولية.

1. Introduction

Since classical times it has been accepted that language plays a role in the creation of political reality (Edleman, 1978:62). There is an assumption that the aim of the analysis of political talk is to uncover the rhetorical techniques used by politicians create and manipulate a specific view of the world.

Recognizing the devices of implicative relations (to use Lycan's term 1986) and learning how to see through them will help us clear a way the fog so we can face the world we share with all mankind (Erickson, 1985:25).

There are certain aspects of meaning emanate from the interaction of language and context resources. These aspects of meaning are intentional, motivated by the speaker's aim of achieving particular goals in a specified context of human interaction. By this is meant that linguistic resources are selected in terms of their interaction with principles of human behaviour in order to achieve specified outcomes.

In one sense this paper may be seen as an exercise in applied pragmatics that is defined here as the study of the selection and manipulation of pragmatic elements within specified communicative contexts.

The most important fact about the applied pragmatic approach from the perspective of this work is that it draws the attention to the role of sequencing in the construction of pragmatic of pragmatic meaning, the fact that meaning may be constructed, reformulated and changed across turns.

The underlying premise here is that politicians' language does not merely convey the message, but creates for the listener a controlled

cognitive environment from which any interpretation is manipulated (Hudson, 1978: 71).

Since it is quite obvious that political language is designed to achieve specific political goals, to make people believe in certain things, it is a prime example of what we will call " pragmatic behaviour ", linguistic behaviour, that is, which is sensitive to the context of production.

Analyzing and considering how this context-sensitivity emerges within political talk is the main function of this paper. By focusing on samples of actual political language, the aim is to indicate the way in which a pragmatic analysis reveals, in a structural manner, underlying aspects of meaning.

The analysis of this paper goes with the same line of implicative relations suggested by Lycan 1986.

1.1.Statement of the Problem:

This work looks at a widely held conception that one of the main function of political talk is to manipulate political thought. This seems a particularly significant case of using language to mean more than is said. It is argued, however, that we must be careful in making claim regarding such manipulation since it is difficult, if not impossible, within a variable and contextually relative linguistic system, to claim that one has discovered a single and underlying immutable truth. The paradoxical consequences of this position are briefly explored, and the working basis of a pragmatic case is developed from the premise that much political language depends on implications rather than factual claims . Since implications may be cancelled, it becomes difficult to prove, beyond

doubt, that any meaning which may be interpreted beyond what is said was intentionally projected.

Political talk will be considered from a pragmatic perspective by focusing centrally on meaning which may be derived beyond the context of what has been said. Following, and extending, Lycan (1986) these meanings will be referred to as implicative relations.

1.2. The Aims of the Study:

The aim of this paper is to explain pragmatically, how implicative relations operate in political discourse. It aims also at considering the role of language in the creation and maintenance of political and social ideologies. Thus the task of this work is grounded within the framework of a linguistic analysis, specifically a pragmatic analysis. In other words, this paper tries to explore how politicians manipulate language for their own ends.

1.3. Data Collection:

The data come from a question and answer session in the British House of Commons, which took place on Wednesday, 7may 1986. In particular the analysis will be focusing on questions, directed to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Geoffrey Howe), on US military aid to the contra in Nicaragua (answered, in the first instance, by Tim Eggar, Undersecretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs), and questions on the issue of international terrorism.

1.4. Value of the Study:

Applying pragmatic theory is not always simply a case of matching data to concept, but may involve the development of specified concepts, or the introduction of new concepts. This is where application feeds back into the development of theory, and in some respects it is hoped that this paper contributes not only to our understanding of how the pragmatics of political language operates, but also to the ongoing development of a pragmatic theory of language itself.

The true value of this work resides in the high lightening the various insights which may be gained from the application of pragmatic constructs.

2.The Notion of Implication:

An ' implication ' is an inference type not a fact, and as such, in many cases, it can be cancelled or denied (Carston, 1987: 64): Bull,2006:52). In the following example (1c) denies that the conventional implication of a request in (1a) was intended, and in (2) the presupposition of truth attached to the verb 'regret' is cancelled by the final clause.

(1a) can you pass the salt?

(b) Here you are.

(c) I don't want the salt; I only asked if you could pass it.

(2) John doesn't regret beating his dog because he never touched it.

Since many implications are defensible (the term used to indicate that certain implication types disappear in selected contexts), this makes them particularly useful for directing hearer's interpretations, without, in one sense, from the speaker's point of view, in overt responsibility for any inferences which the hearer makes (Rescher. 2000:81; Bull, 2002:68).

Further, implicational types are also particularly useful in general social terms for the maintenance of what Goffman (1967) calls ' face ' i.e. the way in which we present ourselves and act towards others, and the way in which we expect other, to behave towards us (see Brown and Levinson, 1978); Fetzer, 2006:79).

In example (1a) we have a classic case of what would normally be a request. It is articulated in this indirect manner because, as the request is an implication, a secondary meaning, we cannot be accused of imposing up our hearer, but at the same time we can, by the use of such a form, achieve our own specified goal.

Most important, from the perspective of this work, is the general idea that speakers can employ implicative relations in order to direct a hearer's interpretation. I am not suggesting that this is a form of ' thought manipulation ' in any Orwellian or deterministic sense however (Orwell,1969:78). It is more of a conjuring trick, where we employ those forms which we predict will lead to the interpretation most conducive to our aims at a point in time.

2.1. Secondary Meaning:

Lycan has suggested three types of implicative relations: (Lycan, 1986:76).
(a) Secondary meanings;
(b) Invited inference and
(c) Presupposition.

a. By secondary meanings is meant meanings which are not strictly part of a sentence's logical from (semantic meaning). For example, if I say " It's cold in this room " I may, in some contexts, intend my hearer to

interpret what I have said as meaning I would like to have a window closed.

Secondary meaning, then, is meaning beyond logical form which opens up a wealth of possibilities. However, in the case of a secondary meaning, we cannot be accused of imposing upon our hearer, but at the same time we can, by the use of such form, achieve our own specified goal. (Langton, 2003:309).

b. Invited Inference

Inference as defined in Cobuild's dictionary " is the act of drawing conclusions about something on the basis of information that you already have (Cobuild, 1995:862). It had an extremely tiny head and, by inference a tiny brain.

The term ' invited inference ' seems to cover a broad range of phenomena. For example, if I say I'll give you five thousand dinars if you get a friend to buy this book, it invites the inferences seem highly dependent on specific aspects of general world and background knowledge. (Mackinnon,2006:63).

C. Presupposition

The third type of implicative relations is ' presupposition ' an element of inferred information which emerges from the use of specific forms.

Presuppositions, as noted by scholars, are inferences which have certain structural qualities (Levison, 1983, Kempson, 1979; Oh and Dineen, 1979; Green,1989).

In early studies it seemed to survive under negation (Strawson, 1950; Wilson,1975; Gazdar, 1979). For example, (b) is assumed to be true in both (1) and (2) below:

(1a) John regrets beating his wife.

(b) John has beaten his wife.

(2a) John doesn't regret beating his wife.

(b) John has beaten his wife.

This behaviour under negation distinguishes presuppositions from other elements of meaning such as ' entailments ', that is aspects of meaning logically derived from a sentence relative to its assumed truth value (Harris, 1974); Bell, 2004:61).

2.2. An Example of Implication:

To take amore traditional example, the quote from Nixon will be considered, where he stated that no one ' presently employed in the white House had participated in the break-in at Democratic National Committee Headquarters; we can see that there is a possible implication here that those previously working in the white House may have been involved in the break-in.

No one presently employed in the white House participated in the break-in at the Democratic National Committee Headquarters, but a number of past employees were involved.(cited in Geise,1987:91; Bitzer & Rueter 1980:102).

There is, however, no guarantee that this implication was either intended, or that it is indeed correct, since this implication can be cancelled:

No one presently employed in the white House participated in the break-in at the Democratic National Committee Headquarter nor indeed anyone who has ever worked in the white House.

As we now know the implication of the original statement was in fact true, and Nixon's hand might have been forced had reporters

questioned further. But as Halen Thomas, who was there when Nixon gave his response, points out, it was not something which the reporters noticed. On the surface the statement seemed to answer the question and deny any link between members of the white House and those involved in the Watergate break-in (see Thomas, 1978:iii). In this sense Nixon achieved his goal, and he achieved it by making use of specific pragmatic aspects of language (Bull,2003:79).

The point is that Nixon did not create any representation of the world which was false. His utterance acted to delimit asset of individuals in a specific ' possible world ' (Lewis, 1972), or more simply at a particular point in time. Then Nixon noted that this set of individuals had no overlapping membership with the set of individuals designated as being involved in the break-in. However, the set of individuals working ' presently ' in the white House is a sub-set of the total set of those who, have worked in the White House, and there is in fact an overlap of the total set of individuals who have worked in the White House and the set those individuals involved in the break-in. (Howard,2005:9). Diagrammatically, we might represent the situation as in figure 1. What the reporters really wanted to know about was the relationship between the total set and the set of individuals involved in the break-in. What they have been provided with is a description of the relationship between set B and set C (which have no overlapping members). If we look at the relationship between the total set of those who have worked in the White House, and set C, we can see that there are members of A (those who have worked in the white House in the past) who are also members of set C. This is what the reporters were trying to get at. What Nixon did by forming his response to attend only those presently working in the White House, was to direct attention to sets B and C which have no overlapping members.

Thus Nixon made his point. Nixon's utterance was an example of thought manipulation in that his utterance led the audience to create a mental model (see Johnson-Laird-1983) based on a comparison of set B and set C. But this cannot really be thought control really be thought control since it is an example of what we all do in directing particular topics of interest in conversation (Elster,2006:58). Nixon has simply selected a particular picture of the world which suits his purpose on which to focus. As the above analysis shows, however, the reporters were free to select their own focus based on the implication contained in what Nixon said, i.e. that it might have been members of the set of those individuals who had worked in the White House in the past who had been involved in the break-in the fact that the reporters were not alert to this possibility is something they have to consider.

If this is not thought control in a strong deterministic sense it is certainly a form of manipulation, a process by which specific interpretations are encouraged. It is important to stress encouraged, and not guaranteed, because listeners can locate the principles being manipulated and subvert these. If we want to understand what politicians are up to when they make use of the linguistic system for particular political purposes or functions, and if, in one sense, we wish to redress the balance of power, we must pay attention not only to content but to form as well; and indeed the interaction of these two in specific contexts of production, i.e. we must do pragmatics.

A

All those who have ever worked in the White House

B

Those presently working in the White House

C

Those involved in the break-in

Figure.1: The White House and the Watergate break-in available conceptual sets

3. Implications:

Although the questions I want to focus on seem to attend to two different issues, i.e. military aid versus international terrorism, these issues were linked by a number of questioners who suggested that the United States' support of the contra rebel group was an example of state-sponsored terrorism. This suggestion was developed, in part, in relation to the US bombing of Libya, which had taken place previously that year, an action justified by the United States in terms of Libyan support for international terrorism.

Several of the speakers who put questions in this parliamentary session suggested that the US actions indicate hypocrisy. The argument was that it was hypocritical for the United States to claim that they carried out the bombing of Libya as a response to that country's involvement in international terrorism, when they themselves (the Americans) supported the Nicaraguan contras who, in the opinion of some members of the

house, were in fact terrorists. This position is summed up in the question put by Mr. Dennis Healey: Did the Government remind President Reagan at the Tokyo summit that his proposals for military aid to the contras involved the United States in a most blatant from of state terrorism, because the contras have engaged in horrifying innocent woman and children…. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that, so long as president Reagan supports such activities he has no right whatsoever to claim to be an opponent of state terrorism.: (Hansard;198d: p.136).

In response to this question, and its attendant claims, Mr. Tim Eggar, speaking for Her Majesty's Government, made the following statement:

Mr. Tim Eggar: I think the right hon. Government is trying to draw a parallel between the United States action in Libya and its action in Nicaragua, which simply dose not stand up to any examination. Gaddafi has committed the Libya Government to organizing and directing a world wide campaign of terrorist violence against innocent people outside Libya. In Nicaragua, the contras and the Nicaraguans have resorted to armed struggle against their own government. The contras do not seek to advance their cause by terrorist acts in third countries.

The suggestion is that Mr. Eggar's claim carries a pragmatic assumption, or implication, which seems at variance with the case we believe Mr. Eggar would want to make. The problem is this: to claim that the contras do not carry out terrorist acts in third countries does not, in itself, deny that they carry out terrorist acts, merely that they do not carry out such acts in third countries. Further, accepting this possibility, and focusing directly on the phrase "in third countries" which is generally used to mean something like in countries other than one's own, then it is perfectly legitimate to interpret that Mr. Eggar has said as implying that the contras carry out terrorist acts in their own country.

Eggar's aim in responding to Mr. Healey, since in one sense it gives some credence to those claims made by Mr. Healey which Mr. Eggar is attempting to deny. Of course, one might argue that the interpretation we have arrived at, or are suggesting, arises because we have taken the sentence out of context. This is not a valid criticism however. First, because the very same option would remain rhetorically available for any one listening to Mr. Eggar's response, and we cannot seriously believe that in the House of Commons, as a forum for confrontational debate, that such an option would be ignored where it is given (intentionally or not). Second ,and more importantly, there is nothing within the total context of the response, nor indeed the sequential context of the question and the response, which acts to explicitly block the implications we have identified.

Mr. Eggar has claimed that the contras differ from the Libyans, in that the Libyans carry out terrorist acts word-wide while the contras do not. If one were accusing the contras of carrying out terrorist act world-wide then Mr. Eggar would be correct; there would be comparison between them and the Libyans. But this is not what Mr. Healey claimed he claimed that the contras were terrorists, and Mr. Eggar has not explicitly denied this.

What evidence is there, however, to support the interpretation we have proposed? In order to present such evidence we must look at the concept of a presupposition; and introduce another pragmatic concept referred to as a ' conversational implicature '.

It will be necessary now to consider ' presupposition' in a technical manner. This one will find an excellent summary of the main issues in the controversial history of presupposition in Levinson, 1983; see also Gazdar,1979; Kempson, 1979; Oh and Dineen, 1979;Green,1989).

This is not a work on theoretical pragmatics however; consequently the formal nature of the argument will be kept to a minimum (one will find….).

It is noted that this quality of presuppositions is referred to as 'defeasibility '. It was also stated that presuppositions are tied to specific aspects of surface structure, presupposition triggers' as they are sometimes referred to (see Levinson,1983:181-4 for a range of examples). Taking these basic (if somewhat controversial) facts into account, let us return to our selected example from Mr. Eggar's statement, and compare its negative form with its positive form:

(8a) The contras seek to advance their cause by terrorist acts in third countries.

(b) The contras do not seek to advance their cause by terrorist acts in third countries.

One implication which seems to survive in both contexts here is that "the contras carry out terrorist acts" which suggests that such an implication is presupposition. Further evidence for this claim can be provided when we consider that in (8b) one can deny such an implication (an example of defeasibility):

(9) The contras do not seek to advance their cause by terrorist acts in third countries because they do not carry out terrorist acts.

As we have already noted, presuppositions have yet another defining quality above and beyond defeasibility; it is claimed that they are triggered by specific linguistic elements. Is there any evidence, in this case, that the implication is tied to a specific aspect of surface structure? We think the answer is yes; compare Mr. Eggar's statement in both its positive and negative forms with the final adverbial clause removed:

(10 a) The Contras seek to advance their cause by terrorist acts.

(b) The Contras do not seek to advance their cause by terrorist acts.

It is clear that in this case the implication that" the contras carry out terrorist acts" does not survive under negation, in fact it is explicitly denied. Consequently, the argument is that the implication "the contras carry out terrorist acts" is a presupposition of Mr. Eggar's statement.

The evidence for this claim is based on the following facts:

(a) The implication survives under negation;

(b) it is defeasible; and

(c) it is tied to a specific aspect of surface structure, in this case the adverbial clause" in third countries".

One can see then, that Mr. Eggar's statement carries a presupposition that the contras carry out terrorist acts, but this would seem to support Mr. Healey's claim rather than Mr. Egarr's. Why then, did Mr. Eggar make a statement which carried a presupposition at odds, or seemingly at odds, with his aim of countering the claims explicitly made by Mr. Healey? One cannot, of course, be sure of his intentions, but since his main aim was to contrast the actions of the Contras with the actions of Libya, and since his main argument here was that Libya carried out terrorist acts beyond its own borders, he seems to have concentrated on making this claim prominent, with the consequence that there was no denial of the contras as terrorists, simply a claim that they were different from the Libyans who carried out atrocities world- wide.

In one sense, and perhaps within the total context of both Mr. Healy's question and Mr. Eggar's answer, if Mr. Eggar's intention was to deny that the contras were comparable to the Libyans then his actions are, on one level, pragmatically sound. In analyzing the pragmatic nature of negation, Givon (1979a) suggests that negative statements occur where a corresponding affirmative has either been mentioned or where the content of such a corresponding affirmative is deemed likely, or where the speaker holds the affirmative to be true. Horn (1989;1988) makes a

broadly similar point when he claims that various problems and ambiguities which surround questions about the semantic/pragmatic nature of negation (see kempson, 1987; Carston, 1987b) may be resolved by treating negation as a metalingual concept. Horn argues that in a sentence like (11) a contradiction arises. The contradiction is generated by the fact that the speaker, on one view of negation, is denying that John drank three glasses of water, while at the same time asserting that he drank five glasses of water logically, of course, if John drank five glass of water then it must be true that he drank three glasses of water. This problem is resolved where one assumes that (11) is an example of metalinguistic negation. In metalinguistic negation the speaker is denying some aspect of a previous claim, within which it was believed that John drank at least three glasses of water .

(11) John didn't drink three glasses of water, he drank five.

These arguments about the pragmatic nature of negation would allow us to claim that, within the total context of Mr. Eggar's response, the statement, "the Contras do not seek to advance their cause by terrorist acts in third countries", functions merely to deny a prior claim made by Mr. Healey. But what would this claim be? It can't be Mr. Healey's claim that the Contras are terrorists, since Mr. Eggar's statement, the Contras, etc., as we have noted, carries a presupposition that the Contras are terrorists; therefore, it would be a contradiction for Mr. Eggar to both deny this and implicate it at the same time.

What he does deny, however, is that the Contras, if they are terrorists, carry out any terrorist acts in third countries. Now, Mr. Healey has not claimed that the contras do carry out terrorist acts in third countries; he has merely said that he believes they are terrorists. However, Mr. Healey has also likened the Contras, or rather linked then in his question, with Libya. And Libya does carry out terrorist actions in

third countries. Consequently, the only way we can make sense of Mr. Eggar's turn as a metalingual form is to see it as denying that the Contras, like the Libyans, carry out terrorist actions in third countries. Consequently, the only way we can make sense of Mr. Eggar's turn as a metalingual form is to see it as denying that the contras, like the Libyans, carry out terrorist acts in third countries.

Such a claim was never explicitly made in Mr. Healey's question; it is, however, implicit in what he says; and indeed it is this that Mr. Eggar takes up in the opening remark of his response. In this sense, then, Mr. Eggar's statement functions pragmatically to deny an assumed comparison between the contras and the Libyans, However. If Mr. Eggar is going to be selective in his interpretation of what Mr. Healey has said, then Mr. Healey is free to apply the same approach to Mr. Eggar's statement, and despite the metalingual claims attendant on Mr. Eggars' statement, he has implicitly left intact a presupposition which is at odds with a more central and core issue, i.e. whether the contras are or are not terrorists. The problem here is that Mr. Eggar has negated any comparison between the Contras and the Libyans at only one level, leaving the presupposition that the Contras are terrorists intact.

4. Further Implications:

This is not the only implication that Mr. Eggar has left intact however. We want to suggest that there is yet a further implication in Mr. Eggar's statement to the effect that the contras not only carry out terrorist acts, but they carry out these acts in their own country. Obviously, from a purely political perspective, this is an implication which, in the context of this parliamentary debate, clearly works against any attempt to counter

the general tenor of Mr. Healey's critical claims (although this is not something which Mr. Healey seems to have been aware of).

The implication that the contras carry out terrorist acts in their own country is based, once again, on the use of the adverbial clause "in third countries". The clause, "in third countries", can be said to mean "in countries other than one's own", or more simply, "not in one's own country". Interpreting the adverbial phrase *countries* in this way created what seems to be a simple bilateral relationship:

Third countries   ↔   not one's own country

One's own country ↔   not third countries

There is, anyhow, no such simple exclusive relationship in the use of these structures, since it is possible to say the following without contradiction:

(12) The Contras seek to advance their cause by terrorist acts in their own country and indeed in a number of third countries.

(13) The contras seek to advance their cause by terrorist acts in third countries and indeed in their own country.

Clearly, the relationship between "third country" and "not one's own country" is more than simply one of semantics in that the two do not seem inter-substitutable in any sense of synonymy. Here a legitimate question may arise: are we talking of a presuppositional relationship? Apparently not, in that the implication which follows from "in third countries", in this case is not that which follows from the same form under negation.

(14a) The Contras seek to advance their cause by terrorist acts in third countries.

(b) In countries other than their own

(15a) The contras do not seek to advance their cause by terrorist acts in third countries.

(b) in their own country

While the presupposition already discussed, i.e. that the contras carry out terrorist acts, is available in both (14a) and (15a), we would argue that the implication that the contras carry out terrorist acts in their own country is only really available in (15a).

Indeed (14a) states that the contras do not carry out terrorist acts in their own country. The question is, then, where dose the implication come from in the negative form of the statement, and what kind of implication is it?

If ' third countries' implies ' not one's own country ', then on the surface, the adverbial is behaving in the same way as a word like 'some', which is said to imply 'not all'. Both the adverbial clause and `some' are similar in that they imply the negation of another form:

(16a) some of the boys enjoyed the party.

(b) Not all of the boys enjoyed the party.

(c) We play football in a third country.

(d) Not our own country

They are also similar in that they both provide implications which can be cancelled.

(17a) Some, if indeed not all, of the teachers were sacked.

(b) We will visit a number of third countries and of course our own country.

As we have already noted it is one of the defining features of presuppositions that they are defeasible, i.e. that they will disappear in certain contexts. This is not the only defining feature of presuppositions, however, and indeed defeasibility is a characteristic exhibited by several pragmatic phenomena. Consequently, we should not automatically assume that what we have here is another example of presupposition.

5. The Implications of Using Implications:

Returning to why Mr. Eggar would make a statement which carries an implication at odds with the central claim he would wish to defend, it might be argued that there is some advantage in using a phrase which generates an implication, in that such an implication may be cancelled. This would offer Mr. Eggar some degree of protection in that he cannot be accused, if later evidence should prove against him, that he claimed that the contras were not terrorists; all he claimed was that unlike the Libyans the contras did not carry out terrorist acts outside their own borders. Nevertheless, Mr. Eggar seems to be in an odd position, unless of course the British Government really believes that terrorism is only to be opposed when terrorist acts are perpetrated upon third countries.

Whether this is in fact the British Government's view is not something which we can prove, on the basis of this evidence, one way or the other. Such a conclusion would in many ways, be odd in purely political terms, and it may be the case that Government representatives ((and indeed the Opposition) are not fully aware of the implicational consequences of what they have said. Yet a very similar conclusion is further engendered in the very same debate, this time by Sir Geoffrey Howe, who provides a response to an almost identical question to that tackled by Mr. Eggar:

Dr Goodman: Has the Foreign Secretary in recent times brought to the attention of Mr. Schultz the deep disquiet felt by many people in this country concerning American sponsored terrorism in Nicaragua.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: that point has already been dealt with by my hon. Friend the parliamentary Under Secretary of State in answer to a number of questions, but I make the distinction yet again that there is a total difference between those terrorist organizations that are dedicated

to the infliction of indiscriminate damage on innocent people in third countries and the context in which the Nicaraguan subjects are engaged within the frontiers of Nicaragua.

The implicational context is clear in this case, although once again we have the use of the phrase ' third countries '. The problem here is that any presupposition associated with the use of the adverbial ' in third countries ' has been tempered by the overall structure of the sentence within which it is embedded (this is an example where one has to be careful not to interpret any presupposition out of context). Presupposition can be affected by the structural context within which they are located, an issue referred to as the ' projection problem' (see Karttunen, 1973; Karttunen and Peters, 1979). The projection problem focuses on the way in which presuppositions behave in complex sentences. We have already come across a case of this in (7), where the presupposition disappears with the addition of a clause of denial. But there are various other contexts in which presuppositions may disappear; consider the following sentence:

(18a) Jane took three units in linguistics last year.

(b) There is someone called Jane.

(c) Jane took two units in linguistics.

It is suggested that (18a) presupposes (18b), and entails (18c). However when (18a) is negated, only the presupposition survives. This much is clear from what we have already noted about presupposition above. But when we place (18a) within a modal context, as in (19), then the presupposition disappears:

(19a) It is possible that Jane took three units in linguistics last year.

The projection problem is generated by the fact that within complex sentences certain surface structural elements may allow presuppositions to survive, while other surface structural elements may

not. The situation is made even more complex by the fact that within certain contexts some presuppositions may survive while other may not. Karttunen (1974) introduced the concept of a 'filler' to refer to surface structural forms that let some presuppositions through but not other. An example of how filtering works may be seen in the use of certain conditionals:

(20) If Kelly eats that cake she will regret it.

Here the second clause presupposes 'Kelly will eat the cake', but the whole sentence does not.

Sir Geoffrey Howe, in his response, makes use of a conjunction of two complex syntactic structures. Conjunction, in general, allows presuppositions to survive, so we might expect that any presuppositions associated with whole. Let us consider the first part of the conjunction:

(21) …those terrorist organizations which inflict indiscriminate damage on innocent people in third countries.

Example (21) clearly specifies a category of terrorist who carries out activities in third countries. The second part of the conjunction states:

(22)…..the context in which Nicaraguan subjects are engaged within the frontiers of Nicaragua.

In this case (22) is vague in terms of what ' the context ' is, but in terms of the text it must be one in which the Nicaraguans are involved. Now since the first conjunction has been set up to contrast with the second conjunct, in that Sir Geoffrey refers to a 'total difference ' between two elements to be presented, we must look to see what the difference between the conjuncts might be.

The second conjunct is vague as to what the ' context ' is, but we know whatever the context is, it is to be contrasted with another context in which terrorists are carrying out activities in third countries.

Again, since, as we have noted, ' third countries ' implies' not one's own ', it seems reasonable to assume that Sir Geoffrey is suggesting that the Nicaraguan situation dose not involve terrorist activities in third countries-this assumption seems perfectly reasonable, and is supported by the fact that Sir Geoffrey alludes to Mr. Eggar's own response to a similar question, suggesting his agreement with Mr. Eggar's previous response.

The problem is, however, that Sir Geoffrey Howe has simply talked of a ' Nicaraguan context ', which is extremely ambiguous. Nevertheless, the logic of suggesting a contrast between two elements A and B requires a basis for comparison, and the only basis Sir Geoffrey has given is that of terrorists who carry out activities in third countries, which leaves only those who do not carry out terrorist activities at all, or those who only carry out such activities in their own country (the implication of Mr. Eggar's statement; a statement which Sir Geoffrey indicates his agreement with) as possible candidates. The second candidate here is a reasonable possibility, since, in Gricean terms, if Sir Geoffrey Howe had evidence for the stronger first-candidate interpretation then he should have provided it.

This kind of argument is based, partly, on what Lycan (1986) referred to as ' invited inferences'. Invited inferences make use of general background knowledge. In this example we are dealing with a claim which contrasts two elements. The dimension of background Knowledge involved here is that any contrast must be predicated upon some basis for comparison. Consequently, the hearer must search Sir Geoffrey Howe's statement for the basis of contrast, which in this case is one of whether terrorist acts are, or not, carried out in third countries.

What we have, then, via a series of pragmatically based arguments is a fascinating (implicative) picture of the British Government's view of contra activities. The contras are not international terrorists, because they

do not carry out any atrocities in third countries; are they, however, terrorists within the confines of their own border? The Government representatives, responses are unclear on this, but they pragmatically imply (certainly in Mr. Eggar's case) that the contras are carrying out terrorist acts within their own country.

As it is noted above implications are not statements of fact and can therefore be cancelled. Therefore, can we really say that the British Government believed that the Contras are terrorists? Perhaps not, but what we can say is that the particular use of language employed by the Government representatives contains a number of implications supportive of the notion that the contras are terrorists, and that if those questioning the Government on this matter had been more sensitive to the pragmatic context, they could have pushed the representatives to clarify the context implied by what they had said.

Both Sir Geoffrey Howe and Mr. Eggar made clear that the contras did not carry out terrorist acts in third countries and that, therefore, they were not, unlike the Libyans, international terrorists. Sir Geoffrey and Mr. Eggar did not make clear, however, the status of the Contras vis-à-vis terrorism within the confines of Nicaragua. The opportunity for making this issue clear was available to both Mr. Eggar and Sir Geoffrey Howe; they simply had to drop reference to ' third countries '. Then we would have had, in the case of Mr. Eggar, the following unequivocal statement: (23) The Contras do not seek to advance their cause by terrorist acts.

If this was what Mr. Eggar believed to be the case, there was no need to contrast the contras with the Libyans, or indeed anyone else associated with terrorism. If the contras are not terrorists then Reagan's support for this group is not a sponsorship of terrorism. The ' third countries ' argument only makes sense if one is contrasting acts in one's own country with acts in other countries, in this case terrorist acts.

With these claims in mind we can also consider again the question of taking Mr. Eggar's statement out of context. The context of the question and answer encounter is quite clear: it is concerned with whether or not the contras are, or are not, terrorists. If they are terrorists then Mr. Healey's criticism makes some sense (within the British context); if they are not terrorists then Healey's claims are unfounded. The clearest and simplest rebuttal is that the contras are not terrorists. There may be many sound political reasons why such a response was not given (the creation of a debate on what is and what is not terrorism for example); nevertheless, the response which was given generates its own problems, problems which are not generated purely out of context, but in conjunction with the context.

6. National and International Terrorism:

The British Context:

Now it is time to consider the consequences for a British Government which distinguishes between terrorism within the borders of one's own country and international terrorism, where it is implied, in the first case, that it is implied, in the first case, that it is legitimate for a nation, such as the United States, to lend support for certain activities. This would of course suggest that the IRA, operating within the confines of Northern Ireland, a part of Great Britain, would be, in the main, in a very similar position to the Contras (at least on the basis of Foreign Office responses to question on terrorism). This position would, of course, be an awkward, if not indeed a dangerous, one for the British Government. It is interesting then to note that within the same question and answer session we have been discussing, Sir Geoffrey Howe took the opportunity, at a later point in the debate, to say the following in response

to a question about proscribing Sinn Fein (the political wing of the provisional IRA) as a terrorist organization:

(24) One important point to be taken into account in this context is that conflicts that arise in Ireland and Northern Ireland take place in the context of a society with a fully representative democratic system (Hansard, 1986:141).

The question on Sinn Fein was out of line with the general debate on international terrorism and the role of the United States; a fact noted by Sir Geoffrey Howe: ' That question raises different considerations. Nevertheless, in responding to the question Sir Geoffrey made the statement outlined in (24). Within the general debate on international terrorism we might consider what this statement adds.

Consider again the point raised above, i.e. that if the contras are different from the Libyans in that they struggle against their own government, and do not carry out terrorist acts in third countries (cf. Mr. Eggar and Geoffrey Howe), this implies:

(a) that the contras are terrorists, and

(b) that they carry out their actions in their own country.

Further, it suggests that other groups who struggle against their own governments, and who do not carry out any actions against third countries, are in a similar position. Such a description, in the main, would fit the IRA. However, Sir Geoffrey's latest comment does draw a possible distinction between the contras and the IRA, in that the IRA operates within a democratic system, whereas the contras struggle against a communist regime.

Once again this conclusion is politically interesting. Certainly, it distinguishes the IRA from the contras, but it suggests that terrorist action is legitimate where the struggle is against one's own government, provided that government is not a democratic one. It is important to

emphasize that the claims we are making are based on what the British Government is saying through its own representatives. The logic of the argument is built up through a pragmatic analysis of not only individual responses as they attend to the issue of who is and who is not a terrorist, and therefore worthy either of support, or ripe for attack.

Since implication can be denied without contradiction, it would be difficult to categorically confirm that our interpretation of the Government's position, via a pragmatic analysis of their responses, was what was intended by the Government representatives. Nevertheless, there is an important point to made: if a democratic system is to be successful it is partly dependent on the quality and nature of the arguments which take place between the various parties and members of the parties within the system. What the analysis in this paper shows is that there seems to be certain lack of sensitivity to the interpretation of pragmatic implications. On wonders what the outcome might have been if the representatives of the British Government had been pushed not only on the content of what they said, but no the pragmatic implications of what they have said. It is important to stress that we are not suggesting that there should be only one standard of debate or argument (as suggested by Bitzer and Rueter,(1980), what we are suggesting is that our understanding of political rhetoric may be significantly advanced, both in theory and in practice, by considering how language is used from the pragmatic perspective.

7. Conclusion:

In this paper we have attempted to show how a pragmatic analysis would operate in the description of political talk. Taking a number of examples from a British parliamentary question answer session, it was

argued that once one goes beyond the surface-level meaning of what is said, a variety of implicational types may be located. Because they are implicational types they can, in many cases, be denied. Nevertheless, at the very least, in the examples we explored, a greater sensitivity to implicational possibilities might have helped clarify the British Government's position on a number of issues of present-day terrorism.

The relevance of this kind of pragmatic analysis is clear. For politicians (like Mr. Healey above), for example. A greater awareness of pragmatic concept would be useful in clarifying responses given to specific parliamentary questions, and of course in constructing such answers. For political analysts the importance of going beyond the surface form of what is said also significant. In this case, the analyst is providing with arguments which are not simply based on intuitions about ideological beliefs, but facts about language processing and interpretation. And for the public, it is important to be able to evaluate the political product being offered. In all cases some awareness of the pragmatic aspects of political talk would prove invaluable.

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