

Semantics and Pragmatics

Exercise time

1 Exercise A

Consider the following pairs of sentences. In each case, the first implies the second. 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. 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.
- 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.

2 Exercise B

Which maxim is followed or violated/flouted for the implicature to arise in the following sentences?

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:

Jesse approaches Danny in a night club, and Danny is texting on their phone.

Jesse: 'Hey gorgeous, can I get your number?

Danny: Sorry I don't have a phone.

Jesse thinks that Danny is not interested in them and goes away.

MAXIM:

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

MAXIM:

Betsy: How was the opera?

Alex: The singer produced a series of sounds corresponding closely to an aria from Rigoletto.

Betsy understands that Alex did not enjoy the opera.

MAXIM:

3 Exercise C

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:

4 Exercise D

I. 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?

II. In the discourse below, Sophie fails to follow one of Grice's maxims. Tell which maxim she violates, and explain the violation.

Josh: What did you do yesterday?

Sophie: I went to the concert downtown. It was a lot of fun.

Josh: Who was there?

Sophie: I saw Jane, David, Susan, and Polly. Oh, and her mother was there.

Josh: Whose mother?

Sophie: What? Oh, Susan's, of course!