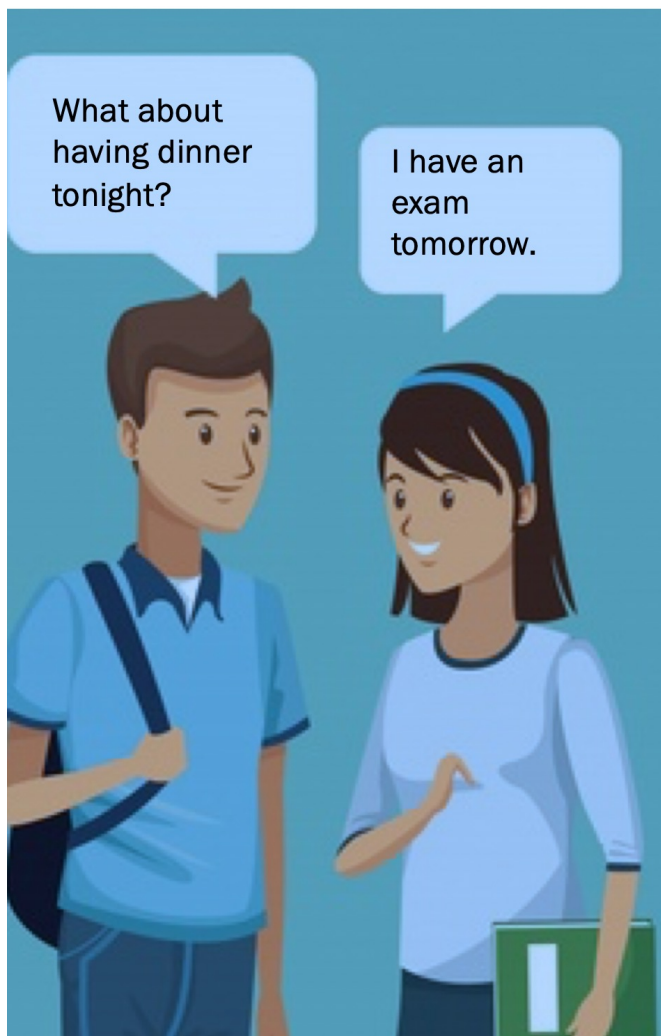

INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS II

ANNA PIATA
apiata@enl.uoa.gr

FACULTY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
SPRING 2025

A-KAP, Π-Ω



AN EXAMPLE

- Here the reply “*I have an exam*” does not provide an **explicit, straightforward answer** to the invitation (cf. “*No*”).
 - In this case, meaning is **implicated** and therefore it has to be inferred by the addressee.
- Sometimes the meaning that is actually communicated is **different** from the literal meaning of a sentence.
 - In pragmatics, this type of meaning is known as **implicature**.

TODAY'S TOPICS

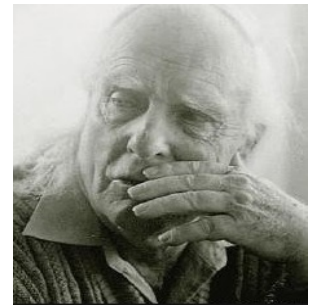
- Pragmatics:
 - Implicatures.
 - The Cooperative principle and the Maxims of conversation.
- You can study these topics in:
 - Yule, ch. 11: p. 147-149.
 - Dirven & Verspoor, ch. 7: p. 161-184.

PRAGMATICS

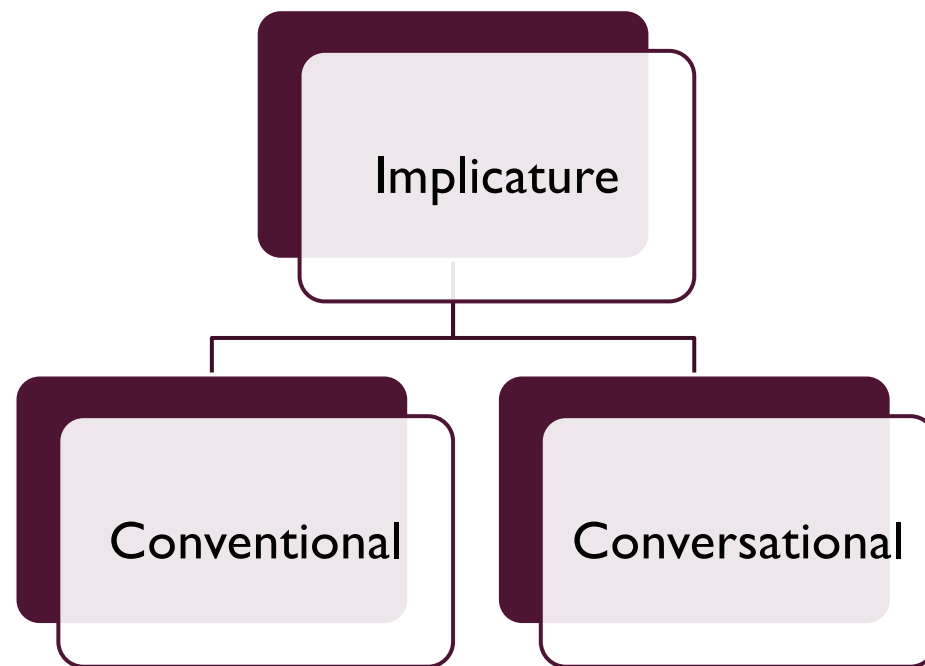
IMPLICATURES

IMPLICATURE: DEFINITION

- The term **conversational implicature** was introduced by Herbert Paul Grice in his seminal work *Logic and conversation*, published in 1975.
 - Grice was a **philosopher** interested in those types of meaning that cannot be explained in terms of semantics.
- Implicatures are **additional to, or different meanings from**, the semantic content of a sentence and thus go beyond the meaning of the words used.
 - Grice introduced a **distinction** between “what is said” (i.e., sentence meaning) and “what is implicated” (i.e., implicature).



TWO TYPES OF IMPLICATURE



CONVENTIONAL IMPLICATURE

- **Conventional implicatures** always convey the same meaning, regardless of context.
 - They are **tied** to particular linguistic expressions such as *but*, *even*, *therefore* and *yet*.
 - *John is smart but lazy.*
 - *I love pizza but my friends don't.*
- What is the meaning conveyed with *but* in these two utterances?

CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE

- With **conversational implicatures**, what is implied varies according to the context of utterance.
 - A: *Can I check my email?*
 - B: *The laptop is in the kitchen.*
(implicature: yes)

CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE

- With **conversational implicatures**, what is implied varies according to the context of utterance.
 - A: *Can I check my email?*
 - B: *The phone line is off.*
(implicature: no)

POINTS TO REMEMBER...

- It is important to emphasize that:
 - Implicatures are **implied**, not said (beyond the meaning of the words used).
 - The same utterance may give rise to different implicatures **in different contexts**.
 - Implicatures are cancellable, or defeasible.
 - A: *Can I check my email?*
 - B: *The laptop is in the kitchen.*
(implicature: yes)
- A: *Can I check my email?*
 - B: *The laptop is in the kitchen,*
but I don't trust you with it.
(implicature: no)

PRAGMATICS

THE CO-OPERATIVE PRINCIPLE (CP)

QUESTION

- How are **hearers** able to understand what is meant? In other words, how do they understand implicatures?

THE CO-OPERATIVE PRINCIPLE

“Make your 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.”

- There is a **tacit agreement** between the speaker and the hearer to cooperate in communication, based on their shared interest in being mutually understood.

WHAT THE CP IS NOT...

- An ideal of fair and honest cooperation amongst human beings.
- The term 'cooperation' is not used in an everyday sense to refer to people's social behaviour.
- It does not designate a prescriptive set of rules and regulations for human interaction.

THE MAXIMS OF CONVERSATION

- Within the CP, Grice established four maxims of conversation, which explain how hearers arrive at implicatures:
 1. **Quality** (truthfulness).
 2. **Quantity** (informativeness).
 3. **Relation** (relevance).
 4. **Manner** (clarity).
- Speakers often **observe** the maxims of conversation and thus give rise to implicatures.
 - But it is also possible to **flout** the maxims to the effect that meaning can be inferred.

PRAGMATICS

OBSERVING THE MAXIMS

THE MAXIM OF QUALITY

- This maxim requires that we give information only for what we know (or at least believe) to be **true** and for which we have evidence.
- Make your contribution one that is true, specifically:
 - (i) Do not say what you believe to be false.
 - (ii) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

THE MAXIM OF QUALITY: EXAMPLE

- A: *Who won the match yesterday?*
- B: *Manchester did.*
 - Implicature: Assuming that B is co-operative and provides information for which he has evidence, his reply is true and therefore Manchester won the match; otherwise, B would have provided a different answer.

THE MAXIM OF QUANTITY

- This maxim requires that the speaker says **as much as it is necessary**, with no excessive or inadequate information.
 - (i) Make your contribution as informative as is required.
 - (ii) Do not make your contribution more informative than required.

THE MAXIM OF QUANTITY: EXAMPLES

- *A: Do you know where I can get some petrol?*
- *B: There's a petrol station down this road on the left.*
 - Implicature: As far as the speaker knows, the station is open and also sells petrol. If neither of the two was true B would not have said so. Therefore, I can find petrol there.
- *A: Do you have a pet?*
- *B: I have two cats.*
 - Implicature: B has no more than two cats and no other pets.

THE MAXIM OF RELEVANCE

- The maxim is very simple:
 - Make your contribution relevant.

THE MAXIM OF RELEVANCE: EXAMPLES

- A: *Can I borrow 10 euros?*
- B: *My wallet is in the bedroom.*
 - Implicature: Provided B is cooperative and provides a relevant answer, I can borrow 10 euros.
- A: *How are the trumpet lessons going?*
- B: *Not great, but I'd rather not discuss it now.*
 - Implicature: The trumpet lessons are not going so well.

THE MAXIM OF MANNER

- Be perspicuous, and specifically:
 - avoid obscurity
 - avoid ambiguity
 - be brief
 - be orderly

THE MAXIM OF MANNER: EXAMPLE

- A: *Do you love me?*
- B: *Of course I do.*
 - Implicature: provided that B is co-operative, s/he is giving me a clear, unambiguous answer; therefore, B loves A.
- *The woman got out of her car and went straight into the office.*
 - Implicature: The woman got out of her car and *then* went to the office.

Grice's theory of conversational implicature (simplified)

a. The co-operative principle

Be co-operative.

b. The maxims of conversation

Quality: Be truthful.

(i) Don't say what is false.

(ii) Don't say what lacks evidence.

Quantity:

(i) Don't say less than is required.

(ii) Don't say more than is required.

Relation: Be relevant.

Manner: Be perspicuous.

(i) Avoid obscurity.

(ii) Avoid ambiguity.

(iii) Be brief.

(iv) Be orderly.

IN SUM

- The hearer assumes that the speaker is being co-operative and, unless there is an indication to the contrary, the speaker:
 - will tell the truth,
 - will say as much as the occasion requires by estimating what is already known,
 - will know what is being discussed,
 - will make sure the hearer(s) understands her/him.



Observing the
maxims of
conversation

The diagram consists of two large dark purple circles. The left circle contains the text 'Observing the maxims of conversation'. A light gray triangle points from the right side of the left circle to the left side of the right circle. The right circle contains the text 'Conversational implicature'.

Conversational
implicature

Quality	Quantity	Relevance	Manner
<i>As far as I know,...</i>	<i>As you probably already know,...</i>	<i>Oh, by the way,...</i>	<i>I'm not sure if this is clear, but...</i>
<i>I'm not sure if this is true, but...</i>	<i>I can't say any more,...</i>	<i>I'm not sure if this is relevant, but...</i>	<i>I don't know if this makes sense, but...</i>
<i>I may be wrong, but...</i>	<i>I probably don't need to say this, but...</i>	<i>I don't want to change the subject, but...</i>	<i>This may be a bit tedious, but...</i>

OPTING OUT OF MAXIMS: HEDGES

POINTS TO REMEMBER...

- The maxims are *not* rules that people have to follow in an interaction.
- People do *not* always follow these maxims in everyday interaction.
- As we will see next, even when the maxims are not followed the hearer assumes that this is done on purpose and looks for particular inferences.

PRAGMATICS

FLOUTING THE MAXIMS

OBSERVING VS FLOUTING THE MAXIMS

- The hearer draws inferences as to what the speaker implies **in two distinct ways**:
 - As already said, when the speaker is **observing** the maxims inferences will be quite straightforward:
 - A: *I need to check my email.*
 - B: *The laptop is in the kitchen.*
 - But when the speaker deliberately **flouts** the maxims and it is **obvious** that s/he is doing so, this prompts the hearer to look for a different meaning from what is explicitly expressed.

FLOUTING THE MAXIMS: EXAMPLE

- A: *Did you like Paul's new book?*

B: *Lovely weather for a picnic!*

- Flouts the maxim of **relation** (as B's reply does not relate to A's question).
- Implicature: A does not want to say if s/he liked the book.

FLOUTING THE MAXIMS: DEFINITION

- Some conversational implicatures are derived on the basis of a **violation, or flouting** of the maxims.
 - In this case, the implicature arises because the speaker **blatantly** fails to observe a maxim so that the hearer is able to recognize the speaker's intention and thus derive the intended meaning.

FLOUTING THE MAXIMS: DEFINITION

- If the speaker is still cooperative, and if he or she is exploiting a maxim in such a way that the hearer should **recognize** the infringement, then he or she is doing so in order to convey some extra message, which is in tune with the Cooperative principle.
 - The speaker knows or assumes that the hearer is **able to compute** what that message is.
- This applies to all **four conversational maxims**, as we will see next.
 - This is different from **violating** the Cooperative principle, as is the case with lying: here the speaker's intention is covert, i.e. intentionally not manifest to the addressee.

FLOUTING THE MAXIM OF QUALITY

- A: *You know, many people here are depending on you.*
- B: *Great! That really is a relief...*
 - Implicature: B's answer is **ironic**; s/he says something which is obviously untrue, thus implying that the opposite is true. The true meaning here is something along the lines of "That really stresses me out".

FLOUTING THE MAXIM OF QUALITY

- A: *Do you need any help with your luggage?*
- B: *Thanks, this suitcase weighs a tone!*
 - Implicature: B's answer is **hyperbolic**; s/he says something which is obviously untrue, in an exaggerated manner. The true meaning here is something along the lines of "This suitcase is too heavy for me".

FLOUTING THE MAXIM OF QUALITY

- A: *Do you like your new job?*
- B: *My job is a jail.*
 - Implicature: B's answer is **metaphorical**; s/he says something which is obviously untrue, thus implying that an alternative, non-literal meaning is to be sought. The true meaning here is something along the lines of "I do not like my job and feel suppressed".

FLOUTING THE MAXIM OF QUANTITY

- A: *Where does Mary work?*
- B: *Room 43 or Room 34.*
 - Implicature: B does not know which of the two places Mary works.
- A: *What can you tell me about my son's school performance?*
- B: *Your son is always polite and is never late for class.*
 - Implicature: B avoids providing a complete, fully informative reply.
- A: *How was your sandwich?*
- B: *Oh, a sandwich is a sandwich.*
 - Implicature: This was only a typical sandwich.

FLOUTING THE MAXIM OF RELATION

- A: *Do you like your new flatmate?*
- B: *The flowers are looking great!*
 - Implicature: B does not like her/his new flatmate.

- A: *Are you coming to my party this weekend?*
- B: *It looks like it's going to rain.*
 - Implicature: B will not come to the party.

FLOUTING THE MAXIM OF MANNER

- A: *Do you love me?*
- B: *I'll ponder on that matter soon and when an answer pops up, it will be delivered to you without haste.*
 - Implicature: B is being unnecessarily ambiguous and confusing; therefore, B either does not know or does not want to answer the question.
- (a couple has just had an argument and are having supper with their small children)
- A: *Do you still think I was wrong?*
- B: *Oh, just go to H-E-L-L.*
 - Implicature: B does not want to show discontent in a clear and straightforward way.



The diagram consists of two large dark purple circles connected by a light gray right-pointing triangle. The left circle contains the text 'Flouting the maxims of conversation' and the right circle contains 'Conversational implicature'. The triangle points from the left circle to the right circle, indicating a logical flow or relationship between the two concepts.

Flouting the
maxims of
conversation

Conversational
implicature

CANCELLING IMPLICATURES

- But note that conversational implicatures can be **cancelled**.
 - This allows the speaker to imply something and then **deny** that implicature.
- A: *Do you love me?*
- B: *I'll ponder on that matter soon and when an answer pops up, it will be delivered to you without haste. Sure I do – just joking 😊*
 - Implicature: B loves A and expresses it in playful, humorous way.

Exercise I

SUMMARY

- **The Cooperative principle:** Grice's principle for explaining how conversational implicatures arise. The CP is supported by four maxims: Quality, quantity, relevance and manner.
- **Implicatures:** implications following from the maxims. They are additional or different meanings from the expressed meaning (what is said).
 - Grice distinguished between conventional and conversational implicatures but here we have focused only on **conversational** implicatures