

Ad hoc concepts, affective attitude and epistemic stance

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Abstract

In relevance-theoretic pragmatics the *lower-level* or *first-order explicature* is a propositional form resulting from a series of inferential developments of a logical form. It amounts to the message the speaker communicates explicitly. The *higher-level* or *second-order explicature* is a description of the speech act that the speaker performs, her affective attitude towards what she says or her epistemic stance to the communicated information. Information about the speaker's affective attitude or epistemic stance need not solely be represented in the latter, though. It could be included as beliefs in the mental files of pragmatically adjusted conceptual representations featuring in lower-level explicatures. Those beliefs would originate as lexical pragmatic processes operate and their representation would be triggered by elements like evaluative morphemes, expressive expletives, insulting terms and evidential participles. Although they may be true or false in their own right, such beliefs would not affect the truth-conditional content of the expressed proposition.

Keywords: Relevance Theory, explicit content, lower-level explicature, higher-level explicature, attitudinal representation, epistemic stance representation, evaluative morphemes, expressive expletives, insulting terms, evidential participles

1 Introduction

Relevance-theoretic pragmatics depicts derivation of speaker's meaning as an intricate process relying on *mindreading* or attribution of psychological states and intentions (Sperber & Wilson 1986/1995, 2015, Wilson & Sperber 2002, 2004). The mind creates various mental representations with a compatible format, one of which captures the message explicitly

communicated through linguistic input. Resulting from decoding and inference, this representation is the *lower-level* or *first-order explicature* of an utterance. Another representation grasps the action that the speaker performs in uttering her¹ words—i.e., the illocutionary force—her epistemic stance to dispensed information—e.g., (dis)belief, (un)certainty, etc.—her feelings while speaking and/or her affective or emotional attitude(s) towards either the message itself or something in the communicative situation. Termed the *higher-level* or *second-order explicature* of an utterance, this second representation is a superordinate mental representation subsuming a lower-level explicature. Its construction relies on paralinguistic clues like facial expressions, gestures or intonation, which are tracked by a specialised emotion-reading (sub-)mechanism included in the mindreading one, even though it may also be constrained by linguistic elements. Hence, that representation is the byproduct of decoding and (to a greater extent) inference. Along with the lower-level explicature, it is part and parcel of the content that the speaker explicitly communicates by means of an utterance.

This paper does not question this twofold distinction, nor does it challenge the illuminating relevance-theoretic contributions concerning the construction of these two types of representations enabling recovery of the explicit import of speaker's meaning. This distinction, however, may suggest a division of work: lower-level explicatures represent communicated messages, while information about actions, feelings, affective attitudes and epistemic stance would be solely restricted to higher-level explicatures. A lower-level explicature results from a series of pragmatic enrichments of decoded linguistic input. One of them involves modulating or adjusting the meaning of words endowed with conceptual content, or creating highly idiosyncratic occasion-specific conceptual representations (Wilson

¹ Following a relevance-theoretic convention, reference to the speaker will be made through the third person singular feminine personal pronoun, whereas reference to the hearer will be made through the masculine counterpart.

& Sperber 1998, Carston 2000, 2002, Wilson & Carston 2006, 2007). Such representations behave as mental files where the hearer may store varied information about what the speaker means (Wilson 2011, 2016, Carston 2013a, 2013b, 2016, Hall 2017). Although that information may pertain to specific characteristics, properties or nuances of their referents—e.g., category, shape, size, colour, flavour, style, number, parts, etc.—it may likewise consist of personal beliefs about the speaker and her relation and experiences with, feelings towards and/or stance about what those words refer to (Scott 2019). In relevance-theoretic pragmatics, construction of occasion-specific conceptual representations is regarded as a *free* pragmatic process. It is an inferential enrichment that is not enacted by any element in the linguistic signal, but is automatically performed as a necessary step to obtain a fully-fledged propositional representation of speaker's meaning (Carston 2000, Jary 2016).

Various lexical morphemes and lexical items ascribe conditions or properties to the referents of the words to which they are attached or appended. However, they often reveal the speaker's attitudes, feelings or emotions to what those words allude to, or her epistemic stance about it. These morphological and lexical items could cause the hearer to represent their user's psychological states, and to add information about them to the conceptual files activated by the words to which they are attached or appended. To put it differently, such elements could give rise to more fine-grained conceptual representations incorporating that sort of information. Accordingly, this paper argues that the morphological and lexical items in question assist the recovery of a specific portion of meaning that speakers communicate explicitly. These items facilitate representations of speakers' psychological states and enact lexical pragmatic processes yielding highly idiosyncratic, nuanced, perhaps one-off, concepts that may comprise beliefs about them. In other words, these items increase the explicitness of the part of speaker-intended meaning that relies on linguistic encoding by enacting representations of speakers' attitudes, emotions, feelings and belief states, as well as

inferences yielding conceptual files storing those representations. This would involve admitting that information about psychological states would be represented at a conceptual level as a result of lexical pragmatic processes, so its representation need not be confined to higher-level explicatures.

The possibility that the said linguistic elements trigger conceptual refinements seems more psychologically plausible and coherent with the relevance-theoretic framework than postulating the enactment of a further representational level capturing information about the speaker's psychological states. Allegedly, that additional representation would be superordinate to, or would encompass entirely, a conceptual constituent of a lower-level explicature. It would not amount to a proper higher-level explicature, as long as its scope does not range over a whole propositional representation, but is just confined to some conceptual component of the lower-level explicature (Padilla Cruz 2018). However, that new representation would certainly contravene Ockham's razor principle, as it involves an unnecessary increase of representational layers during comprehension. The information that it would include could instead be mentally represented as a consequence of the fine-tuning of conceptual material triggered by the morphological and lexical items under scrutiny, and be subsequently added to the mental file associated with that material. In addition to being more parsimonious, this account would be consistent with the relevance-theoretic description of the interpretation of the explicit portion of speaker-intended meaning as contingent on a series of parallel inferential tasks operating on distinct components of linguistic input. In fact, it is based on recent research that stresses the explanatory capabilities of the lexical pragmatic processes posited by relevance-theoretic pragmatics and their outputs, while showing that other linguistic elements may give rise to similar information likely to be filed in occasion-specific conceptual representations (Scott 2019).

2 Explicit meaning

Utterances set in motion a complex mental machinery that works out their significance. This is an exercise in mindreading that takes as input coded and non-encoded elements, along with information perceptible through the senses or stored in the mind. The output is a hypothesis about what the speaker might have meant or intended to communicate explicitly and implicitly: her *informative intention* (Wilson 2017). Formulating a hypothesis about explicit meaning partially depends on decoding. This is performed by the linguistic module of the mindreading mechanism. It unpacks the semantic content of the acoustic signal, accesses its potential sense(s) and minimally structures it into a *logical form*, or a chunk of representations “in the appropriate format for integration with representations from other information sources” (Carston 2000: 6). Since this form is not yet fully propositional, it needs to undergo context-dependent pragmatic developments yielding a truth-evaluable form amounting to what the speaker might have communicated explicitly (Sperber & Wilson 1986/1995: 72, 181, Wilson & Sperber 2002, 2004).

The inferential (sub-)module carries out a series of incredibly fast, parallel, non-sequential tasks while linguistic input is perceived and processed: *mutual parallel adjustment* (Sperber & Wilson 1986/1995, Carston 2000, 2002). One of them is *disambiguation* of the potential senses of lexical items and/or of specific sentential constituents. Other tasks are triggered by linguistic material in the acoustic signal (Carston 2000, Jary 2016):

- a. Reference assignment to pronouns, deictics or proper nouns, and delimitation of the temporal coordinates of the actions denoted by verbs. These tasks are constrained by the *procedural meaning* or processing instructions that such elements encode (Blakemore 1987, 2002, Wilson & Sperber 1993, 2002, 2004).

b. Completing syntactically complete but semantically sub-propositional sentences (Carston 2000, 2002, 2009, Carston & Hall 2017, Hall 2017), as in (1), and establishing certain relations between states of affairs alluded to in a proposition, as in (2):

(1) a. This is the same [as what?]

b. Mary is too tall [for what? If compared to whom?]

(2) John came to London and [then/while he was there] visited Mary.

Still, other pragmatic developments are not triggered by linguistic elements, but are a necessary step to obtain a fully explicit expression of speaker's meaning. They are known as *free enrichment* and result from two operations:

a. Supplying of *unarticulated constituents*, such as the location or time of an event, or the instrument wherewith an action is performed. This process is free from linguistic control because it is the byproduct of “general and routine processes of reasoning” (Carston 2000: 35) based on knowledge about actions and events, their agents, requisites, consequences, etc.:²

(3) a. There are several boxes [in the warehouse/store] [now/today]

b. Tom gave Mary the key and [then] she opened the door [with that key].

b. *Lexical adjustment*. The canonical relevance-theoretic view is that open-class words like nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs encode schematic concepts with a denotation—*pro-concepts*—and *procedures* enabling their adjustment (Sperber & Wilson 1998, Wilson

² In relevance-theoretic pragmatics this inferential development is not triggered by overt or covert indexicals, or empty constituent slots, in the logical form (Carston 2000, Wilson & Sperber 2000, Carston & Hall 2017).

2011, Hall 2017).³ A possible adjustment *broadens* or *loosens* the denotation of a concept towards something less specific than its literal meaning by dropping one or more of its logical or defining properties—i.e., by eliminating information from its *logical entry* (Carston 2000, 2002, Wilson & Carston 2006, 2007). Accordingly, the concept CIRCLE in (4) is modulated as the *ad hoc*, occasion-specific concept CIRCLE*, which does not denote a circular, but a circle-like shape (from Carston 2013b):⁴

(4) The children quickly formed a *circle*.

Another adjustment *narrows* or *strengthens* a concept so that it refers to something more specific. This involves elevating information in its *encyclopaedic entry* to the status of logical, defining characteristic on the grounds of other co-occurring concepts and manifest assumptions about the communicative situation and the speaker's intentions (Carston 2002: 339, Hall 2017: 93). Thus, in (5) DRINK is specified as DRINK* referring to 'drinking large quantities of alcohol' (from Carston 2013b):

(5) Many doctors *drink* because of the stress of their job.

Both adjustments take place in combination, for example, when words are metaphorically used. In this case, some of the defining properties of the encoded concept are eliminated and one or more items of encyclopaedic information become(s) content-constitutive.

However, the most recent view contends that open-class words lack a denotational content

³ Carston (2013b) considers it unlikely that instructions attached to every lexical concept trigger lexical adjustment. They would be redundant when the communicated concept is the one literally encoded.

⁴ Following another relevance-theoretic convention, concepts are notated in small caps and ad hoc concepts with an asterisk.

that can be abstracted away from any context of use. They simply encode “an address or file label giving access to associated information in memory” (Hall 2017: 97). They are conceptually underspecified and can express differing concepts depending on context and available world knowledge. They are purely procedural elements enacting the creation of occasion-specific conceptual files on the basis of co-occurring lexical items, other sentential material, paralinguistic, available contextual information and general knowledge (Carston 2013a, 2013b, 2016, Wilson 2016).⁵ Thus, a demonstrative like *that* in the definite description in (6) may provide information concerning the fact that the referent of the noun it accompanies is unknown to the speaker:

(6) That man is jumping over the fence.

Instead of assisting the hearer in identifying the referent or contributing truth-conditional information, the demonstrative would trigger the ad hoc concept MAN* and add to its conceptual file assumptions about the fact that the speaker does not know the person she refers to (Scott 2019). Something similar would happen if a speaker uttered (7):

(7) I will get some dark chocolate!

The adjective preceding the noun, exclamatory intonation, facial expression and knowledge about the speaker would cause the hearer to create the concept DARK CHOCOLATE*. Its file might include varied assumptions about the brand or quantity—a square or a whole bar—meant by the speaker, her passion for or addiction to that type of

⁵ This is known as the *meaning eliminativist* approach (Carston 2013b).

chocolate, or the time when she has some. Similarly, conceptual files could store beliefs about attitudes, emotions, feelings or belief states like (un)certainly, scepticism, etc.

The output of these pragmatic developments is the lower-level or first-order explicature, or simply the explicature of an utterance. This is the portion of speaker's meaning that is explicitly communicated through a linguistically encoded signal, which the speaker intends the hearer to represent to himself as true. An explicature is a fully-fledged propositional representation that results not only from decoding, but also from the inferential activity necessary for the aforesaid developments, among which is ad hoc concept construction. It is distinct and *functionally independent* from an implicature: it does not overlap in content, is not entailed by an implicature, has its own truth conditions, functions as an autonomous premise in inferences and is stored separately. However, like implicatures, explicatures are calculable and cancellable because their derivation involves inference (Carston 2013a: 261–264, Wilson 2017).⁶ The more inference needed, the *weaker* explicatures will be, while the more decoding involved, the *stronger* they will be (Wilson & Sperber 2002, 2004).

Explicatures heavily depending on decoding make speaker's meaning relatively more determinate or explicit, while those greatly relying on inference render it less so (Carston 2013a, Wilson 2017). In addition to paralanguage and available contextual assumptions, morphological and lexical items may steer inferences conducive to speaker's meaning, and more specifically ad hoc concept construction. These items would thus increase its explicitness.

Lower-level explicatures, however, do not exhaust the representation of speakers' explicit meaning. Its representation may also include beliefs about their psychological states—i.e., attitudes, emotions, feelings—and the actions that they seek to accomplish, which they reveal

⁶ Yet, Burton-Roberts (2005: 401) thinks that explicatures cannot be cancellable because they are part of the truth-conditional content of an utterance.

through a variety of linguistic and paralinguistic means. As the creation of lower-level explicatures is in progress, another (sub-)module simultaneously attributes intentions, feelings and emotions to speakers, as well as mental states like (dis)belief, (un)confidence, (un)certainly, etc., about what they say. It takes as input both coded elements and paralinguistic clues, and yields a conceptual schema amounting to a speech-act or propositional-attitude description. Known as the higher-level or second-order explicature of an utterance, it subsumes the pragmatically developed propositional form of an utterance:

(8) [SPEAKER_x WANTS/REQUESTS/IS HAPPY/IS WORRIED [*p*]]

The construction of higher-level explicatures may also be constrained by a series of linguistic elements and features:

a. *Attitudinal* adverbials headed by *happily*, *sadly* or *unfortunately*, which are appended to a sentence, make up an independent tone group and convey information about affective attitudes (Ifantidou 1992, Wilson & Sperber 1993):

(9) a. Sadly/Unfortunately, Martha passed away yesterday.

b. [SPEAKER_x IS SAD/REGRETS [MARTHA_y DIED* at time_t]]

b. *Illocutionary* adverbials headed by *frankly*, *seriously* or *honestly*, and with similar characteristics. They unveil the manner in which speakers dispense information (Ifantidou 1993, Wilson & Sperber 1993):

(10)a. Frankly/Seriously, Martha passed away yesterday.

b. [SPEAKER_x SAYS in a frank/serious manner [MARTHA_y DIED* at time_t]]

c. *Evidentials* providing information about speakers' epistemic stance to what they say, their degree of commitment to it or the sort of evidence they rely on. A subset includes evidential adverbials (11); *hearsay* adverbials (12), and parenthetical phrases (13), which share the said syntactic and prosodic features (Ifantidou 2001, Wilson & Sperber 1993, Wilson 1999):

(11)a. Clearly/Obviously, Martha passed away yesterday.

b. [SPEAKER_X IS CERTAIN [MARTHA_Y DIED* at time_t]]

(12)a. Allegedly/Reportedly, Martha passed away yesterday.

b. [SPEAKER_X IS UNCERTAIN [MARTHA_Y DIED* at time_t]]

(13)a. Martha passed away yesterday, I heard.

b. [SPEAKER_X IS UNSURE [MARTHA_Y DIED* at time_t]]

Another subset gathers linguistic properties and elements like declarative syntax, indicative and subjunctive mood, and modal verbs (Wilson & Sperber 1993, Wilson 1999):

(14)a. Martha passed away yesterday.

b. [SPEAKER_X BELIEVES [MARTHA_Y DIED* at time_t]]

(15)a. Martha might have passed away yesterday.

b. [SPEAKER_X IS UNSURE [MARTHA_Y DIED* at time_t]]

d. Declarative or interrogative syntax (16, 17), indicative or imperative mood (16, 18) or conventionalised syntactic formulae and *illocutionary force indicating devices* (19), which facilitate identification of the action that speakers perform:

(16)a. Martha passed away yesterday.

b. [SPEAKER_X SAYS [MARTHA_Y DIED* at time_t]]

(17)a. Did Martha pass away yesterday?

b. [SPEAKER_X ASKS [MARTHA_Y DIED* at time_t]]

(18)a. Pass me some salt.

b. [SPEAKER_X WANTS [I_Y PASS* HER_Y SALT* at time_t]]

(19)a. Can/Could/Would you please pass me some salt?

b. [SPEAKER_X REQUESTS [I_Y PASS* HER_Y SALT* at time_t]]

Additionally, higher-level explicatures may be constrained by paralinguistic elements and clues such as interjections (20), intonation contours, gestures or facial expressions (Wilson & Wharton 2006, Padilla Cruz 2009, Wharton 2009, 2016):

(20)a. Alas, Martha passed away yesterday!

b. [SPEAKER_X IS SAD [MARTHA_Y DIED* at time_t]]

A higher-level explicature may be characterised as a propositional representation of the speaker's affective attitude, her epistemic stance about the information that she dispenses or the action that she performs in speaking. It is part of her intended meaning or informative intention, and is identified by a combination of decoding, inference and emotion-reading in some cases, while in others by inference and emotion-reading. Since inference plays a role and it may go wrong, higher-level explicatures also are calculable and cancellable. They are *strong* if their construction depends on decoding and paralinguistic clues determinately showing the speaker's purposes, psychological states or epistemic stance, but their strength

decreases as the amount and/or determinacy of such clues diminishes. Finally, higher-level explicatures cannot be entailed by implicatures, so they are functionally independent from implicatures and also play a different role in mental computations, even if they are tightly connected with lower-level ones (see Carston 2013a).

The two components of explicit utterance import shed much light on how speaker's meaning is arrived at (Moeschler 2017, Wilson 2017). They also help to better understand where comprehension problems may originate (Yus Ramos 1999, Moeschler 2007, Padilla Cruz 2013, 2017). The shades of meaning amenable to representation in higher-level explicatures have also prompted analyses of further linguistic elements as yielding specific superordinate attitudinal representations (Zakowski 2014). However, representation of the speaker's affective attitude or epistemic stance need not be confined to higher-level explicatures. A variety of linguistic elements could trigger it during the inferential adjustment of lexical material and cause the addition of information about that portion of speaker-intended meaning to the conceptual file associated with that material.

3 Lexical adjustment and psychological states

Many languages possess morphological items that are attached to words encoding or activating concepts: *evaluative* morphemes like the diminutive and the augmentative. On some occasions, they nuance referents in a variety of manners, while on other occasions they seem to convey information about the speaker's attitude, emotions or feelings about them. Languages also have lexical items devoid of effable content that speakers add before conceptual elements within a phrasal structure: expletives like *damn(ed)*, *fucking* or *bleeding*. They lack the modifying value characteristic of adjectives and fulfil similar functions.

Speakers also use a wide variety of offensive terms: qualifying insults—e.g., *idiot*, *stupid*—which ascribe negative, relatively easily identifiable qualities to their target; denigrating epithets—e.g., *whoreson*, *asshole*—which attribute blurred and fuzzy conditions to them, and slurs—e.g., *chink*, *faggot*—which disparagingly refer to social, sometimes racial/ethnic, groups. Likewise, these terms express (negative) attitudes, emotions and feelings about their targets or the mentioned social groups or types. Owing to their functions, these three types of elements may be classified as *expressives* (Pott 2007a, 2007b, Blakemore 2011, 2015).

Nominal heads are frequently accompanied by some participles that appear to modify them—e.g., *supposed*, *alleged*. However, such participles do not satisfy proper adjectival functions, as they do not provide information regarding the features or conditions of the referents of the heads with which they co-occur. They seem to communicate stances like (un)certainty, doubt, scepticism, caution, etc., about what those nominal heads actually denote, or the sort of evidence available to the speaker to allude to their referents in a particular manner. This function places these participles within the broad category of *evidentials* (Ifantidou 2001).

These morphological and lexical elements could give rise to representations of the speaker's emotional states, affective attitudes and belief states. Such representations would not pertain to the propositional content that she communicates, but just to what is denoted by the words which receive them or they accompany. Additionally, these elements would also steer or constrain the modulation of the conceptual material activated by those words. They would cause the storage of beliefs about such attitudes and states in the file of the resulting ad hoc concepts.

3.1 Evaluative morphology and ad hoc concepts

Inflectional languages like Spanish or Italian—both belonging to the Romance family—Modern Greek or Jordanian Arabic, to name but a few, possess a number of derivational morphemes, among which are the diminutive and the augmentative (Sifianou 1992, De Marco 1995, Mendoza 2005, Bosque 2009, Bardaneh 2010). Phonologically realised through various allomorphs attachable not only to nouns, but also to adjectives and adverbs, these two affixes typically indicate subjective or objective, size- or degree-related appraisals. Therefore, they have an evaluative function (Volek 1987, Wierzbicka 1991, Bosque 2009). In Spanish, for example, this function enables both morphemes to intensify the degree of a quality or manner when they are added to adjectives (21a, b) and adverbs (21c), and to express nuances about the size of an entity when they are added to nouns (21d) (Mendoza 2005):

(21)a. La casa está *ordenadita*.

‘The house is tidy[+DIM]’.

b. Tu hijo está *grandote*.

‘Your son is tall/big[+AUG]’.

c. Tomás llegó *prontito*.

‘Thomas arrived soon[+DIM]’.

d. Luis se ha comprado un *casoplón*.

‘Lewis has bought a house[+AUG]’.

Evaluative function also enables the diminutive and the augmentative to denigrate an entity or express pejoration:

(22)a. María ha visto una *peliculilla* de terror.

‘Mary has watched a horror film[+DIM]’.

b. Marta es una *mujerzuela*.

‘Martha is a woman[+DIM]’.

c. El otro día unos *niñatos* rompieron una ventana.

‘Some guys[+AUG] broke a window the other day’.

Lastly, it also licenses the usage of the diminutive alone in approximate assessments:

(23)a. El regalo es *carillo*.

‘The gift is expensive[+DIM]’.

b. Marta está *tristecilla* porque su novio la ha dejado.

‘Martha is sad[+DIM] because her boyfriend left her’.

Both morphemes may serve additional hearer- and/or speaker-supportive functions in positive-politeness contexts characterised by intimacy, solidarity, camaraderie and good—and egalitarian—relations, as well as in negative-politeness contexts characterised by social distance and/or power-differences (Brown & Levinson 1987). Functions common to both morphemes include (Sifianou 1992, Mendoza 2005; Badarneh 2010):

- Showing positive emotions like affection, endearment or admiration:

(24)a. ¡Qué *perrito* más bonito tiene María!

‘What an adorable doggie Mary has!’

b. ¡Qué *cochazo* se ha comprado Luis!

‘What a car[+AUG] Lewis has bought!’

- Asserting or strengthening intimacy:

(25)a. ¡No me seas *cabroncete*!

‘Don’t be such a bastard[+DIM]!’

b. ¡Eres un *cabronazo*!

‘You are a bastard[+AUG]!’

Functions exclusively characteristic of the diminutive include (Sifianou 1992; Mendoza 2005; Badarneh 2010):

- Showing modesty and avoiding bragging:

(26)a. Me he comprado un *apartmentito* en la playa.

‘I have bought an apartment[+DIM] on the coast’.

b. Tengo una *casita* en las montañas.

‘I own a house[+DIM] in the mountains’.

- Hedging or mitigating directive acts like requests, commands or orders by minimising the degree of imposition:

(27)a. ¡Anda, dame un *vasito* de agua!

‘Come on, give me a glass[+DIM] of water!’

b. ¿Puede esperar un *segundito*?

‘Could you hold on a second[+DIM]?’

When face is not an interactive concern, both morphemes may even increase the face-threateningness or aggressiveness of actions like insulting, offending or criticising (Brown & Levinson 1987):

(28)a. ¡Eres un *cabronazo*!

‘You are a bastard[+AUG]!’

b. ¡Vaya *perrucho* se ha comprado María!

‘What a dog[+DIM] Mary has bought!’

This variety of functions renders the interpretation of both evaluative morphemes extremely discourse-sensitive and contingent on situational factors like the interlocutors’ identities, relationships and, most importantly, intentions (Würstle 1992: 50). It certainly unveils that their semantics cannot stably be connected with notions such as littleness, bigness or low/high amount or degree. Indeed, the speaker of (21a) would not be stating that the house is not very tidy, that of (22a) would not be asserting that the film that Mary watched was short, that of (23a) would not be saying that the gift is inexpensive and that of (24b) would not be exclaiming that the car that Lewis bought is big. Similar things would happen in the other cases where the diminutive and the augmentative express intensification, pejoration, approximation, intimacy or modesty, or are used to offend. Although both morphemes could encode a ‘[fictive]’ feature that is contextually specified as ‘[non-serious]’ (Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi 2001), their semantics could rather be seen as contributing to lexical adjustment in these cases. In (21a), attachment of the diminutive to the adjective *ordenada* (‘tidy’) expresses a higher degree of tidiness than average or expected; in (22a), the diminutive causes the noun *película* (‘film’) to denote a boring or bad quality film, and in (23a), it conveys the idea that the gift was overpriced or unexpectedly (very) expensive. In (25) and (28a), the diminutive and the augmentative help the speaker respectively communicate that she considers the addressee a special, outstanding, peculiar, miserable or disrespectful type of person, or that she ascribes to him any of a range of qualities or conditions like naughtiness, misbehaviour, impoliteness or wretchedness, while in (26), the

diminutive makes the nouns *apartamento* ('apartment') and *casa* ('house') refer to an affordable, inexpensive or modest kind of second dwelling. These morphemes trigger the modulation of the concepts encoded or activated by these nouns and adjectives as ORDENADA*/TIDY*, PELÍCULA*/FILM*, CARO*/EXPENSIVE*, and so on. Those occasion-specific concepts would respectively capture subjective or objective assessments and estimates about the degree of tidiness of the house, the quality of a film, the price of a gift, personality or the features of a dwelling. Hence, the semantics of these morphemes would be procedural: it would enact and steer an inferential process of construction of highly idiosyncratic, perhaps one-off, concepts.

In the canonical relevance-theoretic view of lexical adjustment, the defining properties of the concepts encoded by the words receiving the diminutive and the augmentative would be preserved. Since their encyclopaedic entries would include information about the speaker's possible views, opinions, standards, appraisals, etc., that information, or part of it, would be shifted to defining property, even if momentarily. This would involve a narrowing towards some more delimited notional space that incorporates some evaluative component about the referent of the noun, or the condition alluded to by the adjective, to which these evaluative morphemes are attached. Its final output, nevertheless, would depend on the contextual and encyclopaedic information manifest to the hearer, among which would feature beliefs about the speaker and what she is referring to. In the more recent view, in contrast, these morphemes would cause the words to which they are attached to activate conceptual files where hearers would store highly idiosyncratic and specific beliefs concerning the speaker's views, opinions, appraisals, assessments, etc., about what she alludes to by means of those words. Thus, the conceptual file PELÍCULA* resulting from the attachment of the diminutive to *película* in (22a) could store beliefs such as the following:

- (29)a. The plot was predictable.
- b. The story was not believable.
 - c. The cast did not include famous actors.
 - d. The special effects were terrible.
 - e. The photography was miserable.
 - f. The soundtrack was bad.
 - g. The film budget was ridiculous.

These beliefs could be true or false in their own right, as they stem from the hearer's estimates about the speaker's assessment, opinion, viewpoint, etc., on the grounds of knowledge about her, paralanguage and manifest contextual or encyclopaedic assumptions. In fact, the reason why the speaker refers to the film that Mary watched as *peliculilla*, and invites the creation of the concept PELÍCULA*, may be the actual features of its plot, story, cast, special effects, photography or soundtrack, but it need not be. Nevertheless, the representation and storage of similar beliefs within the activated conceptual file would not affect the truth-conditional content of the proposition that the speaker explicitly expresses: the speaker states that Mary watched a horror film and it actually was a horror film that she watched.

Similarly, the speaker of (27a) does not ask for a small glass of water and that of (27b) would not expect the addressee to wait for literally less than a second or for something like 'a small second'. While both perform requestive acts, they also provide estimates about the minimal demands of those acts through the diminutive. Its associated idea of littleness or smallness is somehow symbolically transferred to their actions. Thus, they insinuate that the requested good or action are not meant to significantly impose on their hearers, hamper their freedom of action or involve much effort or cost (Brown & Levinson 1987). As a result, the hearer of (27b) would create an occasion-specific concept denoting a wait time that does not

exactly amount to a second, but to some short time span. He could also add to its file beliefs concerning the facts that the speaker does not regard it as excessively or unduly long or burdensome, finds it reasonable or considers it polite for the hearer to wait for some relatively brief time span in that particular situation. The diminutive in (27a) would cause ‘glass of water’ to give rise to an idiosyncratic concept, too. Perhaps that concept GLASS OF WATER* does not store or give prominence to assumptions about physical or size-related features of what the speaker refers to. Rather, it may highlight beliefs to the effect that a glass of water is a relatively free good in the interlocutors’ culture, asking for one is a permitted action in the interlocutors’ current relationship and giving one is an almost effortless action at the time of speaking. The speaker’s intonation, tone of voice, facial expression and gestures could also make manifest or bring to the fore assumptions regarding her relationship with the hearer and her attitude towards him. The interaction of the diminutive with those paralinguistic clues could result in the addition of such assumptions to the mental file of the created concept. This would hence comprise a constellation of beliefs of very varied content.

In addition to expressing intensification, pejoration or approximation; showing intimacy or modesty, and being used to offend or mitigate actions, the diminutive and the augmentative also serve an expressive function (Potts 2007a, 2007b, Blakemore 2011, 2015). Both morphemes unveil the speaker’s attitudes, feelings or emotions about an individual, animal, object or entity alluded to in the proposition that she explicitly communicates. It might appear reasonable to postulate that they activate, or raise the activation of, the emotion-reading mechanism, thus facilitating the identification and representation of the speaker’s psychological states. The resulting representation might be thought to resemble a higher-level explicature, as long as its content captures the speaker’s attitudes, feelings or emotions. However, it would differ from a higher-level explicature in terms of scope: while a higher-level explicature subsumes a whole pragmatically enriched propositional form, the scope of

the representation enacted by the diminutive and the augmentative would only affect a conceptual component of a proposition. This new attitudinal or emotional representation could be some sort of *intermediate-level explicature* (Padilla Cruz 2018). Yet, postulating this becomes problematic. Firstly, its construction unnecessarily increases the complexity of the mutual parallel adjustment tasks yielding the explicit portion of speaker's meaning. Secondly, it involves a superfluous augmentation in the number of representational layers with which the mind would work. Thirdly, the fact that this new representation was the output of the diminutive and the augmentative morphemes would render their procedural meaning polysemous: whereas these morphemes set in motion lexical pragmatic processes in most cases, only when they work as expressives would their encoded procedure yield that representation. If this was so, a further mental instruction would have to enact or impede one or the other procedure.

Evaluative morphemes certainly make manifest information about the speaker's attitudes, feelings or emotions. Its representation could even be secured by additional linguistic features, paralinguistic clues and available encyclopaedic information about the speaker. However, it seems more plausible that such a representation amounts to beliefs pertaining to some conceptual component of a logical form. They would emerge during pragmatic enrichment, their contents would be determined by these morphemes and they would be housed by the mental file for that component. So these morphemes also contribute to ad hoc concept construction when they fulfil an expressive function. They not only foster the enactment of occasion-specific mental files associated with elements of propositional forms, but also supply beliefs about the speaker's psychological states with which to fill them. As a result, such mental entities will very likely host a doxastic universe made up of varied beliefs. Some of them will concern nuances, temporary conditions, stable peculiarities or size-related characteristics of what the speaker refers to by means of the word to which these morphemes

are attached. Others, in contrast, may have to do with the attitudes that the speaker has towards it and/or the feelings and emotions that it causes her to experience.

Thus, the diminutive in (24a) favours the creation of the mental file PERRO*/DOG*, which surely accommodates beliefs about the referred pet's breed, size, coat, age, eyes, sex, tail, legs, mood, etc. Just as it could also incorporate assumptions concerning the animal's calmness, shyness, braveness, playfulness or fierceness, it could also harbour beliefs about the fact that the speaker loves that sort of dog or breed, feels tenderness or admiration towards it, has an affectionate or paternalistic attitude towards it, etc. And the same would obviously apply to the augmentative in (24b): it would cause the storage of attitude- or emotion-related beliefs in the mental file of the idiosyncratic concept whose construction it prompts, possibly along with specific paralinguistic clues. This means that the procedural semantics of both morphemes yields the same output regardless of whether they behave as expressives or fulfil other functions, so it is monosemous. It activates mental files and directs, at least partially, how they are filled with beliefs of a specific content whose representation it also enacts. Their inclusion in those files would somehow increase the explicitness of a portion of meaning that the speaker expects the hearer to derive on the grounds of linguistically encoded input.

3.2 Expressive expletives, ad hoc concepts and psychological states

Languages like English or Spanish commonly place seeming nouns and adjectival participles in pre-nominal position. Yet, they do not fulfil proper adjectival functions, as they do not denote stable qualities or gradable properties:

(30)a. The *fucking/bleeding* bastard said he would come earlier!

b. ¡El *puto/jodido* cabrón dijo que vendría más temprano!

(31)a. Give it to that *fucking/bleeding* idiot.

b. Dáselo a ese *puto/jodido* imbécil.

Unlike prototypical adjectives, these words cannot be gradated or intensified with adverbs. They cannot receive prefixes that give rise to derived terms, either. Furthermore, movement from pre-nominal to predicative position, or replacement with defining relative clauses, dramatically distorts what speakers intend to communicate (Huddleston 1988: 108–110, Greenbaum & Quirk 1993: 142, Haegeman & Guéron 1999: 56–57, 71–72, Collins & Hollo 2000: 80–81, Börjars & Burridge 2001: 64–65):

(32)*The bastard *who/that was fucking/bleeding* said he would come earlier!

However, these words partake of adjectival features on some occasions, as they have heightening effects:

(33)a. John is a *fucking* star/idiot.

b. Juan es un *puto crack*/imbécil.

In English, moreover, they can also precede adjectives. In this case, they achieve intensifying effects characteristic of some adverbs:

(34)The cake was *fucking/damn* delicious!⁷

Like evaluative morphemes, these seeming nouns and adjectival participles would trigger and contribute to ad hoc concept construction. In the traditional account, they would prompt the

⁷ In Spanish this function is fulfilled by an adverb: “La tarta estaba *jodidamente* buena”.

adjustment of the concept encoded by the phrasal head with which they co-occur. Given its descriptive content, it would be narrowed and the resulting concept would place its referent up—or perhaps down—an alleged scale of alluded types of persons or qualities. Accordingly, the concept IDIOT*, created by the hearer of (33a), would denote an outstanding or exceptional type of idiot, whereas DELICIOUS*, constructed by that of (34), would represent an extraordinary or unexpected degree of deliciousness. The semantics of these seeming participles would be rather elusive, but it would be closer to that of adverbs like *extremely*, *incredibly*, *surprisingly* or *shockingly*, than to that of adverbs like *very*, *highly* or *fairly*. Indeed, the former adverbs do not simply upgrade entities or increase qualities, but also add emotional touches connected with shock, surprise, unexpectedness, puzzlement, overwhelm, etc. Such touches would be captured by the fine-tuned concept. In the more recent account, the interaction of these seeming nouns and adjectival participles with the phrasal head would create a conceptual file likely to store a cascade of beliefs. That resulting from (33a) could include beliefs regarding the facts that the alluded person is not an average idiot or the speaker is surprised, amazed or overwhelmed to discover his actual degree of idiocy. In turn, that resulting from (34) might incorporate beliefs concerning the cake's extraordinary degree of deliciousness, its uniqueness—which might be caused by the ingredients, flavour, texture or the way it was baked—or the fact that the speaker is positively impressed by it, admires and appraises it.

Lack of a clearly identifiable or easily effable conceptual content places these seeming nouns and participles within the group of expletives, along with elements like the slot holder *it* or existential *there* in English. Their conceptual emptiness facilitates large expressive capabilities, among which features voicing elusive things like psychological states. This function further sorts these lexical items out as a sub-group of expressive expletives. Moreover, lack of conceptual semantics renders them procedural elements steering the mental

tasks in mutual parallel adjustment. Their output might be thought to be a representation of the psychological state(s) that the speaker experiences about the referent of a nominal head. Its range would be shorter than that of a higher-level explicature, as it would be limited to the referent of the noun with which these words co-occur (Padilla Cruz 2018). Nonetheless, as with evaluative morphemes and expletives with adjectival or adverbial functions, it seems more coherent with the relevance-theoretic framework that the procedural semantics of expressive expletives contributes to lexical pragmatic processes. It would also determine the direction of lexical adjustment and its output, or steer the filling of the conceptual files activated by the nominal heads that they accompany. In addition to enacting the representation of beliefs concerning the speaker's attitudes, emotions or feelings about what she refers to, their semantics would cause the storage of those beliefs in such files. Information about such states would hence be represented at a conceptual level. Thus, the conceptual files activated by the nouns in (30) and (31)—perhaps PERSON or MAN—would also home assumptions regarding the scorn that the speaker feels about the referenced person, her contemptuous attitude towards him or the negative emotions that he causes her to experience. Such beliefs do not affect the truth conditions of the content that the speaker explicitly communicates, even though they will be true or false in their own right. Nevertheless, their representation and storage within a conceptual file will render more explicit what the speaker communicates about her psychological states.

3.3 Offensive terms and lexical pragmatic processes

As opposed to evaluative morphemes and expressive expletives, the semantics of qualifying insults, denigrating epithets and slurs is conceptual. It enables the ascription of definite, or somewhat indeterminate, derogatory conditions or features to their targets—e.g., inferiority,

ineptitude, disreputability, etc. (Croom 2014: 232–236, Archer 2015: 83). The interpretation of utterances containing these offensive terms, though, need not require representing in exact terms what the speaker is actually calling the hearer or the precise quality that she attributes to him. Their occurrence could simply lead the target to forge an approximate representation of what the speaker does—namely, insulting him:

(35)a. You are a(n) idiot/asshole/faggot!

b. [SPEAKER_x INSULTS* HEARER_y at time_t]

However, as with any item with a conceptual semantics, these terms set in motion lexical pragmatic processes. Perhaps their output is more evident when these words receive prosodic prominence. Alternatively, their output could be more evident when their target entertains beliefs about specific states of affairs or he is familiar with their user and how she normally tends to employ them.

Qualifying insults activate representations of scalar and multifaceted properties like idiocy, stupidity or retardation. Their interpretation might depend on a rough or exact determination of the degree or nuance of the quality felt to have been ascribed. In the canonical view, that specification would rely on narrowing the linguistically encoded concept. Thus, the concept IDIOT* in the lower-level explicature of (35a) would denote an average or outstanding type of idiot; a slight, moderate or deep idiot; a demented, crazed or frenzied person, or an idiot that is closer to a village fool. In the more radical view, that specification would be made through a conceptual file accommodating diverse beliefs. Some of them could concern the denigrating, harmful or malign attitudes that the speaker holds towards the target of the insult.

Slurs sometimes denote a social type or group. When they are used descriptively and attributively, their interpretation would proceed along the same lines as that of qualifying

insults. Other times, however, slurs are used metaphorically. In the traditional account, their encoded concepts need to undergo broadening and narrowing simultaneously: one or some of the defining characteristics of the mentioned type or group must be dropped, while some encyclopaedic information about that type or group must be upgraded to defining feature (Padilla Cruz 2019). For instance, FAGGOT* in the lower-level explicature of (35a) could just focus on the target's effeminacy or flamboyance. The mental file for a slur, however, would host assumptions about the user's scornful or damaging attitude(s) towards the social type or group alluded to (Blakemore 2015: 23).

In contrast, offending epithets do not seem to encode concepts denoting easily identifiable scalar properties or describing social types or groups. Rather, they seem to refer to extremely nebulous and blurred properties. These epithets originated in terms labelling, for example, recognisable social types—e.g., an illegitimate son—or physiological organs—e.g., anus. Subsequently, such terms were metaphorically applied to places or individuals possessing certain characteristics. In the traditional account, that use called for simultaneous broadening and narrowing, which yielded ad hoc concepts that could grasp the properties felt to have been attributed to their targets. The spread and progressive stabilisation of that use could have replaced the content initially encoded by these epithets with an all-encompassing, overarching, rather vague or fuzzy one. This replacement diluted their conceptual load and rendered it elusive or ineffable. Ultimately, it motivated a semantic change that enabled the application of these epithets to virtually denote any negative condition (Padilla Cruz 2019).⁸ Their interpretation, however, would be contingent on lexical pragmatic processes yielding occasion-specific concepts or mental files, as in the case of insults and slurs. Beliefs about their user's slighting, ridiculing, besmearing, discrediting or offending attitudes or intentions

⁸ See Clark (2016) for a relevance-theoretic account of semantic change based on lexical pragmatic processes.

would surely find a place within them, too (Allan 2015: 187). Their representation and storage would similarly add to the clearness of the explicit import of messages.

3.4 Evidential participles, lexical pragmatics and belief states

Finally, languages like English and Spanish often modify head nouns with past participles like ‘*alleged*, *supposed* (*presunto*) or *suspected* (*supuesto*) in attributive position:

- (36)a. The *alleged* robber was sent to prison.
- b. *Suspected* killer arrested.
- c. El jugador de fútbol se niega a declarar por *presunto* fraude.
‘Footballer refuses to declare because of suspected fraud’.
- d. Denuncian la *supuesta* estafa de una página web.
‘Supposed website scam denounced’.

Unlike prototypical adjectives and adjectival participles, they are excluded from predicative position and cannot be intensified (37a–b). They cannot appear in comparative or superlative structures (37c–d), either. But they may be modified by some adverbs (37e) (Huddleston 1988: 108–110, Haegeman & Guéron 1999: 56–57, 71–72, Collins & Hollo 2000: 80–81, Börjars & Burridge 2001: 64–65):

- (37)a. *The robber was alleged.
- b. *The very alleged robber was sent to prison.
- c. *The robber was more alleged than reported.
- d. *The most alleged robber was sent to prison.
- e. The *widely* suspected robber was sent to prison.

In English, these participles have corresponding transitive verbs. Although this should license passive transformations, replacement with passive forms yields bizarre sentences (38a). For passivisation to be acceptable, the passive verb should be complemented by an infinitival clause asserting what the agent of the original sentence would have done. Yet, the noun referring to the agent in the original sentence would need substituting by a more general one:

(38)a. *The robber who/that is/was alleged.

b. The man who/that is/was alleged to have robbed three corner shops.

Spanish does not allow passivisation, but requires an impersonal construction. Its subject position is occupied by the slot-filler *se* and the verb subcategorises a finite complement clause. This clause is introduced by the complementiser *que* and works as direct object. As in English, the noun referring to the agent in the original sentence also has to be replaced, though:

(39) El hombre (del) que se supone que ha robado tres pequeños establecimientos.

These participles do not share most of the features characteristic of adjectives. They do not denote permanent, inherent, temporary or accidental properties or states of the referents of the nouns they modify. However, they indicate that the individuals alluded to as *robber* or *killer*, and the states of affairs labelled *fraud* or *scam*, should not be definitely regarded as such at the time of the utterance. On the one hand, the reliability of the source(s) informing about such individuals or states of affairs might be inadequate. On the other hand, further supportive

evidence or some (judicial) investigation must be necessary in order to confirm that they can be thus referred to and/or be attributed specific properties in the future.

Failure to share the properties of prototypical adjectives and participial adjectives suggests that the past participles under scrutiny may make up a group specialised in a particular function: informing about the communicator's lack of evidence concerning individuals or states of affairs alluded to in assertions or claims. Hence, the communicator can suggest reluctance to admitting their agency in some action or that such states might actually be the case. To put it differently, the speaker shows her minimal degree of commitment to considering them in a particular manner at the time of speaking (Crystal 1991: 127). Consequently, these past participles work as *evidentials* and seek to achieve specific perlocutionary effects. They cause hearers to question, to not take for granted or to not yet (uncritically) believe a part of a claim or assertion because of lack of pertinent evidence, (un)trustworthiness of the source(s) of information or incompatibility with other beliefs (Dendale & Tasmowski 2001, Ifantidou 2001, Aikhenvald 2004, Nuyts 2006, Matthews 2007, Wilson 2012, Piskorska 2016). These participles target the vigilance mechanisms responsible for believing information and informers (Mascaro & Sperber 2009, Sperber et al. 2010). They raise the activation of those mechanisms in order to prevent hearers from blindly believing some information and/or gullibly trusting an informer (Padilla Cruz 2020).

The contribution of evidential participles to truth-evaluable propositions is clear. If they are replaced with other adjectives or adjectival participles, the meaning of the resulting sentences obviously changes. If they are eliminated, the resulting sentences lose the tentativeness of considerations about the referent of the nouns the participles accompany. Indeed, evidential participles convey information about the speaker's epistemic stance. Their position unveils that she expresses uncertainty or has reservations about the fact that someone could qualify as the actual agent of an action or a likely state of affairs could actually be the

case. In this regard, these participles differ from their hearsay counterparts. Those adverbials make up independent tone-units, are not integrated in the syntax of a sentence, and may precede, interrupt or follow it:

- (40)a. Allegedly, the robber was sent to prison.
- b. The robber was, allegedly, sent to prison.
- c. The robber was sent to prison, allegedly.

With hearsay adverbials, speakers communicate uncertainty or lack of evidence about what the propositional content of a sentence asserts, thus cautioning epistemic vigilance mechanisms to its veracity. Those adverbials enact and constrain the construction of very specific higher-level explicatures.

Evidential participles, however, would not trigger an additional representational layer capturing the speaker's epistemic stance about a person or state of affairs alluded to in a proposition. Like evaluative morphemes, expressive expletives and offensive terms, they would instead give rise to mental files where highly idiosyncratic information could be stored. Among the wealth of beliefs that could sit in such files, some would concern the (un)likelihood of someone or something for being considered in a particular manner. Such beliefs would amount to personal estimates, judgements or considerations of an epistemic nature. They would pertain to the speaker's uncertainty about an individual's agency in some event or the actual occurrence of a state of affairs. They would capture the speaker's attitude or stance of doubt, scepticism, caution or reservation about the fact that a person actually did something or an event really amounted to a particular state of affairs. Other beliefs could even concern the reason for the speaker's attitudes or stance: lack of supporting evidence, reliance on the testimony of untrustworthy individuals, need for confirmation or investigation, etc.

Still, other beliefs might even allude to the possibility to employ certain terms or labels in order to refer to that individual or state of affairs.

Activated by the evidential participle in (36a), ROBBER* or MAN* would file beliefs concerning the man in question, what he could have done and the speaker's epistemic stance about it:

- (41)a. The man went out of a bank shortly after a robbery.
- b. The man might have robbed the bank.
- c. The man had an enormous amount of money.
- d. People say that the man robbed a bank.
- e. A judicial investigation must determine whether the man actually robbed the bank.
- f. The man might be a robber.
- g. It is uncertain that the man is a robber.
- h. The man should not be called a robber yet.

Representation and storage of these beliefs prevent the noun phrase in that sentence from simply denoting a 'robber'. Instead, that noun phrase would spark a notional conglomerate like "the man who is said/thought to have robbed a bank, but supporting evidence must confirm whether he actually did so". It would refer to a particular man while it makes manifest the speaker's belief state about his involvement in a particular crime and the reason for that state. Available contextual assumptions or encyclopaedic knowledge would thus enable an occasion-specific mental concept to render explicit a variety of stances of which a speaker intends to inform. These could range from absolute certainty to utter uncertainty about the nature of an event or an individual's agency or responsibility. They could even include shades like caution, scepticism, doubt or reservation. Nevertheless, a hearer would

recover that information during mutual parallel adjustment, as he specifies the explicit import of an utterance and, among other operations, determines what some lexical items refer to.

4 Conclusion

A variety of linguistic elements trigger and steer the construction of higher-level explicatures. Evaluative morphemes, expressive expletives, offensive terms and evidential participles could similarly be thought to enact a further mental representation capturing the speaker's affective attitude, emotional state or epistemic stance not about a whole propositional content, but only about something alluded to in a proposition. The drawbacks of that additional representational layer, however, render it more plausible that such information will be represented as beliefs or assumptions that emerge as the conceptual representation of some entity or event is enacted and inferentially fine-tuned. Just as these morphological and lexical elements contribute to occasion-specific mental files by supplying varied beliefs about what the speaker refers to, they could also trigger the representation of assumptions about her attitudes, emotions, feelings or belief states about it, and cause such files to host them. Representation and storage of those assumptions could further be ensured by additional linguistic material or features, paralinguistic clues, available contextual assumptions or encyclopaedic knowledge about the user of the elements in question. In other words, evaluative morphemes, expressive expletives, offensive terms and evidential participles could activate and steer lexical pragmatic processes yielding some sort of notional conglomerate consisting of variegated information, among which would feature that about the speaker's affective attitude, emotional state or epistemic stance about something she alludes to.

The first and most obvious implication of this approach pertains to the amenability of the four elements discussed in this paper to a unitary pragmatic analysis. The second one is that lexical adjustment, or ad hoc-concept construction, should not always be portrayed as a free inferential development operating without mandate from other linguistic material. The third one has to do with the explanatory capabilities of the lexical pragmatic processes envisaged in relevance-theoretic pragmatics. Their output may accommodate beliefs regarding not only characteristics, properties or nuances of what speakers refer to, but also concerning their attitudes, emotions, feelings and epistemic stances. Their manifestness and storage in conceptual files significantly contribute to the explicitness of a portion of speaker's meaning that is precisely connected with them. Therefore, hearers would recover information about them as they create and fine-tune such conceptual files during mutual parallel adjustment. Future research, nevertheless, could delve into the idea that lexical adjustment is linguistically mandated, explore if other linguistic elements and properties, or paralinguistic clues trigger it, and examine the type of information that its output could incorporate.

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