

Lecture 9: Formal semantics and formal pragmatics

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Suggested reading:

- (1) Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet (1999), *Meaning and Grammar: An Introduction to Semantics*. Chapter 4: Speaking, Meaning, and Doing. Section 5: Conversational Implicature. (pp 187 – 203)
- (2) Chapter 1 from: Kadmon, Nirit. (2001). *Formal Pragmatics: Semantics, Pragmatics, Presupposition, and Focus*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- (3) Potts, Christopher. (Potts to appear). Conventional implicatures, a distinguished class of meanings. In *The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Interfaces*, eds. G. Ramchand and C. Reiss. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Other good references: (not handed out): (Grice 1975, Levinson 1983, Padučeva 1985, Potts 2002, Potts and Kawahara 2004)

0. Syntax, Semantics, Pragmatics.

The term “pragmatics” and the classic definition of the distinctions among syntax, semantics, and pragmatics are due to Charles Morris (1938). Within *semiotics*, the general science of signs, Morris distinguished three branches of inquiry: *syntax*, the study of “the formal relation of signs to one another”, *semantics*, the study of “the relations signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable” (their designata), and *pragmatics*, the study of “the relations of signs to interpreters” (1938, p.6), quoted from Levinson (1983, p.1). On this view, syntax concerns properties of expressions, such as well-formedness; semantics concerns relations between expressions and what they are “about”, such as reference and truth-conditions; and pragmatics concerns relations between expressions, their meanings, and their uses in context, such as *implicature*.

In recent work, many have challenged the autonomy of semantics from pragmatics and the sharp distinction between them implied by the traditional trichotomy. The subdiscipline of *formal pragmatics* is concerned especially with issues where semantics and pragmatics overlap. Kadmon (2002) and Potts (2005) are good examples of work in formal semantics and pragmatics; Kadmon's book has a large section on presuppositions (see below, Section 3) and a large section on “association with focus” (a phenomenon that can be illustrated with quantificational uses of Russian *vsegda*). Potts is mainly concerned with the properties of conventional implicatures (Section 4), and argues that they are a part of semantics, but with a special status.

1. Grice's Conversational Implicatures.

1.1. Motivation. Questions about the meanings of logical words.

It was widely held (before Grice) that there are considerable mismatches between the standard interpretations of the standard connectives and operators of logic (‘ \sim ’, ‘&’, ‘ \vee ’, ‘ \rightarrow ’, ‘ $\forall x$ ’, ‘ $\exists x$ ’, ‘ $\neg x$ ’) and the meanings of their closest counterparts in ordinary English (‘not’, ‘and’, ‘or’, ‘if–then’, ‘every’, ‘some’ (or ‘at least one’), ‘the’). Some consider natural language rather vague and imprecise and take the logical language as a “regimentation” and an improvement. Others consider natural language richer than and different from the language of formal logic, but not ‘inferior’, and urge the independent investigation of ‘natural logic’ as something distinct from formal logic.

Grice does not want to take sides in this debate; he wants instead to challenge its common presupposition. He believes that the meanings of the connectives and operators of standard logic are much closer to the meanings of their natural language counterparts than had been assumed. The reason for the widespread belief to the contrary, he argued, was a failure to distinguish between semantics and pragmatics, a failure to distinguish between the literal semantic content of a sentence (“what is literally said by a sentence”) and a variety of further kinds of inferences that may reasonably be drawn from the speaker's use of that sentence in a particular context. A speaker may succeed in communicating (intentionally or unintentionally) much more than what is literally said by the words of her sentence.

An example:

- (1) A: How is C getting along in his new job at the bank?
B: Oh, quite well, I think; he likes his colleagues, and he hasn't been to prison yet.

What B implied, suggested, or meant is distinct from what B *said*. All B *said* was that C had not been to prison yet.

1.2. Truth-conditional content (semantics) vs. Conversational Implicatures (pragmatics).

Grice's new terms: *implicate*, *implicature*. “Implicate” is meant to cover the family of uses of “imply”, “suggest”, “mean” illustrated above. Things that follow from what a sentence literally “says” or *asserts* are called *entailments*; so the major distinction Grice is drawing is between (semantic) *entailments* and (pragmatic) *implicatures*. B's sentence in (1) *entails* that C is not in prison; it *conversationally implicates* that C may have a tendency toward criminal behavior.

Example: How many *and*'s?

- (2) (a) Mary got married and had a baby.
(b) Mary had a baby and got married.
(c) Mary got married. She had a baby.
(d) Mary got married and had a baby, although not in that order.
(3) Tests proved that Jones was the author of the pamphlet.(./) and
(a) he was sent to jail.
(b) he was awarded the prize.

There have been proposals that *and* is ambiguous among “logical *and*”, *and then*, *and therefore*, *and nevertheless*, But Gricean principles like “Be orderly” and “Be relevant” can help to defend the semantic non-ambiguity of *and*.

Consider first the hypothesis that *and* in (2a) and (2b) means “and then”, and the competing hypothesis that what we have in (2a) and (2b) is the ordinary logical conjunction *and* plus a conversational implicature that the events happened in the order in which the two clauses are given, an implicature that can be derived from the Gricean principle “Be orderly”.

The first argument for a single *and* involves Occam’s razor (“Do not multiply entities unnecessarily.”) If we posit multiple “and”s, how many will we need? And will we predict many sentences containing *and* to be ambiguous when in fact they generally are not? Will we have “and then” in (2a-b), a distinct “and therefore” and “and nevertheless” for the sentences in (3), and other kinds of *and* in other sentences? And doesn’t sentence (3a) strongly suggest both temporal order and cause? So would that require a still different *and*?

For the second argument, we can see in example (2c) that the principle, “Be orderly”, gives rise to the same implicature even without the word *and*; that gives another reason not to posit a separate “and then” meaning for *and*.

And a third argument is illustrated with example (2d). One of the properties of conversational implicatures is that they can be “cancelled” without contradiction: we can see that happening in (2d), which would be contradictory if *and* in the first clause of (2d) meant “and then”.

Thus it seems most reasonable to conclude that the sentential conjunction *and* is unambiguous: lexical semantics should specify that its truth-conditional meaning is just the meaning of the logical conjunction *and*. The fact that sentences containing *and* often convey much more than that can be explained within pragmatics, using the concept of conversational implicatures. We will describe the principles that generate them, Grice’s “Conversational maxims”.

1.3. Conversational maxims. (“Gricean maxims”.)

Conversational partners normally recognize a common purpose or common direction in their conversation, and at any point in a conversation, certain “conversational moves” are judged suitable or unsuitable for accomplishing their common objectives. A most general principle:

CP: Cooperative Principle: 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.

Under this very general principle, Grice distinguishes four categories of maxims.

Note: these maxims are characteristic of conversation as a *cooperative* activity. Think about which ones would change in a non-cooperative setting, such as between a prosecuting attorney and a defendant, or when having your tax return audited (I could tell an anecdote about the latter case), or when a military commander is giving orders to the troops, or if I am a crook trying to persuade you to buy something worthless.

Maxims of Quantity.

- (i) Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
- (ii) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Maxims of Quality.

Supermaxim: Try to make your contribution one that is true.

- (i) Do not say what you believe to be false.
- (ii) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

Maxim of Relation.

- (i) Be relevant.

Maxims of Manner.

Be perspicuous:

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

The question of why speakers can normally be expected to obey the supermaxim of trying to tell the truth is insightfully discussed in David Lewis’s classic book *Convention* (Lewis 1969). There are other maxims that are not “conversational” maxims but which may also be observed during conversational exchanges (aesthetic, social, moral), such as “Be polite”.

1.4. Generating implicatures. General principles. Examples.

- (i) A participant may quietly and unostentatiously *violate* a maxim. If he does so “quietly”, rather than “cooperatively”, he may mislead. **Example:** saying (4) when in fact Bill has two wives. This violates one of the maxims of quantity, and would normally be misleading, although it is not false.
 - (4) Bill has a wife
- (ii) A participant may be faced by a *clash*. It may be impossible to fulfill one maxim without violating another. For instance, one may be unable to fulfill the first maxim of Quantity (say enough) without violating Quality (only say what you have evidence for.) **Example:** in conversation (5), B’s answer is less informative than required. Assuming he is not opting out, we can explain the violation if we assume that B could not give a more informative answer without violating the maxim of Quality. So B implicates that he does not know more precisely where C lives.
 - (5) A. Where does C live?
B. Somewhere in the south of France.
- (iii) He may *flout* a maxim: that is he may *blatantly* fail to fulfill it. This is similar to violating a maxim, except that in this case the hearer is expected to recognize what is happening, and if so, then the maxim is likely to be being *exploited* to intentionally generate a conversational implicature. **Example:**
 - (6) A asks: Where’s Bill?
B answers: There’s a yellow VW outside Sally’s house. (Levinson 1983, p. 102)

1.4.1. Characterization of conversational implicature.

“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*, *provided that*: (1) he is 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 sense of his saying or making as if to say *p* (or doing so in *those* terms) consistent with this presumption; and (3) that 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) *is* required.” (Grice)

1.4.2. More Examples.

General pattern: “He has said that *p*; there is no reason to suppose that he is not observing the maxims, or at least the CP; he could not be doing this unless he thought that *q*; he knows (and knows that I know that he knows) that I can see that the supposition that he thinks that *q*

is required; he has done nothing to stop me thinking that q ; therefore he intends me to think, or is at least willing to allow me to think, that q ; and so he has implicated that q .

Example: Letter of recommendation: Use Maxim of Relevance to generate the implicature that the letter writer does not have a very high opinion of Mr. X.

(7) “Dear Sir, Mr. X’s command of English is excellent, and his attendance at tutorials has been regular. Yours, etc.”

Example: Metaphor: Use Maxim of Quality to generate the implicature that the words are not to be taken in their usual literal sense.

(8) You are the cream in my coffee.

Example: A “generalized implicature”. Almost any use of a sentence of the form (9) would normally implicate that the person to be met was not X’s wife, mother, or sister. (Similarly with other indefinites – “X went into a house” implicates that it was not X’s house.)

(9) X is meeting a woman this evening.

2. How a better understanding of conversational implicatures helps semantics.

Back to the question of the logical connectives.

2.1. *And*.

Discussed above: semantics is just logical *and*, conversational implicatures account for “added meanings”.

2.2 *Or. Inclusive – exclusive ambiguity?*

Intuitively, it often seems that natural language *or* is often used in an “exclusive” sense: “but not both”. We can easily write a truth-table for exclusive *or*, which we will represent with the symbol ‘+’.

p	q	$p \vee q$	$p + q$
1	1	1	0
1	0	1	1
0	1	1	1
0	0	0	0

The question is, is English *or* (or German *oder*, or Russian *ili*) really semantically ambiguous between two truth-conditional connectives? Or can one defend an analysis on which *or* is semantically always inclusive disjunction, and all the apparent exceptions can be explained as a result of other factors such as Gricean implicatures?

1. **Intrinsically mutually exclusive alternatives:** Examples like (10) are sometimes given as examples of exclusive disjunction (I even gave such examples in my first textbook).

(10) Mary is in Prague or she is in Stuttgart.

But (10) does not give any evidence for distinguishing between two kinds of *or*, because with (10), the first line of the truth table does not arise; we know independently that p and q will not be true simultaneously.

2. Using the (first) Gricean Maxim of Quantity.

(11) Mary has a son or a daughter.

In this case, the alternatives are not intrinsically incompatible; it is perfectly possible to have both. So is this a case where we should say that *or* is ambiguous? How else can we explain that in most normal contexts an utterance of (11) would be construed exclusively, but sometimes it is possible to understand it inclusively (for instance, if we are discussing eligibility for some kind of tax exemption, and anyone with at least one son or daughter is eligible)? Answer: Make use of the Gricean maxim: “Make your contribution as informative as is required.” If the speaker had evidence that Mary has a son *and* a daughter, she could have made the stronger statement (12):

(12) Mary has a son and a daughter.

In many contexts, it would be relevant to know whether the stronger statement holds, so in many contexts, the use of *or* signals the absence of evidence for the conjunctive case; and if we believe that the speaker would have known if the conjunction were true, we obtain the implicature that the conjunction is false, leaving lines 2 and 3 of the truth table as the surviving options. In such a case, we can say that semantics allows lines 1 through 3 of the truth table, but the first line may be ruled out pragmatically through implicatures.

More generally: whenever the speaker has a choice between a weaker or less specific form and a stronger or more specific form, other things being equal, the use of the weaker form implicates that the speaker does not have evidence that the stronger form is true. And in a context in which the speaker is presumed to have full information, that will lead to the implicature that the stronger form is actually false. Thus “or” plus an assumption of full information implicates “not ‘and’”, and “some” plus assumption of full information implicates “not all”, etc.

3. A strong argument from negation.

(13) Mary doesn’t have a son or a daughter.

If *or* were ambiguous between inclusive and exclusive, negating it should be likewise ambiguous, and (13) should have one reading on which it asserts that Mary has either neither or both. But (13) unambiguously asserts the negation of the inclusive *or*: Mary has neither.

3. At the borderline of semantics and pragmatics: presuppositions.

(Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet 1999, Ch. 6, Kadmon 2001, Levinson 1983, Chs. 3,4)

A **presupposition** is (a) backgrounded and (b) taken for granted, i.e. assumed by the speaker to be already assumed by the hearer to be true.

A classic definition of **semantic presupposition**: A sentence S presupposes a proposition p if p must be true in order for S to have a truth-value (to be true or false). *Note that this requires that we allow some sentences to lack a truth-value; this definition does not make sense if we work with a strictly bivalent logic, in which each sentence must be either true or false.

An approximate definition of **pragmatic presupposition**: A use of a sentence S in a context C pragmatically presupposes a proposition p if p is backgrounded and taken for granted by the speaker in C.

Padučeva (1985, p. 58), who distinguishes presuppositions of *sentences* from presuppositions of *speakers*, makes a useful and slightly different distinction between semantic and pragmatic presuppositions of sentences:

- A semantic presupposition of a sentence S is a proposition which the hearer must consider true in order for the sentence S to make sense;
- A pragmatic presupposition of S is a proposition which should be already known to the hearer in order for the assertion of S to be appropriate in the context.

Test for backgrounding: *p* is in the background of S if *p* is implied by all of the sentences in the “S family”:

- (14) a. S
b. It is not the case that S.
c. Is it the case that S?
d. If S, then S’.

Example:

(15) “Joan has stopped drinking wine for breakfast.”

Presupposition: Joan used to drink wine for breakfast.

Similar Russian examples in Padučeva (1985), p. 61-62:

(16) *V dva časa Džon načal rabotat’.* ‘At 2 o’clock John started to work.’

Presupposition: At some time before 2 o’clock, John wasn’t working.

Assertion: At some time after 2 o’clock, John was working.

Backgrounded but *not presupposed*: non-restrictive relative clauses.

(17) Jill, who lost something on the flight from Ithaca to New York, likes to travel by train.

- A number of authors have considered the embedded proposition, that Jill lost something on the flight from Ithaca to New York, to be a presupposition (Keenan 1971, Levinson 1983), but arguments against considering it a presupposition can be found in Padučeva (1985, p.65) and later in (Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet 1999) and (Kadmon 2001).

Contrasting sentence with a real presupposition: Pseudo-cleft construction.

(18) What Jill lost on the flight from Ithaca to New York was her new flute.

3.1 Presuppositions of definite descriptions.

(19) “After the separation of Schleswig-Holstein from Denmark, Prussia and Austria quarrelled.”

This is an example from Frege (1892). Frege states that the thought that Schleswig-Holstein was once separated from Denmark “is the necessary presupposition in order for the expression “After the separation of Schleswig-Holstein from Denmark” to have any reference at all.

- (20) a. The present king of France is bald.
b. The present king of France is not bald.

This is a classic example discussed by Russell and by Strawson.

Russell analyzed (2b) as ambiguous, treating the conditions of existence and uniqueness as part of the truth-conditions of the sentence. If there is no king of France, (2b) would come out true on Russell’s analysis if negation has wide scope, false if the definite description has wide scope.

(Optional exercise: You could work out a Russellian analysis of this kind explicitly by using our fragment, with Montague’s <<e,t>,t> type analysis of “the king”.)

Strawson argued that it is more normal to consider (2b) *neither true nor false* if there is no king of France. Strawson’s analysis corresponds to our e-type treatment of definite descriptions. If you try to evaluate (2b) using a Strawsonian analysis, assuming there is no king of France, then the subject NP will get no semantic value. And we assume that if one of the parts has no semantic value, then the whole sentence has no semantic value.

(21) Chirac is not the king of France.

As Strawson noted, a sentence like this does not lack a truth value: it seems to be definitely true. For this example (but not for all), we can capture the absence of presupposition by using the predicative <e,t> meaning of the definite description proposed in (Partee 1986) (see Lecture 6). In other examples, as argued by Hajičová (1984), Theme-Rheme structure may be crucial: a definite description that is part of the Theme (Topic) carries a presupposition of existence and uniqueness; but a definite description that constitutes all or part of the Rheme (Focus) seems to carry only an “allegation”, or cancellable implicature, of existence and uniqueness.

- (22) a. Our defeat was not caused by Bill’s cousin.
b. Bill’s cousin did not cause our defeat.

Potential presuppositions: (i) we were defeated. (“our defeat” has a reference.) (ii) Bill has a cousin. Test for cancellability:

- (23) a. “... , in fact Bill does not have a cousin.” (ok after 22a, not after 22b)
b. “..., in fact this time we achieved a great victory.” (ok after 22b, not after 22a)

A good discussion of *referential status* of a variety of kinds of noun phrases, and their associated presuppositions, can be found in Chapter 4 of (Padučeva 1985).

3.2. Presuppositions of Factive Verbs.

Another classic case of presuppositions much studied by linguists are the presuppositions of factive verbs. Let’s consider two sets of verbs and compare their behavior in the sentences in the “S family”.

Non-factive verbs	Factive verbs
believe	know
say	regret
hope	be surprised
deny	notice
claim	discover

- (24) (a) John said that Bill is a spy.
(b) John didn’t say that Bill is a spy.
(c) Did John say that Bill is a spy?
(d) If John said that Bill is a spy, Mary will be unhappy.

None of the sentences in (24) imply that the speaker takes for granted, or even believes, that Bill is a spy, not even the positive assertion (24a). In contrast, all of the sentences in (25) require for appropriate use that the speaker takes for granted that Bill is a spy.

- (25) (a) John knows that Bill is a spy.
(b) John doesn’t know that Bill is a spy.

- (c) Does John know that Bill is a spy?
- (d) If John knows that Bill is a spy, Mary will be unhappy.

We get similar results putting any non-factive verb in the pattern in (24) and any factive verb in the pattern in (25). The classic work is (Kiparsky and Kiparsky 1970); there has been much important work since then, including (Gazdar 1979, Heim 1992, Karttunen 1971, Karttunen 1973, Karttunen and Peters 1979).

For Russian factive predicates *znat'* and *ogorčen*, see Padučeva (1985, pp. 49-52, 69-72).

- (26) *Ivan znaet, čto N'ju-Jork – stolica SŠA.* (Padučeva 1985, p. 49)
Ivan knows that New York is the capitol of the USA.

Neither sentence (26) nor its interrogative or negative form can be used felicitously (appropriately) to make an assertion or ask a question, since they all carry the false presupposition that New York is the capitol of the USA.

3.2. Presuppositions in lexical meanings.

The division of “components” of lexical meaning into assertive and presuppositional has been emphasized both in the work of Fillmore (1971) and in the work of Apresjan (1974) and his colleagues. Good examples include the contrast discussed by Fillmore among the verbs *blame*, *criticize*, *accuse*, all involving an agent *X*, an addressee or patient *Y*, and an action *P*, and the different status of the components ‘*X says/believes that Y did P*’, ‘*X says/judges that P is/was a bad action*’, and ‘*X says/believes that P happened*’, and the similar contrast discussed by Padučeva (1985, p.67) among the Russian verbs *obvinjat'* ‘accuse’ (*X obvinjaet Y v P*) and *osuzdat'* ‘criticize’ (*X osuzdaet Y za P*), noting an observation of Langendoen that when an adverb such as *spravedlivo* ‘justly’ is added to a sentence containing one of these verbs, what is asserted to be “just” is only the asserted part, not the presupposed part.

If we follow Frege and take the denotations of most words to be *functions*, then presuppositions can be treated formally as **conditions on the well-definedness of functions**. Recall, for instance, our definition of the iota-operator used for the referential sense of the definite article: $\iota x[\mathbf{king}(x)]$ is defined iff there is one and only one king, and undefined otherwise. In general, when a presupposition (precondition) of a function is not satisfied, the function is not defined and it is impossible to compute a value. (Heim 1983)

4. Implicatures within semantics: Conventional implicatures.

4.1. Conventional vs. conversational implicatures.

Grice: distinguished *conventional implicatures* and *conversational implicatures*.

Conventional implicature: part of the meaning of a word or construction but not part of its truth-conditions. An implicature which arises from the particular choice of words or syntax, rather than from conversational maxims. See (Potts 2002, Potts to appear)

From Potts (to appear):

- (27) a. CIs are part of the conventional (lexical) meaning of words.
b. CIs are commitments, and thus give rise to entailments.
c. These commitments are made by the *speaker of the utterance* “by virtue of the meaning of” the words he chooses.
d. CIs are logically and compositionally independent of what is “*said* (in the favored sense)”, i.e., the *at-issue entailments*.

Some authors equate conventional implicature with presupposition, but conventional implicatures can be new information, whereas presuppositions should not be.

Examples: (a) manage, (b) too, (c) even, (d) but, (e) the appositive construction, (f) non-restrictive relative clauses, (g) expressive meaning.

- (28) (a) John *managed* to close the door.
Assertion: John closed the door.
Implicature: The door was hard to close.
(b) Susan left the party at midnight, and Maria left the party early *too*.
Assertion: Susan left the party at midnight, and Maria left the party early.
Implicature: Midnight was early to leave the party.
(c) *Even* Al passed the test.
Assertion: Al passed the test.
Implicature: Al was the least likely person to pass the test. There were grounds for expecting that Al would not pass the test.
(d) Mary is a linguist, but she’s rich.
Assertion: Mary is a linguist, and she is rich.
Implicature: Linguists are not usually rich.
(e) David Partee, a former president of the Alaska Dog Musher’s Association, lives in Fairbanks.
Assertion: David Partee lives in Fairbanks.
Implicature (conventional): David Partee was the president of the ADMA.
(f) Just like (e), but with relative clause ‘who is a former president of the ADMA’.
(g) Bob brought his *damn* dog with him.
Assertion: Bob brought his dog with him.
Implicature: Speaker has a negative attitude toward the dog, or toward Bob’s bringing the dog with him.

Conversational implicature: an implication that follows from general principles of conversational exchanges. **Example:** *some* usually conversationally implicates *not all*, by the Maxim of Quantity. Other examples were given earlier.

One important difference that Grice notes is that conversational implicatures can normally be *cancelled*, whereas conventional implicatures, like entailments, cannot be.

- (29) A. I hit John. He insulted me. That wasn’t why I hit him, though. (Cancellation of *conversational* implicature of cause-effect relation. Implicature came from Maxim of Relevance.)
(30) A: John insulted me, so I hit him. #That wasn’t why I hit him, though. (Non-cancellability of *conventional* implicature of cause-effect relation. Implicature came from the use of the word *so*.)

4.2. General features of entailments, presuppositions, conventional and conversational implicatures.

Classification:

- (31) a. *A entails B* (if *A* is true, *B* is true.)
b. *A presupposes B*. (*B* is backgrounded and taken for granted by *A*.)
c. *A conventionally implicates B*. (The use of *A* in any normal context (pragmatically) implies *B*, by virtue of the meaning of the expressions in *A*.)
d. *A conversationally implicates B*. (The use of *A* in the given context (pragmatically) implies *B*, by virtue of conversational maxims.)

Conversational implicatures must possess certain features that distinguish them from conventional implicatures and entailments.

- (a) **Cancellability.** Because it is possible to opt out of the observation of the Cooperative Principle, a generalized conversational implicature can be *canceled* in a particular case, either explicitly or contextually.
- **Conventional implicatures** and **entailments** *cannot* be canceled. Presuppositions may or may not be cancelable, depending on their source.
 - **Examples:** See (22-23 and 29-30) above.
- (b) **Non-detachability.** The calculation of the presence of a conversational implicature requires only contextual and background information plus a knowledge of the literal meaning of the sentence, then substitution of any other truth-conditionally equivalent expression will preserve the implicature. Conversational maxims mainly work from the *content* of what is said, independent of any specific word or construction.
- **Entailments** are also “non-detachable”, since by definition they depend only on the truth-conditional content of the sentence. Most **conventional implicatures** are detachable, as in the case of *but*, truth-conditionally equivalent to *and* but carrying an implicature not carried by the use of *and*.
- (c) **Conversational implicatures are not part of the conventional meaning** of the expressions that serve to generate them. The calculation of the presence of a conversational implicature presupposes already having knowledge of the conventional force of an utterance, so it cannot be part of it.
- **Entailments** are part of the conventional meaning of the expression, and so are **conventional implicatures**.
- (d) The **truth** of a conversational implicature is **not required by the truth of what is said**; what is said may be true and what is implicated may be false (and vice versa). Therefore “the implicature is *not carried by what is said* but only by the saying of what is said or by “putting it that way.”
- **Conventional implicatures** share this property. **Entailments** and **presuppositions** lack it: their truth *is* required by the truth of what is said.

Thought question: Consider a typical use of the sentence “Some of the students passed the exam.” Is the proposition that not all of the students passed the exam an *entailment* or an *implicature* of this sentence? Suggestion: Among your evidence, use the following:

- One can consistently say, “Some of the students passed the exam; in fact I think they all did.”
- The negation of the sentence is generally taken to be “None of the students passed the exam.”
- Make use of the (first) Gricean Maxim of Quantity.

Homework #5: A wide choice of topics. Due May 19.

This is the last homework assignment. For the last assignment, you are free to choose any topic in semantics and write three or four pages about it. If there is some topic you have already been interested in or have already worked on, you could try to apply some of what you have learned in this class to it. Or if you would like to go back and try some of the optional questions in some of the earlier assignments, you could do that. The “thought question” above could also be used for this assignment, or any of the questions in the Partee 1995 article “Lexical semantics and compositionality,” or in the Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet reading. If you send me an e-mail message about your topic by May 1, I may be able to help suggest relevant references to look at. I will be away May 3-10, but I will have access to e-mail most of the time.

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