

Midterm, Fall 2016

I. Gricean reasoning (pragmatics)

Implicature is the act of meaning or implying one thing by saying something else, so with the utterance 'B: I have a cat.' in response to 'A: Do you have a siamese?,' the speaker B is implicating he has a siamese cat. ^{Really, then. Why not just say yes?} Gricean theory provides Cooperative Principles that serve as instances governing rational, cooperative communicating behaviors. For the specific implicature of Speaker B having a siamese cat, one can assume it was derived from the maxim of Relation. Assuming Speaker B was being cooperative, then they were trying to answer the possibly ambiguous question. Since a siamese cat is a type of "siamese" Speaker A did not specify, then Speaker B must have been trying to convey a relevant answer. Additionally, the maxim of Manner was achieved due to the brevity of the implicature. The added clarity of the specific implicature from a possibly vague question achieves Manner.

B might choose to respond this way as opposed to a simple no because the utterance provided an implicature that added clarity to the contextual conversation. More specifically, Speaker B may not have understood the question and contributed an answer that would've killed two birds with one stone – it could have possibly answered the question Speaker A had, and it also could've prompted Speaker A to be more specific in what they meant if the implicature was not informative enough.

^{But what can A conclude from B? B' is literally more informative, its only through the implicature that B has a cat that is not a siamese that B can be thought of as more informative}

II. Possessives and more (compositional semantics)

I used the Possessives problem template and attached the ipynb file.

III. Expressive adjectives (semantic/pragmatics)

Informally, an epithet contributes emotive meaning, emphasis, and tone to the DP or sentence it appears in. It's unassociated with the noun and adds a feature that's unexpected and striking to the audience. An example is the utterance:

(8) Alfonso broke the damn computer.

Here, 'damn' is the epithet and is unassociated with the referring noun, computer, but does add emotive meaning to the context of the utterance itself. For the epithet to add emotive meaning to the context, it first relies on the context itself to provide it with the type of emotion. For example, with (8) we noted something that probably should not be broken (a computer is typically something someone doesn't want broken) is broken by a person. The negative incident is the context that contributes the type of emotive meaning the epithet provides or emphasizes if it's already abundantly present and clear. With:

(8') Alfonso broke the computer.

we may not have understood if this was truly a bad or negative context until the epithet provided emphasis.

I take the stance that the contribution is not an implicature, entailment, presupposition, or otherwise, but an "intensifier" or evaluator. It takes the shape of a definite description

Assuming cooperativity amounts to assuming or granting relevance; this is a violation quantity

7/15

Actually B" is more informative in the same way that B' is more informative because B' and B" narrow the space of possibilities: they fully answer the explicit question of siamese or not siamese. B doesn't literally narrow those possibilities at all - the implicature does that. So, this is in fact a quantity implicature but for a different reason than you give. Alternative consideration - 8/15

Should do a cancellation test to show that this is an implicature not an entailment 0/3

Good What happens when we move it around in the sentence? Should also give an example where fucking is not negative to make your point more strongly

10/11

because it is an NP or DP that is accompanied by a determiner. It bears an evaluative feature, either positive or negative. As a definite description, the contribution is an intensifier that suggests the relative strength or feeling of the speaker. With (8), the speaker wants you to know it was a significant event that the computer broke, and with a [-] negative evaluative feature, 'damn' conveys the gravity of the situation while fully bringing out and fleshing out the negative aspect. The meaning they convey is independent of the descriptive content, and is speaker-oriented. It is similar to a presupposition in that it survives even beyond negation or embedding. That is because it's speaker-oriented tone.

(8) Alfonso broke the damn computer.

10/11 The presupposition – the implication in the background that remains constant under embedding – is that the computer is broken.

(8') If Alfonso broke the damn computer, he should pay for it.

98'') Alfonso did not break the damn computer.

Good
Should show a cancellation
test too

The negative aspect of the computer breaking survives even under negation. We still get the message that the computer is broken, and that it is an unfortunate thing. It triggers a conventional implicature.

[c] found in the Lambda Notebook file

With differences in meaning across expressive adjectives, we can name their properties and then categorize them based on which types hold which properties vs which types that don't. (Potts 2007c) identifies such characteristics, such as independence (contributing meaning separate from the at issue content), perspective dependence (content is evaluated from a particular perspective, usually the speaker's), and immediacy (intention is achieved simply by being uttered).