

24.251 – Intro to the Philosophy of Language

Problem Set 2: Grice on Implicature

1. I'm at a restaurant and I (truthfully) say to the server 'my fork fell to the ground', implicating that I would like my fork replaced. According to Grice, what sort of conversational implicature is most likely to have taken place?
 - (a) One in which the second maxim of quality is violated.
 - (b) One in which exploitation takes place.
 - (c) One in which it's not clear that any maxim is violated.
 - (d) None of the above.

2. A friend asks me why I dropped the class. I (truthfully) respond 'Professor X is not the most engaging of lecturers.' According to Grice, what sort of conversational implicature is most likely to have taken place?
 - (a) One in which a maxim of relation is violated.
 - (b) One in which the second maxim of quantity is violated.
 - (c) Conversational implicature didn't take place at all; this is a case of meiosis, and hence of *conventional* implicature.
 - (d) None of the above.

3. 'One should try to refrain from spitting when one speaks'. What sort of maxim would Grice take this to be?
 - (a) A maxim of manner.
 - (b) A maxim "sepcially connected with the particular purposes that talk is adapted to serve and is primarily employed to serve".
 - (c) Not, at any rate, a conversational maxim.
 - (d) None of the above.

4. Which of the following is true according to Grice?
 - (a) A conversation in which participants strongly disagree is a conversation in which the Cooperative Principle must be violated to a certain degree.
 - (b) Whenever one flouts a conversational maxim one thereby flouts the Cooperative Principle.
 - (c) Although the Cooperative Principle can sometimes be satisfied even though a conversational maxim is flouted, it can never be satisfied in cases of exploitation.

(d) None of the above.

5. Which of the following is true according to Grice?

(a) One can't speak obscurely without thereby violating the Cooperative Principle.

(b) Implicatures can sometimes be cancelled.

(c) In general, conversational implicatures take place when, though some maxim is violated at the level of what is said, the hearer is entitled to assume that the maxim, or at least the overall Cooperative Principle, is observed at the level of what is implicated.

(d) None of the above.