

THE ROLE OF CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE IN COMMUNICATING WITH ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE SPEAKERS

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Abstract: Communication occurs daily between two or more people in various ways. Dialogue is vital, and in most cases, native speakers use phrases entirely different from common expressions, which often makes it difficult to follow the conversation. In pragmatics, conversational implicatures rely on the speaker's intended meaning throughout the communication process. Different implicatures arise based on the speaker's background, including their culture, native language, accent, and the area where they were raised. This can happen when two native speakers converse, and the speaker's intended meaning differs from the receiver's understanding. This paper will introduce the concept of conversational Implicature, explore its variations between native and non-native English speakers, and discuss its implications for cross-cultural communication.

Keywords: conversational implicature, intended meaning, speaker, listener, native, non-native.

Аннотация: Общение между двумя или более людьми происходит ежедневно в различных формах. Диалог крайне важен, и в большинстве случаев носители языка используют фразы, совершенно отличные от общепринятых выражений, что часто затрудняет слежение за ходом беседы. В прагматике разговорные импликатуры основываются на предполагаемом значении говорящего во время общения. Различные импликатуры возникают в зависимости от происхождения говорящего, включая его культуру, родной язык, акцент и регион, в котором он вырос. Это может произойти, когда разговаривают два носителя языка, и предполагаемый смысл говорящего отличается от понимания получателя. В этой статье мы сначала представим концепцию разговорной импликатуры, затем исследуем ее вариации между носителями и не носителями английского языка и, наконец, обсудим ее значение для межкультурной коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: разговорная импликатура, предполагаемый смысл, говорящий, слушающий, носитель языка, не носитель языка.

Introduction: Conversational Implicature is not just problematic between native and non-native speakers. It often occurs between two native speakers due to various factors such as different cultural backgrounds and the milieu in which they were raised. One needs to understand how meaning is implied, rather than directly stated, during a conversation. This could be especially difficult when a

native speaker converses with a non-native speaker. Due to the language barrier, it is more challenging to use conversational Implicature. The word choice and tone also affect the implied meaning and could often be misinterpreted with the direct words. Word choice and context play a crucial role in conversational Implicature, and one must exercise caution when stating specific implicatures, as they vary across different cultures, emphasising the need for precision in communication.

Literature Review: Communication is a fundamental aspect of human interaction. Daily conversations and dialogues occur, and conversational Implicature can lead to potential misunderstandings, especially when a foreign speaker is involved, due to cultural differences and a lack of language and cultural awareness (Musa and Mohammed, pp. 886-893, 2022). According to Bouton (pp. 157-167, 1994), people from different cultures interpret implicatures differently, even when the contexts are similar. Furthermore, it is stated that foreign English speakers with an average level of proficiency still interpret conversational Implicature differently than native speakers, highlighting the potential for misinterpretation. Grice (pp. 41-58, 1975) developed the idea of conversational Implicature and the cooperative principle. It identifies how people understand what others are trying to imply during conversations. When coming from different cultural backgrounds, these ideas are not followed due to cultural diversity. According to Thomas (pp. 56-84, 1995), people don't always explicitly state what they mean, which can cause misunderstandings when the same rules of communication are not applied.

Alsmari (pp 66-81, 2024) states that semantic meaning is essential, but on its own, it is not sufficient to enable the receiver to understand the speaker's intended meaning. Furthermore, the listener should identify additional clues and use their background knowledge to arrive at the intended meaning of the discussion. The problem with this is that foreign English speakers do not possess the necessary skills to interpret the speaker's intended meaning, regardless of their English level. Their culture and background prevent them from analysing this effectively, but it could be developed.

On the other hand, Fernández and Barberán (pp. 199-222, 2024) argue that irony poses a significant challenge during the implicature process, as it is more culture-specific and thus could lead to substantial misunderstanding or even conflict during discourse, whether intentional or unintentional. According to Mukhtasar and Qizi (pp. 1201-1204, 2024), this context highlights a key element of conversational Implicature, which can lead to misunderstandings across cultural boundaries because the meaning is not necessarily literal. Study Smarter (n.p., 2023) supplements what is being said. Additionally, it provides a discreet way of conveying sensitive information to the listener and vice versa. Often, with foreign English speakers, this information is misinterpreted or, in some cases, not understood at all.

Kecskes (2013, pp. 45–92) states that people use what they know about their culture and attempt to apply it when trying to understand conversational implicatures. This often occurs between native and English foreign language speakers, leading to misunderstandings. Furthermore, Yamanaka (2003, pp. 107-175) reiterates that to fully understand conversational implicature, one needs to spend more time with the language and its culture. By doing this, skills would be taught and developed, allowing the person to improve their understanding of the underlying meanings.

Research Methodology: In this article, various qualitative research methods were used. Firstly, discourse analysis was employed to examine language within its social and cultural context, focusing on the interactions and conversations between native and non-native English language speakers. Secondly, Linguistic ethnography, a research method that focuses on the relationship between language and culture through observation, was used. Lastly, the multimodal analysis was used to examine the different forms of communication during conversations that incorporated gestures and visual elements, such as facial expressions. These methods helped to understand different types of interaction and the listener's understanding of the utterance. No interviews or quantitative research were conducted, as the speaker and listener were in their natural environment, unaware of the study being undertaken. Otherwise, preparations would have been made, and the results would have been obscured and skewed. The people in question and under observation were unaware of the observation. One can conclude that it was a blind qualitative method.

Analysis and Results: Certain phrases or words could be interpreted differently during conversations by different cultures, regardless of the level of English proficiency. An example of a word is the use of "fine". When native speakers use this word, it can be interpreted in the form of sarcasm, anger and annoyance. Where "fine" could have various meanings according to the context it is used in. It was a fine day, which could mean it was an excellent or perfect day. It could also replace the word okay in specific instances. However, when a conversation takes place between native and foreign language speakers, it could be misinterpreted. When a native speaker states that they will be late for any reason, the foreign language speaker would reply with "Fine". In their mind, they agree with the statement of the native speaker. Still, the native speaker would take it up in a condescending way, as if to think that their statement was upsetting the foreign language speaker. This is where understanding of cultural differences is vital. If the conversation took place over the phone, then no body language could be detected, and inferences were made. This should be avoided to prevent misunderstanding. As a foreign language speaker, the synonyms that they have learnt state the original meaning of the specific word in question. One cannot simply assume that foreign language speakers would understand the different

implicatures of words when trying to master an additional language. That comes with experience and years of practice speaking to native speakers.

Idioms can also be difficult to understand during conversations for foreign language speakers. When a foreign language speaker asks a native speaker how they have slept the previous night, the answer would be "I was lights out", "I was out like a light" in some cases, or "I slept like a baby" if they have slept well. All these examples are relatable to native speakers, but for foreign language speakers, these idioms are taken literally and often misunderstood.

On the other hand, a foreign language speaker could use the phrase "save face," and native speakers would not understand it due to a lack of cultural knowledge about the country. In this example, the foreign language speaker is not using that specific phrase literally, but the native speaker will interpret it in a literal way. This is where conversational Implicature is essential, where one does not just interpret the word but analyses and understands the true meaning of the utterance within the context in which it is spoken or communicated.

This does not just occur between native and foreign language speakers, but also between two native speakers; it all depends on the background and country of the speaker and the listener, as well as how they interpret it. In certain native countries, the literal meaning of the words "pants" and "trousers" is used interchangeably to refer to a type of garment they are wearing. In another native country, the word "trousers" is what men wear to work, and the word "pants" means underwear or undergarment. Whilst in some native countries, the word "pants" can take on a figurative meaning, such as "That's pants," which means you are talking nonsense.

As a result of these analyses, it was found that foreign language speakers tend to interpret every utterance in a literal manner when communicating with native speakers. When two native speakers speak, they interpret each other's utterances within the context of their respective cultural backgrounds.

Conclusion and Recommendations: In conclusion, regardless of one's native language, cultural background and upbringing will determine how the intended meaning and level of understanding are interpreted. Foreign language speakers tend to speak in a formal tone when speaking English; they also take the meaning more literally. Whereas native speakers use a more casual tone in speaking, using collocations and idioms to enrich their utterances.

A recommendation to avoid misunderstanding is to learn about the cultural background of the speaker's country of origin, which enables clear communication and enhances conversational Implicature. This comes with more exposure to native speakers and practice. One should respect different cultures and accept the intended meaning of the speaker. When one studies a foreign language, they learn it by the book; however, conversational English has evolved, adopting a more casual form than is presented in current textbooks. That is why exposure to people of different countries and cultures could enhance

conversational implicature and simplify the process. The only way to learn is by experience and exposure to these factors.

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