A Cognitive-Pragmatic Approach to Metalinguistic Negation

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1. Introduction

This paper is concerned with the phenomenon labeled ‘metalinguistic negation’ (MN) by Horn (1985). He claims that “[metalinguistic negation] must be treated not as a truth-functional or semantic operator on propositions, but rather as a device for objecting to a previous utterance on any grounds whatever -- including the conventional or conversational implicata, its morphology, its style or register, or its phonetic realization.” (Horn 1985, 133) The latter half of this characterization gives the impression that his idea of MN is identical to what is called “denial.” In fact, however, he distinguishes the descriptive use of negation (henceforth DN), as in (1), which negates truth-conditional content of propositions, from MN as in (2), which negates the ‘assertability’ of a previous utterance (U), and treats DN and MN separately. In other words, ‘proposition denial’ in Geurts’ (1998) sense is not included in the range of phenomena which Horn regards as MN.

(1) We didn’t see the hippopotami — we saw the rhinoceroses. (Carston 1996: 310)
(2) a. I’m not his daughter — he’s my father. (Horn 1985: 133)
    b. The king of France isn’t bald — there ISN’T any king of France. (Horn 1985: 125)
    c. Her dissertation is not eSOTeric; it’s esoTERic (Carston 1996: 328)
    d. I didn’t manage to trap two monGEES — I managed to trap two monGOOSES. (Horn 1989: 371)

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e. Grandma isn't feeling lousy, Johnny, she is indisposed.  

(Horn 1985: 133)

Horn argues that MN cannot be reduced to truth-functional negation (i.e. DN) and that negation is pragmatically ambiguous.

A substantial amount of work has been produced on MN since then, and the fog around this mythical phenomenon is clearing. Carston (1996) claims that "the crucial property of so-called metalinguistic negations" is that "the representation (or a part of it) falling in the scope of the negation operator is implicitly echoic."(Carston 1996, 320-321)

It follows that every case of MN has its source of echo, namely an attributed utterance or thought in Wilson's (1999) sense. Then what aspect of the source of an echo does the operator negate? As far as I know, nobody has succeeded in characterizing it properly. The examples in (2) above show that a variety of its aspects, including connotation/focus, 'presupposition,' accent, morphology, and style/register, can be MN targets. One of the difficulties in analyzing the phenomenon of MN is this variety: some of them are formal, as in (2c, d), while others are conceptual, as in (2b). At first glance, anything seems to be able to be the target of MN. However, as we will see in the later section, some implicatures cannot be influenced by a negation operator. Is it possible to include these facts in a unified analysis, or must we simply list them? I assume that if these MN data (i.e. Horns metalinguistic negation) constitute a natural class from any perspectives, it should be possible to find some common character among them.

This paper is a fundamental study on MN whose goal is to provide a unified characterization of the aspect of the source of an echo that is negated by metalinguistic negation in Horn's sense. It seems to me that the meaning of 'metalinguistic' varies subtly from one author to another, as does the range of linguistic data covered by the name. Adopting Carston's claim and limiting the data to utterances as a starting point, I pursue the possibility of providing them with a unified characterization, and suggest that it should be stipulated as that which is necessarily accompanied but not communicated by the source of an echo (i.e. the attributed utterance, in this case).

2. Carston's (1996, 1998a, b) Echoic Property

Carston (1996) argues, as in (3), that, among several features often cited as typical of MN listed in (4), the crucial property of MN is that the material falling in the scope of the negation operator is implicitly echoic and that not is not ambiguous in any sense: not is a truth-functional operator in MN cases as well as in DN cases.

(3) "... This, I claim, is the crucial property of so-called metalinguistic negations: the
representation (or a part of it) falling in the scope of the negation operator is implicitly echoic.” (Carston 1996, 320-321) “…the negation operator itself is, in all instances, just the standard truth-functional operator.” (ibid., 327)

(4) (A) The cases of MN involve the ‘contradiction’ intonation contour.
(B) They occur in rejoinders to utterances of the corresponding affirmative.
(C) They are garden-path utterances, requiring double processing.
(D) Taken literally, they constitute a logical contradiction.
(E) The material falling in the scope of the ‘not’ is implicitly echoic.

(summarized from Carston 1996: 311-312)

The examples (5)-(7) illustrate that (A)-(D) in (4) above are not the essential properties of MN but that (E) holds. Consider the example (5); the first line is the text on the front of a birthday card, the next two lines are the text inside. The typical accent pattern is not in evidence; as a written message the contradiction contour cannot be indicated. Furthermore, there is clearly no utterance to which this one is a rejoinder. It means that (A) and (B) in (4) are not the essential properties of MN.

(5) This Birthday Card is NOT from one of your admirers.

It’s from TWO of your admirers.
Happy Birthday from both of us. (Horn 1992: 166)

In (6), where the order of the negative clause and the so-called correction clause is reversed, there is no garden-pathing or reanalysis: (C) in (4) is not essential to MN. The example (7), which is an example of what is called a slip of the tongue, does not constitute descriptive contradiction: (D) in (4) is not essential to MN either.

(6) Maggie’s patriotic AND quixotic; not patriotic OR quixotic. (Carston 1996: 313)
(7) He doesn’t need FOUR MATS; he needs MORE FATS. (Carston 1996: 315)

Carston claims that the echoic property (E) in (4), on the other hand, holds in all the examples of MN. Based on these observations, Carston concludes that (E) is the only essential property of MN.

The concept of echoic is defined by Wilson and Sperber (1992) as follows: “indirect quotation may be used for two rather different purposes – we called them reporting
and echoing. A report of speech or thought merely give information about the content of the original. An echoic utterance simultaneously expresses the speaker’s attitude or reaction to what was said or thought. (Wilson and Sperber 1992, 59). The distinction between explicitly echoic utterances and implicitly echoic ones are illustrated by (8) and (9). The cases as in (8), where its echoic property is marked explicitly by some means, such as quotation marks or communicative verbs, are called explicitly echoic. On the other hand, the cases as in (9) without any of those explicit means are called implicitly echoic, where its echoic property is only implicitly understood.

(8) It’s not correct to say that you saw two ‘mongeese’; you should say ‘mongooses’.
(9) Around here we don’t eat tom[eiDauz] and we don’t get stressed out.
   (We eat tom[a:tauZ] and we get a little tense now and then.)

Carston’s claim is that the only essential property of MN is that the representation in the scope of not is implicitly echoic. This means that the implicitly echoic representation there is regarded as capsuled, which explains why positive polarity items (PPIs) such as some or sometimes but not negative polarity items (NPIs) such as any or ever appear in the scope of MN operator. It is simply because PPIs, but not NPIs, are supposed to have been in the original affirmative utterances or thoughts.

Furthermore, Carston (1998a, b) argue that the cases of ‘p(resupposition)’-canceling negation are different from other MN cases in that the negative part (P) and the (usually following) rectification (Q) do not constitute literal contradiction, but that our intuition that they are matalinguistic is explained by the characteristic pragmatic process of our understanding those utterances. In order to examine whether two descriptive statements P and Q lead to literal contradiction, she uses the following test: if P and Q are contradictory, then it is true that ‘if/since P, then not Q’ or ‘if/since Q, then not P,’ as exemplified in (10).

(10) a. She murdered him; he’s still alive. (P;Q descriptive contradiction)
    b. If she murdered him, he is not still alive. (If P, then not Q )
    c. If he is still alive, she didn’t murder him. (If Q, then not P )

(11)-(13) are the results of applying this test to some MN cases. The validity of (11b) shows that the MN cases of ‘scalar implicature’ as in (11a) are regarded as literal contradiction. The same is true of (12) which shows that the MN cases of focus or connotation also constitute literal contradiction. Things are different in the p-canceling
cases in (13). The semantic anomaly of (13b) evidences that P and Q in (13a) are not in descriptive contradiction relation.

(11)a. I’m not happy; I’m ecstatic.
   b. Since/if I’m ecstatic, I’m (certainly) happy. (Since/if Q then not P)

(12)a. I’m not his child; he’s my father.
   b. If he is my father then I am his child. (If Q then not P)

(13)a. The king of France isn’t bald; there isn’t a king of France.
   b. ! Since there isn’t a king of France, the king of France is bald. (! If Q then not P)

(Carston 1998: 330)

However, it seems that there is some tense between the first statement and the latter in (13) and that some reanalysis is involved in its interpretation, as is usually the case with other MN examples. Based on relevance theory, Carston explains that the reanalysis in these p-canceling cases is motivated by the failure in meeting a pragmatic criterion, that is, the failure in achieving enough cognitive effects. The pragmatic process which she assumes of interpreting the p-canceling MN (13a) is something like the following.

(14) Semantically : not [The F is G]
   via pragmatic processing (a) : [The F is not-G]
   via pragmatic processing (b) : not ["The F is G"] (Carston 1998: 340)

("the F is G’ stands for ‘the king of France is bald.’")

(" ‘’ marks metarepresentation.)

Carston’s semantics of not is the wide-scope negation which cancels so-called presuppositions (the first line in (14)). However, since this is too weak / uninformative, in most contexts, to meet the criterion of optimal relevance, the scope of the negation is narrowed so as to achieve sufficient cognitive effects. The negation could, in principle, be taken to target the existential entailment (‘existential presupposition’), but processing effort considerations mediate strongly against this, since it would leave the predicate ‘is bald’ no role to play in the interpretation. So the preferred interpretation is the narrow scope, ‘presupposition’-preserving, interpretation (pragmatic processing (a) in (14)). Some milliseconds later, however, when we have processed the next utterance, we find ourselves with a contradiction: there is a king of France and there isn’t a king of France. The overall interpretation of the two clauses is not consistent with the expectation of optimal relevance and a reanalysis is sought. This may be a move to an echoic (metalin-
guistic) analysis (pragmatic processing (b) in (14)). Notice that, in the result of the pragmatic processing (b) above, the material in the scope of *not* is echoic. The property (E) in (4) above holds even in the p-canceling MN cases.

In this paper, I fundamentally accept Carston's claim that the material in the scope of MN operator is implicitly echoic. Her characterization, however, does not address what aspect of the echoed material may be the target of MN. In the following sections, I focus on examples of the MN of attributed utterances, and through observations of a limited amount of data, suggest the possibility of providing a unified characterization. Before embarking on the discussion, I should clarify the target area.


This paper tries to determine what Horn's metalinguistic negation is from a cognitive-pragmatic point of view. The range of data which Horn (1985) includes as metalinguistic negation seems to be slightly different from that covered by Carston's (1986) echoic property. Her echoic property can be applied to all kinds of so-called 'denial' in Geurts' (1998) sense. The category of denial includes 'proposition denial' as a sub-type, as in (15)-(16), whose function is to object to the propositional content, or the truth-conditional meaning of attributed utterances or thoughts. In contrast, it seems to me that Horn (1985, 1989) actually and strictly excludes this type of denial as descriptive negation from his argument. Carston's echoic property can not exclude these proposition denial cases from MN.

(15) A: Mary seems happy these days.
   B: She isn't HAPPY; she just puts on a brave face.  (Carston 1996, 324)

(16) A: Peter lives in Amsterdam.
   B: Peter DOESN'T live in Amsterdam.  (Foolen, 1990, 220)

Furthermore, not every remaining aspect of attributed utterances can be the target of MN. Chapman (1996) points out that MN can not be applied to some particularized conversational implicatures, as shown in (17). The anomaly of the second utterance of A indicates that the implicature communicated by B's utterance 'He has a girlfriend in New York' is not within the scope of the negation operator. Implicature issues are not easy to deal with as regards our present topic, partly because relevance theory takes a different idea about the boundary between explicit/ implicit contents of utterances from Horn's. We will come back to this point later.

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A: Smith doesn't seem to have a girlfriend these days.
B: He has been paying a lot of visits to New York lately.
   (→ He has a girlfriend in New York.)
A: !He hasn't been paying a lot of visits to New York lately; he's been paying a lot of
   visits there in order to see his accountant. (Chapman 1996: 396)

These observations suggest that there is some constraint on what the material echoed can bring into the scope of the operator. Chapman (1996) argues that "MN can be used to object only to those aspects of a previous utterance which relate directly to the linguistic expression used. It cannot be used to object to properties of the previous utterance which are non-linguistic, or entirely dependent on context." (Chapman 1996: 396) This characterization, however, does not seem to explain so-called "presupposition(P)-canceling negation" as in (3b), repeated here as (18a), which is cited by Horn as an example of MN. (18b) is the result of applying Carston's way of semantic representation of p-canceling negation discussed in (14) to the first clause of (18a). The operator not takes a wide scope. What is in the scope of not is "the king of France is bald," i.e. the echo of the whole sentence.

(18) a. The king of France isn't bald — there ISN'T any king of France.  
   b. not ["the king of France is bald"]

Relevance theory takes the anti-presuppositionalist position that does not assume the special semantic notion of 'presupposition.' What is negated in (18a) is the assumption 'there is a king of France.' This assumption is not an aspect relating directly to any specific linguistic expression used in its affirmative counterpart 'the king of France is bald', but an entailment which necessarily holds if it is true.

Besides, one of the typical MN examples which interests me greatly is the one such as (3a) "I'm not his daughter — he's my father," about which I have been able to find little theoretical analysis, in contrast to the large amount of work available on 'presuppositions,' morphology or pronunciation. What characterization is appropriate to allow these types of MN to be properly included? The next section attempts to provide this characterization from the viewpoint of relevance theory.

4. What Is Necessarily Accompanied but Not Communicated by an Utterance

Carston (1998b) gives the following summary of what is communicated by an utterance within the framework of relevance theory.
(19) "The assumptions (propositional forms) communicated by a speaker fall into two classes: explicature and implicature. Sperber & Wilson (1986a, 182)'s definition of explicitness is as follows: 'An assumption communicated by an utterance U is explicit [hence an 'explicature'] if and only if it is a development of a logical form encoded by U.' The definition of implicitness, then, is that an assumption communicated by U which is not explicit is implicit [hence an 'implicature']."

(Carston 1998a: 86)

And it is now widely accepted that an explicature contains constituents which come from two different sources; semantic decoding and pragmatic inference. Consider (20).

(20) A: How is Mary feeling after her first year at university?
    B: She didn't get enough units and can't continue.

(21) a. Mary Jones didn't get enough university course units to qualify for second year study, and, as a result, Mary cannot continue with university study.
    b. Mary Jones is not feeling at all happy about this.

(adapted from Carston 1988: 155)

(20B) is developed to an explicature, like (21a), through semantic decoding and pragmatic inferences (i.e. disambiguation, saturation, free enrichment and ad hoc concept construction) and conveys an implicature such as (21b) functioning as an answer to (20A). (21a) contains not only some constituents decoded but also other elements recovered by pragmatic inferences, such as Mary Jones and with university study by saturation, university course units by disambiguation, to qualify for second year study and as a result by free enrichment.

Furthermore, this distinction between explicatures and implicatures applies only to communicated assumptions, as cited in (22). In other words, the assumptions which are not communicated are neither explicatures nor implicatures. Whether assumptions are communicated or not (i.e. whether it becomes mutually manifest to the hearer and the speaker that she intended, by means of her utterance, to make them manifest, or more manifest, to him) is crucial in our present analysis.

(22) “[T]he explicature/implicature distinction applies only to communicated assumptions, by which Sperber & Wilson (1986/95) mean those which the speaker has made it evident she intends the hearer to pick up.”

(Carston 1998, 86)
It should be noted that not all constituents or aspects of an utterance expressed by a speaker, whether they are its forms or concepts, invariably contribute to its explication or implicature. Some aspects of the utterance actually expressed are sometimes not included in what is communicated. Even a whole utterance actually expressed may not be communicated. Consider the ironical utterance in (23).

(23) [It is found that John, one of A's friend who A trusted completely, deceived A.]

A: John is a fine friend.

In (23), A actually utters 'John is a fine friend.' However, it is clear from the context that he does not mean it and does not communicate it. In other words, the utterance 'John is a fine friend' is not included in the assumptions which A has evidently intended the hearer to pick up. It is expressed and so necessarily accompanied by the utterance, but not communicated.

I would like to suggest that the target of MN, or that of (at least) most MN cases, is this aspect of an utterance: what is necessarily accompanied by uttering linguistic forms but not communicated by the utterance. Bearing these theoretical background in mind, in the next section, I attempt to give a unified characterization to what is negated by the metalinguistic use of negation.

5. A Unified Analysis

I have adopted Carston's echoic analysis of MN which states that the representation falling in the scope of a negation operator is implicitly echoic. It means that an example of MN presupposes its source of echo: attributed utterance or thought, in Wilson's (1999) sense. The data I use in this section is limited to MN cases of attributed utterances and I examine several types of MN to find a unified characterization.

5.1 Connotation/ Focus

The above father-daughter example (3a) (repeated here as (24B)) is a typical example of MN in that the target of negation is not the truth-conditional content of the previous utterance. The context in which (3a) might appear appropriately would be something like the following. Suppose that A, a young college lecturer, meets a new student B who resembles a former high-school teacher of A, and says (24A) to her (=B). She is slightly impudent and responds with (24B). A would be somewhat surprised at her reaction since she has objected to an aspect of his utterance other than the point he has communi-
cated. His point was that Mr. Yoshioka and B are perhaps parent and child. A would recognize B’s consciousness of her own independence and might think that he should address her more carefully.

(24) A: You resemble Mr. Yoshioka very much, who taught me English in my high-school days. You must be his daughter.
   B: I'm not his daughter -- he's my father. (=3a)

In this type of examples, it is not very easy to state appropriately in concrete terms what is being negated. In the attributed utterance ‘You must be his daughter,’ A uses a possessive expression to conceptualize B. A possessive expression is explained by reference-point construction which is one of the basic cognitive abilities in the framework of cognitive grammar. Langacker (1993, 5) claims that “[f]or the analysis of possessives, it is best described as the ability to invoke the conception of one entity for purposes of establishing mental contact with another.” A conceptualizer establishes mental contact with a target by making a more salient entity contingent to it as a reference point.

In (24A), A establishes mental contact with B by way of Mr. Yoshioka as a more salient reference point. What B objected to was A’s way of conceptualizing her. Following Langacker (1993), this is illustrated as in (25). B negates A’s way of conceptualizing her in (25a) and insists that A should adopt (25b).

(25) a. 
   b.

What status does this conceptualization have in our cognitive process of utterance interpretation? Since a lecturer A uses a possessive construction, A’s way of conceptualization with the reference-point construction in (25a) should be necessarily accompa-
nied. However, it is not what was communicated by A, who was confused by B's objection to the aspect. In other words, it cannot be regarded as being what the lecturer A has made it evident that he intends the student B to pick up. It is what was necessarily accompanied by A's utterance but not what A intends B to represent mentally. Based on the above observation, we may construct the following hypothesis.

(26) What is negated by the metalinguistic use of negation is what is necessarily accompanied but not communicated by the source of an echo (an attributed utterance in this case).

In the following subsections, I examine other types of MN and suggest the validity of this hypothesis.

5.2 'Presuppositions'

The context where an utterance of 'presupposition'-canceling such as (3b) appears appropriately would be similar to the following. Suppose that there are two hat-designers, A and B. They have been building a good reputation for the high quality and excellent design of their products. They have recently received orders from several European monarchs, and they are now discussing ways of producing attractive designs for these monarchs by taking their hairstyles into consideration. In this context, A says (27A), to which B objects with (27B).

(27) A: The king of England has long hair. The king of Sweden has very short hair and is half-bald. The king of France is bald.
B: The king of France isn't bald — there isn't any king of France.

A mistakenly believes that France is a monarchy. It is usually claimed by presuppositionalists that the proposition of (27B) 'The king of France isn't bald' has the presupposition 'there is a king of France,' and that what B denies in this example is this 'presupposition.'

In contrast, relevance theory, which I adopt in this paper, takes the anti-prespuppositionalist position where 'presupposition' does not take any special semantic status but is simply regarded as a kind of entailment. For example, if (28a) is true, then (28c) is also necessarily true without any contextual inference. That is, (28c) is an entailment of (28a). It follows that (28c) is necessarily accompanied by (28a) as long as it...

\footnote{This context may be traced back to somewhere in Carston's works.}
is uttered by the speaker.

(28) a. The king of France is bald.
   b. The king of France is not bald.
   c. There is a king of France.

Now let us find out whether or not this is communicated. Generally speaking, from a cognitive processing point of view, some entailments are communicated and others are not. Consider (29). (29B), uttered after the question (29A), communicates an implicature ‘I bought some fruit’ which is an entailment of (29B). The implicature functions as an answer to (29A).

(29) A: Did you buy any fruit?
   B: I bought some apricots and a couple of apples.       (Carston 1998b, 121)
       (→ I bought some fruit.)

On the other hand, in the case of (27), a hat-designer example, the entailment is not communicated because it is not included in its explicatures or in its implicatures. An explicature is a full-fledged propositional form developed, by disambiguation, saturation, free enrichment and ad hoc concept construction, from the logical form of an utterance. (28c) is not one of the explicatures of (28a), which fits our intuition. It is not an implicature of (28a) either, because there is no need to derive and explicitly represent it since it does not produce any cognitive effects, which also fits our intuition; we are not conscious of (28c) when we interpret (28a). Therefore, it is also true of this p-canceling case of MN that the target of the metalinguistic use of negation is what is necessarily accompanied but not communicated by the attributed utterance (the previous utterance in the case of (27)).

5.3 Intonation / Pronunciation
The same characterization can be applied to the pronunciation/ intonation cases of MN, as in the above example (3c), repeated here as (30). It seems to appear appropriately in the following context. (30B) does not answer the descriptive contents of a question (30A) but corrects A’s pronunciation of ‘eSOTeric’. A seems to remember the pronunciation wrongly. This is not included in what is communicated. That is, it is not what A has made it evident A intends B to pick up. It should be regarded as what is necessarily accompanied by the utterance when (30A) is uttered like that.
Wrong pronunciations/intonations of words/sentences sometimes appear in our daily conversations. The hearer rarely points them out and usually interprets the speaker’s intention correctly by means of unspoken revision, because he understands that they are not what the speaker intends the hearer to represent explicitly. This is one of the reasons for communication proceeding without problem.

5.4 Morphology
The morphological cases of MN can also be treated in the same way. In (31), the point to which B objects is A’s plural form of ‘mongoose’. It is regarded as necessarily accompanied by the utterance as long as A utters it like that, but is not included in what is communicated, namely it is not what A has made it evident that he intends B to pick up.

(31) A: I heard that you managed to trap two mongeese yesterday.
    B: I didn’t manage to trap two monGEESE -- I managed to trap two monGOOSES.

5.5 Style/ Register
The same analysis can be applied to style/ register cases of MN. In the above example (3e), repeated here as (32), Mother corrects her child’s word usage. She understands the descriptive content of what Johnny wants to convey, but is not satisfied with how he expresses it. The aspect of the expression ‘feeling lousy’ with which she is not satisfied is certainly accompanied by the utterance as long as he uses it. But it is not what he intends her to pick up. She denies not the descriptive content of his communication but the register of the expressions he uses.

(32) Johnny: Grandma is feeling lousy.
    Mother: Grandma isn’t feeling lousy, Johnny, she is indisposed.

6. Problems to be Solved
Our characterization of the target of MN given in (26) seems to capture successfully all the types of MN examined above, which includes the cases of focus/connotation, ‘presupposition’, intonation/pronunciation, morphology, and style/ register. However,
there seem to be some cases to which the above characterization does not apply in a straightforward fashion.

6.1 Ironical Utterances
As we saw in (23) in § 4, the proposition expressed by an ironical utterance is necessarily accompanied but not communicated by the utterance. If the above characterization in (26) is correct, the proposition which it expressed should be able to be the target of MN and so the following instance of MN should be possible.

(33) [It is found that John, one of A's friend who A trusted completely, deceived A.]
   A: John is a fine friend. (uttered ironically)
   B: He's not a fine friend; he's a poor friend./He's not a fine friend; he's a great friend.
   (from p. c. with Carston)

But (33B) seems to be possible only if B has misunderstood A's utterance and taken him to be communicating that John is a fine friend. Why couldn't it occur if B has correctly understood the utterance as ironical and so realizes that the proposition is only expressed, not communicated? What is the difference between the character of the target of typical MN cases such as the above father-daughter example (24), repeated here as (34), and that of the negation of ironical utterance (33)?

(34) A: You resemble Mr. Yoshioka very much, who taught me English in my high-school days. You must be his daughter.
   B: I'm not his daughter -- he's my father. (=3a, 24)

   I tentatively suggest that it is whether the speaker of the source of an echo intentionally uses the utterance as such: the speaker of the ironical utterance (33A) intentionally uses the expression whose proposition is not communicated and so he is conscious of its character, while the speaker of (34A) is not conscious of his special way of the conceptualization accompanied by his using the expression. If this is correct, the characterization of MN targets in (26) should be revised to something like the following.

(35) What is negated by the metalinguistic use of negation is what is necessarily accompanied but not communicated unintentionally by the source of an echo.
6.2 Generalized Conversational Implicatures

The second problem is what is called 'generalized conversational implicatures' (GCI) in Gricean framework. Most of them are reanalyzed as pragmatic contributions to explicatures, i.e. truth-conditional contents of the utterances in RT. This raises one problem: whether the cases where GCI is negated, as in (36a) and (37a), are really MN cases or not? Horn (1985, 1989) treat them not as DN but as MN cases since, for him, GCI is not part of the truth-conditional contents of the utterance. If we keep Horn's distinction between DN as a negation of the truth-conditional contents and MN as other negation cases than DN, and adopt the framework of RT, it follows that these cases are classified as DN, a possibility which seems to deserve our examination.

A's utterance in (36a) communicates the time-sequential meaning between the first and the second conjuncts of and. This time-sequential meaning has been analyzed as a generalized conversational implicature of and. It can be the target of a negative operator as shown in (36a, B). In relevance theory, the meaning is regarded as a pragmatic contribution to the proposition, i.e. the truth-conditional meaning of the utterance, which is supported by (36b) where the time-sequential meaning is in the scope of if. (36b) would be a logical contradiction if the meaning did not contribute to the propositional content. However, we, in fact, do not interpret (36b) as a logical contradiction.

(36)a. A: I heard that they had a baby and got married.
   B: They didn't have a baby and got married: they got married and had a baby.
   b. If they got married and had a baby, Jane will be happy, but if they had a baby and got married, then Jane will be unhappy.

The same type of argument can be applied to (37), where three and four in if-clauses are interpreted as 'exactly three' and 'exactly four' respectively and these meanings are in the scope of the logical operator if. Otherwise, (37b) would be a logical contradiction. In fact, (37b) is perfectly understandable and we

(37) a. Max doesn't have THREE children – he has FOUR.  (Horn 1985: 143)
   b. If Max has three children, he will manage to take care of them while his wife is out of town, but if he has four, it will be impossible without anybody's help.

Furthermore, the Japanese versions of (36a,B) and (37a) for example, as shown in (38) and (39) respectively, sound descriptive, not metalinguistic, to me and my students who are all native speakers of Japanese, at the pre-theoretical intuitive level.

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6.3. Some of Particularized Implicatures (Q-implicatures)

The third problem is that some of particularized implicatures, Q-implicatures in Horn’s terminology, seem to be the target of the negation operator, as in (40B) and (41). I’m less confident of their status in the cognitive processing theory of utterances, but it seems that the same type of argument in the previous sub-section may be applied to some of them including (40). The attributed utterance (40A)’s explicature will be something like ‘X is meeting a woman other than his family or relatives this evening.’ If so, it is regarded as an example of DN.

(40) A: X is meeting a woman this evening.
B: No, he’s not (meeting a woman this evening) – he’s meeting his wife.

As Horn pointed out, another type of Q-implicatures like (41) below may be a real problem to our analysis. What is denied in (41) is something like the reviewer’s implicatum that Miss X’s performance suffered from some hideous defect. Unlike the case in (40), this assumption is not an explicature of the attributed utterance, since they cannot be regarded as a result of developing the logical form of the utterance. And so we have no way to exclude (41) from MN.
Miss X didn’t ‘produce a series of sounds that corresponded closely with the score of “Home Sweet Home”’, dammit, she SANG ‘Home Sweet Home’.

(Horn 1985:134)

Some further research is needed to comprise this type of MN in a unified analysis. Or we might have to conclude that Horn’s metalinguistic negation does not constitute a natural class.

7. Concluding Remarks

The targets of the metalinguistic use of negation (MN) in Horn’s (1985) sense vary and include connotation, ‘presupposition,’ morphology, pronunciation, style/register, and some Q-implicatures. This paper has tried to provide these various types of metalinguistic negation with a unified characterization from a relevance-driven cognitive processing point of view. Carston (1996) claims that the crucial property of MN is that the material falling in the scope of a negation operator is implicitly echoic. It follows that every case of MN has its source of echo whether it is explicit or not. Limiting the data to the MN cases where the source of the echo is an utterance (more precisely, attributed utterance), I have tried to determine which aspect, or aspects of the utterance can be brought within the scope of a negation operator by the material echoed. Furthermore I have suggested that it may be defined, or stipulated as ‘what is necessarily accompanied but not communicated unintentionally by the attributed utterance.’

This analysis successfully explains that some implicatures of the attributed utterance that are not necessarily accompanied but communicated cannot be the target of MN, as we have seen in the example of the girlfriend in NY. It also succeeds in excluding cases where the MN target is the truth-conditional (propositional) content which is communicated.

The range of MN covered by our analysis is summarized as follows. The examples in (41) are arranged from meta-fomal negation to meta-conceptual negation. Our cognitive-pragmatic analysis captures the characteristic of the target of MN of (41a)-(41e): all the cases of the meta-fomal negation and most cases of meta-conceptual negation are subsumed under our analysis.

(41) a. Her dissertation is not eSOTeric; it’s esoTERic
b. I didn’t manage to trap two monGEESE — I managed to trap two monGOOSEs.

(Carston 1996: 328)

(Horn 1989: 371)
c. I'm not his daughter – he's my father. (Horn 1985: 133)
d. Grandma isn't feeling lousy, Johnny, she is indisposed. (Horn 1985: 133)
e. The king of France isn't bald – there isn't any king of France. (Horn 1985: 125)
f. Miss X didn't 'produce a series of sounds that corresponded closely with the score of “Home Sweet Home’,’ dammit, she SANG 'Home Sweet Home'.

(Horn 1985:134)

I would venture to say that the above characterization at least covers the wide range of MN cases. My future research will deal with how all the meta-conceptual negation types of MN can be dealt with in a unified analysis.

References


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