Implicatures II

LING-053 Semantics 1
UCSC
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• An implicature is triggered by an apparent violation of one of the maxims of conversations, together with the assumption that everybody in the conversation knows everybody is following the maxims.

• So if the speaker violated a maxim, she must have intended to do so, and she must have intended her interlocutor to understand that she intended to do so.

• In these conditions, the implicature is triggered.
Particularized Conversational Implicatures

(1) A: What on earth has happened to the roast beef?
    B: The dog is looking very happy.

**IMPLICATURE**: Perhaps the dog has eaten the roast beef.

Generalized Conversational Implicature

(2) I walked into a house.

**IMPLICATURE**: The house was not my house.
Generating generalized Quantity Implicatures

SCALAR IMPLICATURES

- What’s a scale? A scale is a set of alternatives of the same grammatical category, which are arranged in a linear order by their degree of informativeness or strength.

  \[(3) \quad \langle e_1, e_2, e_3, \ldots, e_n \rangle\]

- If we put \(e_1\) in a sentential frame, we get a well-formed sentence like \(S(e_1)\).

- The informativeness or strength means that \(S(e_1)\) entails \(S(e_2)\), and \(S(e_2)\) entails \(S(e_3)\), and so on and so forth, for every pair in the scale.
Examples

- **Numbers:**

  \[(4) \langle 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 \rangle\]

  1. John read 3 books.
  2. John read 2 books.

- **Quantifiers:**

  \[(5) \langle \text{all, some} \rangle\]

  1. All of the kids went to the party.
  2. Some of the kids went to the party.
General rule for predicting a scalar implicature:

If a speaker asserts that a lower (weaker) point on a scale obtains, then he implicates that a higher (stronger) point on the same scale does not obtain.

- **Scalar Implicature**: Given any scale of the form \( \langle e_1, e_2, \ldots, e_n \rangle \), if a speaker utters \( S(e_2) \), then she implicates \( \neg S(e_1) \). In general, if she asserts \( S(e_n) \), then she implicates \( \neg S(e_{n-1}) \).
More examples of scalar implicatures:

(6) The soup is warm.
(7) You can buy a Porsche or a Ferrari.