Translation as a Test for the Explicit-Implicit Distinction

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Abstract   The paper will first present Kripke's "translation test" to identify any semantic ambiguity and his claim, against Donnellan, that we should not expect to disambiguate the referential vs. attributive uses of definite descriptions via translation into another language. Second, the paper will discuss a strengthened version of Kripke's "translation test" proposed by Voltolini to distinguish between any semantic vs. pragmatic phenomena. Finally, the paper will show that translation cannot work as a test for the semantic/pragmatic distinction, but can rather work as a test for the explicit/implicit distinction.

Keywords   Ambiguity. Definite Descriptions. Explicatures. Implicatures. Kripke. Lexical Pragmatics. Translation

Summary   Acknowledgements. – 1 Introduction. – 2 Kripke on Definite Descriptions and Translation. – 3 Alternative Translations and the Translator's Dilemma. – 4 Translation, Interpretive Possibilities, and the Explicit/implicit Divide. – 5 Conclusion.

Introduction

Translation has been used as a test to identify lexically ambiguous words (Zwicky, Sadock 1975; Hirst 1987): the failure of one-to-one translatability would prove the existence of a genuine ambiguity in the meaning encoded in the original sentence. Saul Kripke (1979) extended the test to identify any "semantic or (syntactic) ambiguity". Following Paul Grice (1975), he distinguished between what words mean and what the speaker meant, by using those words in a given context. For instance, the sentence "Where is the bank?" may have different meanings in different contexts, but this is a matter of difference in words' meaning, not in the speaker's meaning. We might find it to be differently translated into another language. It is not the same case for a sentence with a definite description as in: "The murderer of Smith is insane", where the referential vs. attributive use is different in terms of the speaker's meaning. We should not expect to translate it into other languages. In the second section of the paper, I will present Kripke's "translation test" and discuss some implications for translation, with particular attention to the translation of definite descriptions.

In the third section of the paper, I will present an extension of Kripke's "translation test" proposed by Alberto Voltolini (2009), who strengthened Kripke's test, arguing that a linguistic phenomenon in the original text is genuinely semantic if it can be solved through translation, forcing the translator to choose between two different senses in the words of another language. A linguistic phenomenon would be instead genuinely pragmatic if it can be preserved in translation. In the fourth section of the paper, I will argue that translation does not work as a test to distinguish between semantic and pragmatic phenomena, but it can instead work as a test for the distinction between explicit and implicit phenomena of meaning. In the paper, I will consider semantic phenomena those linguistic phenomena whose meaning is provided by the conventional meaning of the words and the compositional rules of meaning, while I will consider pragmatic phenomena those linguistic phenomena whose meaning depends needs contextual and inferential processes to be determined. I will consider implicit phenomena of meaning those linguistic phenomena whose meaning are completely recovered by inferential processes (completely new propositions), while I will consider explicit phenomena those linguistic phenomena whose meaning is largely

underdetermined by the linguistically encoded meaning of the words and thus need to be completed by contextual information (Recanati 2004, 2010; Carston 2002). I will argue that the difference between the original and the alternative translations is the result of a change in the degree of explicitness in translation. I will go back to the problem of translation of definite descriptions and, in the last section, I will draw some conclusions on translation in general as a test to distinguish explicit-implicit meaning.

1 Kripke on Definite Descriptions and Translation

In a famous paper, *Speaker's Reference and Semantic Reference* (1979), Kripke discussed definite descriptions, i.e., the use of the definite article, "the", to refer to a specific individual, as in the well-known example "The murderer of Smith". In particular, Kripke focused on Keith Donnellan's distinction between the attributive and referential uses of definite descriptions (Donnellan 1966). In Donnellan's words:

> A speaker who uses a definite description attributively in an assertion, states something about whoever or whatever is the so-and-so. A speaker who uses a definite description referentially in an assertion, on the other hand, uses the description to enable his audience to pick out whom or what he is talking about and states something about that person or thing. (Donnellan 1966, 285)

For instance, when using the definite description "The murderer of Smith" in the sentence "The murderer of Smith is insane", the utterer uses the definite description attributively when she is talking about the brutal killing committed by whoever was the murderer, while she uses the definite description referentially if she refers to a specific person, as for instance Jones. In the latter case, the proper name could actually replace the definite description, but not in the case of the attributive use of the definite description, where the speaker may not be able to identify the referent. In Donnellan's view, the distinction between the attributive and referential use of definite description is pragmatic, rather than semantic; it is "a *function of the speaker's intentions* in a particular case" (Donnellan 1996, 297). Indeed, he further stated that there is no semantic ambiguity in the meaning of words between the referential and the attributive readings of definite descriptions, but possibly a pragmatic ambiguity:

"The murderer of Smith" may be used either way in the sentence
"The murderer of Smith is insane". It does not appear plausible
to account for this, either, as an ambiguity in the sentence. The
grammatical structure of the sentence seems to me to be the same
whether the description is used referentially or attributively: that
is, it is not syntactically ambiguous. Nor does it seem at all attrac-
tive to suppose an ambiguity in the meaning of the words; it does
not appear to be semantically ambiguous. (Perhaps we could say
that the sentence is pragmatically ambiguous: the distinction be-
tween roles that the description plays is a function of the speak-
er's intentions.) These, of course, are intuitions; I do not have an
argument for these conclusions. Nevertheless, the burden of proof
is surely on the other side. (Donnellan 1966, 297)

Kripke took the burden of proof and argued that there is no reason to
suppose a pragmatic ambiguity, as it is "not 'uses', in some pragmatic
sense, but *senses* of a sentence which can be analyzed" (Kripke 1978,
13). Following Grice (1975), Kripke distinguished between what the
speaker's words meant on a particular occasion and what the speak-
er meant by using those words on a particular occasion. Consider,
for instance, the following sentence:

(1) She asked me where the *bank* is.

Sentence (1) may mean different things in different contexts (some-
thing that has to do with a certain financial institution or a riverside),
but this is a matter of difference in word meaning, not in the speak-
er's meaning. We should not expect to find the same semantic ambi-
guity in another language, as there are historical, conventional and/
or purely accidental reasons if two different senses are expressed
with the same word. For instance, there are different words in Ger-
man or in French for the different senses of the English word "know".
Indeed, "there is no reason for the ambiguity to be preserved in lan-
guages unrelated to our own" (Kripke 1978, 19), and to find a one-to-
one equivalence in translation into different languages (Ervas 2008).
  While what the words mean is given by convention in a language,
what the speaker meant is given by the speaker's intentions and rel-
evant contextual features. In sentence (2):

(2) *The murderer of Smith* is insane.

the difference between the referential and the attributive use of the
definite description is in terms of the speaker's meaning, not in word
meaning. Kripke argued that we should not expect to find another
language having different words for different *uses* of a sentence, as in
the case of the referential vs. attributive uses of definite description:

> if the sentence is not (syntactically or) semantically ambiguous, it has only *one* analysis; to say that it has two distinct analyses is to attribute a syntactic or semantic ambiguity to it. (Kripke 1978, 13)

Intuitively, we should not expect to find a D-language, i.e., a "Donellan's unambiguous language", having two different words, for instance "the" and "ze", for the attributive and referential uses of definite descriptions. This is because we can provide a unitary account or interpretation of definite descriptions in terms of the speaker's meaning, and not different senses that can be disambiguated in another language. Postulating a pragmatic ambiguity unless we are forced to do so, in Kripke's view, would amount to embracing "the lazy man's approach" in philosophy. Just as Grice warned philosophers to hone the "Modified Occam's Razor", according to which senses are not to be multiplied beyond necessity, Kripke invites philosophers to avoid positing ambiguities in sentences where a unitary account in terms of uses of those sentences could be provided. An alternative explanation is provided by Kripke for a unitary account of attributive/referential uses of definite descriptions: in the referential use of definite descriptions, the *semantic referent* is given by the speaker's *general* intention to refer to a certain object (the "simple" case); in the attributive use of definite descriptions, the *speaker's referent* is given by the speaker's *specific* intention to refer to the object in a certain occasion (the "complex" case). In certain occasions, the "simple" and the "complex" cases might coincide: for instance, the specific intention might simply be the intention to refer to the semantic referent.

Kripke proposed also an empirical "translation test" to assess whether a genuine semantic ambiguity has been found in the original sentence:

> We can ask empirically whether languages are in fact found that contain distinct words expressing the allegedly distinct senses. If no such language is found, once again this is evidence that a unitary account of the word or phrase in question should be sought. (Kripke 1979, 19)

Kripke himself provided the example of the word "bank", which can be disambiguated via translation into other languages, as for instance into Italian: "banca" (financial institution) and "riva" (riverside). However, the "translation test" failed to identify cases of lexically ambiguous or homonymous words, having distinct but unrelated senses (Zwicky, Sadock 1975; Hirst 1987). Indeed, as already pointed out (Ervas 2014), also polysemous words, having distinct but related senses, can be disambiguated via translation into other languages, as in the following examples (in italics):

(3) Mi piace il *pesce*.
a. Me gusta el pez.
b. Me gusta el pescado.

(4) Era il *nipote* di Lussu.
a. C'était le neveu de Lussu.
b. C'était le petit-fils de Lussu.

(5) La *pata* del perro estaba herida.
a. La gamba del cane era ferita.
b. La zampa del cane era ferita

However, Kripke himself warned to be cautious in using the "translation test", as it needs further exploration and refinement:

> The mere fact that some language subdivides the extension of an English word into several subclasses, with their own separate words, and has no word for the whole extension, does not show that the English word was ambiguous (think of the story that the Eskimos have different words for different kinds of snow). If many unrelated languages preserve a single word, this in itself is evidence for a unitary concept. On the other hand, a word may have different senses that are obviously related. One sense may be metaphorical for another (though in that case, it may not really be a separate sense, but simply a common metaphor.) "Statistics" can mean both statistical data and the science of evaluating such data. And the like. (Kripke 1978, 26 fn. 29)

As we shall see in the next section, the "translation test" has been further strengthened as a test to distinguish all semantic phenomena in the original sentence from pragmatic ones (Voltolini 2009). However, in the case of the referential-attributive uses of definite descriptions, Kripke maintained that any attempt to provide a pragmatic account of the referential vs. attributive readings would have been so close to the Gricean explanation he provided "as to render any assumptions of distinct senses implausible and superfluous" (Kripke 1978, 26 fn. 29). A Gricean account of pragmatic phenomena has been maintained also in the strengthened version of the "translation test" (Voltolini 2009). However, as we shall see in the third section, other languages can be found where the referential and the attributive uses of definite description can be encoded in different words translating the article "the". As I shall argue, other pragmatic accounts can be provided to explain these cases.

2 Alternative Translations and the Translator's Dilemma

The aim of the "translation test" was to discover alternative translations into another language, distinguishing the senses of an original (English) sentence, and thus to empirically show a genuine semantic (or syntactic) ambiguity in the original sentence. Against Donnellan, Kripke followed Grice, claiming that we should not expect to find in different languages two alternative translations disambiguating the referential vs. attributive uses of definite descriptions. In a more recent paper, *L'irrimediabile dilemma del traduttore* (2009), Voltolini proposed a strengthened version of the Kripkean "translation test", by claiming that translation can work as a test to identify *any* genuinely semantic phenomenon in the original sentence:

> Any phenomenon of signification indifferent to translation is pragmatic, while any phenomenon of signification that not only is pointed out by a difference in translation as Kripke argues, but even forces a choice between a translation that preserves it and one which does not preserve it, is semantic. Translation assumes therefore the value of test or identification criterion of a phenomenon of signification as a genuine semantic phenomenon. (Voltolini 2009, 45)

Following Kripke, Voltolini claimed that translation works as a test to show that a linguistic phenomenon in the original text is genuinely *semantic* when it can have two (or more) separate analyses, which could be expressed by two or more different senses in the words of another language. Thus, if a translation places the translator in front of a dilemma, forcing her to choose between two alternative translations of the same original sentence, this means that the translator (or whoever reads the alternatives) identified a genuine semantic phenomenon in the original sentence. Generalizing Kripke's methodological remarks, translation can thus work as a test to distinguish semantic from pragmatic phenomena, because it can highlight two (or more) different *senses* expressed by different words in the target language.

For instance, *reference assignment* forces the translator to choose between alternative translations of a sentence in a situation similar to that arising in lexical disambiguation. Consider the possible alternative translations of sentence (6) into Hopi language (Katz 1978, 222):

(6) He thinks that he wins

a. Pam navoti:ta (pam) mo:titani-qate

b. Pam navoti:ta (pam) mo:titani-q

While translation a) expresses a co-reference, translation b) does not maintain the co-reference, because the referent of the subject of the translation of the verb "thinks" is not the same referent of the subject of the translation of the verb "wins". Hopi language has indeed the appropriate linguistic resources to solve the (co)reference assignment. Voltolini (2009) provided a lot of examples to show how the translator might be forced to choose between alternative translations that preserve part of the meaning of the sentence while losing another part of the meaning of the sentence. For instance, it is quite common for the translator to choose between a translation that preserves the linguistic meaning but loses the word pun and a translation that preserves the word pun but waivers the linguistic meaning. In Voltolini's example (2009, 35), the translation of the German sentence (7) into Italian might force the translation to choose among the following alternatives:

(7) Weiche, Wotan, Weiche! (R. Wagner, Rheingold)

(i) Vattene, Wotan, vattene!

(ii) Alla coque, Wotan, alla coque!

(iii) Marcia, Wotan, marcia!

Translations (i) and (ii) maintain the linguistic meaning, disambiguating two possible senses in Italian ("vattene" and "alla coque"), but losing the pun word of the original sentence in German; translation (iii) preserves the pun word, as "marcia" in Italian means both the imperative verb "walk" and the female adjective "rotten", but losing the linguistic meaning of the German word "Weiche".

Interestingly, as Voltolini (2009, 41-4) argued, loss in translation is not just something accidentally due to the linguistic differences among languages, but rather something *necessary* in translation. In the case of the passage from *oratio obliqua* (8) to *oractio recta* (9), as he pointed out, the translator cannot maintain both the reference to the original sentence and its truth value (T = true; F = false). For instance, in the following example:

(8) Andrea dice che la birra Ichnusa, come Socrate, ti fa dire ciò che vuole.

(i) Andrea says that Ichnusa beer, like Socrates, makes you say what it wants.

(ii) Andrea dit que la bière Ichnusa, comme Socrate, te fait dire ce qu'elle veut.

(9) Andrea dice: "La birra Ichnusa, come Socrate, ti fa dire ciò che vuole"

(i) Andrea says: "Ichnusa beer, like Socrates, makes you say what it wants" (F)

(ii) Andrea says: "La birra Ichnusa, come Socrate, ti fa dire ciò che vuole" (T)

(i) Andrea dit: "La bière Ichnusa, comme Socrate, te fait dire ce qu'il veut" (F)

(ii) Andrea dit: "La birra Ichnusa, come Socrate, ti fa dire ciò che vuole" (T)

However, as Voltolini noted (2009, 42), the problem is not limited to cases of use-mention distinction. For instance, Tyler Burge, in *Self-reference and Translation* (1978), clearly demonstrates that the translator can never keep the reference, self-reference and linguistic meaning together. In the example of translation into German provided by Burge (1978, 138-9), the choice of the translator of one of the different parts of meaning (reference, self-reference, and linguistic meaning) is indeed necessary, not contingent:

(10) This sentence begins with a four-letter demonstrative.
 (i) Jener Satz fängt mit einem hinweisenden Artikel mit vier Buchstaben an.
 (ii) Dieser Satz fängt mit einem hinweisenden Artikel mit sechs Buchstaben an.
 (iii)Dieser Satz fängt mit einem hinweisenden Artikel mit vier Buchstaben an.

The translator's choice among these alternatives would probably rely on extralinguistic contextual factors. Burge concluded that a good translation should be

> responsible for preserving certain *global* characteristics of discourse, as well as more *local* features. One cannot always read off the best translation of a sentence (at an occurrence) simply by understanding the sentence itself. (Burge 1978, 142; italics added)

However, even though it is a matter of principle that in a translation we cannot preserves all aspects of signification, Voltolini's conclusions are not so dramatic:

> One can try to argue that if problems of translation arise (and often cannot fail to arise) with respect to an original, in which it is necessary to choose among different factors that contribute to the general signification of the original, which ones to preserve in the translation, then the nuances of meaning indicated by these factors are genuine semantic nuances, not nuances postulated by a theory or some pre-theoretical intuition. Or, conversely, if such nuances are not genuine semantic nuances, then there is no problem of choosing among such nuances in the translation. (Voltolini 2009, 44)

In the latest case, the phenomena in the original will be pragmatic, as they are "indifferent" to translation. Voltolini himself (2009, 38) provided an example of irony (11), that can be preserved in translation:

(11) Ecco *il re di Sardegna*!
Here comes the king of Sardinia!
Voilà le roi de Sardaigne!
Hier ist der König von Sardinien!

In Kripke's terms, this might be a case of speaker's reference, rather than semantic reference, depending on the speaker's intentions (cf. Kripke 1978, 24 fn. 22). There are other examples of pragmatic phenomena that can be preserved in translation, as for instance in the case of generalized (12) and particularized (13) conversational implicatures (Grice 1975, 51):

(12) Michael made dinner *and* took a shower.
Michele preparò la cena *e* fece la doccia.
Michel a préparé le dîner *et* a pris une douche.

(13) A: Smith doesn't seem to have a girlfriend these days.
B: He has been paying a lot of visits to New York lately.
A: Smith non sembra avere una ragazza in questi giorni.
B: Ultimamente ha fatto molte visite a New York.
A: Smith ne semble pas avoir de petite amie ces jours-ci.
B: Il a effectué de nombreuses visites à New York ces derniers temps.

In the first case, the temporal reading of the sentence, i.e., the implication of time sequence, that is conveyed by using "and" in a list of events, is maintained by the translation of "and" into "e" in Italian and "et" in French. In the second case, the implicature that Smith does have a girlfriend is maintained in the translation into Italian and French, if the conversational context is maintained.

However, as already pointed out (Ervas 2014), also the strengthened version of the "translation test" does not seem to work for the distinction between semantic and pragmatic phenomena. Sentences like (14) might arise no problem in translation, but this would not mean that a pragmatic phenomenon was identified.

(14) The cat is white.
Il gatto è bianco.
Le chat est blanc.

One might argue that the test works only when the translator is forced to choose between two (or more) alternative translations. However, problems in translation seem to arise also when a "cross-border" linguistic phenomenon (Ervas 2014, 94), as in the cases of metaphor (15) and metonymy (16), or a pragmatic phenomenon appears in the original sentence, as in the case of idiomatic sentences (17):

(15) Un abbozzo di sorriso attraversa il suo volto.
(i) A hint of a smile crosses her face. // Un toque de una sonrisa cruza por su cara.
(ii) A ghost of a smile crosses her face. // Una sombra de una sonrisa cruza por su cara.

(16) Giada has given a Hoover.
(i) Giada ha regalato un Folletto. // Giada ha regalado una Roomba.
(ii) Giada ha regalato un aspirapolvere. // Giada ha regalado una aspiradora.

(17) It's raining cats and dogs.
(i) Sta piovendo a catinelle. // Está lloviendo a cántaros.
(ii) Sta piovendo molto. // Está lloviendo mucho.

In the translation of sentence (15), the translator cannot maintain at the same time the literal meaning of the metaphor and its figurative meaning: she should find out a translation of the figurative meaning (i) or a pragmatic equivalent (ii) in the target language. In the translation of sentence (16), the translator is forced to choose between a translation that maintains the metonymy in the target language (via another famous brand in the target culture) (i) or the figurative meaning of the original sentence (ii). In the translation of sentence (17), the translator needs to choose between a pragmatic equivalent in the target language (i) (Ervas 2008), and the idiomatic meaning of the original sentence (ii). However, one might still argue that most cases of metaphor and metonymy are semantic phenomena: indeed, both metaphor in (15) and metonymy in (16) have a highly conventional meaning in the respective linguistic communities. One might also argue that, after all, as Kripke suggested, when choosing a pragmatic equivalent of an idiomatic sentence in the target language, the translator is maintaining a unitary account of the pragmatic phenomenon, as the meaning of an idiomatic sentence cannot be provided by the meanings of its words and compositional rules for the meanings.

3 Translation, Interpretive Possibilities, and the Explicit/implicit Divide

However, the "translation test" does not work for the semantic/pragmatic distinction, because problems in translation seem to arise also in the case of implicatures. Consider the following example of conversational particularized implicature:

(18) A: Dario è superstizioso?
 B: Non esce mai di casa il venerdì 17…
 A: Is Dario superstitious? // ¿Dario es supersticioso?
 B: He never leaves home on Friday 13th…// Nunca el sale de casa el martes 13…
 B: He never leaves home on Friday 17th…// Nunca el sale de casa el viernes 17…

implicating that Dario is superstitious. In order to maintain the implicature, the translator should find out a pragmatic equivalent of "venerdì 17" in the target language, i.e., the pragmatic equivalent that works as "the unlucky day" in the target cultural context (ex. "Friday 13th" in English, "martes 13" in Spanish). If the translator chooses to preserve the linguistic meaning, translating "venerdì 17" into English with "Friday 17th" or into Spanish with "viernes 17", she will lose the implicature in the target cultural context. Two alternative translations into another language can be offered to the translator: the expression translating "venerdì 17" in the target language needs indeed to be enriched as "the unlucky day" to guarantee the same implicature in the target language, otherwise the linguistic meaning is preserved but the implicature is lost.

In this case, the translation needs to resort to pragmatic processes of lexical modulation or enrichment (Carston 2002; Recanati 2004, 2010) that "intrude" into the semantic realm to arrive at the proposition expressed and make it explicit in the target language to guarantee the implicature. This process involves the completion of the logical form (i.e., the semantic representation encoded by the utterance) to arrive at the communicated proposition. Indeed, following Robyn Carston's semantic underdeterminacy view,

> the logical form of a linguistic expression seldom, if ever, determines a truth condition, so that pragmatics is inevitably required in the recovery of a fully propositional representation. (Carston 2002, 184)

Thus, Carston proposed two different pragmatic realms: the realm of *explicatures* or explicit meaning, and the realm of *implicatures* or implicit meaning (see also Carston, Hall 2012 for the explicature/implicature distinction). While the conceptual content of an implicature is totally supplied by pragmatic inference, the explicature is the pragmatic development of a logical form linguistically encoded by an utterance via two sources: the linguistic expressions used and the context. In Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson's definitions, both explicatures and implicatures are assumptions communicated, but the distinction between what is explicit and what is implicit is that:

> (I) 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. [Note: in cases of ambiguity, a surface form encodes more than one logical form, hence the use of the indefinite here, "a logical form encoded by U".]
> (II) An assumption communicated by U which is not explicit is *implicit* [hence an "implicature"]. (Sperber, Wilson 1986, 182; italics added)

Though distinct, explicatures and implicatures are interrelated: indeed, "the implicatures of an utterance must be deducible from its explicatures" (Wilson, Carston 2007, 242), based on appropriate contextual assumptions. As in the example (18), the translator needs to recover the explicit meaning of "venerdì 17", alias "the unlucky day", as assumed in the Italian cultural context, to grasp the implicature that Dario is superstitious. We can find alternative translations in modulating the meaning of "venerdì 17" ("Friday 13th/martes 13"), based on contextual assumptions, to find the right balance to preserve the implicature in the target text. The translator might still decide to make the implicature that Dario is superstitious explicit in the target text or add it in a footnote, but this would be a completely new proposition coming from a global pragmatic process rather than a local enrichment of the already existing logical form. Indeed, with the explicature being a development of the linguistically encoded logical form of the sentence, the mutual adjustment process between explicatures and implicatures precludes entire extra propositions from being incorporated into the proposition expressed. As pointed out,

> since such enrichments, which have global effects, are excluded, it follows that free enrichment is essentially local: it applies to subpropositional constituents, either replacing encoded concepts with inferred concepts, or adding material (unarticulated constituents) to change the interpretation of some encoded element (making it more specific, or broadening its denotation, […] and so on). (Hall 2008, 445)

All these local processes of enrichment are necessary to warrant the implicature of the source sentence in the target language.

From this theoretical perspective, the development of the linguistically encoded logical form is not limited to disambiguation, but rather included a variety of pragmatic processes (e.g., saturation, enrichment, and transfer) operating in the very constitution of the explicit level of meaning. In particular, in their unitary account of lexical pragmatics, Carston and Wilson (2007) highlighted two pragmatic processes of broadening and narrowing that take the linguistically encoded concept in the utterance words and modulate them in an "ad hoc concept" in the interpretive process. For instance, when uttering the sentence (19):

(19) John never drinks when he drives.

the concept encoded in the word "drink" is pragmatically narrowed down to a part of the concept encoded in the word "drink", i.e., the ad hoc concept "drink alcohol" to convey the appropriate communicated proposition in that context. Instead, when uttering the sentence (20),
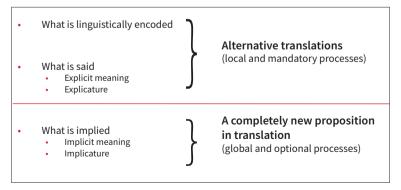
(20)   The ATM swallowed my credit card.

the concept encoded in the word "swallow" is modulated via a broadening process into the ad hoc concept of "rapidly withdrew without returning". In the same vein, also metaphors like (21):

(21)   Giacomo is a bulldozer.

can be interpreted as the result of a pragmatic enrichment which takes as an input the concept BULLDOZER and gives as an output the ad hoc concept BULLDOZER* having as relevant properties attributed to Giacomo the properties of being "cynical", "insensitive", etc. In their lexical pragmatics, indeed, modulation via narrowing and broadening processes (or a combination of the two) is the outcome of a "single interpretive process which fine-tunes the interpretation of almost every word" (Wilson, Carston 2007, 231).

   In François Recanati's view (1993, 286-7), all these pragmatic processes can generate "pragmatic ambiguity", i.e., "a form of "ambiguity" which affects truth-conditions even though it is pragmatic (in the sense of contextual) rather than semantic". Indeed, in Recanati's view, pragmatics is not confined to the speaker's meaning we can grasp via inferential processes, as contextual elements can also modulate the meaning of the words composing an utterance, thus affecting the evaluation of its truth-conditions. Translation can offer alternative analyses of the original sentences in both the case of semantic ambiguity and the case of pragmatic ambiguity due to pragmatic processes that would carry out the proposition expressed. As represented below **[tab. 1]**, the translator might expect to be obliged to choose between alternative translations when local and mandatory pragmatic processes are required to derive the communicated assumptions, but not when global and optional processes of pragmatic inference are required to understand the communicated content.

Table 1   Translation as a test for the explicit/implicit divide

• What is linguistically encoded
 	
• What is said
   • Explicit meaning
   • Explicature
	Alternative translations
	(local and mandatory processes)

• What is implied
   • Implicit meaning
   • Implicature
	A completely new proposition in translation
	(global and optional processes)

From this perspective, translation would point out not only a case of semantic ambiguity in the disambiguation process (as in the case of homonymy, when a word has two or more unrelated senses possibly disambiguated in another language), but also cases of *sense-generality* (when a word included two or more related senses possibly explicitly expressed by another language). In the latest case, two (or more) different interpretive possibilities are highlighted in the process of translation (Van der Sandt 1988; Atlas 1989). Indeed, as Jay Atlas noted (1989, 31), "the sense-generality of a sentence radically underdetermines [...] the truth-conditional content of its utterances", thus we need to resort to pragmatically inferred aspects of truth-conditional content.

Translation might then work as a test to distinguish two different faces of communicated content in the pragmatic realm: the explicit and the implicit ones. Thus, the translator might be forced to choose among *different interpretive possibilities* when enriching the logical form of the sentence to be translated into another language, while she might preserve the implicatures as they are fully derived as new propositions. Indeed, as already pointed out in previous work on translation:

> What is crucial to translation as regards enrichment is that languages differ in the strategies used to make meaning explicit. Thus, one language may be equipped to encode very subtle nuances by means of specific linguistic devices, whilst another language may commonly express the equivalent nuances by linguistic devices which encode very vague semantic constraints on the interpretation. This forces translators to resort to pragmatic enrichment of the logical form in order to derive the intended propositional form of the source sentence. (Ervas 2014, 97)

For instance, there might be languages encoding what Donnellan intuitively called "pragmatic ambiguity" between the referential vs. attributive readings of definite descriptions. Pace Kripke, languages that can encode differences in the referential vs. attributive use of definite descriptions were actually found in Northern Frisian (Ebert 1970), Malagasy (Keenan, Ebert 1973), and Greek (Guardiano 2012; Longobardi 2005). Talmy Givón (1978, 251-2) provided some examples of languages encoding different "degrees of definiteness" in different articles ("di", "a") translating the article "the":

(22) John was surprised that the man who won was drunk.

(i)   John wonert ham dat *di* maan wat woon bisööben wiar.

(ii) John wonert ham dat *a* maan wat woon bisööben wiar.

While the article "di" maintains the ambiguity between the referential and the attributive interpretation of the definite description, the article "a" has the attributive reading. Furthermore, Givón provided the following example in Malagasy:

(23) Rakoto was surprised that *the* winner was drunk.
 (i) Gaga Rakoto fa mamo *ny* mpandresy.
(ii) Gaga Rakoto fa mamo *ilay* mpandresy.

In translation (i) the article "ny" is ambiguous and allows both the referential and the attributive readings, while in translation (ii) the article "ilay" allows just the referential reading. Furthermore, other languages have been found where the referential/attributive distinction is grammatically marked by the presence of the subjunctive mood (Farkas 1985). From this perspective, the use of definite descriptions can be best understood as a particular type of enrichment of the logical form encoded by the linguistic utterance (Rouchota 1992), based on the contextual interpretation of the definite description in the original sentence in either a referential or attributive way. These examples indeed show that languages are in fact found where different lexical resources can be used to enrich the meaning in translation, providing alternative interpretive porssibilities that make meaning more explicit in the target language.

4 Conclusion

The paper introduced Kripke's "translation test" (1978) for the identification of any semantic ambiguity and Voltolini's strengthened version of the test (2009) to distinguish semantic vs. pragmatic phenomena, discussing their possible limitations but also the interesting linguistic phenomena the process of translation might bring to light. Finally, I proposed my own version of the "translation test": if the process of translation offers us alternative interpretive readings possibly encoded in another language, then we resorted to pragmatic processes of selection (in the case of ambiguity) or completion of the logical form to make meaning explicit. In the latter case, the translator needs a variety of processes (saturation, enrichment, transfer) that operate at the level of what is said or at the level of explicit meaning to arrive at the communicated proposition. As languages differ in the strategies used to make meaning explicit, the translator is forced to resort to different pragmatic processes in order to translate the communicated content from one language into another (Carston 2002; Ervas 2014). Different from the case of explicatures, implicatures are completely new propositions, totally derived via pragmat-

ic inference from the speaker's utterance. In the interpretation process of the original sentence, we can draw information not only from the original sentence, but also from the context, to fill the gap between different degrees of meaning explicitness that languages permit (Rosales Sequeiros 2002). The target language might force the translator to explicitly encode a meaning which was only implicit in the semantic representation of the original text. Example (16) shows that this may be due to a choice of the translator not only on the basis of the linguistic meaning but also on some other grounds, for instance the *cultural context* and its differences from the original one.

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