Embedded implicatures: the very idea

Gricean theories of conversational implicature has always been plagued by data suggesting that what would seem to be conversational inferences may occur within the scope of expressions like "believe", for example; which for bona fide implicatures should be an impossibility. Concentrating my attention on scalar implicatures, I argue that, for the most part, such observations can be accounted for within a Gricean framework, and without resorting to local inferences of any kind. However, there remains a small class of marked cases that cannot be treated as conversational implicatures, and they do require a local mode of interpretation. However, this concession does not entail that the problem of scalar inference is to be relegated (if only in part) to syntax, as has been proposed by Chierchia, Fox, and others.