Psych156A/ Ling150
Spring 2016
Review Questions: Pragmatics (Implicatures)

(1) Terms/concepts to know: conversational implicature, cooperative principle, Maxim of Quality, Maxim of Manner, Maxim of Relevance/Relation, Maxim of Quantity, scalar implicature, epistemic modal, generalized implicatures, particularized/ad-hoc implicatures, generics

(2) How is the Maxim of Quality used for interpreting statements involving sarcasm, metaphor, and hyperbole? (Hint: Think about what the Maxim assumes about the speaker with respect to being truthful.)

(3) How do advertisers use the Maxim of Relevance/Relation to their benefit? (Hint: Think about what a listener assumes about a speaker for the Maxim of Relevance/Relation.)

(4) How can a listener use the Maxim of Quantity to interpret "Some penguins are cute" appropriately? (Hint: Does it mean the speaker thinks all penguins are cute? Why not?)

(5) Some experimental evidence suggests children as old as ten years old struggle with certain kinds of implicatures (Noveck 2001). Why might these studies underestimate children's ability to compute implicatures? (Hint: Think about what kind of task children were asked to do and how natural that task is.)

(6) What evidence do we have that children as young as three years old can use the Maxim of Relevance to compute implicatures?

(7) How do epistemic modals relate to scalar implicatures?

(8) Consider the Ozturk & Papafragou 2015 study.

   (a) Are there cases where both children and adults fail to compute implicatures? How do we interpret this with respect to understanding children's development of implicature computation?

   (b) Do adults compute epistemic modal implicatures when asked to explicitly judge between two statements? Do four- and five-year-old children? Is there any difference in adult and child ability? (Hint: Think about children's performance on "may be" vs "is" and "has to be" vs. "is".)

   (c) How did experiment 3 differ from experiments 1 and 2? (Hint: Was it a judgment task?) How did this impact children's ability to compute implicatures with epistemic modals? Was there any difference between adult performance on child performance? (Hint: Think about the Negative trials. How did children do?)

(d) Given the different performance across the three experiments, what does this tell us about the impact of the specific task/scenario on children's ability to compute these kind of implicatures?

(9) Consider the Stiller, Goodman, & Frank 2015 study.

(a) What kind of implicatures were children required to compute? (Hint: Were these generalized or particularized/ad-hoc?) How did these implicatures differ from standard scalar implicatures, like those involving *some* vs. *all*?

(b) Why did Stiller et al. 2015 use a control "No Label" condition?

(c) What was the youngest age children were able to reliably compute the kind of implicature investigated in this study?

(10) Consider the Brandone, Gelman, & Hedglen 2015 study.

(a) What is an example of a generic statement? How do adults typically interpret generic statements? Are generic statements more or less complex for adults to interpret than statements involving quantifiers like *all, most*, or *some*?

(b) At what age do children seem to have an adult-like sense of how prevalent a property has to be in order for a generic statement to apply?

(c) Based on this study, does it seem like eight-year-olds understand that *some* and *most* are inappropriate to use if something occurs 100% of the time? (That is, can they compute the scalar implicature, based on the Maxim of Quantity?) What about four-year-olds?

(d) How does the adult interpretation of generic statements differ from four-year-old and eight-year-old interpretations of generic statements? (Hint: Do adults treat generics similarly to any other quantifier? What about four-year-olds and eight-year-olds?)