

Questions on Gricean Implicature

Introduction to Pragmatics, Fall 2010

Due: Wednesday, November 24th

Read: Grice (1975), *Logic and Conversation*.

1. Grice says on p. 25 that “in some cases the conventional meaning of the words used will determine what is implicated.” (These are called *conventional implicatures*.) What is his example of that? What is implicated in that example? What is said? How does the conventional meaning of the words used determine what is implicated?
2. What is the Cooperative Principle?
3. For each category (Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner), list the maxims, including the “supermaxims” and the more specific ones.
4. What does “Be perspicuous” mean?
5. Grice says, “a man who has expressed himself with undue prolixity would, in general, be open to milder comment than would a man who has said something he believes to be false.” What does he mean?
6. Grice lists examples of “expectations or presumptions connected with at least some of the foregoing maxims” that “have their analogues in the sphere of transactions that are not talk exchanges” (p. 28). He does not list one for manner. Can you think of one?
7. What ways are there to fail to fulfill a maxim?
8. What is a conversational implicature (pp. 30-31)?
9. Grice gives two examples of conversational implicature in which no maxim is violated. What are they? He gives no gloss for the second one, and claims that it is unnecessary in view of that given for the first one. Provide a gloss.
10. Consider the following dialogue:
A: Är hon snygg?
B: Hon är snäll.
What is conversationally implicated? How does the implicature arise?

11. What is the difference between particularized and generalized conversational implicature?
12. What does it mean to cancel an implicature? Give an example.
13. Watch the “intellectual” blonde joke on the course website.
 - What Gricean maxim(s) is the blonde violating in her first line?
 - In terms of Gricean maxims, what is the library assistant’s response intended to convey?
 - In terms of Gricean maxims, what does the blonde apparently take the library assistant to mean?
14. Watch the Seinfeld car reservation video (or read the transcript).
 - Look for cases of the following: violating, opting out of, or flouting a maxim, or accusing another participant of doing so. List at least 2.