Reframing Implicatures

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I use the case study of linguistic 'framing effects' to argue that not all pragmatic implicatures are calculable. Framing effects arise when logically equivalent sentences generate systematically different responses in hearers. Building on a promising account in the psychological literature, I argue that these can be caused by 'reference point information' being conversationally implicated. I show that the contents of the relevant implicatures cannot be calculated on the basis of Gricean conversational principles. However, since the contents' presence and strength on any given occasion do depend on such principles, I argue that they remain distinctively pragmatic (pace philosophers like Davis, Stone and Lepore).