

**“THE CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE AND ITS MAXIMS IN OPRAH  
WINFREY TALK SHOW IN METRO TV”**

**(A Pragmatic Study)**



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## ABSTRAK

**Ary Azhari.** *The Conversational Implicature and Its Maxims in “Oprah Winfrey” Talk Show in Metro TV (A Pragmatic Study)* (Dibimbing oleh Hamzah Machmoed dan Marleiny Radjuni).

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguraikan makna ujaran-ujaran yang tersirat di setiap pembicara pada acara talk show “Oprah Winfrey” dan mengungkap dampak dari penggunaan implikatur percakapan serta maksim-maksimnya. Sesuatu yang sangat penting disini adalah memperhatikan konteks dari ujaran tersebut disampaikan, serta dengan memperhatikan latar belakang pengetahuan orang yang terlibat di dalamnya.

Metode yang digunakan dalam menganalisis data dalam skripsi ini adalah metode deskriptif, yaitu menggambarkan dan menjelaskan makna dari setiap ujaran (datum) yang disampaikan dengan memperhatikan konteksnya sebagai suatu kesatuan, bukan menganalisis suatu kalimat tertentu secara terpisah tanpa disertai latar belakang percakapan tersebut.

Dari hasil analisis yang dilakukan, diperoleh bahwa ujaran-ujaran yang disampaikan oleh penutur mempunyai makna yang lebih dari yang diucapkan. Makna ini dapat dipahami apabila penutur dan pendengar memiliki latar belakang pembicaraan dan makna konvensional dari kata yang digunakan. Dalam menyampaikan atau merespon suatu ucapan, penutur tidak selalu mengindahkan maksim-maksim percakapan, seperti yang diperkenalkan oleh Grice. Maksim percakapan seringkali sengaja dilanggar oleh penutur untuk suatu maksud yang lain, antara lain untuk mentaati prinsip-prinsip kesopanan. Disamping itu, kenyataan menunjukkan bahwa tingkat sosial seseorang di dalam masyarakat ikut mempengaruhi penutur dalam melanggar atau mentaati prinsip kerjasama dan prinsip kesopanan.

## ABSTRACT

**Ary Azhari.** *The Conversational Implicature and Its Maxims in “Oprah Winfrey” Talk Show in Metro TV (A Pragmatic Study)* (Supervised by Hamzah Machmoed and Marleiny Radjuni).

This research aimed to elaborate the implied meaning in the utterances of the speakers in Talk Show “Oprah Winfrey” and disclose the effect of using Conversational Implicature and its maxims. Something very important here was the context of the speech was delivered, and paid attention to the background knowledge of people whom involved in it.

The method which used in analyzing the data in this thesis was descriptive method, which described and explained the meaning of each utterance (datum) which is delivered for attention in context as a whole, rather than analyzed a particular sentence separately without a background conversation.

From the analysis conducted, the writer finds some utterances which is implied by the speakers and has more than one meaning in speaking. The meaning can be understood if the speakers and listeners have a background in speech and conventional meanings of words which is used. In delivering or responding to an utterance, speakers do not always neglect the conversational maxims, such it has been introduced by Grice. Conversational maxims are often deliberately violated by speakers for another purposes, namely to comply with the principles of politeness. In addition, the fact shows that the social degree in community may influence the speakers in violating or obeying the Cooperative Principles & Politeness Principles.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **1.1 CONTEXT**

English is an international language, which is used to communicate by many people in different countries. Many scientists define the meaning of language differently but generally it is stated that language as a mean of communication. Wardaugh stated that, “language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group cooperates”. In other words, the writer considers that language is an oral system of communication by conversation. Conversation means that people are talking with each other, as a form of sociability, or it can be used to indicate any activities of interactive talk, independent of its purpose. Talking about sociability, it means that we are talking about society. At the basis of all conversational activity is society. Human social life and work are what necessitate conversation in the first place and in its turn. It is shaped by human life and work.

The philosopher Grice introduced the term conversational implicature. According to Grice, Speech acts are guided and ensured by four factors, known as the cooperative principle, which Grice calls maxim. Cooperative principle is a kind of tacit agreement by speakers and listeners to cooperate in communication.

It focuses on a more micro-level, for example “If I am in conflict with you, I still may want to communicate my intentions with you, and assume you will work out the implications of my utterances”. It is at the underlying level of linguistic communication that Grice identifies this cooperation between speakers and listeners.

To know this study deeply, the writer will breakdown the theory of this research under the title “*“The Conversational Implicature and its maxim in “opera winfrey” talk show”* as Pragmatic study. In this paper, the writer discusses conversational implicature in Oprah Winfrey talk show, one of the popular talk show round the world. The objectives of the study are to identify the implicature utterances uttered by the characters (Guest, Host & Audience) in the talk show, to describe the implied meaning uttered by the characters and to describe the cooperative principles occur in the conversation of the Oprah Winfrey talk show.

In this study, the writer applies qualitative research method. The data is taken in written form and conversational implicature uttered by the characters in the Talk show Oprah Winfrey. The source of data is from the Video entitled Oprah winfrey talk show, and the supporting data is knowledge and comprehension of the writer as the researcher and theories related with this study. In method of collecting data, the writer uses “recording technique” (teknik sadap) as the basic technique, the first continuing technique is “non participant

observing technique” (teknik simak bebas libat cakap), and continued by “noting technique” (teknik catat). Meanwhile, the writer uses contextual research in analyzing data and uses the theory of conversational implicature generated by four maxims. Those are maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation and maxim of manner.

In this research, the writer tries to find conversational implicatures in The talk show Oprah Winfrey related to the breaking of the maxims. They are conversational implicatures that break maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation and maxim of manner. The purpose of this research will be focused on the analysis of utterance in Opera Winfrey talk show. In this case, the writer tries to indicate maxims that are used by each speaker. During the talk show, The characters (Guest, Host & Audience) does not adhere the maxims so they break the rules of the maxim, such as in maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation and maxim of manner.

In supporting this research, the writer finds some researches that uses Pragmatic approach in their study. They are Zeth Tallu Lembang (2005). A Study of Conversational Implicature in the Play of “Burried Child” by Sam Shepard and Zainurrahman (2002). Implicature in the English Conversation.

The last chapter will presents of the research methodology used in this study. The existence of the research methodology has a goal of guiding the

research as in order to work systematically. The research methodology covers a set of research activities conducted by researcher. From here the ways of research will be known clearly.

## **1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS / STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In this research, the writer takes some research questions in order to analyze the data, namely:

- a. What are the meanings implied in the utterances of speakers in “Opera Winfrey” talk show?
- b. What is the effect in using Implicature in the characters conversation that related to the Conversational Principles (Its maxims)?

## **1.3 RATIONALE**

This study focuses on maxims of Co-operative Principles (Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner) which is violated by the speakers in Opera Winfrey talk show. In addition, this research will enhance our understanding of

the implied meaning in the utterance of the speakers and disclose the effect in using Conversational Implicature and its maxims.

#### **1.4 PRACTICAL OF THE STUDY**

This research is hoped to increase our understanding of Conversational Implicature in Opera Winfrey talk show. This research also can be advantageous both to the reader and writer. Moreover, this research can be used as a reference to increase students' interest in learning English language, especially about Pragmatic study. The results of this research is aimed to be guidance for students who are interested in conducting further researches on Conversational Implicature.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 PREVIOUS STUDY**

In completing this research, the writer consult with some studies on Pragmatic. These previous studies are presented on the similar Approach (A Pragmatic Study). Both of them are from English Department. The first is Zeth Tallu Lembang (2005), A Study of Conversational Implicature in the Play of “Burried Child” by Sam Shepard. He analyses the aspect of conversational implicatures in the

dialogues of Sam Shepard's Play, "Buried Child". He uses conversational principles (maxim). He takes twenty samples from the population by using the random sampling technique. The second is Zainurrahman (2002), Implicature in the English Conversation. He analyses implicatures in English conversation. He takes two novels ("A view on the Bridge" and "All My Son") as his written data, and Two movies shows ("Willy Wonka and Chocolate Factory" and "Big Daddy") as his primary data. He uses descriptive method and concentrate with context such as time, place, and background of people's knowledge.

Some researchers above try to analyze about Conversational Implicatures in different data. The first writer (ZethTallu Lembang) analyze it by taking some datum in the Play (Drama) and the second writer (Zainurrahman) analyze it by taking datum in the novels and Movie. In this research, the writerwill also use different data in spoken discourse, which will from an English Talk Show, Oprah Winfrey. Besides, the writer will use an approach , namely Pragmatic Study, because this approach concern to describe how human use language to communicate and investigate the use of language in context by a speaker (The relationship between speakerand the utterance).

## **2.2 RELATED THEORIES**

### **2.2.1 Pragmatic Theory**

Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics which studies the ways in which context contributes to meaning. Pragmatics encompasses speech act theory, conversational implicature, talk in interaction and other approaches to language behavior in philosophy, sociology, and linguistics. It studies how the transmission of meaning depends not only on the linguistic knowledge (e.g. grammar, lexicon etc.) of the speaker and listener, but also on the context of the utterance, knowledge about the status of those involved, the inferred intent of the speaker, and so on. In this respect, pragmatics explains how language users are able to overcome apparent ambiguity, since meaning relies on the manner, place, time etc. of an utterance. The ability to understand another speaker's intended meaning is called pragmatic competence. An utterance describing pragmatic function is described as metapragmatic. (Joan Cuttin 2002, Pragmatics and Discourse).

### **2.2.2 Area of Interest in Pragmatics**

- The study of the speaker's meaning, not focusing on the phonetic or grammatical form of an utterance, but instead on what the speaker's intentions and beliefs are.
- The study of the meaning in context, and the influence that a given context can have on the message. It requires knowledge of the speaker's identities, and the place and time of the utterance.

- The study of implicatures, i.e. the things that are communicated even though they are not explicitly expressed.
- The study of relative distance, both social and physical, between speakers in order to understand what determines the choice of what is said and what is not said.
- The study of what is not meant, as opposed to the intended meaning, i.e. that which is unsaid and unintended, or unintentional.

### **2.2.3 Implicature Theory**

P. Grice (1913–1988) was the first to systematically study cases in which what a speaker means differs from what the sentence used by the speaker means. Consider the following dialogue:

*Alan: Are you going to Paul's party?*

*Barb: I have to work.*

If this was a typical exchange, Barb meant that she is not going to Paul's party. But the sentence she uttered does not mean that she is not going to Paul's party. Hence Barb did not say that she is not going, she implied it. Grice introduced the technical terms implicate and implicature for the case in which what the speaker meant, implied, or suggested is distinct from what the speaker

said. Thus Barb “implicated” that she is not going; that she is not going was her “implicature.” Implicating is what Searle (1975: 265–6) called an indirect speech act. Barb performed one speech act (meaning that she is not going) by performing another (meaning that she has to work).

By “saying,” Grice meant not the mere utterance of words. What Barb said is what she stated, namely, that she has to work, something she could have stated by saying different words. As Grice realized, “say” is used more or less strictly. Thus if Carl says “The largest planet is a gas giant,” we will sometimes count him as saying (and thus not implicating) that Jupiter is a gas giant. We will follow Grice in using “say” more narrowly, requiring that what a speaker says be closely related to what the sentence uttered conventionally means. So we will take Carl to have implicated that Jupiter is a gas giant by saying that the largest planet is.

Our sample implicature is said to be conversational. The implicature is not part of the conventional meaning of the sentence uttered, but depends on features of the conversational context. In our example, a key feature was the question Alan asked. Had he asked “What are you going to do today?” Barb could have implicated something completely different “I am going to work” by saying the same thing. Grice contrasted a conversational implicature with a conventional implicature, by which he meant one that is part of the meaning of the sentence used. (Geoffrey Leech 1983 *Principles of Pragmatics*).

#### 2.2.4 Gricean Theory

In addition to identifying and classifying the phenomenon of implicature, Grice developed a theory designed to explain and predict conversational implicatures. He also sought to describe how such implicatures are understood. Grice (1975: 26–30) postulated a general “Cooperative Principle,” and four “maxims” specifying how to be cooperative. It is common knowledge, he asserted, that people generally follow these rules for efficient communication.

Cooperative Principle contributes what is required by the accepted purpose of the conversation. They are:

- a. Maxim of Quality. Make your contribution true; so do not convey what you believe false or unjustified.
- b. Maxim of Quantity. Be as informative as required.
- c. Maxim of Relation. Be relevant.
- d. Maxim of Manner. Be perspicuous; so avoid obscurity and ambiguity, and strive for brevity and order.

Grice viewed these rules not as arbitrary conventions, but as instances of more general rules governing rational, cooperative behavior. For example, if a woman is helping a man build a house, she will hand him a hammer rather than a

tennis racket (relevance), more than one nail when several are needed (quantity), straight nails rather than bent ones (quality), and she will do all this quickly and efficiently (manner). (George Yule & Brown Gillian. 1983, Discourse Analysis).

Implicatures like that in the first dialogue are explained in terms of the Maxim of Relation, and are therefore called “relevance implicatures.” Barb would have infringed the Maxim of Relation, it is claimed, unless her contribution were relevant to the purpose of the conversation. If Barb is being cooperative, then she is trying to answer Alan's question. Given that working is incompatible with partying, Barb must have intended to communicate that she is not going to the party.

Grice thought that some implicatures arise by flouting the maxims. This happens when what a cooperative speaker says so patently violates the maxims that the hearer must infer that the speaker is implying something different. Irony and metaphor are thought to arise from flouting the Maxim of Quality. Thus Candy might answer Alan ironically as follows:

*Alan: Are you going to Paul's party?*

*Candy: I don't like parties.*

If Alan knows full well that Candy is a party animal, he could reason that if she meant what she said, she would be lying, thus violating the Maxim of

Quality. So she must have meant something else. If she meant that she does like parties, then she would be in conformity with the Maxim. And via the Maxim of Relation, she would have answered Alan's question. (Stephen Levinson 1983, Pragmatics).

### **2.2.5 Theoretical Difficulties**

While Grice viewed his ideas as tentative and exploratory, followers have taken the theory to be well established. Indeed, it has served as a paradigm for research in pragmatics. Gricean theory has been invoked repeatedly to defend semantic claims made in all areas of philosophy. But many problems have emerged (see Davis 1998).

A relatively minor objection is that the Calculability and Generative Assumptions do not provide a foundation for Grice's Razor. This methodological principle assumes that conversational implicatures can be derived from psycho-social principles, meaning that they can be inferred from and explained by them. The only psycho-social principles Grice formulates are the Cooperative Principle and associated Maxims. But these are not what explain conversational implicatures if the other parts of Grice's theory is correct. The Generative Assumption says that what explains conversational implicatures is the cooperative presumption, along with determinacy and mutual knowledge. The Calculability Assumption similarly says that conversational implicatures can be

inferred from these three conditions. The cooperative presumption is not the Cooperative Principle itself, however. The presumption is the belief or assumption that the speaker is observing the Cooperative Principle. The fact that a particular audience does or should presume something about a principle is not itself a general principle, and is not explained by that principle. Similarly, the fact that speakers generally contribute what the conversation requires does not tell us that a particular belief is required, and so does not explain the determinacy condition. The Generative Assumption would be falsified, in fact, if “Cooperative Principle” replaced “cooperative presumption.” For speakers contribute what the conversation requires, and thus observe the Cooperative Principle, by implicating things. (Anne Curzan & Adam Michael, *How English Works*).

The Generative Assumption states that conversational implicatures exist because of the fact that the cooperative presumption, determinacy, and mutual knowledge conditions hold. The Calculability Assumption states that a speaker's implicatures can be inferred from these conditions. A more serious objection is that the satisfaction of these three conditions seems insufficient to infer what a speaker implicates—that is, means, implies, or suggests. (Source from wikipedia).

### **2.2.6 Determinacy Problem**

Grice's determinacy condition states that S conversationally implicates p only if S has to believe p if S's utterance is to be consistent with the Cooperative Principle. Determinacy is a key premise in the working out schema. It is hard to find contexts, though, in which the determinacy condition is satisfied. There are normally many alternative ways for a speaker to be cooperative, and contribute what is required by the purpose of the conversation. Grice takes for granted, and so will we, that the conventional meanings of the words used, along with the identity of any references, are held fixed. He assumes too, although not explicitly, that the speaker means by the words what the words mean conventionally, and thus is not misspeaking or using a code.

We noted above that Griceans account for irony in terms of flouting the Maxim of Quality. Thus when the party animal Candy answered Alan in the second dialogue by saying "I don't like parties," he could reason that if she meant what she said, she would be lying, and thus violating the Maxim of Quality. So she must have meant something different. If she meant that she loves parties, then she would be in conformity with the Maxim. So that must be what she meant. This reasoning, however, takes Barb's belief that she loves parties as given, and infers what she must have meant to be cooperative. It was not the Cooperative Principle that required her to believe that she loves parties. She

would have made a perfectly suitable contribution to the conversation if she had meant and believed that she does not like parties.

In general, the determinacy requirement is unsatisfied in the case of irony and other figures of speech because the speaker could have been speaking literally, believing what was said. There is also the possibility of using another figure of speech. For example, Candy would have made a suitable contribution to the conversation with Alan if she had been engaging in understatement instead of irony, meaning and believing that she hates parties.(Paul Ten Have, *Doing conversation Analysis*).

### **2.2.7 Conflicting and Inapplicable Principles**

When the Gricean maxims conflict, there is no way to determine what is required for conformity to the Cooperative Principle. In the case of irony, for example, Manner clashes with Quality. When Candy says “I don't like parties” we cannot interpret her as meaning what she said because on that interpretation she would be violating the Maxim of Quality. But we cannot interpret Candy as meaning the opposite of what she said, because on that interpretation, she would be violating the Maxim of Manner. It is hardly perspicuous to use a sentence to mean the opposite of what the sentence means. Indeed, it is hard to see how any implicatures could be worked out on the basis of the maxims, because it would always be more perspicuous to “explicate” a proposition rather than implicate it.

We use irony and other figures, of course, in part because we have conversational goals other than the efficient communication of information. We observe not only the Cooperative Principle, but also the Principle of Style (Be stylish, so be beautiful, distinctive, entertaining, and interesting).

A clear and simple prose style “just the facts, please” can be boring, tedious and dull. We liven up our writing with figures of speech and other devices. In the process, we sacrifice perspicuity (violating Manner). We sometimes “embellish” a narration to make it more interesting (violating Quality) and delete boring or ugly details even when they are important (violating Quantity).

The Gricean maxims often clash with the Principle of Politeness (Be polite, so be tactful, generous, praising, modest, agreeable, and sympathetic), emphasized by Leech (Geoffrey Leech 1983, *Principles of Pragmatics*).

Speakers frequently withhold information that would be offensive or disappointing to the hearer, violating the Maxim of Quantity. Speakers often exaggerate in order to please or flatter, and utter “white lies” in order to spare the hearer's feelings, violating the Maxim of Quality. People pick “safe topics” (e.g., the weather) to stress agreement and communicate an interest in maintaining good relations but violating the Maxim of Relation. Euphemisms avoid mentioning the unmentionable, but in the process violate Manner and Quantity.

Given the possibility of clashes among these principles, speakers often conversationally implicate something even though they are presumed to be observing the Principles of Style or Politeness rather than the Cooperative Principle. In case the first dialogue, Alan may correctly presume that Barb is simply making an excuse, or even trying to mislead him into thinking that she is not going. Barb may realize that Alan will presume such a thing. That does not stop her from meaning that she has to work and implicating that she will not be at Paul's party.

### **2.2.8 Relevance Theory**

The most influential alternative to Grice's theory is the “Relevance” Theory developed by Sperber and Wilson.

We have proposed a definition of relevance and suggested what factors might be involved in assessments of degrees of relevance. We have also argued that all Grice's maxims can be replaced by a single principle of relevance that the speaker tries to be as relevant as possible in the circumstances which, when suitably elaborated, can handle the full range of data that Grice's maxims were designed to explain. (Wilson & Sperber 1986: 381).

Wilson & Sperber (2004: 609) illustrate by imagining a speaker whose choices are confined to the alternatives in these statements below:.

*(a) We are serving chicken.*

*(b) We are serving meat.*

We conclude that (a) would be maximally relevant. For it entails everything (b) does and more, while being as easy to process.

While Grice's maxims enjoin the speaker to communicate efficiently, they do not require maximization. Conversely, the Principle of Maximal Relevance does not imply Grice's principles. Nothing guarantees that the contribution with the greatest number of contextual effects per unit processing cost is: required by the accepted purpose of the conversation; true or justified, and thus informative; germane to the topic of the conversation (relevant in the ordinary sense); or perspicuous and brief (lengthy formulations are permitted as long as they have enough implications).

Relevance theorists have presented a wealth of valuable data, and pointed out the inability of Gricean theory to account for it adequately. Their theory, however, has similar deficiencies. The Principle of Maximal Relevance clashes with the Principle of Politeness as badly as the Cooperative Principle does. Imagine parents deciding what to say after listening to their daughter struggle through her clarinet recital. "Your performance was horrendous" seems at least as easy to process as "Your performance wasn't perfect." And the former implies more than the latter in any context. So "Your performance was horrendous"

would seem to have the greater ratio of contextual effects to processing cost in any ordinary context. But considerations of their child's feelings, among other things, will lead most parents to prefer the less efficient contribution. Nothing in the Sperber and Wilson theory, furthermore, accounts for why a speaker would say "Some athletes smoke" and implicate "Not all do" rather than vice versa. This choice is a matter of style and emphasis rather than informativeness or effort.

### **2.2.9 Speaker Implicature and Intention**

We have reviewed a number of outstanding problems for theories that seek to derive conversational implicatures from general conversational principles. What alternatives are there for explaining conversational implicatures, and describing how they are understood? That depends on whether we are concerned with speaker implicature or sentence implicature.

For a speaker to implicate something, we said at the outset, is for the speaker to mean (imply, suggest) something without saying it. It seems clear that what a speaker means is determined by the speaker's intentions. For example, When Steve utters "Kathryn is a Russian teacher," whether Steve means that Kathryn is a teacher of Russian nationality or a teacher of the Russian language,

and whether he is speaking literally or ironically, depends entirely on what Steve intends to convey. Which intentions determine speaker meaning is a matter of debate. On Grice's (1957) view, to mean that p by e is to utter e with the intention of producing the belief that p in one's audience. Thus whether Steve means that Kathryn is a teacher of Russian or a teacher from Russia depends on which belief he is trying to produce in his audience. Grice's definition seems to have many counterexamples. Speakers who issue reminders are not trying to produce belief. People talking to themselves, or answering a teacher's question, are not even trying to produce activated or occurrent belief. People talking to babies or pets do not expect their audience to recognize what they mean, and people talking to the dead know that their audience cannot think or recognize anything. People sometimes speak in a particular language despite the fact—and occasionally because of the fact—that they know their audience does not understand it. The assumption made by Grice and his followers that speaker meaning is the attempt to communicate seems fundamentally mistaken. These problems can be avoided by specifying different intentions. On my view (Davis 2003: Ch. 5), for example, to mean that p is to directly express the belief that p. To express a belief or other mental state is to do something with the intention of providing an indication that one is in that state.[19] If Steve expressed the belief that Kathy is a teacher from Russia, then he intended his utterance of the sentence “Kathy is a Russian teacher” to be an indication that he believes she is a teacher from Russia. He can

do this without trying to communicate with anyone. (Summary from book “Doing Conversation Analysis by Paul Ten Have).

### **2.2.10 Sentence Implicature and Convention**

What is it for a sentence to implicate something? For example, Why does “Some athletes smoke” implicate “Not all athletes smoke” but not “It is not the case that at least 13% of all athletes smoke?” The answer to this question seems clearly to be convention. Speakers conventionally use sentences of the form “Some S are P” to implicate “Not all S are P,” but not to implicate “Less than 13% of all S are P.” All the signs of conventionality are present. There is a regularity in usage and interpretation. English speakers commonly use sentences of the form “Some S are P” to implicate “Not all S are P,” but they rarely if ever use them to implicate “Less than 13% of all S are P.” Speakers are commonly understood accordingly. These regularities are socially useful, serving, among other things, the purpose of communication. They seem to be as self-perpetuating as other conventional practices. People use “Some S are P” to implicate “Not all S are P,” and are so understood, in part because people have regularly done so in the past. And finally, the regularities are arbitrary. Plenty of other practices could have served the same purpose quite naturally, and would have perpetuated themselves in the same way if only they had gotten started. It could have been conventional for English speakers to use “Some S are P” to implicate the denial

of any stronger sentence, such as “At least 13% of S are P” or others listed above in the athlete example. Implicature conventions are not as arbitrary as lexical conventions, though. In all known cases, there is some antecedent relation between what the sentence means and the implicature that makes it natural to use one to convey the other. But there are always alternative implicatures that would be natural too. Conventional regularities are seldom perfect. Thus even though it is conventional to use “bank” to mean “river bank,” speakers more often use it to mean something else. Thus the fact that people sometimes use “Some S are P” without the usual implicature is compatible with it being conventional.

Many important implicature conventions associate implicatures with sentences of any form. The most familiar examples are the figures of speech. It is conventional to use a sentence to mean the opposite (irony), or something stronger (litotes), or something similar (metaphor). There is also a convention whereby a sentence is used to implicate requested information by making a statement closely related to it by implication, which gives rise to relevance implicatures like the first dialogue. Since these conventions do not attach implicatures to particular sentence forms, they do not give rise to sentence implicatures. (Jacob Mey 1993, Pragmatics).

It is possible that conversational implicature conventions arose in much the same way idioms do. “Kicked the bucket” started life as a metaphor, and thus an implicature. Some speakers used it as a metaphor to implicate that someone

died. The metaphor caught on and became conventional. Although it has not to my knowledge been historically attested, it is plausible that the use of “Some S are P” (or its translation in some earlier language) to implicate “Not all S are P” similarly started life as a nonce implicature that caught on and spread. The difference is that with idioms, the metaphor “died,” and what previously was implied came to be meant directly, creating a non-compositional meaning for the expression. Consequently, idiomatic meanings have been “detached,” whereas conventional implicatures are “non-detachable.” The study of the origin of implicature conventions falls in the domain of historical linguistics.

The claim that conversational principles generate sentence implicatures is problematic, as we have seen. If they did, conversational implicature conventions would not exist because the regularities would be non-arbitrary. But conversational principles do specify common interests that conversational implicature conventions serve: communication of information, politeness, style, and efficiency. Since conventional practices sustain themselves by serving socially useful purposes, the fact that speakers strive to be cooperative, polite, stylish, and efficient sustains implicature conventions. We also noted earlier that conversational principles can serve as generalizations used in the process of inferring implicatures, and we can add that flouting a principle often serves as a signal that an implicature convention is in play. (Frank Praker 1994, *Linguistics for non Linguists*).