

WEEK 7: Pragmatics

Topics: The co-operative principle and implicatures.

A. The Co-operative Principle and Conversational Implicature

Exercise 1: Identify one obvious conversational implicature that arises from the flouting of the maxims in the following utterances. Specify which maxim is flouted in each case:

1. A: Did you invite Mary and George?
B: I invited Mary.
2. A: Do you like Jason?
B: Well, he is certainly a nice person, he is sometimes well-dressed and he is definitely very polite.
3. A: Hello Mary. How are you?
B: Well, I went to the doctor's on Monday, and he has now referred me to a specialist. I should have an appointment at the hospital some time in July, if I'm lucky, but you know what the health service is like about arranging appointments. I'll probably be dead by then...
4. A: Jane is an iceberg.
5. A: Does your grandmother have a boyfriend?
B: She's very traditional.
6. A: Do you want dessert?
B: Is the Pope catholic?
7. A: War is war.
8. A: Have you done your homework and taken the garbage out?
B: I've taken the garbage out.
9. A: What did you think of that new movie?
B: I'm starving!
10. A: She's small, isn't she?
B: Well, she's sort of small ... certainly not very large ... but actually ... I would have to say that she is large rather than small.
11. A: Is Mary dating anyone these days?
B: Well, she goes out of town every weekend.
12. A: Does this shirt look good on me?
B: The material is nice.