Conversational implicature

Christopher Potts
Stanford Linguistics

Linguist 130a/230a: Introduction to semantics and pragmatics
Definition

Speaker $S$ saying utterance $U$ to listener $L$ conversationally implicates $q$ if, and only if,

1. $S$ and $L$ mutually, publicly presume that $S$ is obeying the cooperative principle.
2. To maintain 1 given $U$, it must be supposed that $S$ thinks that $q$.
3. $S$ thinks that both $S$ and $L$ mutually, publicly presume that $L$ is willing and able to work out that 2 holds.
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Relevance-based

Ann: What city does Paul live in?
Bob: Hmm . . . he lives in California.

Conversational implicature: Bob does not know which city Paul lives in.

Contextual premise: Ann and Bob are planning a trip, and both are open to visiting Paul.

Assume Bob is cooperative at least insofar as he is forthcoming about where Paul lives.

Bob supplied less information than was required, seemingly contradicting 2.

Assume Bob does not know which city Paul lives in.

Then Bob's answer is optimal given his evidence.
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Ann: What city does Paul live in?
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**Adjectival scales**

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A: Sandy's work this term was satisfactory.

Implicature: Sandy's work was not excellent (= not q)

1. Contextual premise: the speaker A intends to exhaustively answer 'What was the quality of Sandy's work this term?'

2. Contextual premise: A has complete knowledge of Sandy's work for the term (say, A assigned all the grades for the class).

Assume A is cooperative in the Gricean sense.

The proposition q that Sandy's work was excellent is more informative than p, the content of A's utterance.

q is as polite and easy to express in this context as p.

By 1 and 4, q is more relevant than p.

By 3–6, A must lack sufficient evidence to assert q.

By 2, A must lack evidence for q because q is false.
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\[ A: \text{Sandy's work this term was satisfactory.} \]

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3. Assume \( A \) is cooperative in the Gricean sense.
4. The proposition \( q \) that Sandy’s work was excellent is more informative than \( p \), the content of \( A \)’s utterance.
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