

## Semantics and Pragmatics

### Exercise time

#### 1 Exercise A

Consider the following pairs of sentences. In each case, the first implies the second. Are these implications entailments or implicatures? Support your answers by applying the defeasibility and reinforcement tests.

- Every dog barked.  
Every dog made a noise.
- Sam lived in London in the 1990s.  
Sam doesn't live in London now.

#### 2 Exercise B

For each pair of sentences, state whether the second one is an entailment (E) or an implicature (I) of the first. If there is no relation between the sentences, then say no relation (NR). Support your answer.

- Laura accidentally took a point off on Ethan's homework.  
Ethan lost at least one point on his homework.
- Trajan is a couch potato.  
Trajan is a potato.
- The pink car that he bought had an engine problem.  
The engine problem is fixed now.
- Kate always draws a smiley face on her own homework.  
All of Kate's homeworks have a smiley face drawn on them.
- Sally asked Harry a question that he couldn't answer.  
Sally asked Harry a difficult question.
- Only Amy knows the answer.  
Amy knows the answer.

#### 3 Exercise C

In the following conversations, the underlined sentence is an implicature. Your task is to identify which maxim is followed or violated/flouted for the implicature to arise. If you think the Maxim of Manner is responsible for any of them, make sure to specify which Maxim of Manner is at play.

A: Does your grandmother have a neck tattoo?

B: She has a very traditional aesthetic sensibility.

(B's grandmother doesn't have a neck tattoo.)

MAXIM:

All of the toys that my dog plays with are dirty and covered in saliva. The toys are dirty and covered in saliva as a results of the dog playing with them.

MAXIM:

I ate three eggs when I ate breakfast today. I didn't eat more than three eggs.

MAXIM:

A: Did you make a doctor's appointment?

B: The phone line was busy.

(A didn't make a doctor's appointment.)

MAXIM:

## 4 Exercise D

What is the inference in the following examples?

- I ate some of the pizza.

I did not eat all of the pizza.

IMPLICATION:

SUPPORTING TEST:

- At least five students attended the precept.

Five or more students attended the precept.

IMPLICATION:

SUPPORTING TEST:

- I did not sleep well and got into an accident on my way to work.

First, I did not sleep well; and then I got into an accident on my way to work.

IMPLICATION:

SUPPORTING TEST:

## 5 Exercise E

1. No farmer sold tomatoes.

No farmer sold produce.

2. My mom didn't shout her reply.

My mom didn't speak her reply.

3. Jonah cooked fresh veggies.

Jonah cooked dried beans.

4. More than 2 tests received above 90%  
More than 2 tests received 96%
5. Less than 4 vegans ate fast food.  
Less than 4 vegans ate KFC.
6. The respondent had a sister.  
The respondent had a sibling.

## 6 Exercise F

What is the relation between the following pairs?

1. Fifi is a poodle.  
Fifi is a dog.
2. My last name is Jones.  
My father's last name was Jones.
3. Bob inherited a car from his grandma.  
Bob owns a car.
4. Sally lives in Ohio.  
Sally lives in Europe.
5. Sally lives in Ohio.  
Sally lives in the United States.
6. Polly speaks Russian.  
Polly is from Russia.
7. Polly doesn't speak Russian.  
Polly is from Russia.
8. Bob lives in the capital of Ohio.  
Bob lives in Columbus.
9. Not all dogs bark.  
Some dogs don't bark.
10. Sally said she liked Polly.  
Sally said she didn't like Polly.
11. Polly thinks that Fido is a dog.  
Fido is a dog.

## 7 Exercise G

**I.** In eighth grade, Chris thought (mistakenly) that it would be funny to prank- call the fire department from a payphone on the wall of the school cafeteria. Based on the following dialogue, answer questions (i)–(iii).

**Fire department operator:** Where is the phone that you're calling from?

**Chris:** On the wall.

- i. In general, why would an operator at a fire department ask where a caller is calling from?
- ii. Based on the situation (the operator's goals), which maxim does Chris's answer violate?
- iii. Is Chris's answer true? Justify your answer relative to the maxim of quality.

**II.** Suppose that you ask a friend what he thought of a new movie, and he replies, "Well, the costumes were authentic." His answer does seem to be saying something positive about the movie. Nevertheless, he is guiding you to infer that he probably did not like the movie.

- i. Which maxim is he flouting in order to do this?
- ii. Why might he choose to convey his dislike by flouting that maxim instead of saying directly that he didn't like the movie?

**III.** Below is a discourse between Daniel and Amy. They are in the kitchen at their home. Following the discourse is a list of questions. None of the questions is directly answered in the discourse, but all of the answers are implicated by something that either Daniel or Amy says. Answer each question. Then tell which line of the discourse contains the implicature that answers the question and which Gricean maxim you had to appeal to in order to figure out the implicature.

**Daniel:** Would you like me to make chocolate chip cookies this afternoon?

**Amy:** Sure. That would be great! Do you have all of the ingredients?

**Daniel:** Well, I meant to go to the bank this morning, and then I was going to stop at the store on the way home, but I wasn't feeling well, so I didn't go.

**Amy:** That's too bad. What did you need to buy?

**Daniel:** Just a few things. Do you know whether we have any eggs?

**Amy:** After breakfast, there were two left.

**Daniel:** Then I guess I'll have to borrow some. Are the neighbors home?

**Amy:** (Looks out the window) I don't see their car out front.

**Daniel:** That's too bad. Maybe I should make cookies some other day.

- i. What kind of cookies is Daniel planning to make?
- ii. What kind of store had Daniel meant to go to this morning?
  - A. shoe store    B. grocery store    C. book store
- iii. What did Amy eat for breakfast this morning?

- iv. How many eggs does Amy think there are in the house?  
A. fewer than two B. exactly two C. more than two
- v. How many eggs does the cookie recipe call for?  
A. fewer than two B. exactly two C. more than two
- vi. From where does Daniel hope to get eggs now?
- vii. Are Daniel and Amy's neighbors at home?
- viii. Why does Daniel decide not to make cookies today?
- ix. Which of these activities is Daniel most likely to have wanted to do at the bank?  
A. give blood B. go fishing in the river C. withdraw cash
- x. How was Daniel feeling this morning?  
A. healthy B. a little sick C. extremely ill

## 8 Exercise H

Consider a typical use of the sentence "Some of the students passed the exam." Is the proposition that not all of the students passed the exam an entailment or an implicature of this sentence?

Suggestion: Among your evidence, use the following:

- (i) I can consistently say, "Some of the students passed the exam; in fact I think they all did."
- (ii) The negation of the sentence is generally taken to be "None of the students passed the exam."
- (iii) Make use of the (first) Gricean Maxim of Quantity.