

## Meaning 2.2: Pragmatics 1 — Speaker cooperation and Gricean Maxims

May 13, 2020

# Our focus today — Implicatures

- (i) **Entailment**: Proposition  $A$  **entails** proposition  $B$  if the truth of  $A$  guarantees the truth of  $B$ .
- (ii) **Implicature**: Proposition  $A$  is an **implicature** proposition  $B$  if  $B$  is inferred from  $A$  given the context, but  $B$  is not necessarily true.
- (iii) **Presupposition**: A proposition  $B$  is a **presupposition** of proposition of  $A$  if proposition  $B$  is a precondition on the truth / falsity of  $A$

# Two main flavors of implicature

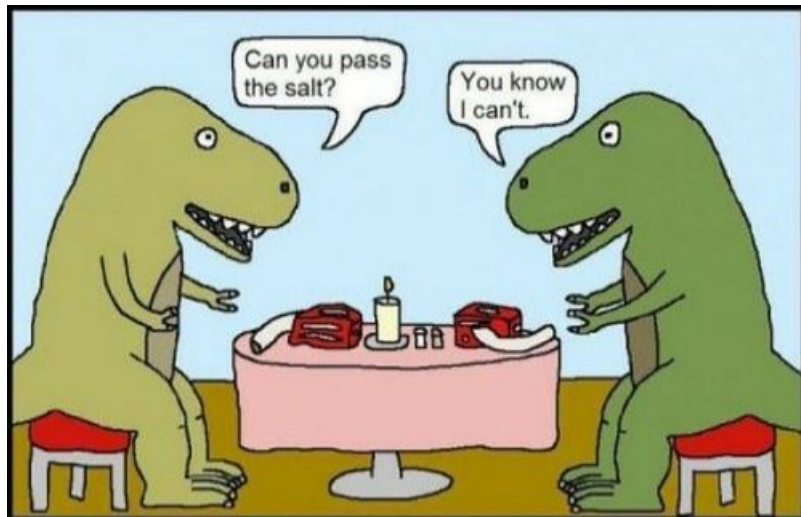
## (i) Conventional implicatures

- . some additional meaning that we have agreed to attach to a lexical item or expression
- . *spare, but, even* . . .
- . Lupe is lonely, **but** he is happy.  
↪ Being lonely would normally make someone unhappy.

## (ii) Conversational implicatures

- . arise from interactions between speakers and their states of world knowledge

## A conversational implicature



## Literal meaning v. speaker meaning

The conversation on the previous slide is funny because the answer is unexpected — it is a literal answer.

When communicating, we often intend to convey meaning beyond what is literally said

SPEAKER MEANING

We expect the other participant in the conversation to be able to recognize our intended meaning and answer or react accordingly.

COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE

## More formally — Cooperative Principle

**Cooperative Principle:** In order to carry on a conversation successfully, each participant needs to

- (i) be able to recognize the other participant's intention for saying certain things
- (ii) assume that the other participant can also recognize his or her intention.

In other words, participants in a conversation assume mutual cooperation.

Assuming cooperation there are a few other conversation guiding principles that emerge.

# Gricean Maxims (Grice, 1975)

**Baseline assumption:** when we participate in a conversation, we expect each other to be cooperative in our communication.

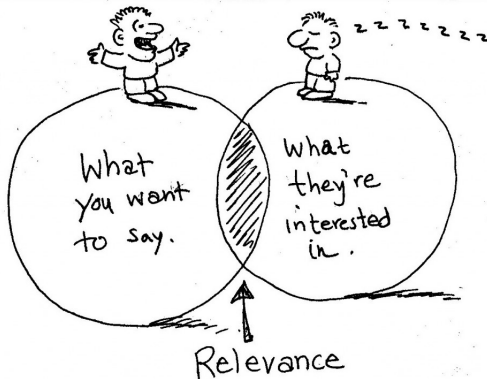
## Gricean Maxims:

Paul Grice posited that these four maxims drive rational conversation; then, he stated that conversational implicatures arise when speaker *A* violates a maxim and speaker *B* reconciles this violation by attaching additional meaning to speaker *A*'s utterance because speaker *B* assumes speaker *A* is cooperating and wouldn't violate these maxims.

- Maxim of Quality: Be honest.
- Maxim of Quantity: Give the right amount of information.
- Maxim of Relation: Be relevant.
- Maxim of Manner: Be perspicuous.

# Maxim of Relation

Be Relevant





# Maxim of Quality

## **Supermaxim:**

- . Try to make your contribution one that is true

## **Submaxims:**

- . Do not say what you believe to be false.
- . Do not say anything for which you lack adequate evidence.

# No fake news



# Maxim of Quantity

Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).

Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

# Maxim of Manner

## **Supermaxim:**

- . Be perspicuous.

## **Submaxims:**

- . Avoid obscurity and ambiguity
- . Be brief and concise

End of this video's material.