

Reading Response: Geurts 2010, Chapter 2

Some Quick Preliminaries...

- (i) Be sure to have a look at the accompanying “Notations and abbreviations” for this chapter, both for a review of our propositional logic connectives, and also for the particular typographic conventions that Geurts employs.
- (ii) On pgs. 33-34, the term “reading of a sentence” should be understood as equivalent to “truth-conditional meaning of a sentence”. In particular, the sentences in (5) are all semantically ambiguous, i.e., each is associated with more than one truth-conditional meaning. In Geurts’ terms, each sentence “admits of several readings”.
- (iii) The portions entitled *Competence and competence⁺* and *What are weak implicatures?* on pgs. 37-40 may (and perhaps should) be skipped without any ensuing loss of comprehension.

Provide a concise overview (one single-spaced page of targeted prose should be sufficient) of the Geurts chapter, which addresses the following questions:

- (A) On pg. 30, Geurts observes that “one of the main virtues of the Standard Recipe is that it distinguishes between weak and strong implicatures, and connects them via the Competence Assumption”. Unpack this statement: what is the difference between a weak Q(uality)-implicature and a strong Q-implicature? What is the Competence Assumption, and how does it serve to connect the weak and strong versions? You should illustrate your answers to these questions by considering my utterance of the sentence *Nora ate some of the cookies*, and the implicatures that it may give rise to.
- (B) What is meant by the claim that “implicatures are abductive inferences” (pg. 34), or alternatively, that the Standard Recipe for Q-implicatures constitutes a form of abductive reasoning? Choose one of the scenarios from pgs. 35-36, in which the Standard Recipe produces the wrong results, and explain why it is merely an exception, not a counterexample, to the Standard Recipe.
- (C) How do (21) and (22) illustrate the need to identify relevant alternatives when deriving Q-implicatures? How do discourse purposes (or goals), and in particular, questions, help to accomplish this task?

You should also feel free to discuss other points that strike you as interesting or important, to raise objections to Geurts’ claims, or to pose any questions that arose while reading this chapter.