CHAPTER III

CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE

3.0 PRELIMINARIES

This chapter deals with the theoretical framework of the notion of conversational implicature. In the beginning, the chapter focuses on two types of implicature, that is, conventional and conversational implicature, with different definitions and various explanations of both the concepts. Conversational implicature has been studied with respect to related notions such as meaning, relevance, presupposition, and entailment and so on. A brief review has been taken of the total signification or communicational content of an utterance. Grice’s theory of implicature has been reviewed extensively with the cooperative principle, its maxims and sub-maxims. The observance, violation, nonfulfillment and flouting of the maxims, which give rise to implicatures have been illustrated with appropriate instances. Types of conversational implicature such as particularized and generalized conversational implicature have been discussed with suitable examples. Finally, various properties of conversational implicature such as defeasibility, calculability and non-detachability and so on, have been discussed. Thus, the present chapter aims to provide the strong theoretical framework of conversational implicature to be applied for the analysis of the selected plays.

3.1 IMPLICATURE

3.1.0 Introduction

Herbert Paul Grice coined the term ‘Implicature’ in the series of William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1969. These lectures were partly published in 1975, entitled as “Logic and Conversation.” Grice’s theories have never been published in their entirety. Grice’s basic purpose behind devising the concept of implicature was to explain how speakers mean more than what they actually say in a conversational exchange.

3.1.1 Historical Background

According to Jaszczolt, Grice is not the first to note that people can mean more than they actually say. This phenomenon was observed by John Stuart Mill at the end of nineteenth century. Mill, as appears in Jaszczolt, says:

If I say to anyone, ‘I saw some of your children to-day,’ he might be justified in inferring that I did not see them all, not because the words
mean it, but because, if I had seen them all, it is most likely that I should have said so. Though even this cannot be presumed unless it is presupposed that I must have known whether the children I saw were all or not. But to carry this colloquial mode of interpreting a statement into logic is something novel

(Mill 1872, as cited in Jaszczolt, 2002:211).

It can be observed that near about a century before Grice’s theory, the phenomenon of implicature was anticipated by Mill. Mill discusses the notion in terms of, what we call scalar quantity implicature by referring to ‘some’ that generates implicature ‘not all.’ Jaszczolt further mentions that the concept of cooperative principle can be traced back to Oswald Ducrot’s ‘Law of Exhaustiveness’:

This law requires that the interlocutor gives the strongest information that he or she has on the topic of the conversation, such that it is likely to be of interest to the addressee

(Ducrot 1972, as cited in Jaszczolt 2002:211).

Ducrot expresses his views regarding the sharing of strongest information which may be compared to Grice’s maxim of quality. His view, that the information given by the interlocutors should be related to the topic and should be of interest to the hearer, coincides with Grice’s Cooperative Principle. Similarly, as pointed out by Horn, the classical rhetoricians like Aristotle, Horace and Quintillion were aware of norms like perspicuity and brevity:

If it is prolix, it will not be clear, nor if it is too brief. It is plain that the middle way is appropriate …, saying just enough to make the facts plain


I strive to be brief; I become obscure


Personally, when I use the term brevity [*brevitas*], I mean not saying less, but not saying more than the occasion demands

(Quintillion, *Instituto Oratio*, IV. ii; as cited in Horn, 2004:14).

The above quotes make it clear that classical philosophers had advanced their own guidelines that are identical to the Grecian maxims.
3.1.2 Conventional Implicature

Introduction

Conventional implicatures stand in contrast with conversational implicatures, with respect to certain properties. They are not based on the defeasible assumptions about the nature of the context. As a result, they are non-cancellable. Conventional implicatures are detachable as they are associated with the particular linguistic items used in an utterance. According to Levinson (1983:128) conventional implicature accepts the failure of the truth-conditional semantics to take into account the conventional content or the meaning of natural language words such as *but*, *even*, *therefore* and *yet*. Conventional implicatures arise, as Gazdar (1979:49) states; solely because of conventional features of the words used is an utterance. In the utterance cited below, the fact is that first clause is in contrast with second one, resulting in conventional implicature.

They recommended literary studies but I preferred pragmatics.

Besides ‘*but*’, words like ‘*even*’ and ‘*yet*’ carry conventional implicatures. ‘*Even*’ raises an implicature that is, ‘contrary to expectation’ about the fact mentioned in the utterance. ‘*Yet*’ has an implicature that the present situation is expected to be different or opposite. In the following utterance, ‘*even*’ raises an implicature:

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Even Harbhajan scored a century.
+>> Harbhajan scoring a century was not expected.
Sachin hasn’t played yet.
+>> Sachin is going to play later.
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‘*Yet*’ in the above utterance implicates the speaker’s expectation. The meaning of contrast is said to be implied in the word ‘*but*’ rather than present in it semantically. The meaning of contrast is inherent in it. According to Van Der Sandt (1988:51-52) conventional implicatures arise out of the ‘conventional meaning of lexical items and structures that occur in a sentence.’ They are free of the context of utterance and maxims governing the rational, cooperative use of language. As a result, it cannot be attributed to pragmatic principles but fall within the domain of semantics.

Definitions

The concept of conversational implicature has been defined by several linguists and logicians. The selected definitions are given below.
Stephen C. Levinson

Levinson defines conventional implicature as:

Conventional implicatures are non-truth-conditional inferences that are not derived from super-ordinate pragmatic principles like maxims, but are simply attached by convention to particular lexical items or expressions (1983:127).

George Yule

Yule, while commenting upon implicature carried by words like but, states that:

The interpretation of any utterance of the type p but q will be based on the conjunction p & q plus an implicature of ‘contrast’ between the information in p and the information in q (1996:45).

Peter Grundy

Peter Grundy states that an implicature is conventional in the sense that:

(a) it does not derive from knowing the rules for talk (therefore it is not conversational) and (b) it is almost always associated with the particular lexical item (and thus a kind of natural meaning) (1995:47).

Jef Verschueren

Verschueren defines conventional implicature as:

Implicit meaning that can be conventionally inferred from forms of expression in combination with assumed standard adherence to conversational maxims (1999:34).

Properties of Conventional Implicature

Barbara Partee has suggested some properties of as well as tests for conventional implicature. They are:

1. Non-cancellability: Conventional implicatures are commitments, and give rise to entailments, though separate from the ‘at-issue’ entailments of a sentence.
2. Conventionality: Conventional implicatures are by definition part of the conventional meaning of a word or construction.
3. Detachability: Most conventional implicatures are detachable, since they come from specific words or instructions and not just from the truth
conditional content of what is said. So substituting a semantically equivalent word or expression can result in changing conventional implicatures.

4. Speaker-orientation: The commitments made via conventional implicatures are made by the speaker of the utterance, and except in special circumstances remain ‘speaker-oriented’ even when embedded.

5. Independence from at-issue meaning: Conventional implicatures are logically and compositionally independent of at-issue meaning.

6. Behavior under Negation: Since conventional implicatures are independent from at-issue meaning, and are (almost) always ‘speaker oriented’, they normally survive under negation, in if-clauses, etc.

7. Non-backgrounding: Conventional implicatures are not generally assumed to be part of the conversational background; they often give new, “supplementary”, information

(2009:3-4).

3.1.3 Conversational Implicature

Introduction

The conversational implicature is one of the crucial phenomena in pragmatics. It is used to elucidate how speakers mean more that they literally say in conversation. It facilitates understanding of unsaid meaning which the hearer is supposed to infer. Apart from Grice, the concept of conversational implicature has been formulated by various linguists and philosophers.

3.1.4 What is Conversational Implicature?

Grice’s notion of conversational implicature refers to the communicational content that is implicated non-conventionally. According to Yule (1996:36), ‘implicature is an additional conveyed meaning.’ It is something more than just what the words mean. Levinson (1983) characterizes implicature with reference to its significant contribution in the field of pragmatics. He states:

(1) “Implicature stands as a paradigmatic example of the nature and power of pragmatic explanations of linguistic phenomenon.

(2) “It provides some explicit account of how it is possible to mean (in some general sense) more than what is actually said.

(3) “The notion of implicature seems likely to effect substantial simplifications in both the structure and the content of semantic descriptions.

(4) “Implicature … seems to be simply essential if various basic facts about language are to be accounted for properly.
“The principles that generate implicatures have a very general explanatory power: a few basic principles provide explanations for a large array of apparently unrelated fact”


Here, Levinson claims that implicature is a kind of pragmatic inference related to some general principles of cooperative conversation. It goes beyond what is expressed literally, in the process of interpretation. According to International Encyclopedia of Linguistics (2003:383), in conversational implicature, the addressee is entitled to draw certain inferences about the speaker’s beliefs and intentions, which are usually based on non-truth-functional components of the utterance. Conversational implicatures are, as Keith Allen (2001:192) states, the principle devices that allow speakers to minimize the quantity of language expressed. Hearer is supposed to use it to intensify what is said in order to understand what is meant. Grice has suggested five features that are jointly necessary for an implicature to be considered conversational, rather than conventional. The five features are:

(i) It must not be part of the meaning of the expression to which it attaches. That is, it must not be given in the lexicon or specified as the meaning changing effect of some syntactic operation.

(ii) It must be context-sensitive and cancellable in particular cases, either by the context making it clear that it is inapplicable or by the addition of a clause denying the implicature …

(iii) It must be not detachable, that is, it must not be possible to substitute some other expression in the sentence which lacks the implicature in question but which otherwise means much the same thing.

(iv) The implicature must not be a truth condition of the sentence involved.

(v) It must be possible for there to be two or more implicatures such that the choice of which is involved may prove indeterminate (Grice 1975, as cited in Gazdar 1979:52-53).

Conversational implicature is cancelable when a clause denying implicature is added to the original utterance:

Indian team failed to win but then they didn’t even try.

Grice is of the opinion that generalized conversational implicatures are conversational rather than conventional. It is because the maxims which generate implicatures are more than simply conversions. Grice has provided a theoretical account of what it is to conversationally implicate something that has been widely adopted.
Conversational implicatures are not attributed simply to the lexical items in an utterance. However, they contain the meaning conveyed in uttering a sentence and additional information that is associated neither with conventions nor with truth-conditional aspects. According to Van Der Sandt there are three factors responsible for occurrence of conversational implicatures:

The semantic content of the sentence—that is, its truth-conditions and conventional implicatures; the linguistic or non-linguistic context of utterance, and the principles that the interlocutors are supposed to respect in a rational, co-operative conversation


Out of these three factors mentioned by Sandt, the third one, that is, the cooperative principle is of vital importance in the theory of implicature. In addition, Kempson has pointed out five characteristics of conversational implicatures:

1. They are dependent on the recognition of the cooperative principle and its maxims.
2. They will not be part of the meaning of the lexical items in the sentence since their interpretation depends on a prior understanding of the conventional meaning of the sentence.
3. The implicature of an utterance will characteristically not be the sole possible interpretation of that utterance. There may well be more than one possible assumption which will reinstate the Cooperative Principle in the face of an apparent breakage. Since these assumptions are not explicit, they are often indeterminate.
4. The working out of an implicature will depend on assumptions about the world which the speaker and the hearer share. They will therefore not in general be predictable.
5. They are cancellable. That is, an interpretation which is not part of the conventional meaning of the utterance can be explicitly denied without contradiction

(1975:144).

3.1.5 Definitions / Procedures

Implicature has been defined / described by various linguists and pragmatists in different ways. Some of them are given below.

**Herbert Paul Grice**

Grice focuses on the observance of the conversational maxims and the beliefs of the interlocutors while working out conversational implicature. He characterizes conversational implicature as:
A man who, by (in, when) saying (or making as if to say) that \( p \) has implicated that \( q \), may be said to have conversationally implicated that \( q \), \textsc{provied that} (1) he is to be presumed to be observing the conversational maxims, or at least the cooperative principle; (2) the supposition that he is aware that, or thinks that, \( q \) is required in order to make his saying or making as if to say \( p \) (or doing so in \textsc{those} terms) consistent with this presumption; and (3) the speaker thinks (and would expect the hearer to think that the speaker thinks) that it is within the competence of the hearer to work out, or grasp intuitively, that the supposition mentioned in (2) \textsc{is required}

\textsc{(1975:49-50)}.

\textbf{John Meibauer}

Meibauer is of the opinion that a conversational implicature should be calculable as well as cancellable and it should have truth value. He defines conversational implicature as:

A conversationally implicated at \( t \) that \( q \), if\( f\)
\begin{itemize}
  \item[(a)] A asserted at \( t \) that \( p \),
  \item[(b)] A presented \( q \) as true
  \item[(c)] \( q \) is calculable from the assertion of \( p \),
  \item[(d)] \( q \) is cancelable
\end{itemize}

\textsc{(2005:1378)}.

\textbf{Barbara Partee}

Barbara Partee follows Grice while defining conversational implicature, by giving due significance to the conversational maxims and the context. She defines conversational implicature as:

An utterance \( A \) in context \( c \) conversationally implicates proposition \( P \) if\( f\)
use of \( A \) in the given context pragmatically implies \( B \) by virtue of conversational maxims

\textsc{(2009:1)}.

\textbf{Annabelle Mooney}

Mooney is of the approach that implicatures facilitate the conversation to be more fruitful by rendering clarity and truthfulness to the information. She characterizes conversational implicature as:

\ldots Implicatures that one provides to make a contributor’s contribution clear, true and so on, or if not, why not

\textsc{(2004:90)}. 
**Gerald Gazdar**

According to Gazdar, implicature is distinct from entailments, that is, it is the meaning conveyed by the speaker beyond what he actually says. He characterizes implicature as:

An implicature is a proposition that is implied by the utterance of a sentence in a context even though that proposition is not a part of nor an entailment of what was actually said

(1979:49).

**Stephen C. Levinson**

Levinson provides certain conditions which must be fulfilled by conversational implicature. He also emphasizes observance of the CP and mutual understanding of the interlocutors. Following Grice’s views, he defines conversational implicature as:

S’s saying that P conversationally implicates q iff:

i) S is presumed to be observing the maxims, or at least (in the case of flouting) the cooperative principle.

ii) In order to maintain this assumption, it must be supposed that S thinks that q

iii) S thinks that both S and the addressee H mutually know that H can work out that to preserve assumption in (i), q is in fact required


**Keith Allen**

Keith Allen’s view is based on the CP, the context and grammatical or encyclopedic knowledge. Moreover, he points out defeasibility as a test of implicature. He describes conversational implicature as:

In the formula $A \Delta B$, B is a CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE of A, which is a part (or perhaps the whole) of speaker’s utterance U made is context C under conventional co-operative conditions. B is a pragmatic inference calculated from the meaning of U as being most probable given the common ground, i.e. (i) the cooperative principle (ii) the context C and (iii) grammatical and encyclopedic knowledge. A conversational implicature is defensible (can be cancelled) without contradicting the utterance which implicates it


**Jef Verschueren**

Verschueren calls implicature as implied meaning resulting out of flouting of the CP and observance of the maxims. He defines conversational implicature as:
Implicit meaning inferred from the obvious flouting of a conversational maxim in combination with assumed adherence to the cooperative principle

(1999:34).

**Ruth Kempson**

Kempson’s definition of implicature is based on the meaning intended by the speaker and its interpretation by the hearer by the way of CP. He defines conversational implicature as:

These ‘conversational implicatures’ of an utterance are by definition, assumptions over and above the meaning of the sentence used which the speaker knows and intends that the hearer will make in the face of an apparently open violation of the Cooperative Principle in order to interpret the speaker’s sentence in accordance with the Cooperative Principle

(1975:143).

**Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy**

**Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy** provides the following theoretical definition of conversational implicature, which rests on the observance of the CP and mutual knowledge of the interlocutors. It defines conversational implicature as:

S conversationally implicates \( p \) iff S implicates \( p \) when:

(i) S is presumed to be observing the Cooperative Principle (cooperative presumption);
(ii) The supposition the S believes \( p \) is required to make S’s utterance consistent with the Cooperative Principle (determinacy); and
(iii) S believes (or knows), and expects H to believe that S believes, that H is able to determine that (ii) is true (mutual knowledge)

(2005).

Here, it is expected that an implicature becomes conversational when it satisfies above three conditions. In other words, these are the conditions which govern the emergence of conversational implicature.

### 3.1.6 Conversational Implicature and Metaphor

**Introduction**

Metaphor, as suggested by Grice (1989), is a kind of implicature arising from the exploitation or flouting of maxims. According to Mooney (2004:908), kinds of
implicature triggered by figurative language are worth providing special attention. The meaning suggested by figures such as metaphor cannot be conveyed by alternative ways.

**Levinson’s View**

As Levinson (1983:148) points out, metaphor has been studied traditionally as one of the central notions in semantics. He mentions two theories of metaphor:

1. **The comparison theory**
   Metaphors are similes with suppressed or deleted predictions of similarity. Thus, *Iago is an ell* is semantically equivalent to *Iago is like an ell*

2. **The interaction theory**
   Metaphors are special uses of linguistic expressions where one ‘metaphorical’ expression (*or focus*) is embedded in another ‘literal’ expression (*or frame*), such that the meaning of the focus interacts with and *changes* the meaning of the frame, and vice versa (1983:148).

In the interaction theory of metaphor, meanings of words are mentioned expressively by the qualities of those words. For instance, the word ‘water’ has various semantic features which collectively convey its meaning:

   Transparent – Colorless – Liquid – Natural

So, when the word ‘water’ is used metaphorically, these features are attributed to certain other entity. The comparison theory of metaphor claims, as Levinson (1983:151) argues, that metaphors are derived from explicit similes. For instance, as per this theory, the following two utterances are equivalent as both involve comparison:

   Politics is a dirty game.
   Politics is like a dirty game.

Both the above utterances share the same semantic interpretation. This theory claims that comprehension of metaphor does not differ from understanding the literal use of language in similes. However, these theories of metaphor, as Levinson (1983:148) points out, fail to yield adequate account of the phenomenon.

**Gricean View**

In Gricean view, metaphors are exploitations or floutings of the maxim of quality. As pointed out by Stroik (1988:25), Grice’s theory of meaning form a theory of information that includes semantic meaning as well as various implicated meanings. Such theory
accounts for interpretation of figurative use of language with metaphors. Following is an utterance with three of its metaphorical interpretations:

Goa is a lively state.
i. The people in Goa are friendly.
ii. The people in Goa are happy.
iii. The people in Goa are hospitable.

The interpretations (i), (ii) and (iii), are cancellable by adding some extra premises as the following:

Even though the people in Goa are unfriendly, Goa is a lively state.

In the above utterance, the interpretation (i) is cancelled. Thus, it shares the property of defeasibility with conversational implicature. Hence, Grice suggests that as the information conveyed by such metaphorical interpretations is cancellable, it is conversationally implicated by the metaphor. Stroik (1988:26-27) tries to prove that the metaphorical interpretations have a natural explanation in the observance of the cooperative principle. He further states that the utterances, such as the one cited above, flout the maxim of quality by being semantically invalid. In order to understand such utterances, the hearer must assume that the speaker is being cooperative and conveying some meaning that is not expressed literally. So the hearer tries to find out the possible implications associated with the literal import of the utterance. Thus, Gricean framework provides significant ways of explaining what metaphorical meaning is and how it can be arrived at.

**Types of Metaphor**

The theories of metaphor have a claim that the proper comprehension of metaphor necessitates that they must be converted into complex simile-like structures. Such structure should be complex because, as Levinson (1983:152) states, the listener has to reconstruct a number of extra-linguistic predicates. He further states that the types of metaphor support the rule that helps conversion of metaphors into complex similes.

**Nominal Metaphor**

Metaphor as the one exemplified below is termed as nominal metaphor.

Michael is a wolf.
To interpret such a metaphor, listener has to convert it into simile with the following rule suggested by Levinson (‘+’ is equal to ‘is interpreted as’):

\[
\text{BE } (\alpha, y) + \rightarrow 3F \; 3G \; (\text{SIMILAR } (f(\alpha), G(y))), \text{ i.e. metaphors of the } \alpha \text{ is a } y \text{ kind are interpreted as: ‘There are two properties } F \text{ and } G \text{ such that } \alpha \text{ having property } F \text{ is like } y \text{ having property } G
\]


Following this rule, the above metaphor can be interpreted as:

Michael’s ability to deceive people is like wolf’s well-known quality to deceive other animals.

**Predicative Metaphor**

Predicative metaphor is the one that makes the following utterance:

African countries crept behind.

The following rule facilitates the interpretation of such metaphors:

\[
G(\alpha) + \rightarrow 3F \; 3y \; (\text{SIMILAR } (F(\alpha), G(y)))
\]

i.e. metaphors of the \( \alpha \)s kind (i.e. with metaphorical predicates) are interpreted as: ‘There is a property \( F \) and an entity \( y \) such that \( \alpha \) \( F \)ing is like \( y \) \( G \)ing


The above utterance can be interpreted, following this rule, as:

African countries are developing like snail creeping.

**Sentential Metaphor**

Sentential metaphors are identified, as Levinson (1983:153) opines, by being irrelevant to the context. Such metaphors are not categorically false. On the other hand, nominal and predicative metaphors are categorically false, that is, Michael cannot be a wolf and countries cannot really creep. Following is an example of sentential metaphor:

A: What do you think about the speech of the Chief Guest?
B: The dog barked.

By applying the rule given below, the metaphor in B’s reply can be interpreted.

\[
G(y) + \rightarrow 3F \; 3\alpha \; (\text{SIMILAR } (F(\alpha), G(y)))
\]

i.e. given an irrelevant proposition \( y \)s interpret it as: ‘there is another property \( F \) and another entity \( \alpha \) such that the proposition ‘\( \alpha \) \( F \)s’ is similar to ‘\( Y \) \( G \)s’ (and ‘\( \alpha \) \( F \)s’ is relevant to the discourse)
Thus, B’s reply can be interpreted by constructing a complex simile as:

The Chief Guest giving speech is like the dog barking.

3.1.7 Conversational Implicature and Theory of Meaning

The concept of meaning is coined by Grice (1957) in his article ‘Meaning’ in which he distinguished speaker’s meaning and sentence meaning. Grice states that what people mean and refer by using words in conversation is more important than what words mean and refer. Grice calls such meaning as non-natural meaning or meaningN. He makes the following generalizations about meaningN:

1. ‘A meantN something by æ’ is (roughly) equivalent to 'A intended the utterance of æ to produce some effect in an audience by means of the recognition of this intention.
2. ‘æ meant something’ is (roughly) equivalent to 'somebody meantN something by æ’.
3. ‘æ meansN (timeless) that so-and-so’ might as a first shot be equated with some statement or disjunction of statements about what ‘people’ (vague) intend (with qualifications about ‘recognition’) to effect by æ’


Generally, the theory of meaningN has not been treated as having any association with the theory of implicature. But Levinson is of the opinion that the theories of meaningN and implicatures have a crucial relation in conversational interaction. He states:

In fact there is a connection of an important kind. If, as we indicated, Grice’s theory of meaning-nn is construed as a theory of communication, it has the interesting consequence that it gives an account of how communication might be achieved in the absence of any conventional means for expressing the intended message


In other words, the theory of meaningN facilitates conversation with non-natural means and provides an account of how more can be suggested than what is said. Grice formulates the concept of meaningN to differentiate the incidental transfer of information from proper communication. He distinguishes natural meaning from non-natural meaning or meaningN and characterizes meaningN as:

S meantN by uttering U if and only if:

i. S is intended U to cause some effect z in recipient H
ii. S intended (i) to be achieved simply by H recognizing that intention (i)  

According to Levinson (1983:16), the above definition seems to be unclear at first sight but it is significant in stating that the intension of the speaker to cause the hearer to act is the vital component of communication. Levinson tries to explain the difference between the natural meaning and meaning with a simple instance:

It distinguishes between two kinds of ‘boos’, or attempts to frighten someone. Suppose I leap out from behind a tree, and by sheer surprise frighten you. I have caused an effect in you by ‘natural’ means. But now suppose that you know I am behind the tree, you are expecting me to leap out, and I know you know all that: I can still (may be) frighten you by leaping out, just by getting you to realize that I intend to frighten you. Only the second is an instance of communication (meaning-nn) in Grice’s sense  

Grice’s theory basically throws light on interesting inconsistencies between meaning and sentence meaning. For instance, an utterance uttered ironically may communicate exactly opposite meaning:

You have done a marvelous job,

The speaker here may implicate:

You have done a stupid job.

Such intention of speaker could be recognized, taking into consideration devices like irony, in addition to the literal meaning. Linguistic devices may affect the literal as well as contextual meaning of an utterance. So, meaning is a part of what is communicated. It consists of two parts, as Kempson (1975:138) states, the definition of speaker’s meaning and the setting up of the maxims of behavior to explain the cooperative nature of communication. Kempson, following Grice, develops the concept of meaning as cited below.

For some specific occasion, a speaker S makes an utterance ‘x’ to a hearer H indicating that p if he intends that:
(1) H should think x has f (where f is a feature)
(2) H should think that he (S) intends H to think x has f
(3) H should think F is correlated in way c with the state of believing that p (where p is the propositional content)
(4) H should think that S intends that he (H) thinks it is correlated in way c with the state of believing that p
(5) H should think he (S) intends H (via 1 and 3) to think that S believes that p
(6) On the basis of (5), H should think that in fact S does believe that p.
(7) H should think that S intends (6)
(8) On the basis of (6) H should believe that p

(1975:139).

The concept of meaning focuses on the issue that what a sentence means may not be similar to what a speaker might mean in the utterance of the sentence in specific contexts.

3.1.8 Conversational Implicature and Theory of Relevance

Theory of Relevance is one of the significant theories in post-Gricean pragmatics. The theory provides most influential alternative to Grice’s theory. The Theory of Relevance is proposed by Sperber and Wilson in 1986. They state:

Grice’s maxims can be replaced by a single principle of relevance—that the speaker tries to be as relevant as possible in the circumstances—which when suitably elaborated, can handle the full range of data— the Grecian maxims were designed to explain

(1986:381).

Relevance is a technical term, used by Sperber and Wilson to mean ‘communicative efficiency’. According to Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, relevance is an application of cost-benefit analysis:

Principle of Relevance (Communicative Efficiency): make your contribution be the one with the maximum ratio of contextual implications to processing cost

(2005).

Sperber and Wilson propose to subsume all the Gricean maxims under one cognitive principle called the Principle of Relevance. They state that the human central cognitive system works by preserving the balance between the effort and the effect in conversation. They claim:

Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance

Sperber and Wilson (1986) claim that interpreting an utterance invariably involves establishing both its explicit and implicit content. Such interpretation consists of two steps - establishing what proposition the utterance has actually expressed and accessing some extra set of propositions directly expressed to yield indirect information. Any utterance is relevant to a hearer subject to its association with certain context to convey new information independent from the utterance or the context alone. The maximum relevance is achieved when hearer gets the desired information at the minimal processing cost.

The concept of Relevance, as Kempson (1988:151) opines, takes the maxim of Relevance as the only central concept in pragmatic theory. What a relevance theory claims to provide is a theory of the central cognitive mechanism, from which follows an account of how utterances are interpreted. Kempson further states that one of the major problems of any pragmatic theory to explain is how it is that the information derived from an utterance of a sentence is far richer than the information which a given sentence will present at its ‘linguistically specifiable meaning’. Kempson (1988:152) is of the opinion that the theory of relevance is based on the fact that the human cognitive mechanism is wired up to maximize relevance. The constraints this assumption imposes on utterance interpretation are what Sperber and Wilson call the Principle of Relevance. This assumption controlling the utterance interpretation is that the speakers believe what they have said is most relevant to the hearer in the circumstances, immediately providing the hearer with a set of premises with minimal processing effort:

A: What’s the new Pizza House like?
B: The cooks are all Italian

(Kempson, 1988:152).

In the above piece of conversation, B takes A’s question to be a question about the food at the Pizza House. B’s reply here is intentionally indirect which forces A to refer to context such as ‘Italians are the best cooks for pizza’, so as to infer the quality of pizza there. So in such circumstances, as Kempson points out, such indirect responses are more relevant than direct ones. The Principle of Relevance is presented, according to Taylor and Cameron (1987:95), as a descriptive generalization about the nature of conversational communication. In other words, it is not a strict rule that interlocutors are supposed to follow. On the contrary; the interlocutors might not even have tacit knowledge of it. Even Sperber and Wilson state that:
The principle of relevance, by contrast, is a generalization about ostensive-inferential communication. Communicators and audience need no more know the principle of relevance to communicate than they need to know the principles of genetics to reproduce. Communicators do not ‘follow’ the principle of relevance; and they could not violate it even if they wanted to (1986:162).

Kempson formulates the concept of Relevance as:

Only say any sentence $S_i$ made up of $*\varphi P'$, if $p$ either entails or implicates some proposition $q$, which is also implicated by $S_i$

(1975:160).

Kempson is of the opinion that every conceivable sentence containing two conjuncts could be interpreted as having some common ground. He further states that given a sentence containing $S_1$ and $S_2$, the hearer must be able to deduce if the two conjuncts are to be seen as possessing a common relevance either by semantic interpretation or some extra assumption. To make it clear, consider the following example quoted from Kempson:

John has yatch and Bill has a house in Knightsbridge.

(1975:159).

In the above utterance, the two conjuncts seem not to share the common topic. However, if the hearer assumes that the speaker abides the co-operative principle, he would interpret the second conjunct as relevant to the first one. To simplify, the speaker knows that the healer knows that to have a yatch and a house at Knightsbridge is not possible for any common man. Therefore, taking into consideration the concept of relevance, the hearer may interpret the sentence implicating that John and Bill are well off.

3.1.9 Conversational Implicature and Inference

Implicature is a kind of pragmatic inference based on non-truth conditional aspects of meaning. Implicatures are identical to inductive inferences. As Levinson (1983:115) points out that implicatures, like inductive inferences, are easily defeasible. He states that an inference is defeasible, in that, it can be cancelled by addition of some premises to the original one. Deductive inferences are not defeasible:

1. If Pluto is a planet, it is everlasting.
2. Earth is a planet.
3. Therefore, Earth is everlasting.
Such a logical argument cannot be cancelled by merely an addition of some premises. On the other hand, inductive inferences, as stated earlier can be defeated, by addicting extra premises. According to Grundy:

> An inductive inference is a conclusion derived from a set of premises sufficient to justify it for so long as no additional premises is added which would cause a different conclusion to be arrived at (1995:43).

According to Thomas, there is a widespread misuse of the terms like implicature and inference among native as well as non-native speakers of English. People frequently say ‘inferring’ when they really mean ‘implying’. Jenny Thomas defines these two terms as:

> To imply is to hint, suggest or convey some meaning indirectly by means of language. To infer is to deduce something from evidence (this evidence may be linguistic, paralinguistic or non-linguistic) (1995:58).

Consider the following argument:

1. Sally has got 50 pens.
2. Every one of the 50 pens is blue.
3. Therefore, all pens are blue.

If an additional premise is added to the above argument, the conclusion (3) becomes invalid:

1. Sally has got 50 pens
2. Every one of the 50 pens is blue.
3. The 51st pen is red
4. Therefore, all the pens are blue.

In the above argument, conclusion (4) becomes invalid because of additional premises (3). Thus, implicatures share this property with inductive inferences.

### 3.1.10 Conversational Implicature and Presupposition

Conversational implicature and presupposition share some of the properties and tests. Both these inferences are defeasible as both can be cancelled by certain additional premises. Defeasibility or cancellability is one of the defining properties of both these concepts. Conversational implicatures are not detachable because they are not part of semantic content or syntactic structure of an utterance. They arise out of the conveyed meaning not stated literally. They are triggered by observance, violation and flouting of
the maxims of conversation. It is not possible to find another way to say the same thing that lacks the same implicature, whereas in the case of presupposition, inferences are associated with the surface form of linguistic expression. Presuppositions are detachable as they are associated with certain linguistic items. They are carried by certain words and structures called presupposition-triggers.

Levinson (1983:213) is of the opinion that conversational implicatures and presuppositions are inferences which are added to complement the context of conversation. Such augmentation takes place in a specific order in which first entailment then conversational implicature and finally presuppositions are added to the context. Levinson provides the order, in which, the inferences are added to an utterance:

1. the entailments of the uttered sentence S
2. the clausal conversational implicatures of S
3. the scalar conversational implicatures of S
4. the presuppositions of S


Conversational implicatures are part of the information that may be new to the hearer. The hearer is supposed to get the message only after the understanding of conversational implicature. On the other hand, presuppositions are part of the old information shared by the participants in conversation. Such old information refers to the common ground or the mutual knowledge of the interlocutors.

### 3.1.11 Conversational Implicature and Entailment

Various scholars have various distinct views regarding the relation between implicature and entailment. Most of them are of the view that both these notions are identical, whereas, others have contrary opinions. Implicatures are inferences that are generated by maxims beyond the semantic meaning of the utterance. On the contrary, entailment is a kind of inference that is derived out of the logical content of the utterance. Consequently, entailments are non-defeasible. They cannot be cancelled by adding some additional premises to the original ones. For instance, as Levinson (1983:115) points out, implicatures can be suspended by addition of an if-clause, whereas, entailments cannot be:

Mike owns five cars.

+>>> Mike owns five cars and not more.

¬\| Mike owns four cars.
When if-clause is added to the utterance, implicature is cancelled, whereas, entailment survives:

Mike owns five cars, if not more

Mike owns four cars.

Dinsmore (1981:17) is of the view that at least most of the alleged conversational implicatures are in fact entailments. Gazdar (1979:54) points out Lakoff’s suggestion that implicature can be treated as ‘context dependent entailments’. Verschueren (1999:30) states that pragmatic inferences such as conversational implicature follow the process of inferring meaning taking into account the contextual information; while inferences such as entailment or logical implication follow logically from relations between forms and implicit meaning. He further mentions that entailments are said to be truth-conditional:

A entails or logically implies B if and only if every situation that makes A true also makes B true

(1999:30).

Robyn Carston (2010:16) points out that entailments and implicatures are mutually exclusive. He is of the opinion that both these concepts belong to different explanatory level.

3.1.12 Conversational Implicature and Social Implication

Social implication arises from how something is said in context and tells us something about the speaker. Mooney states that the presence of conversational implicatures can be said to exploit the particular background knowledge of the maxims in a particular conversation; however, social implication is not part of a message, as normally understood. It is explained by Mooney (2004:907-908) with an example of choice. Suppose a speaker has humors and figurative language as options, while talking to a person having certain relationship, whether he chooses humor or figurative language has certain implications called as social implications.

3.1.13 Conversational Implicature and Conventional Implicature

Laurence Horn gives a systematic conceptual distinction between conventional and conversation implicature, as indicated in the following table:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CONVENTIONAL IMPLICATA</strong></th>
<th><strong>CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATA</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Make no contribution to <em>truth conditions</em>, but constrain <em>appropriateness</em> of expression with which they are associated.</td>
<td>Natural concomitant of what is said or how it is said; non-conventional by definition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) <em>Unpredictable</em>, arbitrary, part of meaning; must be learned <em>ad hoc</em>.</td>
<td><em>Cancelled</em>, either explicitly (by linguistic context) or implicitly (by extra linguistic context).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) <em>Non-cancellable</em>; apply in all contexts of utterance.</td>
<td><em>Cancelled</em>, either explicitly (by linguistic context) or implicitly (by extra linguistic context).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) <em>Detachable</em>; two synonyms may have different conventional implicatures.</td>
<td><em>Non-detachable</em> if arising via one of the content maxims (quality, quantity, relation). <em>Detachable</em> if arising via maxim of manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) <em>Not calculable</em> through any procedure; must be stipulated.</td>
<td><em>Calculable</em> through cooperative principle and the maxims of conversation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Akin to pragmatic presuppositions (non-controversial propositions speaker posits as part of common ground)</td>
<td>Conceptually related to Mill’s <em>‘sous-entendu</em> of common conversation’ or Ducrot’s <em>‘sous-entendi’</em> as discourse or rhetorical notion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) Exhibit a well-defined set of <em>projection properties</em> enabling the implicata of larger expressions to be computed from those of their subparts.</td>
<td>Projection properties unclear, since conversational implicatures ‘may be indeterminate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: From Laurence Horn (1998:123).*

According to Jaszczykov (2002:217), conventional implicature fills the breach between the inadequate truth conditional semantics and the implicatures derivable from the cooperative principle. Moreover, Davis is of the opinion that:

The difference between ‘conventional’ and ‘conversational’ implicatures at the level of sentences lies in the nature of conventions involved. Both are semantic conventions, but only the former is the first order convention. The contrastive implication is part of the meaning of ‘*but*’. The non-universal implication is not part of the meaning of some


According to Jenny Thomas, there is a common thing in these two types of implicature. Both of them convey an additional level of meaning that is beyond the literal meaning of the utterance. Thomas states:

They differ in that in the case of conventional implicature, the same implicature is always conveyed, regardless of context, whereas in the case of conversational implicature what is implied varies according to the context of utterance

Horn (1988:122-123) says that Karttunen and Peters have expanded the category of conventional implicature to cover most of the features of the notion of presupposition. He further states that, their account of how conventional implicature affects the discourse context owes much to earlier accounts of pragmatic presupposition as propositions whose truth the speaker takes for granted.

3.2 COMMUNICATIONAL CONTENT OF UTTERANCE

3.2.0 Introduction

Grice provides these components of meaning that constitute the total signification of an utterance. It is called, by most of the scholars, as communicational content of an utterance. These elements are what is said, what is conventionally implicated and what is non-conventionally implicated. These elements have got a significant status in Grice’s theory of implicature in particular and the study of meaning in general. The total signification or the communicational content of an utterance can be divided as shown in the following manner as appears in Jaszczolt (also in Levinson (1983:131):

\[ \text{Meaning}_{\text{NN}} \text{ (Speaker’s meaning):} \]

1. what is said (truth-conditional aspect of meaning)
2. what is implicated (non-truth-conditional aspect of meaning)
   2.1 what is conventionally implicated
   2.2 what is non-conventionally implicated
      2.2.1 what is conversationally implicated
         2.2.1.1 generalized conversational implicature
         2.2.1.2 particularized conversational implicature
      2.2.2 what is non-conversationally implicated

*Note: From Jaszczolt 2002:219).*

According to Jaszczolt (2002:219), what is meant is composed out of what is said and what is implicated. The latter in turn combines what is implicated conventionally and non-conventionally. Non-conventional implicature can be conversational and non-conversational. Finally, conversational implicature can be generalized and particularized.

3.2.1 What is Said

Grice explains the term ‘what is said’ as:

Suppose someone to have uttered the sentence *he is in the grip of a vice*. Given the knowledge of the English language, but no knowledge of the circumstances of the utterance, one would know something about what the speaker had said, on the assumption that he was speaking Standard
English, and speaking literally. One would know that he had said about some particular male person or animal x, that at the time of the utterance (whatever that was), either (1) x was unable to rid himself of a certain kind of bad character trait or, (2) some part of x’s person was caught in a certain kind of tool or instrument (approximate account, of course). But for a full identification of what the speaker had said, one would need to know (a) the identity of x, (b) the time of utterance, and (c) the meaning, on the particular occasion of utterance, of the phrase, in the grip of a vice (a decision between (1) and (2). [These two types of meaning together may be said to constitute the conventional content of the utterance ‘he is in the grip of a vice’]


The above explanation indicates that the hearer has to refer to various possible senses and references that could have been intended by the speaker in order to come across what is said by the speaker in particular utterance. For instance, most of the times, lexical meaning is not sufficient for the hearer to understand what the speaker has said, when someone says:

None of these.

The hearer of this utterance constructs a complete proposition based upon the words in the utterance to understand ‘what is said’. For instance, suppose an eyewitness in some crime is called upon to identify the criminal. The witness observes a number of criminals caught by police and comes to a conclusion stated above. The policeman would take it as stating:

None of these persons is the criminal he could point out.

Here, the hearer has filled in the utterance with the details from his common knowledge. According to Horn (2004:1) what is said is the literal content of the uttered sentence. It is determined by the grammatical structure of the sentence. It is implicature that builds the gap between what is said and what is communicated. Van Der Sandt (1988:50-51) points out that the distinction between what is said and what is communicated or conveyed is fundamental to Grice’s theory of implicature. He adds that what is said is the logical content of the sentence. In other words, it is all the information that is necessary to specify its truth conditions. It is what can be determined on the truth-conditional grounds. According to Grice, (1975:44) what is said is the semantic content, or to quote his words, ‘closely related to the conventional meaning of the words uttered’. 
3.2.2 Conventionally Implicated

While characterizing conventionally implicated meaning, Grice says:

If I say (smugly), ‘*He is an Englishman; he is, therefore, brave*; I have certainly committed myself, by virtue of the meaning of my words, to its being the case that his being brave is a consequence of (follows from) his being an Englishman. But while I have said that he is an Englishman, and said that he is brave, I do not want to say that I have SAID (in the favored sense) that it follows from his being an Englishman that he is brave, though I have certainly indicated and so implicated, that this is so. I do not want to say that my utterance of this sentence would be, STRICTLY SPEAKING, false, should the consequence in question fails to hold. So SOME implicatures are conventional (1975:44-45).

It can be observed that words like ‘therefore’ carry an additional conventional meaning, besides their literal meaning. For instance:

He is an American; therefore, he is shrewd.

In the above utterance, the speaker may be taken to implicate due, to the meaning of the words used in the utterance, that the person referred to is shrewd as a consequence of his being an American. Such implicated meaning derives from the conventional features attached to the word ‘therefore’. Grice calls such meaning as ‘conventionally implicated’.

3.2.3 Non-conventionally Implicated

Non-conventional meaning is not part of the truth-conditional or conventional import of an utterance. The interlocutors draw inferences to interpret such meaning that is implicated. Grice explains it as:

Suppose that A and B are talking about a mutual friend, C, who is presently working in a bank. A asks B how C is getting on in his job, and B replies, *Oh quite well, I think; he likes his colleagues, and he has not been to prison yet*. At this point, A might very well inquire what B was implying, what he was suggesting, or what he meant by saying that C had not been to prison. The answer might be any one of such things as that C is the sort of person likely to yield to the temptation provided by his occupation, that C’s colleagues are really very unpleasant and treacherous people; and so forth…. It is clear that whatever B implied, suggested, meant, etc., in this example, is distinct from what B said, which was simply that C had not been to prison yet (1975:43).
Grice makes it clear that it may not be a rule for every utterance to have all the three components. He states:

In any given case, one or more of these elements may be lacking. For nothing may be said although there is something which a speaker makes as if to say; and what is non-conventionally implicated may be (or may not be) conversationally implicated


What is implicated or conveyed is attributed to the workings of general principles that govern rational, co-operative conversation. The context plays a crucial role in determining what someone means by what he says. What is conventional is the meaning of the utterance, that is, what is said. On the other hand, what is non-conventional, that is, what is implicated consists of uttering something with a particular form and a particular meaning on a particular occasion. According to Robyn Carston (2010) what is said is related to the truth-conditional content of the utterance. He further states that what is said may not be meant. It may not be part of what the speaker wants to communicate, on the other hand; it may be used as an instrument to communicate something else. The proposition expressed literally may not be identical to what the speaker could possibly mean. The distinction between what is said and what is implicated is made clear by Levinson with the following illustration:

A: Do you have the ability to tell me the time of the present movement, as standardly indicated on a watch, and if so please do so tell me
B: No I don’t know the exact time of the present moment, but I can provide some information from which you may be able to deduce the approximate time, namely the milkman has come.


In the above example, the part that is italicized is the content that is not said but indirectly communicated by the participants.

3.3 GRICE’S THEORY OF IMPLICATURE

3.3.0 Introduction

Grice proposed his theory of implicature in the William James Lectures at Harvard in 1967 and which was published partly in 1975. This theory outlines a formula in which non-conventional kind of inferences can be conveyed taking into consideration Grice’s theory of Meaning NN. According to Levinson (1985:101), Grice’s theory of implicature is essentially a theory about how people use language. In his proposal, Grice assumes a
general rule that governs the conduct of conversation. He basically develops this theory to explain and predict conversational implicature. His aim is to illustrate how various kinds of implicatures are used to interpret the proper message in conversation. With this intention, he postulated a general ‘Cooperative Principle’ and its four maxims to specify how to be cooperative in conversation. He asserts that, as common knowledge, people generally follow these maxims for successful and efficient conversation.

3.3.1 The Cooperative Principle

Grice points out that conversation does not comprise of a series of broken remarks but they are characteristically rational and cooperative events. Grice’s claim is that the interlocutors will recognize a common purpose or a set of purposes which may develop gradually in the conversation. For such efficient and cooperative conversation, Grice formulates the following general principle of conversational interaction. He states:

But at each stage, SOME possible conversational moves would be excluded as conversationally unsuitable. We might then formulate a rough general principle which participants will be expected (ceteris paribus) to observe, namely: Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged. One might label this the COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE

(1975:45).

Grice calls this general principle of cooperative interaction as ‘The Co-operative Principle.’ He states that interlocutors are supposed to follow this basic principle governing conversation. It is based on the assumption that, in conversation, participants will cooperate with each other while making their contribution.

Maxims of Cooperative Principle

Grice identifies maxims and sub-maxims which jointly constitute and make up the force behind the cooperative principle. He formulates four maxims and nine sub-maxims of the Cooperative Principle (hereinafter CP):

1. QUANTITY:
   i. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange).
   ii. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

2. QUALITY:
   i. Do not say what you believe to be false.
   ii. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
3. RELATION:
   i. Be relevant.

4. MANNER:
   i. Avoid obscurity of expression.
   ii. Avoid ambiguity.
   iii. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
   iv. Be orderly.

(1975:45-46).

The primary function of these maxims and sub maxims is to constrain the behavior of interlocutors so that conversation should become orderly, purposeful and efficient at its best. According to Kempson, the CP provides a framework to exploit the use of language by interlocutors to convey massages and also to illustrate the meaning that is not expressed literally. So he states:

A basic condition for a pragmatic theory is that it explains not only how speakers use sentences of the language in a way which corresponds to their meaning, but also how they succeed in using those sentences to communicate information which is not specified by the meaning of the sentence in question, and Grice’s hypothesis of a Co-operative Principle between speakers provides a framework in which this is explained (1975:142).

Meulen (1988:440-41) opines that the conversational maxims proposed by Grice are social conventions of communication. These maxims are generally concerned with additional secondary aspects of meaning of an utterance. Therefore, Meulen calls implicatures as ‘invited inferences which are not entailed by the sentence uttered’. He further states that Gricean maxims are essential to any linguistic theory which purports to explain how inferences are made from what is said in conversation along with the speaker’s shared assumptions and common knowledge. Thus, it can be said that Gricean maxims occupy a significant place in the study of conversational implicatures.

3.3.2 Implicatures Arising out of Observance of the Maxims

Introduction

Kempson (1988:140) is of the view that Grice provided an overall account of utterances carrying far more information than expressed explicitly by the lexical items used. This conversational principle is crucial in deciding the way in which utterances convey indirect information. Kempson (1988:141) further states that the main assumption of the CP is that ‘the speakers do not say what is false, or irrelevant, or too much, or too little.’ The
CP contains a set of assumptions called as maxims of conversation. At times such assumptions are seemingly exploited; such exploitation or violations convey indirect information, forcing the hearer to make additional assumptions so as to understand the message conveyed by the speaker as true and relevant. Inferences arising out of such a process are considered as conversational implicatures. They are not components of directly expressed propositions or the parts of linguistic content of the utterance. Horn (1988:119) is of the view that it is mutually assumed that the CP is being adhered to by the interlocutors, though it seems to be violated. Such seeming violation and exploitation give birth to ‘conversational implicata.’ Horn characterizes it as ‘non-logical inferences’ comprising of conveyed meaning.

**The Maxim of Quality**

When one observes the maxim of quality, one asserts that whatever one believes is true:

- Dr Johnson has a private airbus.
  +>> The speaker believes that Dr. Johnson has a private airbus and he has adequate evidence to prove it.
- Are you doing research in pragmatics?
  +>> The speaker doesn’t know that you are doing research in pragmatics, and he wants to know if you are.

Questions like the second example, as Levinson (1983:105) states, extend the scope of Quality. Such questions are asked sincerely and in want of information that is requested.

**The Maxim of Quantity**

Levinson (1983:106) is of the opinion that, the maxim of quantity generates interesting standard implicatures. Implicatures arise out of the assumption that the speaker says as much as required:

- The thesis consists of six chapters.
  In uttering the above sentence, the speaker implicates that:
  - The thesis consists of six chapters only.

If the speaker mentions six chapters, it is assumed that he follows the CP. By observing CP, he implicates that the thesis doesn’t consists of more or less than six chapters.
The Maxim of Relation

Observation of the maxim of relation, after due contextual analysis, gives birth to implicatures. According to Levinson (1983:109), orders, commands and requests are generally interpreted by the listener as relevant to the speech event:

- Please switch off your cell phones.
- Please switch off your cell phones right now.
- Blow the horn.
- Blow the horn immediately.

Inferences resulting from the assumption of relevance play a crucial role in the sense of coherence in conversation. If the participants in conversation do not interpret each other’s turns as relevant, then the conversation would appear to be absurd.

The Maxim of Manner

The maxim of manner triggers implicatures based on the assumption that, though the participants seem to violate the maxim of manner, they violate it with an intention. For instance, as Levinson (1983:107) points out it may be assumed that participants do not violate the sub maxims of manner arbitrarily but it may be relevant to the speech event. Instead of (1), if the speaker says (2, it seems that by being prolix, he violates sub-maxim ‘be brief’:

1. Type a letter.
2. Switch on the computer, open Ms-word, create a new document, select Times New Roman font and type a letter.

Though the speaker seems to violate the sub-maxim ‘be brief’, the utterance could be taken to be cooperative by observing the maxim of manner in a situation in which the speaker is an instructor teaching some student how to type a letter using Ms-word.

3.3.3 Implicatures Arising out of Violation of the Maxims

Introduction

According to Taylor and Cameron (1987:83), when one or more of the maxims are violated, the hearer will try to deduce some unstated propositions that the speaker may have wished to convey by violating the maxim. They further state that Grice’s theory considers how an utterance may be interpreted as communicating more propositional knowledge than the literal meaning of its words as well as the meaning suggested by the syntactic form. Successful violation is one which the other participant will not be able to
know even though the speaker may intend to and indeed violate a maxim. Mooney states that the hearer will not be able to detect if the violation is completely quite and unostentatious. She further talks about a space for the successful violation:

One that is so quiet and unostentatious that it is not noted and it is extremely likely to mislead.


The Maxim of Quality

Apart from straightforward violations of quality, successful violation invites attention. Such violations generate false implicature. Jenny Thomas (1995:73) notes that authentic examples of successful violations of maxim of quality are difficult to find. However, consider the following example, in which Father advises Son to study seriously for annual exam and the Son is watching television:

Father: You should go to college regularly and study hard as your annual exam is approaching.
Son: Today, I am not feeling well.

The Son here violates the maxim of quality by being a liar as he doesn’t show any symptoms of an illness. However, his utterance can be interpreted as implicating that he wants to watch the final cricket match on television on that day, therefore, he tells a lie that he is ill. He thinks that if he pretends to be ill, his father will not force him to go to college and he will enjoy the final cricket match staying at home.

The Maxim of Quantity

The maxim of quantity can be violated successfully by sayings too much or too little. According to Mooney (2004:914) a talkative speaker will be thought ‘(a) not to be able to speak to the point, (b) to lack appropriate knowledge about what the other participants know; or (c) to be patronizing.’ On the other hand, in case of speaker who says too little, the hearer will think that the speaker’s knowledge of the topic is inadequate or he is being uncooperative. For example:

Mike: What do you know about the Big-bang Theory?
Tony: Oh, it’s really an interesting theory.

In the above interaction, Mike wants to know something about the Big-bang theory, therefore he asks Tony about it. However, Tony’s reply implicates his lack of appropriate knowledge about the theory as he couldn’t give precise information.
The Maxim of Relation

About the maxim of relation, as Mooney (2004:914) points out, it is not easy to see how this maxim can itself be successfully violated. Moreover, what a participant implicates by means of violation of relation may be false. Following is an example adopted, with slight modification, from Grice that throws light on his account:

A: How is C getting on in his job at the bank?
B: Oh quite well, I think: he likes his colleagues, and he hasn’t been to prison yet.

(1975:43).

In the above exchange, B’s reply may be taken to imply more than it literally seems to mean. By violating the maxim of relation, the reply given by B seems to implicate that working in a bank is potentially risky job for C.

The Maxim of Manner

Similarly, in case of the maxim of manner, it is not an easy task to see that it can be successfully violated. Mooney tries to explain successful violations in case of jokes. She states:

When one does not expect a humour in a particular communicative context, either because one knows the speaker as humourless or because humor is inappropriate and so on, one may well be uncertain that humour was intended. It is conceivable that a joke will fail if it is taken ‘literally;’ in a sense a failed joke is a successful violation


Consider the following example in which a stranger is asking an address to a villager:

Stranger: I want to visit the New Museum, is it too far from here?
Villager: You need to turn back and walk for five seconds, then you will get a big door, enter that door and you are in the New Museum.

Here, Villager seems to violate the maxim of manner by being prolix. However, this violation can be taken to implicate Villager’s suggestion that it is not too far from there, but the stranger is standing in front of the New Museum.
3.3.4 Implicatures Arising out of Flouting of the Maxims

Introduction

The maxims of the CP are distinct from linguistic rules in general, in that they are often violated. Most of the times, interlocutors break these maxims deliberately and blatantly in such a way that the speaker knows and intends that the hearer will come to know that the maxims have been broken. It can be further illustrated with examples like the one cited below.

The teacher entered the hall and students threw the books out.

If the hearer of the above utterance is not aware of the context, he might think it to be absurd that students threw the books away when the teacher entered the hall. However, if one assumes that students will throw the books away only when they realize that keeping the books with them in exam hall will cause punishment for them; one can interpret the utterance as relevant. Since the students were facing examination and keeping books with them at that time was illegal, it can be inferred that the students were copying answers from those books. The significance of flout lies in the usefulness of CP and its maxims. Flouting or exploitation results from overtly and blatantly not following some maxims, as Levinson (1983:109) states, in order to exploit them for communicative purposes. Inferences resulting from flouts or expatiations are based on the assumption of cooperation that the utterance is supposed to be cooperative if the speaker is deliberately violating the maxims. In such instances, the hearer is forced to draw inferences to interpret the utterance properly.

The Maxim of Quality

While speaker uses metaphor to convey some figurative meaning, he flouts maxim of quality by expressing ‘Categorial Falsehood,’ as Levinson (1983:100) calls it. Speaker either wants to be uncooperative or he intends to convey something beyond the words when he utters sentences like the following:

Madhubala was a delicate flower.

The above utterance can be interpreted by comparison of the qualities of a flower with Madhubala. The intention of the speaker is to convey that she shares qualities like delicacy, beauty, attractiveness etc. with a flower. So these properties are attributed to her by the utterance. The interpretation of the above utterance varies according to the context.
Uttered by a fan, it may be taken as a compliment, while uttered by a critic, it may be taken to implicate that she was not suitable for some challenging roles.

Ironies flout the maxim of quality by exploiting it blatantly. Levinson (1983:109) is of the opinion that ironies are successfully interpreted only because of underlying assumption of co-operation. Otherwise no inferences could have been drawn from ironical utterances. Consider the following exchange in which participants are discussing about a batsman who scored zero in his debut match:

A: What do you think about his future?
B: Oh come now, he is going to be a number one batsman!

Though B’s reply seems to be false, if it is assumed that B is being cooperative, the reply can be interpreted to convey something different that may be exactly opposite of the literal meaning. The utterance, as an example of irony, can be said to implicate that the future of this batsman is not very bright.

Rhetorical questions ask about something that is undisputedly known and accepted by all. As Levinson (1983:110) states, sincerity of a question is overtly violated in rhetorical question and implicature arises out of the flouting of the maxim of quality:

Are terrorists supposed to be kind?

If the above question is asked to any normal human being, that person will believe that ‘kindness’ is a quality that doesn’t go with terrorists and he will reply that terrorists are supposed not to be kind. Patent falsehoods are the utterances that are used to suggest the absurdity of some other utterance. They flout the maxim of quality and generate implicatures:

Student : Syllable consists of two or more clauses, isn’t it Teacher?
Teacher : And a sound consists of sentences, I think.

To suggest that the question asked by student is extremely absurd, the teacher replies with equally absurd sentence. If the student takes teacher’s reply as cooperative, he can take it to suggest that as a sound does not consists of sentences, in the same way, a syllable cannot consist of clauses. After such interpretation, student comes across the implicature that his question is worthless.
The Maxim of Quantity

Generally, tautologies seem to be meaningless, simply a play upon words or mere repetition. But most of the times, tautology also conveys a great amount of information:

Love is love.

Though the above utterance seems to be mere repetition, it has communicative import due to its pragmatic implications. Regarding such examples of tautology, Levinson (1983:11) states that, the communicative significance of such instances can be given in terms of flouting of the maxim of quantity. The above instance flouts the maxim of quantity by not providing adequate information. However, certain inferences may be drawn if it is assumed that the speaker adheres to the CP. The following inferences may be drawn from the above example of tautology in various contexts:

Such things always happen in love.
It is none of our business.
Love is such a tender emotion. … etc.

The Maxim of Relation

Grice is of the opinion that it is somewhat difficult to find instances of the flouting of the maxim of relation as such instances are hard to construct. Consider the following exchange:

A: Don’t you think that our boss is monstrous devil?
B: Oh, what a nice shirt you have got!

Instead of answering A’s question in Yes or No, B seems to exploit the maxim of relation giving irrelevant reply. However, if B’s reply is taken to be cooperative in appropriate circumstances, it might implicate the presence of boss, of which A is unaware. By exploiting the maxim, B wants to suggest A that:

The boss is standing right behind you.

The Maxim of Manner

The maxim of manner is flouted most of the times when speaker uses circumlocution instead of being brief. If exploitation of the maxim of manner is taken to be cooperative, it generates implicatures. Let’s cite an example that appears in Levinson:

Miss Singer produced a series of sounds corresponding closely to the score of an aria from Rigoletto.

In the above circumstance, the speaker could have avoided prolixity by being brief. He might have said:

Miss Singer sang an aria from *Rigoletto*.

However, by flouting the maxim of manner, the speaker wants to implicate that the lady is not a good singer.

### 3.4 NONFULFILLMENT OF THE MAXIMS

#### 3.4.0 Introduction

Maxims of the CP facilitate comprehension not only when they are observed but also when they are not. Grice (1975:49) mentions that interlocutors ‘may fail to fulfill a maxim in various ways.’ It is from such ways, in which interlocutors might not fulfill the maxims, various kinds of implicatures arise. Grice suggest the following ways in which a participant in conversation may fail to fulfill the maxims:

1. He may quietly and unostentatiously **VIOLATE** a maxim; if so, in some cases he will be liable to mislead.
2. He may **OPT OUT** from the operation both of the maxim and of the CP; he may say, indicate or allow it to become plain that he is unwilling to cooperate in the way the maxim requires. He may say, for example, *I cannot say more; my leaps are sealed.*
3. He may be faced by a **CLASH**; he may be unable, for example, to fulfill the first maxim of Quantity (Be as informative as is required) without violating the second maxim of Quality (Have adequate evidence for what you say).
4. He may **FLOUT** a maxim; that is, he may **BLATANTLY** fail to fulfill it. On the assumption that the speaker is able to fulfill the maxim and to do so without violating another maxim (because of a clash), is not opting out, and is not, in the view of the blatancy of his performance, trying to mislead, the hearer is faced with a minor problem: How can his saying what he did say be reconciled with the supposition that he is observing the overall CP? This situation is one that characteristically gives rise to conversational implicature; and when a conversational implicature is generated in this way, I shall say that a maxim is being **EXPLOTTED** (1975:49).

This taxonomy provided by Grice examines the maxims and how they might be nonfulfilled. As Mooney (2004:907) points out, Grice’s taxonomy can be simplified in only two types of meaningful nonfulfillment: (i) Which produces a conversational implicature and can therefore be said to exploit the maxims: (ii) Which produces social
implications. The significant approaches to Grice’s taxonomy of nonfulfillment include those of Jenny Thomas (1995) and Wilson and Sperber (2000). The following table, reproduced from Mooney (2004), summarizes these approaches:

**Approaches to Nonfulfillment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grice</th>
<th>Wilson and Sperber</th>
<th>Thomas</th>
<th>New System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violation (unsuccessful violation)</td>
<td>Overt violation</td>
<td>Violation</td>
<td>Not relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opting out</td>
<td>Overt Suspension</td>
<td>Opting Out</td>
<td>Social implication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clash</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exploiting (opting out at maxim level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flout (flouting)</td>
<td>Overt violation</td>
<td>Flout Suspension</td>
<td>Social implication (opting out at CP level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Infringement</td>
<td>Exploiting (lack of knowledge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social implication (capabilities)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Exploiting and</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Possible social</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Social implication</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social Implication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### 3.4.1 Maxim Hedges

**Introduction**

Speakers use certain linguistic structures to secure themselves against any possible violation of the maxims. Such linguistic structures are called hedges. Maxim hedges also save speakers from committing face-threatening acts by stating the facts and creating the background. According to Levinson (1983:162), speakers use discourse particles like *well, oh, ah, so, anyway, actually, still, after all* and so on to indicate that they are being cooperative to the extent. As Grundy states:

> Speakers frequently use highly grammaticalized hedges and intensifiers to inform their addressees of the extent to which they are abiding by the maxims


The maxim hedges indicate that the participants try their best to follow the maxims to be cooperative in conversation.
The Maxim of Quality

Most of the times, interlocutors avoid making bold statements in order to save themselves from further complications. There are a number of expressions, as Yule states, which interlocutors use to convey that what they are saying may not be completely accurate. Yule gives some examples of hedges as:

- I may be mistaken, but …
- As far as I know …
- I’m not sure if this is right, but …
- I guess …

(1996:38)

For instance:

i. Ambitious parents are responsible for student-suicide cases.
ii. I may be mistaken but I think that ambitious parents are responsible for student-suicide cases.

When a speaker utters (ii) instead of (i), it implicates that the speaker is observing the maxim of quality with respect to his own view, that may be wrong. It further implicates that there may be some contrary opinions too.

The Maxim of Quantity

The maxim of quantity can be hedged with the following expressions suggested by Yule:

- All I know…
- As you probably know …
- So, to cut a long story short …
- I won’t bore you with all the details, but …

(1996:38)

Most of the times, speakers use such expressions to indicate that they know only that much amount of information:

i. Diabetes is a lifelong disease.
ii. All I know is that diabetes is a lifelong disease

Instead of saying (i) if the speaker says (ii), it might be taken to implicate that the speaker doesn’t have sufficient information about the disease. Consequently, the maxim of quantity is hedged due to inadequate information.
The Maxim of Relation

The hedging of the maxim of relation implicates, as Grundy (2000:78) states, that what is said by the speaker is not as relevant at the stage at which it occurs in the conversations as expected. Yule lists certain expressions used as hedges.

Oh, by the way …  
Well …  
Anyway …  
I don’t know if this is important, but …  
This may sound like a dumb question, but …  
Not to change the subject, but …

(1996:38)

For instance:

By the way, what does your father do?

When the speaker utters the above sentence, it implicates that asking personal questions is irrelevant at that time. Yule (1996:38) states that speakers use such expressions hedging the maxim of relation and go on contributing irrelevant information.

The Maxim of Manner

Speakers tend to hedge the maxim of manner, as Yule points out, to show that they are aware of the expectations of manner. He lists some expressions that hedge the maxim of manner:

This may be a bit confused, but …  
I’m not sure if this makes sense, but …  
I don’t know if this is clear at all, but …  
… if you see what I mean.

(1996:39)

By using such expressions speakers encourage the listeners to try to overcome the obscurity and ambiguity they might have expressed unintentionally:

I’m not sure if this makes sense, but at night I saw a lightning fast shining object.

In the above utterance, the speaker, previously aware that he is going to tell something obscure, hedges the maxim. It implicates that the speaker is unable to make it clear what he saw at night.
3.4.2 Unsuccessful Violation

Mooney (2004:913-916) distinguishes between successful and unsuccessful violations. Unsuccessful violations generate social implications. Mooney (2004:916) points out that in the violation of quantity by saying too little, implications are generated about speaker’s shy personality or little knowledge. The case of unsuccessful violation of CP as a whole results in social implication, that is, unwillingness to be cooperative. Mooney cites the following exchange between husband and wife as an instance of unsuccessful violation:

Alice has been refusing to make love to her husband. At first, he attributes this to post-natal depression, but then he starts to think she may be having an affair.

‘Allie, I’ve got to ask you this.’
He stopped.
‘Ask me then …’
‘Will you give me a truthful answer? However much you think it’ll hurt me?’
Alice’s voice has a little quaver.
‘I promise’.
Martin came back to his chair and put hands on its back and looked at her.
‘Is there another man?’
Alice raised her chin and looked at him squarely.
‘No’, she said. ‘There isn’t another man’.
And then Martin gave a long, escaping sigh, and grinned at her and said he thought they had better finish the champagne, didn’t she?


In the above extract, Alice does not observe the maxim of quantity while answering Martin’s question. She says ‘No,’ but then she adds ‘There isn’t another man,’ which generates further implications. It could be seen as an example of violation of the maxim of quantity as Alice’s reply doesn’t provide adequate information. She gives either more or less information.

3.4.3 Infringement

Mooney (2004:910) points out that infringement results from imperfect command of language and provides social implications. Jenny Thomas (1995:74) is of the opinion that infringement is due to speaker being unfamiliar with the language, or being drunk, nervous, excited or just being unable to speak to the point. It also occurs if one is unable to cooperate because of lack of language proficiency. For instance, consider a piece of
conversation between a native English speaker and a non-native speaker recently exposed to English language:

    Mike : Would you like hamburger or pizza?
    Vijay : Yes.

Here, Vijay could not comprehend the question as alternative one. As a result, Mike might repeat the same question giving stress on ‘or’ to convey that he is providing options. The maxim of relation is suspended, in that; the reply should be one or both of the alternatives. Such infringements, as Mooney (2004:910) points out, are cases of social implications when implicatures are not at work.

3.4.4 Opting Out

Opting out is choosing not to be co-operative. As mentioned by Grice (1989) and further pointed out by Jenny Thomas (1995) and recently referred by Mooney (2004), opting out is due to an unwillingness to cooperate. Grice (1975:49) states that the speaker ‘may say, indicate or allow it to become plain that he is unwilling to cooperate in the way the maxim requires.’ However, the indication of opting out, as Mooney (2004:911) points out, most of the times, may not be ‘linguistically explicit’. In other words, it may be conveyed with body language, gestures intonation as well as silence. For example:

    Manmohan: What do you think about India’s Nuc’ Deal with America?
    Prakash: … (Silence)

Opting out may occur at two levels: at the level of maxims and at the level of the CP. Complete opting out of the CP has a social implication that the speaker doesn’t want to communicate at all.

3.4.5 Clash

According to Grice (1989:51-52), clash is the demand of one maxim infringing another. Clash triggers implicatures. Grice further notes that a clash may result from an imperfectly informed or unequipped speaker trying to be cooperative. In this way, the speaker’s knowledge of the world can be implicated through clash:

    A: Where is the Computer Shoppe?
    B: Somewhere in the next lane.
Here, B is unable to give precise answer forcing A to draw inference that B does not know exactly where the Computer Shoppe is. It results from B trying, but being unable to be cooperative.

3.5 TYPES OF CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE

Introduction

Grice has given three groups of implicature based on the CP and its maxims. These three groups are: (i) implicatures arising out of observance, (ii) violation, and (iii) flouting of the maxims. Moreover, various pragmatists have proposed various distinct views regarding the typology. According to Levinson (1983:126), there are two types of conversational implicature: implicatures derived from an assumption that the speaker is observing the maxims, and those derived on the basis of the speaker flouting a maxim.

Particularized Conversational Implicatures

Particularized conversational implicatures are analyzed with reference to special background knowledge. As Yule (1996:42) states, most of the inferences are assumed in very specific context in which conversation takes place. The analysis of conveyed meaning requires such inferences that give rise to particularized conversational implicatures. Most of the times, some responses as illustrated below, may seemingly deviate from relevance.

Jessie : Are you coming to the party tonight?
Margaret : My son is not feeling well.

Yes or No would have been a relevant response to the question asked by Jessie. However, Margaret’s reply cannot be taken as totally irrelevant. Jessie, being a woman, is supposed to consider some background knowledge that would be mutually assumed. Margaret’s reply could be interpreted as implicating the following:

She will have to look after her son, so she could not attend the party tonight.

Levinson characterizes particularized conversational implicature as:

All implicatures that arise from observing the maxim of Relevance are particularized, since utterances are relevant only with respect to the particular topic or issue at hand

Peter Gundy (1995:45) is of the opinion that particularized implicatures are derived, not from the utterance alone, but from the utterance in context. They vary with the context. Levinson defines particularized conversational implicature as:

\[ \text{“An implicature } i \text{ from utterance } U \text{ is particularized if } U \text{ implicates } i \text{ only by virtue of specific contextual assumptions that would not invariably or even normally obtain”} \]


According to Grice, particularized conversational implicatures are:

Cases in which an implicature is carried by saying that \( p \) on a particular occasion in virtue of special features of the context, cases in which there is no room for the idea that an implicature of this sort is normally carried by saying that \( p \)


**Generalized Conversational Implicature**

**Introduction**

Generalized conversational implicature is sometimes called as standard conversational implicature. Yule defines it as:

When no special knowledge is required in the context to calculate the additional conveyed meaning, it is called a generalized conversational implicature


Structures with definite article mostly give rise to generalized conversational implicature. The following is an example with indefinite articles:

I entered a house and a dog came running towards me.

From the above utterance, it can be inferred that the house and the dog do not belong to the speaker. Such inferences are termed as generalized conversational implicatures. Otherwise, the speaker would have been more specific saying ‘my house’ and ‘our dog’. Peter Grundy (1995:45) states that generalized conversational implicatures have a little to do with the most relevant understanding of an utterance. On the other hand, it derives entirely from the guidelines for talk, and most often from the maxim of quality. Therefore, Levinson states that:

An implicature \( i \) is generalized iff \( U \) implicates \( i \) unless there are unusual
specific contextual assumptions that defeat it


Further, Grice states that generalized conversational implicatures occur:

When one can say that the use of a certain form in an utterance would
normally (in the absence of special circumstances) carry such and such an
implicature or type of implicature


In such type of implicature, inferences are made without taking into consideration the
special background knowledge of the context of the utterance. The following are the two
types of generalized conversational implicature:

**Scalar Implicature**

Scalar implicatures arise from certain words that are used to communicate information by
expressing a scale of values. Levinson has enlisted the linguistic items that express scales
from the highest to the lowest value:

< all, most, many, some, few >
< and, or >
< n,…5,4,3,2,1 >
< excellent, good >
< hot, warm >
< always, often, sometimes >
< succeed in V-ing, try to V, want to V >
< necessarily P, possibly P >
< certain that P, probable that P, possible that P >
< must, should, may >
< cold, cool >
< love, like >
< none, not all >

(1983:134)

Speakers choose contextually appropriate one from the above scales judging it on the
tests of informativity and truthfulness. For instance:

Amartya Sen is of Indian origin and he often visits India.

In the above utterance, by using the word ‘often’, the speaker implicates:

Amartya Sen is of Indian origin and he does not always visit India.
Moreover, as Yule (1996:41) states, all the negative forms of the scale are implicated when a particular form of the scale is used:

- It’s possible that Mary abused Smith.
- It is not certain that Mary abused Smith.
- The cotton dresses should be washed using warm water.
- The cotton dresses should not be washed using hot water.

Scalar implicatures are defeasible. As Yule (1996:42) states, they may be cancelled, ‘when speakers correct themselves on some detail’:

- I got some of these books at Ramesh Mohan Library - actually I think I got most of them there.

In the above utterance, by saying ‘some…’ the speaker implicates:

- I didn’t get all of these books at Ramesh Mohan Library.

But, suddenly the speaker corrects himself by replaying ‘some’ with ‘most’, which could be taken to implicate that:

- I got many of these books at Ramesh Mohan Library.

Levinson has devised a general rule for scalar implicatures:

*Scalar implicatures*: Given any scale of the form \(< e_1, e_2, e_3, \ldots, e_n >\), if a speaker asserts \(A(e_2)\), then he implicates \(\neg A(e_1)\), if he asserts \(A(e_3)\), then he implicates \(\neg A(e_2)\) and \(\neg A(e_1)\), and in general, if he asserts \(A(e_n)\), then he implicates \(\neg (A(e_{n-1}))\), \(\neg (A(e_{n-2}))\) and so on, up to \(\neg (A(e_1))\).


Verstraete (2005:1407) states that permission and obligation form the weaker degrees of the denotic domain and gives the following scales:

- \(< \text{obliged, allowed}>\)

For instance, there is a difference of degrees of strength between the following utterances expressing permission and obligation:

- Students are allowed to sit in the reading room.
- Students are obliged to sit in the reading room.

**Clausal Implicature**

Clausal implicatures arise from the use of stronger and weaker construction by the interlocutors in conversational activities. Levinson has given some pairs of stronger and weaker forms with resulting implicatures:
At the time a speaker uses weaker expression, it may be taken to implicate that he is not in a state to use stronger construction. When someone says (1) instead of saying (2), then he implicates (3):

1. I believe Adam is the first male on the Earth.
2. I know Adam is the first male on the earth.
3. It is possible only up to my knowledge that Adam is the first Male on the earth.

Moreover, structures with alternatives are considered as weaker and give rise to clausal implicatures:

India finalized nuclear deal with Russia or America.

\[\neg \Box \text{India finalized nuclear deal either with Russia or with America.}\]

Whereas it implicates:

It is with America that India finalized nuclear deal, and it is possible that it is not with America, but with Russia, that India finalized nuclear deal.

It happens due to speaker’s preference to weaker expression instead of a stronger one. In such circumstances, if the speaker is aware that India has finalized nuclear deal with both the countries, he can use the stronger expression such as.

India finalized nuclear deal with America and then with Russia also.

Gazdar formulates clausal implicature as follows:

*Clausal implicatures:* If S asserts some complex expression \(p\) which (i) contains an embedded sentence \(q\), and (ii) \(p\) neither entails nor presupposes \(q\), and (iii) there’s an alternative expression \(r\) of roughly equal brevity which contains \(q\); then, by asserting \(p\) rather than \(r\), S implicates that he doesn’t know whether \(q\) is true or false, i.e. he implicates \(Pq & P\neg q\)  

(Gazdar 1979, as cited in Levinson, 1983:136).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) stronger form</th>
<th>(b) weaker form</th>
<th>(c) implicatures of (b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘(p) and (q)’</td>
<td>‘(p) or (q)’</td>
<td>{Pp, P, P\neg p, Pq, P\neg q}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘since (p, q)’</td>
<td>‘if (p) then (q)’</td>
<td>{Pp, P\neg p, Pq, P\neg q}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘(a) knows (p)’</td>
<td>‘(a) believes (p)’</td>
<td>{Pp, P\neg p}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘(a) realized (p)’</td>
<td>‘(a) thought (p)’</td>
<td>{Pp, P\neg p}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘(a) revealed (p)’</td>
<td>‘(a) said (p)’</td>
<td>{Pp, P\neg p}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘necessarily (p)’</td>
<td>‘possibly (p)’</td>
<td>{Pp, P\neg p}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6 PROPERTIES OF CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE

3.6.0 Introduction

Grice suggests characteristics of conversational implicature which distinguish it from the conventional one. These characteristics are known as properties of conversational implicature. Sadock briefly states these properties as follows:

(a) Conversational implicatures are capable of being “worked out” on the basis, inter alia, of the Cooperative Principle. That is, they are CALCULABLE.

(b) Conversational implicatures are CANCELLABLE.

(c) Conversational implicatures are NONDETACHABLE.

(d) Conversational implicatures are not part of the meaning of the uttered forms. They are NONCONVENTIONAL.

(e) Conversational implicatures are not carried by what is said, but by the saying of it.

(f) Conversational implicatures may be INDETERMINATE

(1978:284).

Following is a detailed discussion on the properties of conversational implicature:

3.6.1 Calculability

Calculability refers to the phenomenon, as Jenny Thomas (1995:82) notes, that in different contexts the same words may convey very distinct implicatures. Levinson is of the opinion that for every supposed implicature, it should be possible to construct the following argument:

i) S has said that \( p \).

ii) There’s no reason to think, S is not observing the maxims, or at least the co-operative principle.

iii) In order for S to say that \( p \) and be indeed observing the maxims or the co-operative principle, S must think that \( q \).

iv) S must know that it is mutual knowledge that \( q \) must be supposed if S is to be taken to be co-operating.

v) S has done nothing to stop me, the addressee, thinking that \( q \).

vi) Therefore S intends me to think that \( q \), and in saying that \( p \) has implicated \( q \)


Here, Levinson explains the steps that are supposed to be followed by the interlocutors to calculate implicatures in specific circumstances. The hearer makes inferences to preserve
the assumption of co-operation based on the CP and the maxims, in addition to the literal meaning of the utterance. Jenny Thomas has suggested some steps a hearer goes through in order to calculate implicature. Let’s make it clear with her example:

*Late on Christmas Eve 1993 an ambulance is sent to pick up a man who has collapsed in Newcastle city centre. The man is drunk and vomits all over the ambulanceman who goes to help him. The ambulanceman says: ‘Great, that’s really great! That’s made my Christmas!’*


To calculate the implicatures in the above utterance, one has to follow the deductive process suggested by Thomas:

(i) The ambulanceman has expressed pleasure at having someone vomit over him.
(ii) There is no example in recorded history of people being delighted at having someone vomit over them.
(iii) I have no reason to believe that the ambulanceman is trying to deceive us any way.
(iv) Unless the ambulanceman’s utterance is entirely pointless, he must be trying to put across some other proposition.
(v) This must be some obviously related proposition.
(vi) The most obviously related proposition is the exact opposite of the one he has expressed.
(vii) The ambulanceman is extremely annoyed at having the drunk vomit over him.

(1995:55)

It is after such process that an implicature is calculated by a hearer and then the proper interpretation is possible.

### 3.6.2 Defeasibility

This property denotes that an implicature can be cancelled. An implicature is cancelled when a speaker implies something and then he denies that implicature. Following are examples that illustrate how implicatures are cancelled for various reasons:

Son: Let me go to play hide ‘n seek.
Mother: You have not completed your homework yet.

Son takes mother’s utterance to implicate that:

+>> You can go to play hide ‘n seek after you have completed your homework.
So, the son completes his homework within one hour and then takes place the following exchange:

Son: Let me go to play hide ‘n seek, I have completed my homework.
Mother: I didn’t say that you could go to play hide in seek after you complete your homework. I only said that you couldn’t go before.

In the above conversation, the mother cancelled the implicature raised in the initial exchange. Levinson (1983:115) mentions that implicatures can be directly and overtly denied without a sense of contradiction. He further states that they can disappear when context of utterance makes it clear that the utterance’s communicative content could not contain such an inference. According to Yule (1996:44), for the reason that implicatures arise out of what is communicated and not said, speakers can deny that they did not intend to communicate such meanings.

3.6.3 Non-detachability

Grice claims that conversational implicatures are not detachable. Sadock explains this characteristic as:

If $X$ is an expression with meaning $M$ and $C_k$ is a conversational implicature based on an utterance of $X$ in context $K$, then it should not be possible to find an expression $X'$ that shares meaning $M$ with $X$ but is not associated with the conversational implicature $C_k$ (1978:287).

This formulation is based on the fact that conversational implicatures are calculated on the basis of meaning. Grice is of the opinion that implicature is attributed to the semantic import of what is said. In other words, it is not attached to the linguistic form. Consequently, by substituting some words in an utterance with their synonyms, implicature cannot be detached. On the contrary, presuppositions are detachable as they are attached to certain lexical items:

Bill managed to fulfill his parents’ expectations.

The above utterance seems to presuppose:

$\rightarrow$ Bill tried to fruitful his parents’ expectations.

The same utterance has an implicature that:

$+\rightarrow$ Bill fulfilled his parent’s expectation.
However, the presupposition of the utterance does not implicate that Bill fulfilled his parents’ expectations. In other words, same implicature cannot be detached from relexicalization or paraphrase of the utterance. In figurative use of language, especially irony, an implicature cannot be worked out by replacing synonymous expression. For instance, (following Levinson 1983:116-17), being aware of Smith’s nonsensical behavior, Bill says:

Smith is a genius.

Here Bill implicates:

+>> Smith is a mannerless nonsense.

However, the following utterance, having the same meaning but different lexical items synonymous with those in Bill’s utterance, do not have the implicature intended by Bill:

Smith is a mental prodigy.
Smith is an exceptionally clever human being.
Smith is an enormous intellect.
Smith is a big brain.

The above utterances are not ironically potential and hence do not intend to implicate the opposite. Except those implicatures arising under the maxim of manner are non-detachable because such implicatures are attributed to the structure of the utterance.

3.6.4 Non-conventionality

As stated earlier, conversational implicatures are not part of conventional content of an utterance; rather, they are non-conventional in nature and even by definition. In other words, the hearer has to comprehend the literal meaning of the utterance, as Levinson (1983:117) states, before he interprets the implicatures in a context. So implicatures are not part of literal meaning. Levinson points out that an utterance can be true when its implicature fails to be. He illustrates the phenomenon with the following example:

Herb hit Sally.
+>> Herb didn’t kill Sally by hitting her.


The above implicature comes into existence by extending the quantity. The speaker would be taken to be uncooperative by providing inadequate information if Herb had killed Sally. However, the speaker might say that Herb hit Sally to confuse the hearer in a context where it is true. Consequently, the implicature is false.
3.6.5 Potential Indeterminacy

Indeterminacy or multiplicity of meaning refers to the fact that an utterance with a particular meaning can produce distinct implicatures on different occasions. In other words, a set of implicatures attributed to a single expression on any instance, may be indeterminable. As pointed out by Levinson (1983:118n), Sperber and Wilson claim that implicatures arising out of exploitation of the maxims are indeterminate:

Sam is really a lion.

The above utterance might have the following implicatures in various contexts:

+>> Sam is brave.
+>> Sam is strong.
+>> Sam is active.
+>> Sam is horrible.
+>> Sam is merciless.
+>> Sam is powerful.

The utterance may suggest one or all of these meanings appropriate to the situation in which it is made.

3.6.6 Reinforceability

Reinforceability refers to the phenomenon that strengthens the implicature with addition by making the implicature explicit. According to Sadock (1978:294), conversational implicatures are reinforceable while conventional implicatures are not. Moreover, this test is based on the fact that conversational implicatures are not part of the conventional import. For instance, in the following utterance, conversational implicature is made explicit by addition of a clause:

Jill lost some of the diamonds but not all.

Though it seems like repetition of the facts, it is different from redundancy. Levinson (1983:120) also is of the opinion that implicatures can be combined with an overt statement of their content avoiding ‘anomalous redundancy’. For instance, the second clause in the following utterance restates what is conventionally implicated by the first clause:

It’s funny that John behaves like fool and he does.
Compared with cancellability, as Sadock (1978:294) states, reinforceability is a more sensitive test for implicature in decisive cases. He further states that generalized conversational implicatures associated with ‘almost’ are easily reinforceable:

We almost, but didn’t quite, reach the summit.

In the above utterance, however, it is not so easy to cancel the implicature triggered by the word ‘almost.’

3.6.7  Universality

Universality is a prominent property attributed to generalized conversational implicatures. According to Levinson (2000:15) the inferences derive ultimately from the fundamental consideration of rationality. As a result, a strong tendency to universality of implicatures may be expected. For instance, in all worlds in which (1) is directly expressible, the every utterance identical to (1) should have the standard implicature (2):

1. The cricket team consists of eleven players.
2. The cricket team consists of no more than eleven players.

Levinson formulates a theory from which the universality of implicatures follows:

“If the maxims are derivable from considerations of rational co-operation, we should expect them to be universal in application, at least in co-operative kinds of interaction”


Levinson is of the opinion that universality may turn out to be one of the important tests which will provide refined view of the presence of a conversational implicature.

3.7  CONCLUSION

To conclude, implicature has achieved the status of a central notion in pragmatics. The chapter has thoroughly investigated the concept of implicature with its conceptual associations with other notions in pragmatics. The differences between conventional and conversational implicature have been pointed out with various definitions proposed by various linguists. Types of implicature suggested by Grice, with comments by various other linguists, have been discussed. Properties of conversational implicature have been analyzed as suggested by Grice. The next chapter deals with the analysis of the selected plays in the light of presupposition.