ETHNOMETHODOLOGY, CULTURE, AND IMPLICATURE: TOWARD AN EMPIRICAL PRAGMATICS

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1. Implicature as accounting practice

Garfinkel writes: "When I speak of accountable my interests are directed to such matters as the following. I mean observable-and-reportable, *i.e.*, available to members as situated practices of looking-and-telling" (1967: 1). The elucidation of these practices is a central objective of ethnomethodology. Certain of our practices might be called "unspecifying practices." Garfinkel (3) mentions three: "et cetera," "let it pass," and "unless." The *et cetera* move, for example, allows us to add initially unenvisioned and unspecified instances to some inventory, without being seen to have violated the rules or instructions for constituting that inventory.¹ Grice, with his notion of conversational implicature (1975), has proposed what we might call "specifying practices." This might appear to be exactly the sort of contribution that would be appreciated in ethnomethodology, and yet Grice, and conversational implicature in general, has received little attention from ethnomethodologists. Perhaps the reason for this is to be found in one of Garfinkel's dictums: "A leading policy is to refuse serious consideration to the prevailing proposal that ... rational properties of practical activities be assessed, recognized, categorized, described by using a rule or standard obtained outside actual settings within which such properties are recognized, used, produced, and talked about by settings' members" (33). It is not clear to me, though, whether this objection is properly applied to Grice's maxims.

At any rate, implicature does seem to take place, members do on occasion seem to draw certain conclusions that are not asserted or logically implied, and Grice tries to describe and explain how they do it. Perhaps we can reconcile Grice and Garfinkel by treating Grice's maxims as resources that members can call upon and use according to the situation, that is, "as a recoverable, reproducible stock of knowledge and skills available in daily, routine, mundane ways of talking and acting" (Lee 1992: 225). The Gricean maxims are precisely about "situated practices of looking-and-telling," *i.e.*, about accounting practices. Although the maxims are given in general terms, they are deeply indexical:² "Make your contribution as informative as is required" or "Be

¹ This is my own interpretation. Garfinkel does not elucidate these practices.

² In this, they resemble Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson's (1974) turn-taking rules.

relevant" cannot be applied as principles without a knowledge of the immediate situation. The study of the actual situated application of Grice's maxims appears to be included in the study of accounting practices and, therefore, an ethnomethodological concern.

This paper is, in part, an attempt to "respecify" the study of implicature as an ethnomethodological and conversation analytic undertaking. To the linguistic pragmatists, I am proposing a methodological reorientation. To the ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts, I am proposing a broadening of interests and an open-minded appreciation of what linguistic pragmatics has to offer.³ To both, I am suggesting an increased sensitivity to the subtleties of cultural context.⁴ There remains, of course, the question of whether Grice's particular proposals are useful or accurate. In what follows, I will have occasion to offer some evaluation of the Gricean approach, but I will be primarily concerned with presenting a form of nonGricean implicature. The approach that I propose grounds implicature in specific conversational procedures and cultural understandings, and produces, I believe, clearer and more constrained outcomes than Gricean procedures.

Before outlining my approach to implicature, a few further words on members' interpretive practices as resources available to be used as the situation demands or permits, as a "recoverable, reproducible stock of knowledge and skills." In conversation analysis, it has been found that members treat delays of second pair-parts in certain types of adjacency pairs as portending a "dispreferred" response. Thus, a delay in responding to an invitation portends refusal, the "dispreferred" response.⁵ If one eventually produces a "preferred" response, the delay indicates that the speaker has some sort of problem in producing that response. Now, this generalization, that delay portends a "dispreferred" response, is contingent. A delay could be seen to be due to a mechanical problem in speaking (a stammer, something caught in the throat); to waiting for some sudden background noise to die down; to an incorrect hearing of what

³ This may be a somewhat controversial undertaking. Ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts have been at some pains to distinguish their methods, interests and objectives from those of other sociological and linguistic approaches (Garfinkel and Wieder 1992; Schegloff 1984; Zimmerman and Wieder 1970; and Zimmerman 1993 are representative, but far from exhaustive, examples). Their reasons for doing this are important and valid, but this "isolationist" policy is obstructive insofar as it suggests that one field's findings are irrelevant and useless to the other.

⁴ Again, possibly controversial, at least for conversation analysts. There has recently been much discussion among conversation analysts regarding how much and what sorts of contexting ought to be included in analyses of conversational exchanges (Bilmes 1993; Mehan 1991; Moerman 1988; Schegloff 1991; Wilson 1991, among others). The discussion thusfar has focussed mainly on ethnographic rather than cultural context.

⁵ Schiffrin, in contrasting conversation analysis to Gricean theory, concludes that they are very different sorts of enterprises, both in their basic assumptions and in the phenomena that they seek to illuminate. She writes that "ethnomethodologists [by which she means conversation analysts]...avoid positing any sort of inferencing" (1987: 391). The example of preference seems to belie this assertion.

the speaker said or a failure to recognize that the speaker has relinquished the floor. But the contingent character of the meaning of delay has not resulted in analysts rejecting it as an object of investigation. Rather, delay is treated as a member's resource, as a practice which can be used or heard to produce a particular meaning under appropriate circumstances. (Whether these circumstances are fully enumerable and describable is another matter.) The same considerations apply to the type of implicature that I describe in the next section.

One type of conversational implicature that does not appear to be covered by Grice's maxims was described by Harvey Sacks (1972). In a well-known passage, Sacks discussed the question of how we know, when we hear "The baby cried. The mommy picked it up.", that the mommy is the mother of the baby. This led to an analysis in terms of his notion of categorization devices. He was dealing here with a variety of implicature. Notice, for instance, that the implication that the mommy was the mother of the baby can be cancelled: "The baby cried. The mommy picked it up, even though it was not her baby." Sacks even talked about "hearers' maxims," although he does not mention Grice or conversational implicature in his article.

It should be noted, though, that Sacks' mommy-baby example is objectionable by modern conversation analytic standards in certain of the ways that much of linguistic pragmatics is objectionable. Although Sacks' example is not invented, he is presuming, on the basis of his native interpretive competence, that it has a certain meaning, and he is focussing his analysis on a single utterance, isolated from a conversational sequence.⁶ But suppose, instead, that Sacks had offered, as an example of actually occurring conversation, something like the following:

- (1) Invented exchange
 A: The baby cried. The mommy picked it up.
 B: Was that her only child?

In this case, the understanding that the mommy was the mother of the baby would be, demonstrably, a participant understanding. The study of implicature can be grounded in interactional data. In fact, there is another type of implicature, also originally described by Sacks, which conversation analysts *have* grounded in interactional data.

Conversation analysts have noted, for example, that the absence of denial following an accusation can be taken as indicating that the accusation has been accepted as true (Atkinson and Drew 1979). It is not clear how Grice's maxims could account for this. We might invoke Grice's maxim of Quantity: "Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange." We might say

⁶ It might be noted as well that the style of some of Sacks' analysis is strikingly like that of Grice: "The second sentence ["The mommy picked it up."] is explained by the first: hearing them [the occurrences described by the sentences] as consecutive [simultaneous?] or with the second preceding the first, some further explanation is needed, and none being present, we may suppose that it is not needed." (1972: 331).

that a denial is more informative than silence, and that therefore silence implicates that the accused is admitting that he is guilty as charged. But the same argument could be made for the opposite conclusion. Silence is not as informative as an admission of guilt, so the accused must be denying guilt. It does not appear that any of Grice's other maxims would be more successful in yielding the relevant implicature. Conversation analysts say that denial is "preferred." In what follows, I will avoid the term "preference" and use instead "response priority." I have a number of reasons for this change of terminology. "Preference" in conversation analysis is used in some complex and, in my opinion, not entirely coherent ways (Bilmes 1988). I will draw on one aspect of the conversation analytic notion of preference and extend it in ways which are not currently standard in the conversation analytic literature. Furthermore, I think that the term "preference," because of its everyday meaning, might lead to some confusion about the phenomenon that I am trying to describe. In the case just described, I would say that, upon the occurrence of an accusation, denial is the first priority response.

In what follows, I will explain and illustrate the concept of response priority and show that it generates a very large class of implicatures that the Gricean maxims do not handle well and that conversation analysis has not attempted to deal with. I also claim that response priority is tighter than the Gricean system, that it does not require the sort of *ad hoc* reasoning that is frequently necessary to make the Cooperative Principle yield the desired implicatures. I will show that implicature sometimes rests on a deep knowledge of cultural practice. I will propose two types of scales which provide the basis for response priority and examine some of their properties. Finally, I will discuss the problem of indexicality as it bears on implicature and propose some guidelines for dealing with context. I will try to demonstrate, or at least argue, that implicature can be studied within an ethnomethodologically valid framework.

2. Priority response

Let us move on now to something that looks much more like the sort of implicature that Grice was trying to account for. In the film *Batman Returns*, one of the story's villains, the Penguin, causes a woman whom he has abducted to fall to her death off a high building. When his accomplice in the kidnapping complains "You said you were going to scare [her]," he replies "She looked pretty scared to me." This evoked laughter from the audience. We have here a case of implicature. What we need to account for is the fact that the accomplice protested that "You said you were going to scare her" when the victim obviously was scared; alternatively, we need to account for the fact that the audience laughed.⁷ From the exchange, as we have it, we understand that the

⁷ It is to be noted that this is, in the full sense, an empirical example, even though the exchange was invented by the writers of the movie. To begin with, the exchange was not invented as an illustrative example of implicature. More importantly, the audience reaction was spontaneous, not part of the script. In accounting for this reaction, we are analyzing "naturally occurring data." Admittedly, though, the transcription is crude, in that it does not, for instance, show the nature of the laughter ("ho ho" vs. "ha

Penguin must have said at some point something very much like "I'm going to scare her." The accomplice understood that the Penguin would frighten the woman but not kill her. "I'm going to scare her" seems to implicate "merely scare but not kill." On the other hand, "I'm going to kill her" does not implicate that he will not scare her as well. (His accomplice could hardly have complained, upon noticing that the victim was frightened by her fall, "You said you were going to kill her.")

We might try to derive this understanding from Grice's maxim of Quantity: "Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange." The expression, "for the current purposes of the exchange," is exceedingly vague; if we are to invoke the Gricean model, we must assume that, in the present case, "I'm going to kill her" is somehow more informative than "I'm going to scare her." One proposition might be that "kill" carries more information than "scare" in that it already includes "scare." However, it is possible to kill people without scaring them, so "I'm going to kill her" does not necessarily include "I'm going to scare her," and I can see no clear criterion for saying that the former is more informative than the latter.

In order to make Grice's maxim handle the implicature inherent in "I'm going to scare her," we have to exercise a good deal of interpretive charity. I would like to propose an alternate principle of interpretation. I call this principle "response priority" and have defined it as follows: If X is the first priority response, then any response other than X (including no response) implicates (when it does not explicitly assert) that X is not available or is not in effect, unless there is reason to suppose that it has been withheld.⁸ By specifying that acceptance of an invitation is first priority, we can account for the implication of refusal when acceptance is absent. Similarly, we can say that an expression of compliance with a request and a denial in response to an accusation are first priority responses. An important specification of the notion of priority response is that, when one is going to commit an act that is one of a series of acts of a certain type, the most extreme act in the series gets first priority mention. Whichever act is mentioned, it will be understood that more extreme acts in that series will not be committed. (I will discuss later how such implicature-bearing series or scales of items can be discovered by the analyst. For the moment, I would just note that I am speaking both of culturally available scales, such that any competent member would recognize which item is most extreme, which next, and so on, and of scales that are proposed on the spot for present interactional purposes. Crucially, the hearer must understand that such a scale is in use or see that such a scale is applicable.) For example, scaring and

ha" vs. "heh heh"), nor does it show the precise point where the laughter begins (was there a pause before the laughter began, or did it perhaps overlap part of "She looked pretty scared to me." The latter alternative seems more likely, since the joke becomes evident on or before the word "scared").

⁸ It will be noted that the definition of response priority also contains a hedge: "unless there is reason to suppose that it has been withheld." This is a hedge of a significantly different type, though, from Grice's "for the current purposes of the exchange." For one thing, it may be more specific in telling us where to look. More importantly, it offers a special reason for disregarding the normal implicature, or for understanding it in a special way, rather than being a condition for seeing the implicature itself.

killing are acts in a series arranged according to degree of violence. The rule is to mention at least the most violent act in the series that will actually be committed. This principle accounts for the implicature implicit in "I'm going to scare her."⁹

Response priority is more than a restatement of, or one aspect of, Grice's maxim. The difficulty with the Gricean account is that "scaring" is not necessarily less informative than "killing," since one can kill without scaring. The two descriptions give different information, and there seems to be no principled way to claim that one is more informative than the other. One has to drag in the hedge "*as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange*," and then stipulate that, for this exchange, "scare" is not informative enough, whereas "kill" is. The response priority approach enables us to avoid this *ad hoc* claim.¹⁰

As a second example of an implicature that is readily handled in terms of response priority but not in terms of Grice's maxims, consider excuses. Excuses can be ranged on a scale of strong to weak. In American culture, to refuse an invitation on the grounds that it would be inconvenient for the invitee to accept (say, he¹¹ might have to drive across town) is a relatively weak excuse. On the other hand, to refuse on the grounds that the event to which one has been invited occurs at the same time as one's brother's funeral is quite strong. Strong excuses have first priority. Therefore, if one gives weak grounds for refusing an invitation, it may be inferred that stronger grounds are not available. The reverse is not true; the fact that one has provided strong grounds does not imply that weaker grounds are absent.¹²

⁹ Geoghegan (1973) describes a communicative practice that seems to have some relationship to response priority. Certain usages (e.g., address terms) occur in sets. In any situation, one term in the set will be "unmarked" or "neutral." Use of the other terms in the set will communicate some special information about the speaker's attitude, for example, affection or anger.

¹⁰ Levinson (1983: 106) provides an example (which he treats as an illustration of Gricean implicature) that seems to have the same properties as the Batman example: "A: How did Harry fare in court the other day? B: Oh he got a fine." Levinson comments, "If it later transpires that Harry got a life sentence too, then B (if he knew this all along) would certainly be guilty of misleading A, for he has failed to provide all the information that might reasonably be required in the situation." Note, though, that, if B had said "He got a life sentence", without mentioning a fine, his answer would presumably be adequate, although not maximally informative, since a sentence does not necessarily entail a fine. The rule seems to be: mention at least the most severe penalty.

¹¹ I am following the convention that the gender of the unmarked pronoun accords with the gender of the author.

¹² Is this implicature? When Grice talks about implicature, he seems to be referring not only to what is understood but to what is intended. The Batman example is clearly within the realm of implicature, even if the maxims do not quite account for the implicature. But when one offers a weak excuse, one will ordinarily not be seen as intending to implicate that a stronger excuse is not available. Indeed, the implication may be a problem for the speaker, something which, despite his wishes, he cannot avoid. Since this implication is produced by the same mechanism as the Batman implication, I will call it implicature, although it might be useful to distinguish between implicatures which are taken

A principle similar to that which holds for excuses may hold for other types of discourse categories as well. For example, arguments can (sometimes) be ordered from weak to strong, and the strongest argument seems to have first priority. It will ordinarily be presumed that whatever argument one offers is the strongest that one has available. This implicature can, of course, be used to set up forensic snares and ambushes.

There is a distinction to be made not only between strong and weak arguments but between different argument types. Here is an example from data collected at a meeting of staff attorneys in a division of the Federal Trade Commission (see Bilmes, *in press*, for a full analysis).¹³ At issue was the content of a memorandum which was to be sent from the division to the Office of the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Protection. The Bureau, as the members of the division called it, supervised the work of the division. The memo described the charges and evidence against the XYZ loan company, and suggested what orders to the company might be issued and what penalties might be assessed.

The case had been developed and the memo written by two of the division attorneys, Judy and Mary, with the supervision of Paula, their immediate supervisor. Ben was a step up from Paula in the organizational hierarchy.

The central charge against the company is that it discriminated against women by refusing to consider alimony and child support payments in processing loan applications. There were also, however, three subsidiary charges. One of those charges, the one under discussion in our exchange, is that the company illegally asked applicants about their marital status. The memo includes the charge and an order to desist, but no penalty. There has been some discussion of the charge, whether it is provable, and whether the company's actions were in fact illegal under the circumstances. Ben has finally agreed that the charge is provable and the company's actions illegal, but he still has reservations. He suggests that they add some discussion of the legislative history of the statute. Then he continues:

(2) FTC (S--10/7)¹⁴

I. ... (3) plus it (.) y'know the other thing is y'know (1) given what the rest of the case is about assuming (1.5) y'know (1) an' an' an' given what the rest of the case is about (1) and the fact that we don't (2) u:h (1) that we don't want um: (1) penalties (1) for this if it's gonna be an issue: (.5) sorta who cares (1) y'know if it's gonna hold the whole case up (1) why wo- why would (we) ca//re

to be intended by the speaker and those which are not.

¹³ The analysis is based on my understanding of FTC culture, gained during eight months of fieldwork, on my observations of the participants and their ways of talking, and on the internal evidence of the exchange.

¹⁴ I am using a standard system of transcript notation (see Button, Drew, and Heritage 1986) with one elaboration. Rather than using empty parentheses for unintelligible (to the transcriber) speech, I have indicated the approximate duration of that speech with asterisks, one for each half second.

2. Paula: (Well) (.) I know wh- I- I'll tell you why I care.=Would you like to know Ben why I care (1.5) Becau//se
3. Ben: Why (do) you care. You're not divorced
4. Paula: hhh 'hhh/hhh ((nasal))

.
.
.
((joking sequence))

12. Ben: ((laugh)) Th(h)at's a little (low down). .hhh
13. Paula: U:h (3) for the deterrence value: (.) of having this in an order (.5) If creditors (.) don't a:sk (1) and don't have the information (1) then they can't (.) intentionally discriminate on the basis of marital status .hh If they have the information (1) then we have to con- then- we are put to: (.) a much greater burden: as an enforcement agency (.) in determining whether or not they've used it illegally.=
14. Ben: =(It will happen) if the deterrence: (.) if you: charged them ten thousand dollars for each time we were able to (.) and no deterrence if it's issued in (a consent order) (1) Nothing. (1)
15. Mary: So why don't we charge 'em. (1) I don't have any prob//lem with (not charging)
16. Ben ((to Paula)): You know that. I mean it's just another piece of paper (4.5)
17. Paula: I have to believe that my work is meaningful // because (*)
18. Ben: No I- I- I- I just- I just- I just don't think (1) me:rely having it in as a provision in a consent order (.) has any impact beyond the company.=I think that this will have an impact on the company (.) and that might be a reason to put it in (.) because (1) a- as we suspect that this is a pretty (.5) y'know wi:despread problem I mean (.) y'know (.) y- you're dealing with XYZ (1) and it's a pretty big company. I mean that might make it worth putting it in
19. Judy: Well if it's not p- worth putting in without penalties then I'ds- I would- say: let's: get penalties f(h)or it particularly if // the feeling generally is that (.) (penalties aren't) high enough.
20. ?: Well-
21. Ben: I mean- (1) and the- and the- the problem is that that (.5) that (.5) the benefit to the creditor here:: (1.5) well (1) (won't) talk about the benefit to the creditor (now) but (1) the injury (.) to the consumer here is slight (.) but the difficulty of detection as we've already found ou:t (1) is very very very difficult (.) and that that (1) that merits (.) at least a (.) nominal civil penalty (1) y'know ten thousand dollar//s

I would suggest that, in the context of a logic-oriented argument, such as the one which is taking place in our excerpt, and particularly in this institutional setting, a logical refutation of one's opponent's point, or logical support of one's own, is the first

priority response.¹⁵ Somewhat more precisely: In at least some social-cultural situations, when one has been contradicted with an apparently powerful argument, logical counterargument is first priority.¹⁶ (Of course, it is not always clear whether an utterance constitutes a logical counterargument, but in the case at hand there is, I think, no such problem.) What Paula does instead in #17 is to cite her psychological needs as a reason for not accepting Ben's argument. She does not offer any logical reason for finding his stance wrong or her own right. By not giving a first priority response, she leaves herself open to the inference that she has no such response available, that she has, as a matter of logic, lost the argument. This interpretation is reinforced by the fact that she has waited so long to respond, suggesting that she has had trouble finding an adequate answer. (That is, I take it that her long silence would be so understood by the participants themselves.)

What we have in this exchange is in fact nested response priorities. When one is contradicted, the first priority response is some form of disagreement. To fail to resist or disagree may produce the impression that one has acceded to the other's argument. But given that one produces an oppositional response, and in so doing shows that one has not accepted the other's argument, the nature of that response may be examined to determine whether it constitutes a logical counter, which is first priority, or merely expresses a reluctance, on some nonlogical grounds, to accept the other's point. Paula has not accepted Ben's argument, but she has allowed the inference that she cannot find logical grounds to oppose it.

We can, to some extent, ground these claims regarding priority ordering in the discussion itself. It is clear from Ben's response that #17 has not been ineffective. Indeed, if we knew only what preceded #17, and Ben's response to it, without knowing the content of #17 itself, we might suppose that Paula had made a strong logical point. Therefore, Ben's response does not in itself appear to support my analysis of #17. It is in Judy's #19--"Well if it's not p- worth putting in without penalties then I'ds- I would- say let's get penalties f(h) or it particularly if // the feeling generally is that (.) (penalties aren't) high enough."--that the analysis is supported. Judy ignores Ben's concession entirely. That is, whereas he, in #18, discovers a reason for including the charge (without penalties), she takes it as more or less settled that Ben's previous argument has been correct, that the charge is "not worth putting in without penalties." (I do not have space here for a formal explanation of why, even though she begins with

¹⁵ An observation on the power of such "language games": I overheard a discussion in which academic A made an analytical point. Academic B offered a contrasting analysis. When A began to defend his point, B said, "I'm not going to argue with you." A replied, "You have to argue," and B did. It is A's reply that is of interest here, in that it indicates that they were playing a language game with known rules.

¹⁶ In specifying "an apparently powerful argument," I mean to deal with the possibility that an argument may be so obviously silly or trivial as to not merit a response or to merit nothing more than summary rejection. Of course, before responding (or not responding) in such a manner, one needs to be fairly certain that others present also do not take the argument seriously. Although Paula does not present a logical counterargument, she is clearly not rejecting Ben's point as beneath discussion.

"if," she is in fact accepting Ben's argument, but see Bilmes, in press.) She goes on to suggest adding penalties, even though Ben has already seemingly acquiesced to including the charge without penalties. Apparently, she has concluded that the argument is closed, that Paula has no way of refuting Ben's point. If Paula had had such a refutation at hand, she would have used it. By not using the first priority response, Paula allows the inference that she has no such response available. It is to be noted that Judy had not held this position from the beginning. Judy was one of the team that wrote the memo, and had never before suggested that this charge should have a penalty attached to it.¹⁷

Let us consider one further case, an example used by Grice, where both the maxim of Quantity and the notion of response priority seem to do the job:

A is writing a testimonial about a pupil who is a candidate for a philosophy job, and his letter reads as follows: 'Dear Sir, Mr. X's command of English is excellent, and his attendance at tutorials has been regular. Yours, etc.' (Gloss: A cannot be opting out, since if he wished to be uncooperative, why write at all? He cannot be unable, through ignorance, to say more, since the man is his pupil; moreover, he knows that more information than this is wanted. He must, therefore, be wishing to impart information that he is reluctant to write down. This supposition is tenable only on the assumption that he thinks Mr. X is no good at philosophy. This, then, is what he is implicating). (1975: 52)

Note that this analysis rests on an imputation of conventional motivation--we are reluctant to write bad things about other people. Grice's analysis of this case seems convincing to me, but rather *ad hoc*. I would suggest an approach that makes explicit what is implicit in Grice's analysis. In writing letters of reference, certain matters may be "programatically relevant." That is, if these matters are not mentioned, it will be noticeable, and the reader will make inferences. ("Programatic relevance" is similar to "conditional relevance" in conversation analysis [Schegloff 1968]. The difference is that programatic relevance is determined by the setting, the general context - in this case, a letter of reference - rather than by the occurrence of a specific prior action.) In a letter of reference for an applicant in philosophy, some mention of the applicant's capability as a philosopher is programatically relevant. If the referee has no knowledge of the applicant's ability as a philosopher, that fact should be explicitly mentioned, so as to avoid other possible implications. But what, specifically, would those implications be?

It seems to me that there is a general priority in letters of reference for mentioning the favorable over the unfavorable. These are binary alternatives, like

¹⁷ It has been suggested to me that Judy, in #19, is merely mediating the disagreement by suggesting a compromise. Paula would get something - the charge would be included in the case - and Ben would get something - penalties would be attached to the charge. It might be noted, though, that Ben has not actually suggested that penalties be added, and, judging from his #18, this is not what he was aiming at. More importantly, if Judy were merely offering a compromise, she could have done so without conceding Ben's point. She might have said something on the order of "How about if we include the charge but attach penalties to it?", which is similar to what Mary said in #15. There was no need for her to concede that the charge is not worth putting in without penalties.

acceptance/refusal, and absence of the (relevant) first priority response implicates the presence of the unfavorable alternative. If the referee does not mention that the applicant is a good philosopher, the implication is that the applicant is not a good philosopher. However, a more articulated system of response priorities is nested within this binary system. The rule is to make the most positive possible evaluation. To say that an applicant is a good philosopher is to suggest that he is not really excellent, and to say that he is excellent suggests that he is not absolutely the best student the referee has ever encountered. In general, then, the most positive (relevant) characteristics of the applicant get first priority mention, and failure to mention that the applicant is good at philosophy when one is writing a reference for a job as a philosopher leads to the conclusion that the writer cannot make such a claim (unless one has reason to think that the writer is withholding such information; say, because he does not like the applicant personally). Grice's formulation may seem to have the virtue of being more general, but the generality is more apparent than real. Grice's analysis rests on a base of cultural specifics (e.g., what instructors normally know about their pupils, what information is normally required in letters of reference, what people are conventionally motivated to do or not do).

The nested priority system that I have just described has some generality. We have seen it in the letter-of-reference example and in the FTC example. One further case: if one's behavior is criticized (assuming there is no controversy about the badness of the behavior or who committed it), one may, first of all, offer an excuse or not. If no excuse is offered, it is inferred that none is available. However, as I mentioned earlier, excuses are scaled from weak to strong, so that offering a weak excuse implicates that a strong one is not available. There is a first cut between excuse/no excuse, with silence implicative of no excuse, but the universe of excuses has its own priority ordering.

3. Implicature and response

In this section, I want to further develop the notion of an interactionally based, or at least interactionally sensitive, pragmatics. In some of my examples thusfar, I have emphasized the importance of subsequent utterances (responses) in revealing the presence of implicature in a prior utterance. The audience response in the Batman example supports the interpretation of what preceded as involving some sort of implicature. Judy's response in the FTC example supports the claim that Paula has revealed herself to be lacking a refutation of Ben's argument. The general notion underlying this style of analysis is that an interactant's response reveals his understanding of the prior utterance. This insight is one of the methodological foundations of conversation analysis. It is largely, though not entirely, this interactional orientation that distinguishes conversation analysis from discourse analysis as it is usually practised. There is, however, another perspective on the relationship between utterance and response that may, in some cases, be especially revealing. Instead of asking how the response offers an understanding of the prior utterance, we may ask

how the utterance provides a warrant for the response. This is a variety of the "why that now?" problem (Bilmes 1985). Why is it competent and appropriate for the speaker to say this particular thing at this particular moment? The utterance-as-warrant perspective is complementary to the response-as-understanding perspective. That is, if the response offers an interpretation of the prior utterance, then, of necessity, the prior stands as a (claimed) warrant for the response. Let us, then, examine an exchange which lends itself particularly well to analysis in terms of implicature as warrant.

During the Quayle-Gore-Stockdale vice-presidential debate of 1992, there was a moderator-initiated discussion of abortion. Each candidate was given time to make a short initial statement, Gore first, then Quayle, and finally Stockdale. Stockdale having finished his statement, the moderator says:

(3) 1992 VP Debate

Moderator: ...Let's go ahead with the discussion. Senator Gore?

Gore: Well you notice uh in his response that Dan did not say uh I ((that is, Quayle)) support the right of a woman to choose....

The problem before us is to ascertain Gore's warrant for saying "Dan did not say 'I support the right of a woman to choose'." Here is what Quayle said in the statement on which Gore is commenting:

(4) 1992 VP Debate

Quayle: Yeah. This issue is an issue that divides Americans (*) deeply. I happen to be prolife, I have been prolife ((applause)) (*) my sixteen years in public life. My objective and the president's objective is to try to reduce abortions in this country. We have one point six million abortions. We have more abortions in Washington dee cee ((D.C.)) than we do live births. Why shouldn't we have more reflection upon the issue before abortion the decision of abortion is made. I would hope that we would agree upon that, something like a twenty four hour waiting period, parental notification. I was in Los Angeles recently and I talked to a woman who told me that she had an abortion when she was seventeen years of age. And looking back on that she said it was a mistake. She shed she said I wished at that time when I was going through that difficult time that I had counselling to talk about the post abortion trauma and talk about adoption rather than abortion, cause if I had had that discussion I would have had the child. Let's not forget that every abortion stops a beating heart. I think we have far too many abortions in this country in this country of ours.

The first observation to be made is that Gore is correct. Under a narrow interpretation, it is true that Quayle did not say those words. Still, Gore's statement would be unwarranted if Quayle had said something with a more or less equivalent meaning, such as, "I believe that women should be allowed to have abortions, if that is what they choose." But, in fact, Quayle does not say anything with that meaning. Is that sufficient warrant for Gore's observation? Clearly not. There are always an infinite

number of things that are not present or not happening. The fact that something is "merely absent" is not notable or mentionable simply because it is a fact. It would, for example, have been exceedingly strange for Gore to have said "You'll notice that Dan did not say that *War and Peace* is the greatest Russian novel." Something more than factuality is needed for a mere absence to constitute a silence (Bilmes 1994).

Quayle is speaking about his position on the issue of abortion. In this circumstance, and given the nature of the abortion debate in America, one might listen to hear whether he says that he supports the right of a woman to choose. His not saying that might constitute a notable absence, and thus a warrant for Gore's observation. But, in such a case, we might expect a phrasing such as "you notice in his response that Dan did not say whether he supports the right of a woman to choose." There would be no reason to suppose that he would use particular words or to listen specifically for those words. It is in the talk immediately preceding Quayle's turn that we can find the warrant for Gore's observation in the form that he made it. Looking at that talk, we find that Gore has explicitly challenged Quayle to say that he supports the right of a woman to choose:

(5) 1992 VP Debate

Gore: But Dan, you can clear this up very simply by repeating after me, I support the right of a woman to choose. Can you say that?

Moderator: Vice President Quayle, your turn.

Quayle: Yeah. This issue is an issue that divides Americans (*) deeply. ((etc.))

Gore thus explicitly provides for the relevance of Quayle's saying "I support the right of a woman to choose." That is, in challenging Quayle to say X, Gore makes it relevant to examine Quayle's utterance to see if in fact he says X (or something like X). It may seem from these facts that we have fully provided a warrant for Gore's remark that Quayle did not say that he supports the right of a woman to choose. However, there are further considerations. Suppose that Quayle, in response to Gore's challenge had said "I do not support a woman's right to choose" or words to that effect. Surely, then, it would not have been in order - it would have been otiose and obtuse - for Gore to point out that Quayle did not say that he supports a woman's right to choose. Indeed, I suppose that Gore's remark would have been similarly out of order if Quayle had simply said that he was prolife, since it is generally understood in the context of the American discussion of abortion that "prolife" means favoring the legal abolition of abortion under at least most circumstances.

Now, of course, Quayle *does* say that he is prolife. It will be noted that Quayle's statement that he is prolife is greeted by applause. In general, candidates in this debate received applause (presumably, from those who agreed with them) when they made straightforward, unequivocal statements of position on matters of controversy. This suggests that Quayle's statement of his prolife stance is heard as a clear statement of his position. If Gore's comment is warranted, as I think it is, it must be because of some further complexity in Quayle's statement. Having said that he is prolife, Quayle proceeds to implicate that what he means by the term may be a good deal less

"extreme" than what is usually meant. He says "My objective and the president's objective is to try to reduce abortions in this country." Here we have a straightforward case of scalar implicature, based on the Gricean maxim of quantity. If his objective is to outlaw all, or all but a few, abortions, then this information is sufficient for the current purposes of the exchange, and anything less is not sufficient. Of course, if he wanted to eliminate abortions, it would be true to say that he wanted to reduce the number of abortions, but to say "My objective is to reduce abortions" is to implicate "My objective is not to eliminate abortions." Quayle, in this regard, takes the same position as Gore, who has already said "we believe there are way too many abortions in this country."

Under a response priority approach, we would point out that "reduce the number of abortions" is an item from a salient scale that includes, as its most advanced item, "eliminate abortions." Since Quayle does not say "eliminate abortions," which has first priority mention, it is implicated that that is not his objective.

This implication is bolstered later in the same utterance: "Why shouldn't we have more reflection upon the issue before abortion the decision of abortion is made. I would hope that we would agree upon that, something like a twenty four hour waiting period, parental notification." Once again, the implication is that he favors reflection, a waiting period, and parental notification, *in contrast to* the more extreme measure of making abortion illegal. The notion of first priority response handles this implication. The most extreme item, outlaw abortion, gets priority mention. Since he did not mention this item, it is not part of his position.¹⁸ The Gricean maxim of quantity does not handle this implicature, because "outlaw abortion" is not necessarily more informative than, say, "require a 24 hour waiting period." This is so because the more extreme item does not entail the less extreme. An anti-abortionist might well oppose half measures on the ground that they disguise the evil and thus make meaningful reform less likely. "Outlaw abortion" and "require a 24 hour waiting period" simply give different kinds of information.

Quayle begins his statement by proclaiming himself prolife and thus suggesting that he is in favor of outlawing abortion, a politically unpopular opinion but one that is crucial to a large segment of his constituency. He proceeds, though, to make statements that suggest that he is not in favor of outlawing abortion. The effect is to leave his position fuzzy. This fuzziness is an essential element in warranting Gore's observation that Quayle did not say that he supports a woman's right to choose.

It should be noted that we can easily reverse perspectives, treating Gore's response as evidencing an understanding of Quayle's statement. Gore's observation,

¹⁸ It might be argued that there is actually an entailment here. If you favor a twenty-four hour waiting period or parental notification, then it is implied that you would allow abortions. But it is possible that you would favor the milder measures as, say, a first step, hoping eventually to do away with abortions altogether, or favor the milder measures because you recognize that the stronger cannot be attained. So, "I favor a waiting period and parental notification" does not entail "I do not favor outlawing abortions." Indeed, many of the people who want to outlaw abortion do favor such half measures when they are proposed.

that is, helps to empirically ground the analysis. If I am correct in suggesting that Gore's remark would have been unwarranted if Quayle had taken a clear position on the right-to-choose issue, then the fact that Gore makes his remark, and presumably feels that it is warranted, suggests that he, too, found Quayle's position fuzzy.

Finally, in analyzing Quayle's utterance, we have given some technical specification to a tactic that politicians use when they are forced to speak to delicate issues, a tactic that allows them to answer questions while avoiding an undesirable degree of specificity as to where they stand.

4. Culture and implicature

Although some types of implicature may apply in more than one culture, if not universally, the following example shows that implicature may involve uniquely cultural understandings, and, therefore, that the study of implicature-in-use involves the study of culture. (Some readers may find this example offensive, for which I apologize in advance.) When I was around 17 years of age, one of my friends, Dave, went out on a date with a divorced woman. For teenagers in America in those sexually repressed times, a date with a divorced, and therefore experienced, woman was an event of some interest. The day after the date, Dave was asked by another friend, in my presence, "What did you get?", meaning what did you do in terms of sexual activity. Dave said that he had kissed her. Afterwards, when Dave had gone, he was subjected to some ridicule on the basis that he had achieved so little.

The point to notice here is that, in saying that he had kissed her, Dave allowed the inference that there were a number of other sexual activities that he had not engaged in, although there was no logical implication to that effect. In fact, the inferences that could be drawn were quite detailed. Given an extensive list of common sexual practices in America, one could say about each whether or not this was one that Dave had done on his date. The inferential richness of "I kissed her" is based on a knowledge of the order in which sexual practices occur in American teenage courting. Birdwhistell (1970: 199) claims that there are 24 phases, culminating in sexual intercourse. The implicature was based on the fact that we presumed that Dave was telling us the most advanced phase that he had reached in the sequence.

Since the mention of any particular phase suggests that earlier phases had actually occurred, we can use a Gricean account of the implicature - "this far and no further" - in terms of the maxim of Quantity. We can also account for it in terms of response priority, by specifying that any particular phase has priority mention over the phases that precede it in the cultural ordering.¹⁹ Since we had no reason to suppose

¹⁹ I do not think that the implicature is based on the temporal ordering of phases but on the notion that the later phases are more intensely sexual, more advanced, than the earlier ones. My hypothesis here is that time scales do not yield implicature in the way that intensity scales do. Thus, if you go to a restaurant and I later ask you what you had for dinner, you may reply that you had the lobster. This does not implicate that you stopped with the entree and did not have dessert.

that Dave was withholding from us the information that he had actually reached a more advanced stage than kissing, we assumed instead that he had not.²⁰

It is not crucial to decide which account, one based on the maxim of Quantity or one based on response priority, is to be preferred in dealing with this particular case. The point to be noted is that knowing the inferential mechanism involved is not sufficient in explaining the inferences drawn. Nor will it suffice to add plausible speculations about the way people think or about what motivates them. We must also have a detailed knowledge of the cultural ordering of sexual practices. Note also that the particular ordering involved is not at all universal. There are certainly cultures where kissing would be done only at a much more advanced stage of the sequence, if indeed it were not considered too disgusting to do at all. In carrying forward an investigation of priority response as a form of implicature, we will need to search the culture for various kinds of orderings and series.²¹

5. Two types of scales

I would now like to posit two types of ordering that can be a basis for implicature. The typology is based on conceptual considerations. The particular scales included under each type may vary by language and culture, but I speculate that the types themselves will be observable across cultures. But this awaits empirical inquiry.

Examples of Type I: think/know; like/love; possible/certain; some/all; American teenage courting; B.A./M.A./Ph.D; acquaintance/friend, lieutenant/captain/major*.

Examples of Type II: weak excuse/strong excuse; scare/injure/kill; single/double/triple/home run; in love/married; minor assistance/major assistance; less shocking/more shocking; minor crime/major crime; marijuana/heroin; traveled short distance/travelled long distance; temple boy/novice/monk (in Thai Buddhism)*.

*tense dependent, as explained in footnote 24.

Type I cases provide for two-way understandings. To say "I like you" implicates "but I do not love you." On the other hand, "I love you" makes "I like you" true more or less by definition. To say "I kissed her" leads not only to the inference that the speaker did not have sexual intercourse with her but also to the inference that at some point he held her hand. That is, he did all the things earlier in the conventional sequence but

²⁰ We did not necessarily assume that he was being truthful - he might not even have gotten as far as kissing. What was apparent is that he had gotten no farther.

²¹ The study of response priority speaks to cultural modeling theory. On the one hand, cultural organization of concepts and activities are the basis for certain forms of implicature. It is also the case, though, that the study of implicature, as revealed in actual speech exchanges, can lead to the discovery of cultural orderings. The methodology of the cultural theorist is thereby augmented with a naturalistic technique, one that may perhaps be extended to other kinds of implicature and other kinds of modelling.

none of the more advanced things. The implicature in type I cases may become entailment under negation. "I think" implicates "I don't know"; "I don't think" entails "I don't know."²² "We are not acquainted" entails "We are not friends." In the case of teenage courting, where the ordering is purely cultural rather than semantic,²³ the implicature is stable under negation. Both "I kissed her" and "I didn't kiss her" implicate "We didn't have sexual intercourse."

Type II cases, on the other hand, allow only one-way inferences. To say that you got a triple when asked how you did, implicates that you did not get a home run. It does not necessarily suggest that you got (or did not get) a single. To say merely that they are in love suggests that they are not married, but the fact that they are married does not necessarily entail or implicate that they are in love. To give a weak excuse implicates that one does not have a stronger one available, but giving a strong excuse does not implicate that a weaker excuse is (or is not) available. To say, in Thailand, "He has been a novice" implicates that he was never a monk, but does not suggest that he had (or had not) been a temple boy. Although the three statuses are ordered, one does not have to pass through one in order to get to the next.²⁴ In general, type II cases seem to lose their implicatures under negation. "I didn't get a double" does not say anything about whether one got a home run; "I was never a novice" leaves open the possibility that one may have been a monk; "They are not in love" does not necessarily implicate that they are not married (or that they are).

The implicatures yielded by both types of orderings are handled with a response priority approach; Grice's maxims account only for type I. I am not offering response priority as a thoroughgoing substitute for the maxim of Quantity; that is, I am not asserting that response priority will account for all the cases (and more) that are handled by Grice's maxim of Quantity (even if we leave out of consideration the second part of the maxim that specifies that one should not give more information than is

²² It may be objected that one can say "I don't think it is raining, I know it." In this case, stress is used to put the words of cognition into verbal quotation marks, indicating that they are used in a special sense. "Think" is to be heard as "merely think, think but not know." The implicature of "think" is incorporated into the semantic sense of the word.

²³ By "purely cultural rather than semantic," I mean that the ordering cannot be discovered merely by examining the semantic content of the expressions. The ordering, instead, is based in cultural practice and in cultural understandings as to which practices are more intensely sexual. To put it another way, any particular practice on the list does not logically or semantically include or preclude any other practice on the list.

²⁴ Tense (or, more generally, relative time, however marked) and aspect can determine whether a particular ordering gives rise to implicature. "He is a novice" does not have the implication of "He was a novice." In the former case, one is, by definition, not a monk or temple boy, since these statuses are mutually exclusive with novice. The latter case yields implicature because it is possible to be a novice first and then a monk. A similar example for type I orderings is lieutenant/captain/major.

required - Grice himself has doubts about this stipulation).²⁵ It seems that the set of cases explained by the notion of response priority is not identical to the set explained by the maxim of Quantity, nor is it a subset of the cases explained by that maxim or by all the maxims combined. The two sets overlap.

As far as type I orderings are concerned, one has a choice of the maxim of Quantity or response priority. If one were primarily interested in psychology and reasoning, perhaps Quantity (or relevance theory) would seem the best choice. Response priority seems to point us more directly at cultural concerns. In the case of type II orderings, however, the response priority approach seems to me to be applicable in a more straightforward and less awkward way than the maxim of Quantity.

6. The contingency of implicature

There is a weakness of the response priority approach that I mentioned at the beginning of this paper. I will illustrate with the case of academic degrees. There is a cultural ordering - B.A./M.A./Ph.D. - such that mention of possessing a certain degree in this series will implicate that one does not have a higher degree in the series (I am presuming, in including this scale in type I, that each degree is prerequisite to the next higher one). Now this is a particularly weak case, in that the exceptions are numerous, varied, and obvious. If the topic is Yale, for example, and one says "I have a B.A. from Yale," this may not implicate that one does not have a higher degree from some other school. Or, if the topic is chemistry, and one says "I have a B.A. in chemistry," this does not necessarily implicate that one does not have a higher degree in some other subject. There is normally an implication, though, in the first case that a B.A. is the highest degree that one has from Yale, and in the second that a B.A. is the highest degree that one has in chemistry. In each case, the implicature is merely restricted, not eliminated.²⁶ Still, these examples are troublesome. I made the point earlier that, to justify the positing of procedures yielding implicature, we do not have to suppose that the implicature will occur in every setting where the procedure might be applied. It seems to me that all we need to do is to show that a certain type of inference is commonly, or even occasionally, drawn. If I find that "I think" commonly implicates "I am not certain," I am justified in searching for a procedure that might produce such an implication, even though I can find or imagine circumstance in which "I think" does *not* implicate "I am not certain." Perhaps, with this change of attitude, we have "respecified"

²⁵ Response priority does not seem to handle well a case such as the following: In one of the *Pink Panther* movies, Inspector Cleuzot walks into a shop and sees a dog. He asks the shopkeeper "Does your dog bite?" The shopkeeper says no, and Cleuzot approaches the dog, which proceeds to bite him. When he protests, "I thought you said your dog doesn't bite," the shopkeeper informs him, "That is not my dog." Given that the shopkeeper knew to which dog Cleuzot was referring, he offered insufficient information, so the Quantity maxim seems to handle the implicature on which the joke is based.

²⁶ There may be contexts in which even these more limited implicatures are cancelled.

implicature as an accounting practice and a proper object of ethnomethodological study.

As long as we leave it at this - that response priority is a resource that members have at their disposal and use as they see fit - perhaps we may claim to be studying accounting practices in an ethnomethodological spirit. It may be worthwhile, though, to go a step farther. I feel certain that we will be able to specify to a large degree guidelines for when these procedures will be used and when they will be suspended. It appears, for example, that topical focus is crucial in the circumscription or cancellation of implicature. As Horn (1984: 13) writes of implicature based on his "Q Principle" (roughly, Make your contribution sufficient, say as much as you can [without saying more than necessary]), it can be cancelled "implicitly (by establishing the appropriate context, in which all that is relevant, or can be known, is the lower bound)." In general, the implicatures that I have discussed come about because mention of an item invokes a scale of some sort. So, if one says, "Last week, I went to New York (from Iowa)," the reply might be "Big deal. I went to Europe." Traveling seems to invoke a scale of distance or exoticness, so "I went to New York" implicates that I went no farther than that. However, contextual factors, such as topical focus, may prevent mention of an item from invoking a scale that is normally associated with it, as in my examples concerning educational degrees.

There are other sorts of scales that seemingly are not "automatically" invoked by mention of a constituent item. Examples might be expense or riskiness/adventurousness. To say "I've tried parasailing" may implicate that I have never been skydiving, but perhaps only when risk or adventure is the topic. And scales may be compactly invoked by grammatical constructions, for example, the "let alone" construction (Fillmore, Kay, and O'Conner 1988).²⁷ "He won't eat shrimp, let alone squid" invokes a (culturally specific) scale of exoticness. Another such construction is "If not ..., at least" Such constructions provide settings for the discovery of culturally plausible scales. However, many of these scales must be made locally salient before they will provide for implicature, and some do not seem to yield implicature at all.

I believe, in fact, that there is not a simple dichotomy between scale-invoking items (i.e., items that, when mentioned, make a particular scale salient) and items that yield implicature only when the relevant scale is already topical. It seems more reasonable to suppose that these two types of items mark the extremes on a continuum and that items invoke scales to a greater or lesser extent. One major aspect of the study of response priority, or of any other kind of implicature, is to determine the nature of the contexts in which implicature is produced, and to determine how those contexts are created.

Just as topicality may affect implicature, so may prior knowledge. If some item of knowledge, *k*, is mutually known between speaker and hearer (i.e., speaker knows

²⁷ "The interpretation of any *let alone* sentence requires seeing the two derived propositions as points on a scale" (Fillmore, Kay, and O'Conner 1988: 523). Note that all the type I and type II scales that I have proposed can be used with "let alone" constructions, e.g., "He never tried marijuana, let alone heroin."

it, hearer knows it, speaker knows that hearer knows it, etc.), then any implication of not-*k* that an utterance might otherwise have is cancelled. We will not reach the point where we can state for all (or any) items exactly when and what implicature will occur - if we try to account for all cases, we will end up invoking Garfinkel's "unspecifying practices." We can approach even such an unethnomethodological task as laying down rules or guidelines with ethnomethodological humility. We may hope, though, to be able to identify, as members themselves do, some parameters for what is possible or expectable. Ultimately, we are describing members' competence in "hearing" implicatures.

In fact, the task of accounting for when and where implicatures are actually produced, or, rather, accounting for their production in particular settings, leads us into a deeply ethnomethodological undertaking. Any principle of implicature can only be a partial explanation of an actual instance of implicature taken. Shared knowledge of various sorts, prosody, tone of voice and other paralinguistic features, embodied performance, including facial expression, and other "contextual" matters, such as culturally defined occasion, may enable or obstruct the operation of an implicature-producing principle. An ethnomethodological treatment of implicature will require us to look at instances of actually achieved implicature and to study them as complex assemblages of situated practices.²⁸

7. Conclusion

Successful implicature (of the sort under discussion) depends on both speaker and hearer recognizing that a certain scale has been invoked. It is possible, I suppose, for such a scale to be both produced and invoked *in situ*. If that were the case, it would be observable in the interaction. It is also possible, in principle, for such a scale to be based in the common experiences of the interactants. The primary interest here, however, has been in culturally available scales. How are these to be discovered? One source may be the intuitions of the linguistically and socially competent analyst or of natives that he interviews. Another source is actual linguistic constructions. Lists, for example, such as "X, Y, and even Z", suggest possible implicature-bearing scales. So do such constructions as those using "let alone" and "if not...at least...". And, of course, actual cases of implicature taken may present us not only with problems to be solved but with clues to possible solutions. Ultimately, it is the validation rather than the source of our hypotheses that is crucial. Ideally, for instance, we would want to validate the violence scale proposed to explain the Batman example by producing several more examples that work on the same principle. In practice, it may sometimes be necessary to leave it to the linguistically competent reader to recognize that the scale is valid. The reader, that is, recognizes that the scale, and the implicatures derived therefrom,

²⁸ In seeking to elucidate some of these practices, researchers might look for situations where what is said "ought to" produce implicature, according to some established principle, and yet does not. This would help to reveal other practices and conditions that interact with the principle.

might occur in other contexts. One actual case, to be sure, is better than none at all, but a scale is not properly validated with only one actually occurring example (and, therefore, none of the scales that I have proposed in this paper has been properly validated).

I would like to make a couple of other general points in closing. Levinson (1983: 285) mentions the lack of an "empirical tradition" in pragmatics and says (364) that some pragmatic concepts may be amenable to a conversation analytic approach. These remarks are quoted by Schiffrrin (1987), who comments: "Since discourse provides a central source of context for utterances...it is often hard to imagine why pragmatics so rarely considers discourse context" (388). Although my aim here has been to present a general model, I have, in certain cases, used actual conversational data and have shown how the context of talk can be used to support the pragmatic model, by demonstrating that participants behaved in accordance with the model. The model's usefulness can only be assessed by referring it to actual talk. It is intended to account for what actually occurs in talk, not for what occurs in people's heads. And the model is intended to indicate, in an explicit way, a connection between culture and pragmatic theory. The study of implicature may be an area where ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts can profitably collaborate with linguistic pragmatists and cultural anthropologists.

What I am advocating here is, for want of a better term, an "empirical pragmatics." The label is inadequate insofar as it suggests only that pragmatic theory and illustrations be based on actually occurring data, as well as on recognizably typical or sensible invented materials. Sacks (1984, compiled from his lectures) pointed out long ago that transcribed conversational data is an aid to the imagination. We may see phenomena in our data that otherwise never would have occurred to us. Furthermore, data can show, or at least make plausible, that a phenomenon is systemic rather than random. I want to use "empirical" in a second sense as well, to indicate that the analysis will be nonmentalist. It will not use speculative resources such as intention and motivation; that is to say, it will not draw on the theories and concepts of commonsense psychology. It will deal rather with systems of meaning (Bilmes 1986). The kind of pragmatics that I have in mind, though, would have certain other features not generally found in linguistic pragmatics as it is currently practised. It would consider interaction and use interactional resources. In particular, participant reaction would be used to discover implicature and to validate analysts' interpretations. (This would not, however, rule out the possibility of analysts' interpretations that are not grounded in participant reactions, insofar as such interpretations are grounded in the interactional context and explain how a particular utterance could sensibly occur at this particular moment (Bilmes 1985).) It would take into account verbal and nonverbal contexts, as these are relevant to the talk being analyzed, thus providing an ethnographic dimension, and it would explicate the cultural resources that participants draw on in arriving at an understanding of what was said. A pragmatics of this sort could speak directly and convincingly to those of us who are primarily engaged in the analysis of actual social settings and systems.

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