

Maciej Witek

<http://mwitek.eu>

maciej.witek@usz.edu.pl

COGNITIVE PRAGMATICS

Lecture 5:

Figurative and Manipulative Uses of Language:
Irony, Insinuation, Backdoor Speech Acts, and Dog Whistles

Figurative uses of language (→ stylistic tropes, figures of speech)

- Rhetorical devices used to create specific stylistic effects in writing or speech.
- They involve a deviation from the literal meaning of words.
- Examples: metaphors, hyperbole, personifications, similes, irony, etc.

(1) Peter is a fine friend.

(2) John is a computer.

(1) Peter is a fine friend.

irony

(2) John is a computer.

metaphor

- (1) Peter is a fine friend. *irony*
- (2) John is a computer. *metaphor*

Grice:

- The meaning of a figurative utterance is a non-standard implicature associated with the *exploitation* (= *blatant* and *ostentatious flouting*) of the Maxim of Quality.

- (1) Peter is a fine friend. *irony*
- (2) John is a computer. *metaphor*

Grice:

- The meaning of a figurative utterance is a non-standard implicature associated with the *exploitation* (= *blatant* and *ostentatious flouting*) of the Maxim of Quality.
- Its interpretation involves *meaning substitution* rather than *meaning supplementation*.

- (1) Peter is a fine friend. *irony*
- (2) John is a computer. *metaphor*

Grice:

- The meaning of a figurative utterance is a non-standard implicature associated with the *exploitation* (= *blatant* and *ostentatious flouting*) of the Maxim of Quality.
- Its interpretation involves *meaning substitution* rather than *meaning supplementation*.

- (3) E: How about going to the cinema together tonight?
B: I have an exam tomorrow.

B *says* that *p* and *implies* that *q* *in addition*.

Speaker of (1) *makes as if to say* that *p* and *means* that *q* *instead*.

[?] Are metaphorical meanings implicated through
the mechanisms involving the exploitation of the Maxim of Quality?

[?] Are metaphorical meanings implicated through the mechanisms involving the exploitation of the Maxim of Quality?

(4) A: Is John coming to the party tonight?

B: He is a monk.

(5) A: Is Peter seeing women?

B: Well, he is not a monk.

[?] Are metaphorical meanings implicated through the mechanisms involving the exploitation of the Maxim of Quality?

(4) A: Is John coming to the party tonight?

B: He is a monk.

(E) JOHN IS A MONK*.

(I) JOHN IS NOT COMING.

(5) A: Is Peter seeing women?

B: Well, he is not a monk.

(E) PETER IS NOT A MONK**.

(I) PETER IS SEEING WOMEN.

MONK* and MONK** are two *ad hoc* concepts contributing to the primary meanings of utterances (4B) and (5B), respectively.

[!] Understanding metaphors and understanding the so-called ‘literal’ uses involve cognitive processes of roughly the same type.

(4) A: Is John coming to the party tonight?

B: He is a monk.

(E) JOHN IS A MONK*.

(I) JOHN IS NOT COMING.

(5) A: Is Peter seeing women?

B: Well, he is not a monk.

(E) PETER IS NOT A MONK**.

(I) PETER IS SEEING WOMEN.

(6) John took out the key and opened the door.

LF JOHN TOOK OUT THE KEY AND OPENED THE DOOR.

E JOHN TOOK-OUT* THE-KEY* AND* OPENED* THE-DOOR*.

[?] How about irony? How does it work?

[?] How about irony? How does it work?

(1) Peter is a fine friend.

Q1 What is the ironic meaning of (1)?

Q2 What is the point of irony?

Q3 What are the cognitive processes underlying irony comprehension?

[?] How about irony? How does it work?

(1) Peter is a fine friend.

Grice

Q1 What is the ironic meaning of (1)?

antiphrastic implicature
(opposite to the literal m.)

Q2 What is the point of irony?

no clear answer
expression (?)

Q3 What are the cognitive processes
underlying irony comprehension?

inferential procedure of
meaning substitution

[?] How about irony? How does it work?

(1) Peter is a fine friend.

Echoic Theory (RT)

Q1 What is the ironic meaning of (1)?

dissociative attitude
& echoed thought

Q2 What is the point of irony?

expression

Q3 What are the cognitive processes
underlying irony comprehension?

expressive communication
& echo

[?] How about irony? How does it work?

(1) Peter is a fine friend.

(7) Tom is a bad speaker!

(8) What a boring movie!

[?] How about irony? How does it work?

(1) Peter is a fine friend.

(7) Tom is a bad speaker!

(8) What a boring movie!

→ ironic criticisms (ironic blames) / ironic compliments (ironic praises)

[?] How about irony? How does it work?

(1) Peter is a fine friend.

(7) Tom is a bad speaker!

(8) What a boring movie!

→ ironic criticisms (ironic blames) / ironic compliments (ironic praises)

Context (7): Before Tom's speech, Ann said that Tom was a poor speaker.

Context (8): When we were deciding on *Skyfall*, someone said it was supposedly a boring movie.

Compare:

(9) **Metaphorically speaking**, John is a computer.

(10) **Ironically speaking**, Peter is a fine friend.

Compare:

(9) *Metaphorically speaking*, John is a computer.

(10) *Ironically speaking*, Peter is a fine friend.

(11) Open the window!

(12) *I order you to* open the window.

I request that you open the window.

I advise that you open the window.

I permit you to open the window.

Compare:

(9) Metaphorically speaking, John is a computer.

(10) * Ironically speaking, Peter is a fine friend.

(11) Open the window!

(12) I *order* you to open the window.

I *request* that you open the window.

I *advise* that you open the window.

I *permit* you to open the window.

Hypothesis:

- Irony is a form of *non-overt speech*.

Non-Overt Speech (NOS)

Each act of *non-overt speech* is intended to produce a characteristic effect. Its successful, or at least non-defective, performance requires that the speaker's intention to produce this effect:

- (*c*₁) remains unrecognized by the intended target or addressee,
- (*c*₂) is *neither* openly discussed within the conversation *nor* made explicit, even if recognized and intended to be recognized, or
- (*c*₃) can be plausibly denied by the speaker, even if it becomes a subject of open discussion.

Non-Overt Speech (NOS)

Each act of *non-overt speech* is intended to produce a characteristic effect. Its successful, or at least non-defective, performance requires that the speaker's intention to produce this effect:

- (*c*₁) remains unrecognized by the intended target or addressee,
- (*c*₂) is *neither* openly discussed within the conversation *nor* made explicit, even if recognized and intended to be recognized, or
- (*c*₃) can be plausibly denied by the speaker, even if it becomes a subject of open discussion.

- (*c*₁) — covert acts;
- (*c*₂) — back door speech acts, irony (?)
- (*c*₃) — insinuation, innuendo, dog-whistles.

Likely Reviewer

A young scholar is about to submit their first research paper to a highly ranked journal. They know that John Smith is a well-established expert on the topics the paper discusses and predict that the journal editors are likely to invite him to review the manuscript. Consequently, the scholar begins one of the paragraphs with the following words:

- (13) In his insightful and ground-breaking paper,
 John Smith convincingly argues that ...

Likely Reviewer

A young scholar is about to submit their first research paper to a highly ranked journal. They know that John Smith is a well-established expert on the topics the paper discusses and predict that the journal editors are likely to invite him to review the manuscript. Consequently, the scholar begins one of the paragraphs with the following words:

- (13) In his insightful and ground-breaking paper,
John Smith convincingly argues that ...

Flattering as a covert act (Bach and Harnish 1979): condition (c_1)

(C) In uttering U , S performs a covert act if and only if S intends:

- (i_1) to produce by uttering U a certain response R on the part of H ,
- (i_2') for H not to recognize (i_1).

The scholar's ulterior motive behind their choice of words in (13) is to prejudice John Smith in favour of the submitted manuscript.

The scholar's plan would be thwarted if recognized by the reviewer.

Likely Reviewer

A young scholar is about to submit their first research paper to a highly ranked journal. They know that John Smith is a well-established expert on the topics the paper discusses and predict that the journal editors are likely to invite him to review the manuscript. Consequently, the scholar begins one of the paragraphs with the following words:

- (13) In his insightful and ground-breaking paper,
John Smith convincingly argues that ...

Santa Claus

Within hearing distance of their daughter Nora, Ann says to her husband:

- (14) I sure hope the kids settle down tonight.
Santa only comes if the kids are asleep. (McGowan 2024)

Arrested Surgeon

Zbigniew Ziobro, Poland's Minister of Justice and the Attorney General from 2005 to 2007, calls a press conference after arresting a famous surgeon on charges of corruption. After presenting footage depicting the moment of arrest, Ziobro says:

(15) No-one else will ever again be deprived of life by this man.¹

¹ [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{\"itemid\":\[\"001-150698\"\]}\"](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{\)
[https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sprawa_Mirosława_G.](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sprawa_Mirosława_G.\)

Arrested Surgeon

Zbigniew Ziobro, Poland's Minister of Justice and the Attorney General from 2005 to 2007, calls a press conference after arresting a famous surgeon on charges of corruption. After presenting footage depicting the moment of arrest, Ziobro says:

(15) No-one else will ever again be deprived of life by this man.²

→ **A back door murder charge**

² [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{\"itemid\":\[\"001-150698\"\]}](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{\)
https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sprawa_Mirosława_G.

Arrested Surgeon

Zbigniew Ziobro, Poland's Minister of Justice and the Attorney General from 2005 to 2007, calls a press conference after arresting a famous surgeon on charges of corruption. After presenting footage depicting the moment of arrest, Ziobro says:

(15) No-one else will ever again be deprived of life by this man.³

→ **A back door murder charge**

The minister's intention to present the charge *as something already established* would be frustrated if explicitly represented in discourse.

For example, if someone were to say, 'Hey, wait a minute! Are you trying to say that the arrested surgeon is a murderer?', the minister *would no longer be able* to introduce this charge into the public sphere through the back door.

³ [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{\"itemid\":\[\"001-150698\"\]}](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{\)
https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sprawa_Mirosława_G.

Arrested Surgeon

Zbigniew Ziobro, Poland's Minister of Justice and the Attorney General from 2005 to 2007, calls a press conference after arresting a famous surgeon on charges of corruption. After presenting footage depicting the moment of arrest, Ziobro says:

(15) No-one else will ever again be deprived of life by this man.⁴

→ **A back door murder charge**

Difficult Exam

(16) A: Was the exam difficult?

B: Even Tom passed.

→ **A back door negative evaluation**

⁴ [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{\"itemid\":\[\"001-150698\"\]}](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{\)
https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sprawa_Mirosława_G.

Arrested Surgeon

Zbigniew Ziobro, Poland's Minister of Justice and the Attorney General from 2005 to 2007, calls a press conference after arresting a famous surgeon on charges of corruption. After presenting footage depicting the moment of arrest, Ziobro says:

(15) No-one else will ever again be deprived of life by this man.⁵

→ **A back door murder charge**

Difficult Exam

(16) A: Was the exam difficult?

B: Even Tom passed.

→ **A back door negative evaluation**

Private Sector (Fraser 2001)

(17) BB: Let me explain to you, Al, how the private sector works, O.K.?

→ **A back door ascription of ignorance**

⁵ [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{\"itemid\":\[\"001-150698\"\]}](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{\)
https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sprawa_Mirosława_G.

Arrested Surgeon

Zbigniew Ziobro, Poland's Minister of Justice and the Attorney General from 2005 to 2007, calls a press conference after arresting a famous surgeon on charges of corruption. After presenting footage depicting the moment of arrest, Ziobro says:

(15) No-one else will ever again be deprived of life by this man.⁶

→ **A back door murder charge**

Difficult Exam

(16) A: Was the exam difficult?

B: Even Tom passed.

→ **A back door negative evaluation**

Fundamental Values (Fraser 2001)

(18) GB: I want to see us return to a society with fundamental values.

→ **A back door negative evaluation of BC's presidency**

⁶ [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{\"itemid\":\[\"001-150698\"\]}](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{\)
https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sprawa_Mirosława_G.

Source of Money

Lech Kaczyński, the President of the Republic of Poland from 2005 to 2010, while talking about one of Poland's richest businessmen, says:

(19) If someone has money, they have it from somewhere.⁷

⁷ Witold Gadomski, Jeśli ktoś posiada pieniądze, to skądś je ma, *Gazeta Wyborcza* 204, 1st September, 2007, p. 3.

Source of Money

Lech Kaczyński, the President of the Republic of Poland from 2005 to 2010, while talking about one of Poland's richest businessmen, says:

(19) If someone has money, they have it from somewhere.⁸

→ **insinuation**

[!] The president's communicative plan succeeds only if he manages to put himself in a position where he can plausibly deny having intended to convey that the businessman is dishonest.

→ **plausible deniability**

⁸ Witold Gadomski, Jeśli ktoś posiada pieniądze, to skądś je ma, *Gazeta Wyborcza* 204, 1st September, 2007, p. 3.

Source of Money

Lech Kaczyński, the President of the Republic of Poland from 2005 to 2010, while talking about one of Poland's richest businessmen, says:

(19) If someone has money, they have it from somewhere.⁹

→ **insinuation**

[!] The president's communicative plan succeeds only if he manages to put himself in a position where he can plausibly deny having intended to convey that the businessman is dishonest.

→ **plausible deniability**

Speeding Driver

- (20) a. I'm in a bit of a hurry.
b. Is there any way we can settle this right now? (Pinker 2007)

⁹ Witold Gadomski, Jeśli ktoś posiada pieniądze, to skądś je ma, *Gazeta Wyborcza* 204, 1st September, 2007, p. 3.

Distinguish between

- (DC) diagnostic cancellation,
- (CC) conversational cancellation,
- (CD) conversational denial.

(DC) is a test available to a theoretician who wants to determine if a specific implication of an utterance merits description as a conversational implicature.

(CC) and (CD), in turn, are two discourse moves that can be performed by actual speakers in real dialogical settings; they impose different constraints on the discourse context in which they can be made and produce different effects.

(DC)

A *putative* or *potential* implicature $M(Q)$ of u can be appropriately cancelled if one can add the cancelling phrase without producing a semantic contradiction. (Sadock 1978: 290; Jaszczolt 2009; Zakkou 2018)

Garage

(21) A: I'm out of petrol.

B: There is a garage round the corner. (Grice 1975/1989)

But it is closed (but it doesn't sell petrol).

Cinema

(22) A: How about going to the cinema tonight?

B: I have an exam tomorrow.

But I will join you.

(CC)

A move that affects the incremental process of discourse meaning construction.

It consists in juxtaposing, within a single utterance, (*a*) a sentence whose utterance can give rise to implicature $M(Q)$ and (*b*) an appropriate cancellation phrase.

(CC)

A move that affects the incremental process of discourse meaning construction.

It consists in juxtaposing, within a single utterance, (a) a sentence whose utterance can give rise to implicature $M(Q)$ and (b) an appropriate cancellation phrase.

Garage

(21) A: a. I'm out of petrol.

B: b. There is a garage round the corner,

c. *But it's closed.*

Meeting a Woman

(22) a. X is meeting a woman this evening

b. — *his sister, in fact.*

(Geurts 2010)

The intent behind turns (21c) and (22b) is to *prevent* the addressee from deriving the *potential* implicatures of (7b) and (8a), respectively.

(*CD*)

Its appropriateness requires that *S* has been challenged by their interlocutor.

Sally and Harry

- (23) Sally: a. This is the third time this week that I have seen
John getting off the bus at the stop near Maria's place.
Harry: b. Do you mean that John and Maria are having an affair?
Sally: c. I don't intend to imply anything of that sort!

Plausibility

contextually plausible deniability (Camp 2018; Oswald 2022; Mazzarella 2023)

→ available reconstructed c' in which S can be taken to mean $M(Q)$ '

psychologically plausible deniability (Pinker et al. 2008; Oswald 2022)

→ a sincere act or at least not a bald-faced lie

epistemically plausible deniability (Dinges and Zakkau 2023)

→ a distribution of the burden of proof between S and H

Plausibility

contextually plausible deniability (Camp 2018; Oswald 2022; Mazzarella 2023)

→ available reconstructed c' in which S can be taken to mean $M(Q)'$

psychologically plausible deniability (Pinker et al. 2008; Oswald 2022)

→ a sincere act or at least not a bald-faced lie

epistemically plausible deniability (Dinges and Zakkau 2023)

→ a distribution of the burden of proof between S and H

Speeding Driver

- (20) a. I'm in a bit of a hurry.
b. Is there any way we can settle this right now? (Pinker 2007)
- (24) a. I didn't mean to imply anything of that sort!
b. I was just wondering if I might pay the fine on the spot!
- **fully-fledged denial:**
denying phrase + plausible alternative interpretation

Three effects of insinuation

E1 To convey a certain controversial and risky opinion while maintaining plausible deniability.

E2 To shift the responsibility for contributing this opinion from *S* to *H*.

E3 To put a stain on the target's reputation or name.

Three effects of insinuation

E1 To convey a certain controversial and risky opinion while maintaining plausible deniability.

→ *off-record communication* (Pinker et al. 2008; Camp 2018)

E2 To shift the responsibility for contributing this opinion from *S* to *H*.

→ *shift of responsibility* (Camp 2018)

E3 To put a stain on the target's reputation or name.

→ *staining effect* (Bell 1997; Fraser 2001)

Off-record communication

When a speaker communicates something by putting it *off the record*,
‘it is not possible to attribute only one clear communicative intention to [their] act’
(Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 211).

Off-record communication

When a speaker communicates something by putting it *off the record*,
‘it is not possible to attribute only one clear communicative intention to [their] act’
(Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 211).

Problem:

- How to define the *on-record/off-record* contrast?

Off-record communication

- (25)
- a. Pass the salt, please.
 - b. Could you pass the salt?
 - c. The soup isn't salty enough.

Off-record communication

- (25)
- a. Pass the salt, please.
 - b. Could you pass the salt?
 - c. The soup isn't salty enough.

Direct act

Conventionalized indirect act

Improvised indirect act

Off-record communication

- | | | | |
|------|----|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (25) | a. | Pass the salt, please. | <i>Direct act</i> |
| | b. | Could you pass the salt? | <i>Conventionalized indirect act</i> |
| | c. | The soup isn't salty enough. | <i>Improvised indirect act</i> |

Garage

- (21) *A:* a. I'm out of petrol.
 B: b. There is a garage round the corner.

What would serve as a plausible alternative interpretation?

Improvised implicatures / insinuations

Off-record communication

- | | | |
|------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (25) | a. Pass the salt, please. | <i>Direct act</i> |
| | b. Could you pass the salt? | <i>Conventionalized indirect act</i> |
| | c. The soup isn't salty enough. | <i>Improvised indirect act</i> |

Badgers in the House of Lords

„On 4 July 1967, the House of Lords approved the decriminalisation of homosexuality in the UK. The bill was promoted by Lord Arthur Gore, 8th Earl of Arran, conservative whip in the House of Lords; Gore was known both for the promotion of this bill and for his unsuccessful yet relentless efforts to reform laws for the protection of badgers, of which he and his wife were very fond. When he was asked why his bill on homosexuality succeeded, while his effort to protect badgers had failed, he allegedly replied:

- (26) There are not many badgers in the House of Lords.”

(Preston 2016; see: Oswald 2022)

Shift of Responsibility

Sally and Harry

- (23) Sally: a. This is the third time this week that I have seen
John getting off the bus at the stop near Maria's place.
- Harry: b. Do you mean that John and Maria are having an affair?
- Sally: c. I don't intend to imply anything of that sort!

Shift of Responsibility

Sally and Harry

- (23) Sally: a. This is the third time this week that I have seen
John getting off the bus at the stop near Maria's place.
- Harry: b. Do you mean that John and Maria are having an affair?
- Sally: c. I don't intend to imply anything of that sort!
- d. *You said it, not me!*

Staining Effect

[!] The stain left by an insinuation can persist even after a successful denial.
What's more, the denial itself can sometimes amplify the effect.

Veiled Accusation of Sleaze

(26) Matalin: We've never said to the press that
he's a philandering, pot smoking draft dogger.

(Bell 1997: 47)

Symmetric Insinuation

Tacit Negotiation

(27) *D*: a. I'm in a bit of a hurry.

b. Is there any way we can settle this right now?

O: c. Well, we have a special holiday fund for police officers' children.

D: d. I would be glad to contribute to that.

O: e. That could work.

D: f. What's the usual contribution?

O: g. Most people donate around 60 dollars.

D: h. I have only 45 on me right now.

O: i. That's perfectly fine.

Are unintended insinuations possible?

Tony and His Axe

Tony is walking around a plant nursery, intending to buy an axe and pesticide. At some point, he notices Mr. Piocosta.

(28) T.: Mr. Piocosta, right? How are you doing?

You remember our boys? Went to camp Aheka together.

P.: Of course, Tony, how are you?

T.: Good, good. **Your kid still got that killer crossover dribble?**

P.: Yeah, I guess so.

T.: (raising his hand in which he holds an axe)

That's gonna get him a scholarship.

P.: So how's Anthony?

T.: He's moody, you know, for a kid that age, you know.

P.: Well, it was nice seeing you, Tony.¹⁰

¹⁰ "The Sopranos", season 1, episode 4 "Meadowlands", directed by John Patten, written by Jason Cahill.

Dog Whistles

- (29) GB jr: Yet there's power, wonder-working power,
in the goodness and idealism and faith of the American people.
(Saul 2018: 362)

Dog Whistles

(29) GB jr: Yet there's power, **wonder-working power**,
in the goodness and idealism and faith of the American people.
(Saul 2018: 362)

→ a coded word

two meanings & two audiences

- A public, innocuous interpretation available to the general audience;
- a private, coded message addressed to the subset of the general audience (= those 'in the know') and concealed in such a way that the rest of the general audience is unaware of its existence.

Interesting questions

- Can we use irony to insinuate something?
- Can we use irony to communicate something by putting it off the record?

Nonconventional, nonconversational implicatures (Grice 1989; Green 2007)

MW:

- partially covert implicatures (PCIs),
- expressive perlocutionary implicatures (EPIs).

Estate Agent

- (1) Perhaps you would feel more comfortable settling in a more ...
transitional neighbourhood, like Ashwood? (Camp 2018: 43)

Garage

- (2) a. *A*: I am out of petrol.
b. *B*: There is a garage round the corner. (Grice 1989: 32)

Estate Agent

- (1) Perhaps you would feel more comfortable settling in a more ...
transitional neighbourhood, like Ashwood? (Camp 2018: 43)

*p*_{1.1} The agent *discourages* the couple from buying a house in the suburban area.

*p*_{1.2} Because of their identity, the couple is not welcome in the suburban area.

Garage

- (2) a. *A*: I am out of petrol.
b. *B*: There is a garage round the corner. (Grice 1989: 32)

Estate Agent

- (1) Perhaps you would feel more comfortable settling in a more ...
transitional neighbourhood, like Ashwood? (Camp 2018: 43)

$p_{1.1}$ The agent *discourages* the couple from buying a house in the suburban area.

$p_{1.2}$ Because of their identity, the couple is not welcome in the suburban area.

Garage

- (2) a. *A*: I am out of petrol.
b. *B*: There is a garage round the corner. (Grice 1989: 32)

$p_{2.1}$ *A*'s goal is to fill her tank, and *A* wants *B* to assist her in achieving this goal.

$p_{2.2}$ The garage is open and has petrol to sell.

Estate Agent

- (1) Perhaps you would feel more comfortable settling in a more ...
transitional neighbourhood, like Ashwood? (Camp 2018: 43)

$p_{1.1}$ The agent *discourages* the couple from buying a house in the suburban area.

$p_{1.2}$ Because of their identity, the couple is not welcome in the suburban area.

Garage

- (2) a. *A*: I am out of petrol.
b. *B*: There is a garage round the corner. (Grice 1989: 32)

$p_{2.1}$ *A*'s goal is to fill her tank, and *A* wants *B* to assist her in achieving this goal.

$p_{2.2}$ The garage is open and has petrol to sell.
→ conversational implicature (relevance-implicature)

Estate Agent

- (1) Perhaps you would feel more comfortable settling in a more ...
transitional neighbourhood, like Ashwood? (Camp 2018: 43)

$p_{1.1}$ The agent *discourages* the couple from buying a house in the suburban area.

→ partially covert implicature (PCI)

$p_{1.2}$ Because of their identity, the couple is not welcome in the suburban area.

→ invited inference (II)

Garage

(2) a. *A*: I am out of petrol.

b. *B*: There is a garage round the corner. (Grice 1989: 32)

$p_{2.1}$ *A*'s goal is to fill her tank, and *A* wants *B* to assist her in achieving this goal.

$p_{2.2}$ The garage is open and has petrol to sell.

→ conversational implicature (relevance-implicature)

Estate Agent

- (1) Perhaps you would feel more comfortable settling in a more ...
transitional neighbourhood, like Ashwood? (Camp 2018: 43)

$p_{1.1}$ The agent *discourages* the couple from buying a house in the suburban area.

→ partially covert implicature (PCI)

$p_{1.2}$ Because of their identity, the couple is not welcome in the suburban area.

→ invited inference (II)

Garage

(2) a. *A*: I am out of petrol.

b. *B*: There is a garage round the corner. (Grice 1989: 32)

$p_{2.1}$ *A*'s goal is to fill her tank, and *A* wants *B* to assist her in achieving this goal.

→ expressive perlocutionary implicature (EPI)

$p_{2.2}$ The garage is open and has petrol to sell.

→ conversational implicature (relevance-implicature)

Estate Agent

- (1) Perhaps you would feel more comfortable settling in a more ...
transitional neighbourhood, like Ashwood? (Camp 2018: 43)

$p_{1.1}$ The agent *discourages* the couple from buying a house in the suburban area.

→ partially covert implicature (PCI)

$p_{1.2}$ Because of their identity, the couple is not welcome in the suburban area.

→ invited inference (II)

Garage

(2) a. *A*: I am out of petrol.

b. *B*: There is a garage round the corner. (Grice 1989: 32)

$p_{2.1}$ *A*'s goal is to fill her tank, and *A* wants *B* to assist her in achieving this goal.

→ expressive perlocutionary implicature (EPI)

$p_{2.2}$ The garage is open and has petrol to sell.

→ conversational implicature (relevance-implicature)

[!] PCIs, EPIs, and IIs are *nonconversational*, *nonconventional implicatures*.
(Grice 1989: 26; cf. Green 2007: 100)

Conversational implicatures:

- a.* speaker meant (\rightarrow overt intentions);
- b.* determined through maxim-driven inferences;
- c.* update CG among *S* and *H*.

Nonconversational, nonconventional implicatures

- a.* not fully overt (and not fully covert);
- b.* determined through various mechanisms;
- c.* produce asymmetries between *S* and *H*.

Giveaway Smile

- (3) Ann, plays bridge against her boss, Peter. Ann wants her boss to win. Moreover, she wants Peter to know that she wants him to win, but she does not want to be too blunt about her plan. To achieve this, she adopts a communicative strategy: whenever she has a good hand, *she simulates a spontaneous smile of pleasure*. (Grice 1989: 94-95)

Giveaway Smile

- (3) Ann, plays bridge against her boss, Peter. Ann wants her boss to win. Moreover, she wants Peter to know that she wants him to win, but she does not want to be too blunt about her plan. To achieve this, she adopts a communicative strategy: whenever she has a good hand, *she simulates a spontaneous smile of pleasure*. (Grice 1989: 94-95)

*p*_{3.1} Ann has a good hand.

*p*_{3.2} Ann wants Peter to win.

- (SM₁) In uttering *U*, *S* means something if and only if *S* intends:
- (*i*₁) to produce by uttering *U* a certain response *R* on the part of *H*,
 - (*i*₂) to get *H* to recognize (*i*₁),
 - (*i*₃) that the fulfilment of (*i*₂) function as *H*'s reason for his response *R*.

Giveaway Smile

- (3) Ann, plays bridge against her boss, Peter. Ann wants her boss to win. Moreover, she wants Peter to know that she wants him to win, but she does not want to be too blunt about her plan. To achieve this, she adopts a communicative strategy: whenever she has a good hand, *she simulates a spontaneous smile of pleasure*. (Grice 1989: 94-95)

$p_{3.1}$ Ann has a good hand.

$p_{3.2}$ Ann wants Peter to win.

(SM₂) In uttering U , S means something if and only if S intends:

(i_1) to produce by uttering U a certain response R on the part of H ,

(i_2) to get H to recognize (i_1),

(i_3) that the fulfilment of (i_2) function as H 's reason for his response R ,

(i_{n+1}) to get H to recognize (i_n), for $n > 3$.

Giveaway Smile

- (3) Ann, plays bridge against her boss, Peter. Ann wants her boss to win. Moreover, she wants Peter to know that she wants him to win, but she does not want to be too blunt about her plan. To achieve this, she adopts a communicative strategy: whenever she has a good hand, *she simulates a spontaneous smile of pleasure*. (Grice 1989: 94-95)

*p*_{3.1} Ann has a good hand.

*p*_{3.2} Ann wants Peter to win.

- (PC) In uttering *U*, *S* performs a partially covert act if and only if *S* intends:
- (*i*₁) to produce by uttering *U* a certain response *R* on the part of *H*,
 - (*i*₂) to get *H* to recognize (*i*₁),
 - (*i*₃) that the fulfilment of (*i*₂) function as *H*'s reason for his response *R*.
 - (*i*₄') to get *H* not to recognize (*i*₂).

[!] *S* intends for *H* to recognize (*i*₁) without recognizing its overt nature.

→ plausible deniability

Giveaway Smile

- (3) Ann, plays bridge against her boss, Peter. Ann wants her boss to win. Moreover, she wants Peter to know that she wants him to win, but she does not want to be too blunt about her plan. To achieve this, she adopts a communicative strategy: whenever she has a good hand, *she simulates a spontaneous smile of pleasure*. (Grice 1989: 94-95)

$p_{3.1}$ Ann has a good hand. → PCI; plausible deniability

$p_{3.2}$ Ann wants Peter to win. → II

- (PC) In uttering U , S performs a partially covert act if and only if S intends:
- (i_1) to produce by uttering U a certain response R on the part of H ,
 - (i_2) to get H to recognize (i_1),
 - (i_3) that the fulfilment of (i_2) function as H 's reason for his response R .
 - (i_4') to get H not to recognize (i_2).

Peter's reasoning:

- (a) Ann's smile is intended to make me believe that $p_{3.1}$;

(*b*) therefore, $p_{3.2}$.

Fake One-Way Mirror

(4) Sally and Harry are seated on a bench and notice *John alighting from a bus across the street* ($\rightarrow E$). A framed glass pane separates them, which Harry mistakenly believes to be a one-way mirror. (Witek 2024)

- (5) a. $B_S E \ \& \ B_H E$
 b. $B_S B_H E \ \& \ B_H B_S E$
 c. $B_S B_H B_S E \ \& \ B_H B_S B_H E$

- (6) a. $B_S E \ \& \ B_H E$
 b. $B_S B_H E \ \& \ B_H B_S E$
 c. $B_S B_H B_S E \ \& \ B_H \sim B_S B_H E$
 d. $B_S B_H \sim B_S B_H E$

Fake One-Way Mirror

(4) Sally and Harry are seated on a bench and notice *John alighting from a bus across the street* ($\rightarrow E$). A framed glass pane separates them, which Harry mistakenly believes to be a one-way mirror. (Witek 2024)

- (5) a. $B_S E \ \& \ B_H E$
 b. $B_S B_H E \ \& \ B_H B_S E$
 c. $B_S B_H B_S E \ \& \ B_H B_S B_H E$

- (6) a. $B_S E \ \& \ B_H E$
 b. $B_S B_H E \ \& \ B_H B_S E$
 c. $B_S B_H B_S E \ \& \ B_H \sim B_S B_H E$
 d. $B_S B_H \sim B_S B_H E$

[!] The Estate Agent in (1) and Ann in (3) create conversational fake one-way mirrors, thereby producing and maintaining plausible deniability.

Giveaway Smile

- (3) Ann, plays bridge against her boss, Peter. Ann wants her boss to win. Moreover, she wants Peter to know that she wants him to win, but she does not want to be too blunt about her plan. To achieve this, she adopts a communicative strategy: whenever she has a good hand, *she simulates a spontaneous smile of pleasure*. (Grice 1989: 94-95)

$p_{3.1}$ Ann has a good hand.

$p_{3.2}$ Ann wants Peter to win.

Peter's reasoning:

- (a) Ann's smile is intended to make me believe that $p_{3.1}$; ($\rightarrow E$)
(b) therefore, $p_{3.2}$.

- (7) a. $B_A E \ \& \ B_P E$
b. $B_A B_P E \ \& \ B_P B_A E$
c. $B_A B_P B_A E \ \& \ B_P \sim B_A B_P E$
d. $B_A B_P \sim B_A B_P E$

Estate Agent

- (1) Perhaps you would feel more comfortable settling in a more ...
transitional neighbourhood, like Ashwood? (Camp 2018: 43)

$p_{1.1}$ The agent *discourages* the couple from buying a house in the suburban area.

$p_{1.2}$ Because of their identity, the couple is not welcome in the suburban area.

The couple's reasoning:

(a) Utterance (1) is intended to make us believe that $p_{1.1}$; ($\rightarrow E$)

(b) therefore, $p_{1.2}$.

- (8) a. $B_A E \ \& \ B_C E$
 b. $B_A B_C E \ \& \ B_C B_A E$
 c. $B_A B_C B_A E \ \& \ B_C \sim B_A B_C E$
 d. $B_A B_C \sim B_A B_C E$

Scotch

- (9) a. A: It that Scotch over there?
b. B: Yes.
c. Help yourself. (Attardo 1997: 754)

Scotch

- (9) a. A: It that Scotch over there?
b. B: Yes.
c. Help yourself. (Attardo 1997: 754)

(9b) — *locutionary* (Attardo 1997)
or *rhetorical* (Asher and Lascarides 2013) *cooperation*;
(9c) — *perlocutionary cooperation* (Attardo 1997).

Scotch

- (9) a. A: It that Scotch over there?
b. B: Yes.
c. Help yourself. (Attardo 1997: 754)

(9b) — *locutionary* (Attardo 1997)
or *rhetorical* (Asher and Lascarides 2013) *cooperation*;
(9c) — *perlocutionary cooperation* (Attardo 1997).

Two goals behind utterance (9a):
one signalled linguistically,
and the other implied or expressed (→ EPI).

Scotch

- (9) a. A: It that Scotch over there?
b. B: Yes.
c. Help yourself. (Attardo 1997: 754)

- (EPI) In uttering *U*, *S* perlocutionarily implicates *p* only if
- (a) *S* situates *U* in discourse context *C*, thereby *showing* *p* as the central perlocutionary goal behind *U*, and
 - (b) *S* intends to show *p* as the perlocutionary goal behind *U*
 - *S* refrains from concealing what *U* shows through its placement in *C*
 - thereby *signalling* her illocutionary goal *p*.

In short

We *express* perlocutionary goals behind our speech acts by deliberately situating them in specific contexts.

The context in which an act is situated can be define by characterizing the specific actions that the participants in this situation can afford (Mey 1993, 2002).

[!₁] *EPIs* are forms of non-overt communication.

[!₂] The same speech act, when situated in different contexts,
can lead to different *EPIs*.

[!₁] *EPIs* are forms of non-overt communication.

[!₂] The same speech act, when situated in different contexts,
can lead to different *EPIs*.

Piccadilly Circus

A is standing on Regent Street, and is approached by *B*.

(10) *A*: a. How long does it take by taxi to Piccadilly Circus?

B: b. You don't need a taxi — it's only a two-minute walk.

b'. One minute.

(Kempson 1975: 163; Attardo 1997: 761)

*C*₁ — *A* is dressed in tourist attire, holds a guidebook to London,
appears nervous and is visibly in a hurry.

*C*₂ — *A* is using crutches and appears visibly tired.

[!3] By situating their speech in a specific discourse context, *S* makes their implicated perlocutionary goal recognizable to any *competent interlocutor* — that is, to anyone who can arrive at an appropriate *subjective construal* of this context and its constituent *affordances*.

[!3] By situating their speech in a specific discourse context, *S* makes their implicated perlocutionary goal recognizable to any *competent interlocutor* — that is, to anyone who can arrive at an appropriate *subjective construal* of this context and its constituent *affordances*.

Situational construals are ‘individual, group, and societal constructions of social meanings’ (Griffin and Ross 1991: 334).

Subjective construal is a ‘process of making sense of situations (...) and the people, objects, and events that occur within them’ (Lieberman 2022: 831);

our subjective construal of a certain situation is our personal understanding of its significance in terms of ‘what opportunities or actions it affords us’ (*Ibid.*: 832).

[!3] By situating their speech in a specific discourse context, *S* makes their implicated perlocutionary goal recognizable to any *competent interlocutor* — that is, to anyone who can arrive at an appropriate *subjective construal* of this context and its constituent *affordances*.

Situational construals are ‘individual, group, and societal constructions of social meanings’ (Griffin and Ross 1991: 334).

Subjective construal is a ‘process of making sense of situations (...) and the people, objects, and events that occur within them’ (Lieberman 2022: 831);

our subjective construal of a certain situation is our personal understanding of its significance in terms of ‘what opportunities or actions it affords us’ (*Ibid.*: 832).

Lieberman 2022:

- Any subjective construal is a form of seeing (visual, psychological, semantic);
- pre-reflective *versus* reflective subjective construals.

Hypothesis

- There are two types of *EPIs*: *standard* and *non-standard*;
 - understanding the former involves *pre-reflective* subjective construal, while interpreting the latter requires *reflective* subjective construal.
- Levinson (1983: 104-109) on standard / non-standard conversational implicatures

Hypothesis

- There are two types of *EPIs*: *standard* and *non-standard*;
 - understanding the former involves *pre-reflective* subjective construal, while interpreting the latter requires *reflective* subjective construal.
- Levinson (1983: 104-109) on standard / non-standard conversational implicatures

Standard *EPIs* are conveyed by aligning certain speech acts and their perlocutionary goals with what is afforded by the situations in which these acts are performed;

→ *Garage, Scotch, Piccadilly Circus*

non-standard *EPIs*, in contrast, are conveyed through producing *breaks* (→ Bell 1997) and *incongruities* in the situations in which they are formed.

→ *Speeding Driver*

Speeding Driver

- (11) a. I'm in a bit of a hurry.
b. Is there any way we can settle this right now?

(Pinker 2007: 444-446; cf. Pinker et al. 2008: 834; Camp 2018: 43)

[!4] (11b) constitutes a 'break in the frame' (Bell 1997: 57);
i.e., it is not aligned with what the situations in question
afford their participants in thought, speech, and action.

Tony and His Axe

Tony is walking around a plant nursery, intending to buy an axe and pesticide. At some point, he notices Mr. Piocosta.

(12) T.: Mr. Piocosta, right? How are you doing?

You remember our boys? Went to camp Aheka together.

P.: Of course, Tony, how are you?

T.: Good, good. **Your kid still got that killer crossover dribble?**

P.: Yeah, I guess so.

T.: (raising his hand in which he holds an axe)

That's gonna get him a scholarship.

P.: So how's Anthony?

T.: He's moody, you know, for a kid that age, you know.

P.: Well, it was nice seeing you, Tony.¹¹

¹¹ "The Sopranos", season 1, episode 4 "Meadowlands", directed by John Patten, written by Jason Cahill.