

**Implicature tests, and how to fail them:
A class of 'obligatory' Gricean conversational implicatures**

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A potential implication *i* of utterances of a sentence *S* is **optional** if there can be sincere utterances of *S* that do not give rise to *i*, and such an implication is **cancelable** if a sincere utterance of *S* is compatible with a denial of *i* even in contexts in which *i* would normally arise.

Ever since *Logic and Conversation*, conversational implicatures have largely been considered to be always optional and cancelable. If they are, these properties provide useful diagnostics for implicature-hood, as neither property is exhibited by 'at-issue' semantic content, conventional implicatures in the sense of Grice and Potts (2005), and (most) presuppositions.

This talk points out that neither optionality nor cancelability are conceptually necessary properties of Gricean implicatures. I argue that there is a circumscribable class of implicatures, which I call *Need a Reason* (NaR) implicatures, which are neither optional nor cancelable, yet can be derived by classical Gricean means. As a simple case study, the talk focusses on a well-known case of implicature that belongs to the class of NaR-implicatures: The 'ignorance' implication of unembedded disjunctions, i.e., the fact that an utterance of (1a) implies that one of (1b) is true:

- (1) a. John is in Paris or London.
b. Sp(eaker) does not know that John is in Paris and Sp does not know that John is in London.

(1b) is a strengthened version of a more general implicature (whose content we may circumscribe as 'Sp had a reason to not utter *John is in Paris* or *John is in London*'), which is neither optional nor cancelable. The talk briefly sketches how this implicature can be derived in a dynamic system of interpretation that utilizes a static, Boolean semantics for *or*.

I thus show that a Gricean account of implicatures predicts the existence of conversational implicatures that are 'obligatory' in the sense that, if the implicature is false, the utterance becomes infelicitous. The existence of such implicatures has been sometimes taken as being beyond the reach of Gricean analyses and hence to give support to the idea that (some) implicatures are generated in the grammar (e.g. Magri (2009, Ivlieva (2012)). The present talk shows that this conclusion is unwarranted.

References:

- Ivlieva, Natalia (2012) "Obligatory Implicatures and Grammaticality" in: M. Aloni et al. (Eds.): *Proceedings of the Amsterdam Colloquium 2011*, LNCS 7218, p. 381–390.
Magri, Giorgio (2009) "A theory of individual-level predicates based on blind mandatory scalar implicatures" *Natural Language Semantics*, 17:245–297
Potts, Christopher (2005) "The logic of conventional implicatures" *Oxford Studies in Theoretical Linguistics*. Oxford University Press.