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.

Grice's Maxims

- <u>Relevance</u>: Be relevant.

- <u>Quality</u>: Try to make your contribution one that is true.
  . Do not say what you believe to be false.
  . Do not say anything for which you lack adequate evidence.

- <u>Quantity</u>: Make your contribution as informative as is required; do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

- <u>Manner</u>: Be perspicuous.
  . Avoid obscurity and ambiguity
  . Be brief and concise

Grice's reasoning

- <u>Assumptions</u>: Speakers assume each person in the conversation is cooperating, and they are aware of this. Part of the cooperation is adhering to the four maxims proposed.

- <u>Derivation of implicature</u>: When a speaker strays from one of the maxims, the listener(s) assume the speaker did so for a reason, and the information needed to bridge the maxim and the deviant utterance is inferred, call this information the implicature.

Gricean reasoning — another perspective / broken down

(i) participants assume cooperation

(ii) a speaker makes deviant utterance U

(iii) listener notices U deviates from (a) maxim(s)

(iv) listener adds information I, based on context, to make new meaning $U' = U + I$, call the additional inference I an implicature

(v) listener understands the speaker's original utterance U as meaning $U' = U + I$, which reconciles the deviation

Scalar implicature: implicatures which arise from words on a scale, where the choice of a particular word on a scale implicates that the proposition doesn't hold for more specific words on the scale (words higher up).

$$A < B < C < \ldots < Z$$
Choice of word B implies that saying $C < \ldots < Z$ would be false.

<u>Some examples of scales and their implicatures</u>

(i) *no / none* < **some** < *many* < … < *all*   *some $\leadsto$ not all, not many*(?)

(ii) *missed* < **swung at** < … < *hit*   *swung at $\leadsto$ didn't hit*

(iii) etc. many more examples

Examples

1. <u>Context</u>: Terrence is back home visiting his mother on summer vacation. The past few days he had enjoyed not having any real responsibilities, soaked up the love and affection his mom heaps on him, relished all the free time to read whatever he wants — nothing like linguistics or game theory — and been able to watch his favorite reality tv, a competitive cooking one. One night, he had just settled into this nice lifestyle, almost feeling like he was obligated not to do anything at that point. Also, that night was the season finale of the cooking competition show, and he had been committed to the show throughout the past two years (... long, tough competition), so there was no other option than for him to watch it live. In the finale, there was a three-course challenge, and the competitors just finished the first course at this point in the story, so things were starting to heat up. His mother then walked into the room, and said, 'I am prepping to cook dinner, but I completely forgot to get garlic at the store today, and I *need* it for the recipe. Honey boo Ter-bear, do you want to go to the store real quick to pick up some garlic?'

UTTERANCE: Honey boo Ter-bear, do you want to go to the store real quick to pick up some garlic?

IMPLICATURE: Terrence's mother wanted him to go to the store to pick up garlic.

<u>Gricean reasoning</u>:

(i) Terrence assumes his mother is a cooperative communicator, so when she utters a seemingly irrelevant question about Terrence's desire to get garlic, he assumes she is not being irrelevant.

(ii) Since Terrence's mother said she needed the garlic for the recipe, someone needs to go to the store to get the garlic, and since his mother has already started prepping, she is unlikely to go.

(iii) Terrence infers that she wants him to go to the store because otherwise she wouldn't have asked him that irrelevant question in the context because he — and trust me when I say this — obviously didn't want to leave the comfort of his lifestyle and leave the season finale of his cooking show.

2. Michael swung at the ball. ⤳ Michael missed the ball.

<u>Gricean reasoning</u>:

(i) We assume the speaker is being cooperative, so they wouldn't say something that isn't true and they wouldn't be any under / over informative.

(ii) Since the speaker chose to say *swung at* instead of *hit* or *deflected*, it must be the case that they don't have evidence for saying the more specific words; or, it must be that saying those would not be honest.

(iii) We infer that Michael didn't hit the ball nor deflect it because if he had, the speaker would have said so, as that would have been honest and more appropriately informative.

Exercises

1. Come up with a scenario where one of Grice's maxims are violated and an implicature is derived from that violation.

2. Find a word not already mentioned that induces a scalar implicature.