

# KANSAI GAIDAI UNIVERSITY

## Grice's Cooperative Principle at work in an ESL classroom : a case for teaching implicature

メタデータ	言語: en 出版者: 関西外国語大学・関西外国語大学短期大学部 公開日: 2016-09-05 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): Grice, conversational implicature, pragmatics, explicit instruction, discourse analysis 作成者: Armstrong, Sybil J. メールアドレス: 所属: 関西外国語大学
URL	<a href="https://doi.org/10.18956/00006225">https://doi.org/10.18956/00006225</a>

# Grice's Cooperative Principle at work in an ESL classroom: a case for teaching implicature

Sybil J. Armstrong

## Abstract

With little conscious awareness of it, native speakers of English are engaged daily in the comprehension and production of speakers' implied meaning, or conversational implicature. Despite its ubiquity in daily life, however, the teaching of implied meaning appears to receive scant attention in ESL/EFL classrooms. Several factors argue for its inclusion. First, interlanguage pragmatics, to which Gricean pragmatics is related, assumes the explicit instruction to ESL/EFL learners of contextually-relevant pragmatic aspects of language use. Second, studies of ESL learners' awareness and production of implicature carried out by Bouton (1988, 1990, 1992, 1994b) produced evidence that argues for the explicit instruction of implicature in particular. Third, the data analyzed in the investigation reported in this paper yields further evidence supporting Bouton's argument. In this paper, Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP) is applied to a sample of non-native speaker interaction as a tool for discourse analysis. The findings of the CP analysis attendant to Bouton's findings indicate the usefulness and advisability of teaching implicature in ESL classrooms. Thus, a proposal is offered for a study consisting of three aims: search for existing instances of implicature production in a class of ESL learners, attempt to raise learners' awareness of implicature, and instruct learners in the production of implicature.

**Keywords:** Grice, conversational implicature, pragmatics, explicit instruction, discourse analysis

## Introduction:

Green (1989:92) observes that, as an English language conversational strategy, implicature is "absolutely unremarkable and ordinary." This remark implies that conversational implicature is a common occurrence of everyday life. Bardovi-Harlig and various collaborators have written extensively about their experiences in teaching and researching various aspects of interlan-

guage pragmatics, which includes the study of implicature, (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan, and Reynolds, 1991; Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig, 1992; Bardovi-Harlig, 1999, 2001). Furthermore, many scholars and researchers in the field of interlanguage pragmatics advocate the explicit instruction of L2 pragmatics in addition to the teaching of grammatical competence in developing the overall communicative competence of L2 learners (Holmes and Brown, 1987; Wildner-Bassett, 1994; Boxer and Pickering, 1995; Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; House, 1996; Kasper, 1997; Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei, 1998; Rose and Kasper, 2001).

Rose and Kasper (2001) provide a comprehensive state-of-the-art overview of the vast body of research in interlanguage pragmatics plus a collection of classroom research articles dealing with instruction and assessment of L2 pragmatic proficiency. The authors believe that to better understand the processes of L2 pragmatics learning and the outcomes of those processes three questions need to be asked:

- “-what opportunities for developing L2 pragmatic ability are offered in language classrooms
- whether pragmatic ability develops in a classroom setting without instruction in pragmatics
- what effects various approaches to instruction have on pragmatic development”

(Rose and Kasper, 2001:4)

Most pragmatics instruction and interlanguage pragmatics research appear to be concerned with speech acts and language functions, such as conversation closings. However, the work of two researchers in particular, Bouton and Taguchi, concerns issues dealing specifically with implicature. Beginning in the late 1980s, Bouton conducted a series of studies (1988, 1990, 1992, 1994a, 1994b) in a university in the United States to investigate international students’ awareness and production of implicature. The studies involved the development and deployment of an implicature-testing instrument, IMPLC. Bouton concluded that the explicit teaching of implicature was not only desirable but essential. In addition, Taguchi (2005) examined whether Japanese EFL college students’ ability to accurately and quickly comprehend implicature was affected by their L2 proficiency. Her study offers two pedagogical implications concerning content and method of instruction, which will not be discussed here. The main point here is that her study assumes that “explicit instruction of pragmatic skills” (p. 558) should be conducted in L2 classrooms.

Considering the above, it seems to be a given in the field of interlanguage pragmatics that explicit instruction in pragmatic aspects of language, including implicature, is a necessary component of both ESL and EFL classroom instruction.

Schiffrin (1994) uses Gricean pragmatics to examine referring terms in a spoken narrative interview taken from naturally-occurring data. Although Schiffrin admits her application of Gricean pragmatics is not typical of the way in which it is usually applied, she feels that her particular application provides some insights into how Gricean pragmatics can illuminate how people actually use language in 'real' communication (p. 203). Schiffrin's data sample involves native speakers (NS) of English, but what might be discovered through an application of Gricean pragmatics to non-native speakers' (NNS) talk-in-interaction? Do second language learners display any awareness or production of implicature in their L2 classroom interactions?

In answering the above questions, this paper will show how Grice's Cooperative Principle and its related notion of implicature can account for misunderstanding in peer editing sessions between beginning English as a Second Language (ESL) learners in a college composition class. Evidence will be presented from classroom data that reveals a L2 learner attempting to create implicature without prior instruction. Second, this paper will draw on research in interlanguage pragmatics to propose a course of action for investigating second language (L2) learners' awareness of implicature and their ability to produce it. A small-scale longitudinal study will be proposed to answer three questions:

- (1) How widespread are uninstructed attempts of implicature generation by learners in ESL classrooms?
- (2) What would be the effects of classroom consciousness-raising tasks on L2 learners' awareness and comprehension of implicature?
- (3) What would be the effects of classroom instruction on L2 learners' production of implicature?

## Context and the Cooperative Principle

Schiffrin (1994:9) notes that utterances are obviously situated in some kind of context. Therefore, pragmatics can be an approach to analyzing discourse, which she proceeds to do (*ibid*: chapter 6). Schiffrin (*ibid*:365) continues her discussion of context by saying that the pragmatics

view of context has to do with knowledge: assumptions about what speakers and hearers know (“e.g. about social institutions, about others’ wants and needs, about the nature of human rationality”) and how language use and utterance interpretation are guided by that knowledge. This knowledge-as-context takes the form of what Grice labelled the Cooperative Principle (CP).

“Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.”  
(Grice, 1975:45)

The CP operates through four groups of maxims.

Quantity:

- 1 Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
- 2 Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Quality:

- Try to make your contribution one that is true.
- 1 Do not say what you believe to be false.
  - 2 Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

Relation: Be relevant.

Manner: Be perspicuous.

- 1 Avoid obscurity of expression.
- 2 Avoid ambiguity.
- 3 Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
- 4 Be orderly.

And lest we incorrectly assume that the CP appears to exhort us to always be kind and to always cooperate with each other in the conventional sense of that word, Thomas (1995:62-63) reminds us that Grice “was simply noting that, on the whole, people observe certain regularities in interaction and his aim was to explain one particular set of regularities--those governing the generation and interpretation of conversational implicature.”

To illustrate this, Thomas (*ibid*) offers the analogy of driving a car. The design of traffic rules and regulations creates a particular traffic system. Drivers assume that other drivers sharing the road are rational and that they understand and obey these traffic regulations, thus conforming their behavior to the system. Without this assurance of cooperation, driving would be a

chaotic and dangerous undertaking indeed. As Thomas points out, however, sometimes a driver doesn't conform to the system for whatever reason (emergency vehicles, drivers from foreign countries, drunken drivers, for example), at which time we reassess and adjust our assumptions. When we find ourselves in a situation in which others are not following the same set of rules as we are, accidents might happen. The conversational equivalent of this hypothetical accident is communication breakdown.

Conversational implicature and inference are two sides of the same coin; in a given context or environment, a speaker (S) intends to imply a meaning through the expression of a particular linguistic utterance and a hearer (H) infers the speaker's intended meaning through correct interpretation of that utterance.

Assuming that a hearer is rational and wants to do so, how does a hearer arrive at an adequate interpretation of a speaker's utterance according to Gricean pragmatics? How does H infer S's intended meaning by what S 'says' in a given context? Schiffrin (1994:367-368) stresses the importance and inevitability of the context and CP relationship in a discussion about the kinds of information that Grice considered critical for recognizing implicature (if implicature is indeed present):

- (1) the conventional meanings of the words used, together with the identity of any references that may be involved
  - (2) the CP and its maxims
  - (3) the context, linguistic or otherwise, of the utterance
  - (4) other items of background knowledge
  - (5) the fact (or supposed fact) that all relevant items falling under the previous headings are available to both participants and both participants know or assume this to be the case
- (Grice, 1975:50)

Schiffrin (1994:367-368) speculates that in (3), 'linguistic' can be taken to mean the linguistic code of the utterance, i.e., *text*, and the 'otherwise' to mean the *situation* in which the text is uttered. 'Other items of background knowledge' (4) could possibly mean the information that participants in the interaction possess about the world external to the text and the situation. Schiffrin considers the CP (2) to be a part of the background knowledge that is mutually shared by the participants just as traffic rules and regulations are a part of the background knowledge that drivers draw upon when driving. Therefore, it appears that (2), (3), and (4) could be catego-

rized as background knowledge derived from various sources.

Furthermore, if this background knowledge is mutually available (5) to both participants and both participants realize that it is mutually known and available to both participants, then, when a speaker intends to convey a message in uttering a proposition using words with conventional, literal meaning (1), the hearer draws upon her background knowledge (2), (3), and (4) to arrive at an adequate interpretation of the speaker's implied meaning and, thus, the speaker's intention, assuming that S intended and attempted to generate implicature. When a hearer adequately infers speaker intention, it can be said that communication successful to the purpose at hand has been more or less achieved. This process can be schematized as in Figure 1.

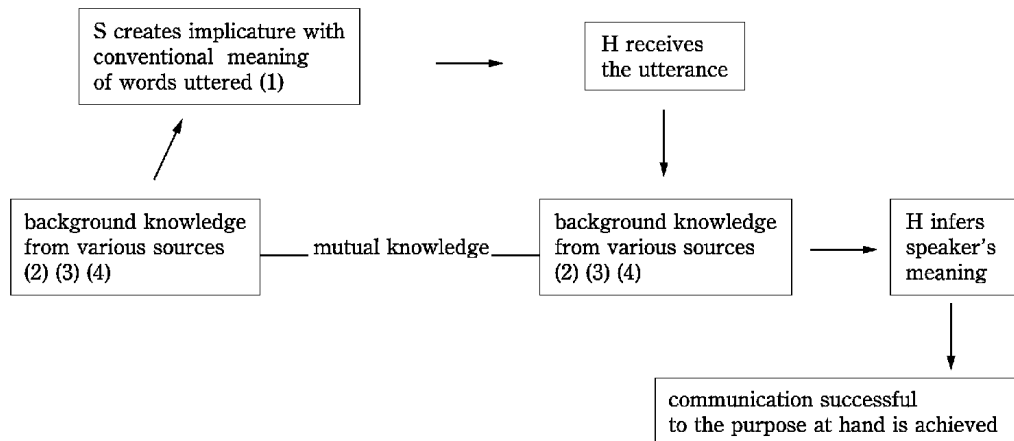


Figure 1 How implicature is calculated and speaker meaning inferred.

## Methodology

The goal of this investigation is to illustrate how the CP can be applied to naturally-occurring NNS data and to examine the results of the analysis. Even though this NNS interaction occurred in a classroom instructional setting, it can be considered as naturally-occurring because the interactants were free to negotiate their own way through the task using whatever interlanguage skills they had gained theretofore. The data for this investigation were gathered during peer editing sessions of an ESL Beginning Composition class of L2 students in a community college in the United States. The two students, aged early-twenties, in the data sample were from

Korea and India. The data sample was taken from six hours of audio-taped classroom peer editing sessions. This particular sample was chosen because it contains a curious puzzle that would be interesting to examine using the CP and its maxims.

## Data analysis

Schiffrin (1994:196) says that “implicatures allow us to account for how people convey messages not provided through the stable semantic meaning of their words.” The people she refers to are NS of a language, and the messages are the intentions of the speaker that are not communicated solely by the semantic load of the words but rather by what the hearer infers based on the speaker’s implied meaning. This conveyance of implied meaning is possible between speakers and hearers who share the same language and cultural background. But NNS, at least in the early stages of their interlanguage development, have to rely heavily on the conventional meaning of words, so how do they convey the messages or meanings of their words if their grasp of the semantic meaning of their words is not stable? One such way is revealed in the data presented further on.

### 1. Data presentation

The communication breakdown which occurred in the following interaction was caused by the speaker’s and hearer’s weak linguistic grasp. The breakdown can be explained by considering it in the light of the maxims of quantity, relation, and manner. The analysis that follows the data sample in Example 1 will elaborate on this.

#### *Example 1*

The actors are two students, writer (W) and editor (E), and the teacher (T). The interaction revolves around a lexical item in the writer’s work. See Appendix 1 for key to transcription conventions.

- 01    E    My friend lives Indian food? (3) Indian food? (2) Indian what [falling intonation] (2)  
             Indian what [falling intonation]
- 02    W    (7) Indian food:: [low monotone]
- 03    E    (2) Indian.
- 04    W    (1) food.
- 05    E    (2) My friend lives Indian what [falling intonation]
- 06    W    (2) lives?- loves.

- 07 E (1) what?  
08 W (1) loves (..) Indian food.  
09 E (1) He lives Indian.  
10 W (5) Indian food !  
11 E Indian food? lives? Indian food?  
12 W Yeah.  
13 E (2) Your friend lives Indian food? =  
14 W =lives.  
15 T No I think you mean likes? maybe? likes? =  
16 W =oh loves.  
17 T Loves?  
18 E (unintel for 6 seconds)  
19 T Spelling (..) Ms [E's name] it's the wrong spelling. (1) So change the word. How do you spell loves?  
20 E (1) l-o-v-e-s.  
21 T l-o-v-e-s. (5) [clapping] OK people. (2) Be kind. (3) OK- Be nice to each other. (3) We're here to help each other.

## 2. Applying the maxims to Example 1

Three distinct segments suggest themselves in Example 1:

- (1) Turns 01-08, the initial questioning and discovery of the misspelled verb.
- (2) Turns 09-14, the inexplicable, continued questioning by E and the subsequent onset of confusion in W.
- (3) Turns 15-21, T's rescue of the situation.

The first segment is a little perplexing in the beginning, but eventually W finds his mistake. The problem is apparently resolved, and E's intentions seem to have been fulfilled. The second segment, however, is where the real problem lies. E's behavior and motivation are incomprehensible. It appears that, actually, her intentions were not fulfilled. The situation here becomes so confused that T feels the need to set things straight in the third segment.

W does not fail to observe any maxims, so he does not create any implicature. W is the recipient of implicature from E. W's responsibility as hearer is to infer the meaning of E's behavior and utterances. E creates implicature mostly by her behavior (Green, 1989:92) but also by her utter-

ances. E implies by the form of her initial questions that there is a mistake, and E implies by her behavior that she is trying to elicit W's awareness of the mistake. E does this by repeatedly using the same line of questioning instead of directly pointing out W's mistake. How does E flout the CP maxims of Quantity, Manner, and Relation?

Quantity 1: Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).

In segment (1), E flouts Quantity 1 by not giving enough information in her questions to lead W immediately to his mistake although eventually W does find it. Is it the mistake E wants W to see, though?

Manner 1: Avoid obscurity of expression.

In segment (1) but especially in segment (2), E flouts Manner 1 by obscuring her intention through the manner of her behavior. (Supposing that the word 'expression' includes behavior.) E does this by withholding information about her intentions.

Relation: Be relevant

In segment (2), E flouts Relation as described by Martinich (1984:26-30), who says that the CP obliges all participants to keep track of the conversation and to make sure everyone sees clearly how each participant's own contributions fit into the whole. This can be achieved either affirmatively or negatively; make clear the direction of the conversation or do not obscure its direction. E, for whatever reason, chooses to make the direction of the conversation obscure to her peer editing partner, who cannot find the relevance of E's behavior to the achievement of their common conversational goals. W does not see where their interaction is going, so there is no coherence for him in their conversation, especially from turn 09.

Manner 4: Be orderly.

E flouts Manner 4 if we can say that she is being disorderly by causing confusion from turn 09. Grice (1975) does not offer any explanation of what exactly 'Be orderly' means. Perhaps it concerns time and space among other things. In this analysis disorderly conduct is included under this maxim.

There is the question of E's motivation in her approach to W. E appears to be intentionally violating the maxims of quantity and manner by not immediately pointing out the misspelling but rather trying to elicit a realization of the problem from W.

Incidentally, this is a strategy often used by teachers. E seems to be acting like a teacher in this interaction by attempting to provide scaffolding using the initiate-respond-evaluate (IRE) sequence of teacher-student interaction. Johnson (1995:76) compares the socialization process of children by adults to the process of classroom socialization of students; just as the home community initiates children into proper use of the language of the home community, students are initiated into ways of using language “in socially and academically acceptable ways.” Johnson observes that students are able to adopt “the language use and conceptual understandings of the teacher” through teacher-student interaction. E’s effort suggests a manifestation of this claim.

### 3. Applying the process of implicature interpretation to Example 1

According to Grice, participants in a conversational interaction, taking for granted that all participants are sane and rational, will assume the CP to be in operation—that everyone involved is observing the CP. Therefore, if one actor (A) appears to be speaking and/or acting irrationally, the respondent (R) will search for an explanation for the apparent inconsistency. R will look for a way to interpret A’s utterances that will provide relevance and coherence to A’s behavior. Because there is this assumed observance of the CP, R will look for an implicature.

“The natural effort of hearers and readers alike is to attribute relevance and coherence to the text they encounter until they are forced not to.”

(Brown and Yule, 1983:66)

Considering the interaction in Example 1 and the process of implicature interpretation presented in Figure 1, where did communication breakdown occur? There was some kind of infraction of the ‘rules of the road’ and an accident happened. The message didn’t reach its destination intact. The intended destination was adequate inference by the hearer and thus, communication successful to the purpose at hand.

Breakdown could occur at several points in the process of implicature calculation and hearer inference (Figure 1). First, the problem could simply be one of mechanics—a defect in the transmission of sounds from producer to receiver. For example, the speaker might have a soft, low speaking voice or might be timid or lack confidence. On the receiving side, the problem could be that the hearer does not or cannot catch the sounds of the speaker. For example, the hearer is not attentive to the speaker at the time or is prevented from receiving the sounds by noise in the environment. Nothing in the data in Example 1 indicates this was a problem for W and E.

Second, there could be a mismatch of mutual background knowledge (5), either in (2) the CP, (3) linguistic and contextual knowledge, or (4) knowledge of the world. Let's consider these one at a time.

### 3.1. Universality of the CP

Can it be assumed that the CP applies to all differentiations of human culture and society, that assumptions about human nature are shared across cultures? Green (1989:95-96) explains that even though Grice did not outright claim that the CP and its maxims are universal in representing values assumed in human society, he did imply so, in that the CP operates on claims of human rationality and sociability. Furthermore, Green insists that "the value of the Cooperative Principle and the maxims in explaining linguistic phenomena is much greater if they are universal (and hence potentially a consequence of some property of human nature or human society) than if they are not." However, agreement on this assumption is not universal (see, for example, Keenan, 1976). In the conversation in Example 1 presented above, it is taken for granted that the CP is in operation.

### 3.2. Linguistic and contextual knowledge

Obviously, as the conversational interactants under discussion are beginning level NNS learners of English, the linguistic context (3) could certainly throw up some obstacles to successful communication. An insufficient knowledge and understanding of the linguistic code of English is presumed. This insufficiency would include an under-developed grasp of vocabulary (including spelling), poor pronunciation, and inadequate control of syntax and grammar. It has been established that the writer in this peer editing session has misspelled a verb that his editor seems to be trying to bring to his attention. The confusion revolves around this attempt at elicitation. In light of E's reactivity to W's error, evidence of E's linguistic deficiency is apparent or else how to explain her behavior? Is it simply plain irrationality? Discussion of this continues later.

Factors of the situational context (3) that might contribute to classroom communication breakdown include learners' past experiences and expectations from their home cultures of what goes on in a classroom that are different from what they encounter in L2 classrooms abroad, e.g., roles and relationships among teacher and students, classroom activities and procedures, or class management styles. In the case of Example 1, the interactants had received training in peer editing in previous classroom lessons, so they knew how to conduct peer editing sessions. In other words, W and E knew what to do, and they were doing it.

### 3.3. World knowledge

Knowledge of the world (4) is difficult to talk about because it constitutes such a multitude of aspects. However, communication breakdown might be the result of differences in cultural and societal norms, age, gender, educational backgrounds, socio-economical status, or even psychological states or what constitutes rational behavior. W and E were from different countries, though both Asian, so some of these differences in knowledge of the world could have played a part in their misunderstanding of each other's behavior.

### 3.4. Mutual knowledge

In any of the three areas (2), (3), and (4) just described, there must have existed a mismatch in mutual knowledge between W and E that contributed to the failure in achieving successful communication. Part of the problem was certainly the linguistic element of context (3).

W's linguistic problem was that he wrote an incorrect word on his paper, which turned out to be a spelling problem. But what was E's problem? It is hard to know what E was trying to get W to see: the verb's incorrect spelling or something about the word 'food'? Did E think it should have been another noun instead of 'food'? Did E think W wanted to say W's friend lives in India? Maybe the verb was not the problem that E saw but rather W's syntax and sentence meaning. Perhaps E thought W was expressing an idea about place not about food. E might have gotten some clues to W's intended meaning if E had examined the co-text of W's writing.

Through E's persistent questioning, W discovered that he had used an inaccurate verb to express his idea of his friend's fondness for a certain kind of food. Perhaps that was not what E thought W was expressing, but anyway, when W corrected the verb, E should have realized W's true intent. But E kept right on with her original line of questioning. So, any way you look at it, it was a linguistic problem for E, too.

W and E intended the conventional meanings of the words they used, but their grasp of the linguistic code was inadequate, either orthographically (W's poor spelling skills) or syntactically (E's possible misunderstanding of W's sentence structure) or textually (E's failure to consider the co-text of W's writing). However, there is more to it than that.

Implicature can be found in their interaction. E implies something by her persistent questions of 'Indian what?' and 'Indian food?' If E had asked directly, what would she have said? "Mr. W,

you made a mistake here. I think you misspelled this word. Don't you mean 'loves?'" Or "Mr. W, don't you mean that your friend lives in India not Indian?" It depends on what mistake E thought W had made. That is not clear. It has already been suggested that E's manner of questioning resembled that of a teacher. By implying that there was some mistake rather than directing W straight to it, E was trying to 'teach' W to help himself.

E's behavior in acting like a teacher created part of the context of situation. E did not create implicature by her words as much as by her behavior. E's behavior was incomprehensible to W. He heard E's words and understood the semantic meaning of them, but he could not make sense of them, i.e., what E *meant* by them, because he could not understand why E asked as she did (the maxim of Manner).

Did W notice that E was acting like a teacher in trying to elicit the problem from him instead of directly providing a solution? Apparently W did not. He did not expect teacher-like behavior from a classmate. W was obviously confused and frustrated by E's behavior. This behavior resulted in a mismatch in mutual knowledge (5) in the area of (3) context of situation, wherein one interactant's expectations of what goes on in a classroom were sideswiped when another interactant did not behave as expected. E was not driving according to W's understanding of the rules of the road.

To summarize, E drew from her background knowledge from different sources (2), (3), (4) to form a message, used words in their conventional sense (1), and uttered them to W. W heard the sounds-as-words and understood the conventional semantic meanings of the words, but because there was a mismatch in W's background knowledge (3), both linguistic and contextual, with E's background knowledge, W could not adequately, or at all it seems, infer E's meaning. Therefore, their communication was not successful, i.e., their conversational goals were not met. This means that E's editing did not help W in the way E intended although it did unintentionally as W discovered his misspelled verb.

#### 4. Conclusion

Generally, beginning level NNS learners have to depend on the conventional, stable meanings of the words in their limited vocabularies. It is difficult for these learners to convey implied meaning. However, the above analysis has demonstrated how a beginning level ESL learner ex-

pressed implied meaning through behavior. It appears to be a strategy of the learner's own choosing. This learner possessed sufficient grasp of the conventional sense of the words needed to point out a partner's writing mistake. Instead, this learner chose to pursue her conversational goal by trying out an alternative interactional strategy. In the end, the learner's partner did not infer the intended meaning, but the learner's attempt is commendable and suggests support for the idea that implicature instruction could be introduced even at the beginning level.

### The way forward: a proposal

The analysis of Example 1 shows that the CP can be used to examine NNS talk-in-interaction. Furthermore, it was shown in the analysis that the editor (E) exhibited awareness of implicature in her attempt to elicit 'noticing' from the writer (W). From this display we can conclude that the data provide evidence that supports the results of Bouton's research, in which learners in an ESL environment displayed awareness and comprehension of implicature even though it was not on a par with native speakers' ability. This in turn supports Bouton's argument that L2 learners can and should be taught comprehension and production of implicature.

In answer to the three questions put forward earlier in this paper, a three-phase longitudinal study is proposed. Each phase would study each question in succession. Assuming the subjects to be international students of a university in the United States and the setting to be ESL speaking skills classes, the project could be carried out over a period of three semesters, or one academic year. Obviously, the project would need to follow the same set of subjects throughout the study. This is a potential problem as the study could lose its validity if a large percentage of the initial participants left the ESL program.

#### 1. The first phase

Investigating the first question would require the first phase to be spent in recording and logging classroom data. Instances of implicature generation and inference would then be extracted, transcribed, and sorted by type. Note would need to be made of the prevalence of implicature in general and types in particular. What do learners seem to understand about the *pragmalinguistic* (pragmatic strategies involving linguistic forms used for carrying out communicative acts (Rose and Kasper, 2001:2)) and *sociolinguistic* ('the social perceptions underlying participants' interpretation and performance of communicative action' (ibid)) aspects of implica-

ture? How often do learners attempt implied meaning? How do they attempt it? Is it successful, i.e., do hearers infer correctly or adequately? These questions are exploratory probes designed to discover what is going on in the classroom. What the data reveal will determine the shape of the interventionist second phase.

## 2. The second phase

This phase would introduce consciousness-raising activities for drawing learners' attention to cases of implicature in dialogues. The exercises, tasks, and activities developed for this would be based on the revelations of the data samples from the first phase, i.e., the types of implicature and their contexts. What the data reveal about the learners' comprehension and use of implicature could, for example, help transform textbook conversations into implicature-bearing interactions.

A skimming of several current ESL speaking skills textbooks turned up no cases of implied meaning in dialogues. Even in social, interpersonal contexts, the interactions consist simply of exchanges of information. Below is a modified dialogue as an example.

As presented in the textbook, no form of contextual information is supplied. The dialogue is on tape, and learners must listen and complete a multiple-choice exercise.

### ***Example 1***

*Without implicature:*

- A. Did you live in Tokyo for a long time?  
B. Yes. Five years.

(Molinsky and Bliss, 2002:60)

*With implicature:*

- A. Did you live in Tokyo for a long time?  
B. Yes, an eternity! (*Implying that she did not like living in Tokyo.*)

Having learners transform non-implicature-bearing dialogues into implicature-bearing ones might be too much to ask of them at this point, but the reverse might be productive; having learners re-write implicature-bearing dialogues into straight-forward versions conveying literal meaning might be enlightening.

Concerning types of tasks, exercises, and activities that could be used for consciousness-raising activities, the following list was compiled after a perusal of the interlanguage pragmatics

research literature:

- (1) Implicature-bearing dialogues with multiple-choice questions
- (2) Discourse completion tasks
- (3) Role plays
- (3) Questionnaires
- (4) Interviews and surveys
- (5) Opportunities for gathering authentic material or utilizing authentic interaction:
  - Extracurricular conversation partners program
  - Collect examples from sources outside the classroom (by learners and teacher)
  - Clips from radio and TV talk shows, sitcoms, dramas, or movies
- (6) Examples from written sources:
  - Conversations from novels
  - Quotes from newspapers or magazines
  - Advice columns

Getting a hold on implicature is like trying to harness the stars in the heavens; there are just too many ways in too many diverse contexts in which too many different people imply meaning toward too many various purposes! The whole business can be very idiosyncratic and culture-bound, but maybe these activities could provide a way in.

### 3. The third phase

The third phase would explore the possibility of developing implicature production through instruction. The learning activities from the second phase could be used here, too, but the course goals would be different; to help learners begin to develop the skill to produce implied meaning. Therefore, the syllabus objectives would need to be modified.

### 4. Tests for effectiveness

The second and third phases would necessarily need to be accompanied by some kind of classroom action research to find out the effects of the interventions. House (1996), in her study to determine if explicit instruction enabled German EFL learners to gain pragmatic fluency, took both a cognitive and behavioral approach as this project proposes to do. In House's study, three methods of data gathering were used:

- (1) initial informal interviews to obtain the subjects' learning histories and final informal interviews to obtain their evaluations and comments

- (2) recording of the subjects' interactions during the various activities
- (3) recorded initial, interim, and final pragmatic tests

Also, House's subjects' interactions were triangulated through use of subject's retrospective verbal reports of their productions and through classroom observation by a research assistant. Perhaps some of House's ideas could be modified to fit the context of the interventionist phases of the project described in this paper. Given that this proposed study is only hypothetical at this point, clearly, details could not be finalized until the context for the study is determined.

## Conclusion

As stated at the beginning of this paper, Green (1989:92) observed that conversational implicature is a common occurrence in the everyday life of native speakers of English. In addition, the analysis of the talk-in-interaction of two non-native speakers concluded that even non-native speakers attempt to generate implicature. Accordingly, the explicit instruction of the comprehension of and production of speaker implied meaning to L2 learners seems warranted. If conversational implicature is indeed a prevalent feature of the daily talk-in-interaction of native speakers as Green claims, it seems to follow that the inclusion of its instruction to L2 learners would be logical and highly recommended.

## References

- Bardovi-Harlig, K. 1996. Pragmatics and language teaching: bringing pragmatics and pedagogy together. In L. Bouton (ed.) *Pragmatics and Language Learning*, monograph series vol. 7, 21-39.
- Bardovi-Harlig, K. 1999. Exploring the interlanguage of interlanguage pragmatics: a research agenda for acquisitional pragmatics. *Language Learning*, 49 (4), 677-713.
- Bardovi-Harlig, K. 2001. Evaluating the empirical evidence: grounds for instruction in pragmatics? In K. Rose and G. Kasper (eds.) *Pragmatics in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 13-32.
- Bardovi-Harlig, K., B. Hartford, R. Mahan-Taylor, M. Morgan, and D. Reynolds. 1991. Developing pragmatic awareness: closing the conversation. *ELT Journal*, 45 (1), 4-15.

- Bardovi-Harlig, K. and Z. Dornyei. 1998. Do language learners recognize pragmatic violations? Pragmatics vs. grammatical awareness in instructed L2 learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32 (2), 233-262.
- Bouton, L. 1988. A cross-cultural study of the ability to interpret implicatures in English. *World Englishes*, 7, 183-197.
- Bouton, L. 1990. The effective use of implicature in English: why and how it should be taught in the ESL classroom. In L. Bouton and Y. Kachru (eds.), *Pragmatics and Language Learning*, monograph series vol. 1, 43-51. Urbana-Champaign: Division of English as an International Language, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.
- Bouton, L. 1992. The interpretation of implicature in English by NNS: does it come automatically without being explicitly taught? In L. Bouton and Y. Kachru (eds.), *Pragmatics and Language Learning*, monograph series vol. 3, 53-65. Urbana-Champaign: Division of English as an International Language, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.
- Bouton, L. 1994a. Can NNS skill in interpreting implicature in American English be improved through explicit instruction? A pilot study. In L. Bouton and Y. Kachru (eds.), *Pragmatics and Language Learning*, monograph series vol. 5, 18-109. Urbana-Champaign: Division of English as an International Language, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.
- Bouton, L. 1994b. Conversational implicature in a second language: learned slowly when not deliberately taught. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 22 (2), 157-167.
- Boxer D. and L. Pickering. 1995. Problems in the presentation of speech acts in ELT materials: the case of complaints. *ELT Journal*, 49 (1), 44-58.
- Brown G. and G. Yule. 1983. *Discourse Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Green, Georgia. 1989. *Pragmatics and Natural Language Understanding*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Grice, H. P. 1975. Logic and conversation. In S. Davis (ed.). 1991. *Pragmatics: a reader*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 305-315.
- Hartford, B. and K. Bardovi-Harlig. 1992. Closing the conversation: evidence from the academic advising session. *Discourse Processes*, 15, 93-116.
- Holmes J. and D. Brown. 1987. Teachers and students learning about compliments. *TESOL Quarterly*, 21 (3), 523-546.
- House, J. 1996. Developing pragmatic fluency in English as a foreign language. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 18 (2), 225-252.
- Johnson, K. 1995. *Understanding Communication in Second Language Classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kasper, G. 1997. Can pragmatic competence be taught? University of Hawai'i, Second Language Teaching and Curriculum Center. <http://www.lll.hawaii.edu/nflrc/Networks/NW6/>

- Keenan, E. O. 1976. The universality of conversational postulates. *Language in Society*, 5, 67-80.
- Martinich, S. 1984. *Communication and Reference*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Molinsky, S. and B. Bliss. 2002. *Side By Side, Third Edition, Book 3*. White Plains, New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 60.
- Rose, K. and G. Kasper. 2001. *Pragmatics in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schiffrin, D. 1994. *Approaches to Discourse*. Oxford (UK); Cambridge (USA): Blackwell Publishers.
- Taguchi, N. 2005. Comprehending Implied Meaning in English as a Foreign Language. *The Modern Language Journal*, 89 (4), 543-562.
- Thomas, J. 1995. *Meaning in Interaction: an introduction to pragmatics*. London: Longman.
- Wildner-Bassett, M. E. 1994. Intercultural pragmatics and proficiency: 'polite' noises for cultural appropriateness. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 32 (1), 3-17.

#### Appendix 1 Key to Transcription Conventions

A. ~~~~~ =	latching
B. = ~~~~~	
not-	word cut off
<u>xxxxxx</u>	emphasis (underlined)
?	question intonation
.	full stop
!	animated tone
xx:::	stretching the sound
(1)	length of pause in seconds
(..)	less than one second
(unintel)	unintelligible
[ ]	editorial comments
x-x-x-x	spelling

(Sybil J. Armstrong 国際言語学部講師)