

A Pragmatic Analysis of Implicature in Charles Manson's Interview

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Abstract

The aim of introducing this paper is to examine the employment of implicature by the pragmatic strategy of evasion in an interview with the famous American criminal Charles Manson. This is done by adopting two theories that of Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975) and Brown and Levinson's Politeness (1987).

Firstly the researcher introduces a theoretical background concerning pragmatics in general, implicature, the Cooperative Principle and Politeness, and how implicature is used by criminals. In the practical part, a historical background about Charles Manson is mentioned. Then a number of exchanges of speech when the criminal implies meanings by the strategy of evasion are selected. They are arranged in texts. The analysis of Manson's interview reveals the following results: criminals imply meanings by evasions from the answers to the questions about the details of their crimes. They do so by many tactics such as by repeating the same question or by saying irrelevant ideas. The principle function from Manson's involving of evasion is to keep his faces away from threatening to show himself as innocent.

Keywords: implicature, Cooperative Principle, politeness, face, criminal, Charles Manson.

تحليل عملي للتضمين في مقابلة تشارلز مانسون

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الملخص

الهدف من تقديم هذا البحث هو دراسة استعمال التضمين عن طريق التهرب كأستراتيجية تداولية في مقابلة مع المجرم المشهور جارلس مانسون. وذلك عن طريق تبني نظريتين، المبدأ التعاوني لكراميس (١٩٧٥) ونظرية التأذب لبراون وليفنسون (١٩٨٧). اولاً، يقدم الباحث خلفية نظرية للتداولية بصورة عامة، التضمين، المبدأ التعاوني ونظرية التأذب وكيفية استخدام التضمين من قبل المجرمين. في الجزء العملي يتم تقديم خلفية تاريخية عن جارلس مانسون. ثم تعرض المقابلة على شكل نصوص كل منها يحتوي على تضمين عن طريق استراتيجيات التهرب. تحليل المقابلة يكشف عن نتائج معينة: كثيراً ما يضمن المجرمون المعاني عن طريق استراتيجيات التهرب من الاسئلة التي تتعلق بتفاصيل جرائمهم. يتم ذلك عن طريق عدة تكتيكات منها اعادة السؤال او قول معلومات لا تمت بصلة الى السؤال. الهدف الأساسي من تضمين مانسون لأستراتيجية التهرب هو ان يحفظ وجهه من التهديد.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ضمني ، مبدأ تعاوني ، مهذب ، وجه ، مجرم ، تشارلز مانسون.

1.1 The concept of Implicature

In Grice's terms, "Implicature is a special case of situations in which the perceived meaning extends beyond the literal meaning. Conversational implicature is, therefore, something which is implied in conversation, that is, something which is left implicit in actual language use," (Wang, 2011: 1162). Implicature can be understood as an assumption which interactants propose by adding it to the verbal meaning of their utterances (Pratama et al., 2019: 416), as exemplified in the following exchange:

(1) *A: Smith doesn't seem to have a girlfriend these days.*

B: He has been paying a lot of visits to New York lately.

B's utterance has an implicit meaning which is, due to his latest visits to New York, it's possible that Smith has a girlfriend there. This's not stated literally.

1.2 Model of Analysis

The researcher adopts two pragmatic theories to investigate the use of evasion in Manson's interview. They are Grice's Cooperative Principle and Brown and Levinson's theory of Politeness. The chosen of these theories is motivated by the centrality of the concept of implicature in both of them.

1.2.1 Cooperative Principle

Grice explains how speakers can accurately perceive what someone is suggesting. According to him, there are universal rules in human interaction. They illustrate how listeners can deduce what the speaker's intentions are (Tsuda, 1993: 63). He submits the Cooperative Principle (CP) to make the conversation between two or more speakers more arranged and comprehensible. It is stated as follows: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk in which you are engaged" (Grice, 1989: 26). Grice divides the CP into four categories and each one has a set of Maxims and sub-Maxims. These are:

- (1) **Quantity Maxim:** "give the right amount of information"
- (2) **Quality Maxim:** "try to make your contribution one that's true."
- (3) **Relevance Maxim:** be relevant.

(4) **Manner Maxim:** be: perspicuous, brief, orderly, and avoid ambiguity (Grice, 1989: 26). Concerning their relation with the cooperative principle, Speakers can do one of the following things:

- 1- **Observing the Maxims:** When speakers follow Grice's Maxims to the point, they are described as observing the Maxims. This means what the speaker is saying is informative, true, relevant, perspicuous, brief, orderly and clear information.
- 2- **Violating the Maxims:** To convey a certain intent, speakers sometimes deliberately, don't obey Grice's Maxims. They violate a Maxim, mainly, to mislead their hearers (Noertjahjo et al., 2017: 198).
- 3- **Flouting the Maxims:** In flouting, speakers also violate a Maxim but the intention isn't to distract the addressee. The main intention is to imply something in addition to the literal meaning of what is uttered. Grice has heavily focused on that additional meaning (Thomas, 2013: 65). Traditional figures of speech such as metaphor, irony, euphemism, and hyperbole which speakers use during speech, are regarded as strategies of flouting the Maxim of Quality (Kroeger, 2018: 145).
- 4- **Opting out of Maxims:** The speaker opts out of regarding a Maxim by showing reluctance to contribute in the form which the Maxim demands and also when the respond isn't in the manner that is typically required. Opting out occurs for many reasons, sometimes due to legislative or moral concerns. These situations may involve a clergyman, therapist, journalist, or a policeman deny to share information that are provided in secret (Thomas, 1995: 74-75).

1.2.2 Face

Cutting (2002: 44) points out that the intended meaning of politeness is the tactful use of linguistic expressions. According to Cruse (2000, 362) "politeness is a matter of what is said, and not a matter of what is thought or believed." One of the key motivations for using implicature has long been regarded in pragmatics to be a concern for politeness (Haugh, 2015: 13). Face has a central role in Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness. They (1987) define politeness as "a complex system for softening face threatening behavior" (O'Keeffe et al., 2011: 59). The participants in a certain interaction want two things in relation to face. These are:

1. **Positive Face:** "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 62).

2. **Negative Face:** “the want of every ‘competent adult member’ that his actions be unimpeded by others” (Ibid.).

Positive politeness is when the speaker gives a consideration to the positive face of the addressee and of him/herself. In **negative politeness**, the consideration is given to the negative face of both the speaker and the listener (Huang, 2007: 116).

Speakers expect other participants to obey their wishes when they convey something about their public self-image (face wants). The speaker’s speech is sometimes understood as a threat to the listener’s face or to his/her face, that what is called by Brown and Levinson as a **Face Threatening-Act (FTA)**. In other situations, expressions and styles of speech might be employed to save face and prevent the risk of threatening face. This is referred to as a **Face Saving-Act (FSA)** (Yule, 1996: 61).

Brown and Levinson consider that adult speakers may have to try to avoid doing the FTAs or, at least, they sometimes attempt to reduce the strength of these acts by using certain sets of strategies. They are divided into two main types: **on-record strategies** and **off-record strategies**.

When interlocutors say something with clear intention, without using any implicit indication, this is described as an *on-record strategy*. The on-record strategies can be adopted by speakers either **baldly (without redressive action)** or **with redressive action**. Bald on record (without redressive action) is the direct way of expressing a certain act, such as requesting, a speaker directly, briefly and in a concise way says.

Off-record Strategies are utilized when speakers convey their intentions by avoiding the explicit way of expressing something, that’s by resorting to implicit and indirect ways (Jaworski and Coupland, 2006: 316).

1.3 Defining Evasion

In interviews with journalists, public people as well as famous figures are expected to respond to inquiries as a matter of basic moral decency (Clayman, 2001: 404). However, the necessity to avoid the answer leads the participants in interviews to use the strategy of evasion as a sort of speech response (Gushchina and Nikolaeva, 2021: 2). Evasion involves ambiguity and equivocation. It is described as non-answer reaction, or that which connects coherently to the interrogation process but

not the question itself. An evasive message is therefore an interactional choice rather than a sentence. According to Harris (1991), a reply is evasive if it doesn't explicitly address the issue or if it poses a challenge to the question (Galasinski, 2000: 55-6).

Different sorts of tactics can be identified for expressing the evasion strategy:

- a- Tactics of repetitions and intersections: are one of the most useful strategies for employing the evasive technique. They are accomplished by the lexical repetition of words or phrases.
- b- Response delay tactics: the use of interjections in speech such as *uh, um, er* is the primary tool which is used to achieve answer delay strategies.
- c- Tactics to reduce categorical answers: one of the really diplomatic devices is to reduce the categoricity of the response because it enables communicators to avoid giving a direct response, lessen the generally tense atmosphere of the conversation, draw the other party's attention away from the irritant or aggrieved issue, and gain their favor (Gushchina and Nikolaeva, 2021: 3-5).

Evasion can be expressed overtly or covertly. In the former, the speaker somewhat directly informs the listener that he or she is unable to respond to the query. In the event of covert evasion, the evader just feigns providing a helpful response (Galasinski, 2000: 98), such as:

(2) A: *What could the prime minister do about it?*

B: *Ah, that's really for him to answer, not for me, I think.*

B claims that he shouldn't be questioned that because of his rank or position. But it's obvious that he refuses to answer the question (Ibid., 60).

1.4 Implicature in Criminals' Speech

Implicatures are used by criminals in many speech acts such as threatening. They can threaten verbally and non-verbally. A case where a defendant makes hand gesture, like a pistol to a witness for the prosecution when they enter the courtroom, is an illustration of a nonverbal threat. Verbal threatening can also be done, such as a criminal warns witnesses by saying that:

(2) *Something is going to happen to you.*

People experience a variety of events, both positive and negative. But in this case, the situation is crucial. The court's ruling that this constitutes a threat, it is warranted, assuming the statement is made with the intention of intimidating the witnesses (Tiersma and Solan, 2012: 13-14).

1.5 Data Analysis

In this section, the researcher has to analyse an interview with the criminal Charles Manson (1934-2017). In the latter half of the 1960s, an American cult leader and criminal, named Charles Manson, established the so-called "Manson Family." They killed seven people in Los Angeles on August 9, 1969, a crime that would later become known as the Tate-LaBianca case, after that they rose to unsavory reputation. Charles Manson directed members of his devotees to carry out the murders rather than actually participating in them personally. Manson had persuaded his supporters to begin a racial war through the Beatles' song "Helter Skelter," and that the way to do that was by committing such crimes. Although he was a white man, he began by killing whites rather than black people. They were sentenced to be executed by court. But this was not fulfilled because of the decision of suspending execution punishment in California. That's why it is replaced to spend the rest of their life in prison. The death of Manson happened in 2017 because of his infection of the colon cancer (Hristova, 2020: 8).

Manson's interview¹ was an episode in the series of the TV program of *60 Minutes*. It was broadcasted on NBC channel. It was Manson's first prison interview which was conducted in 1981.

Text: 1

Snyder: You know, you were sent to the gas chamber and then they modified the death penalty, were you happy when that was done?

Manson: Was I happy with what is done?

Snyder: When you found out that you weren't going to the gas chamber.

Manson: You talk about dying now, it gets me nervous.

¹ This interview is downloaded from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JbW0agGFv88>

Snyder: Why?

Manson: Did you have any thoughts about something.. would you want to go anywhere?

Snyder: Were you happy when you found out you weren't going to go to the gas chamber, Charles?

Manson: Oh, I know I wasn't gonna go to a gas chamber because I hadn't done anything wrong.

From the beginning of the interview, Manson doesn't show his cooperative and doesn't answer the questions that are posed to him by the interviewer, Tom Snyder. To comment on the first question, Manson utilizes implicit **evasion**. Snyder's question is about Manson's feelings when his execution was cancelled and instead he was sentenced to live the rest of his life in prison. Although Snyder's question is obvious, he replies by asking the same question. Snyder repeats the same question but Manson also doesn't answer. He says "*You talk about dying now, it gets me nervous*" and justifies these phrases by ambiguous ones, "*Did you have any thoughts about something.. would you want to go anywhere?*" He flouts the Manner maxim because of his vagueness. He intends something which is possibly understood by Snyder. He may refer to the death by "*something*" and "*anywhere.*" The Quantity maxim is also violated because he doesn't answer the question.

Snyder tries to get an answer from Manson, that's why he repeats the question for the third time. Manson, also, maintains his evasion. This time, he violates the Quality maxim. He claims that he is innocent and doesn't commit crimes, that's why he was assured that execution would be cancelled. These evasions threaten the positive face of the interviewer.

Text: 2

"Snyder: You love the world you live in?"

Manson: hmm, most assuredly, it's me.

Snyder: You love all the pain that you've caused to people, all anguish?"

Manson: Oh, Oh, I don't know pain. I don't know pain. I have no depth of pain. I have no depth of suffering. I don't know ridicule. I don't know all the bad things. I haven't been punished by you all my life since I was 10 years old. I've been in every reform school you got across the country and used to lay down, have to get a swift and I couldn't walk. Tell me about some pains.”

Snyder involves an implicit meaning by his question, “*You love the world you live in?*” He intends the world of criminality, prison, and causing sufferings to people. He doesn't intend the life and the world in general. Manson's reply refers that he doesn't receive the intended meaning. Therefore, Snyder repeats the question directly. He makes his meaning more obvious. Manson makes use of **evasion** in order not to engage in the issue directly. He speaks a lot without giving an informative feedback. What's stated by him is unnecessary and irrelevant. Since ten years old, Manson had been sent to reform schools because of his illegal behaviours. He claims that he didn't feel pain in these schools. He never comments about his victims. He violates the maxim of Relation because he doesn't abide to the question. He offers inaccurate, unrelated, and somehow ambiguous information, therefore Quantity and Manner maxims also broken down.

He hyperbolizes when he says “*I've been in every reform school you got across the country.*” It is impossible that he put in all the reform schools in the country. He flouts the maxim of Quality and threatens the face of his interviewer by hyperbole.

Text: 3

“Manson: I'm playing for my life, you work for money.

Snyder: What does that mean you are playing for your life?

Manson: I am working for my life, mister, I am not playing for money.

Snyder: What does mean you are working for your life?

Manson: I am playing for real.

Snyder: What does that mean you are playing for real? How you working for your life?

Manson: Well, right, oh yes, you'll land by...”

Along this text, Manson continues with his obvious ambiguity and equivocation through relying on the strategy of implicit **evasion**. Snyder tries to demystify his vagueness, but his effort is in vain. Each time he attempts to disambiguate an idea, another one is posed by Manson. This is noticeable more by his recurrent use of the phrase “*what does that mean.*” Manson is a great manipulative interlocutor. He makes Snyder struggles to get answers to his questions. Along the whole interview, Grice’s maxims are violated. The outcome of this vagueness is breached of the Manner maxim. Quantity maxim is also violated because he doesn’t answer the questions. Snyder’s face is threatened since his questions are not answered.

Text: 4

“Snyder: If you got out of here, there are a lot of people who think you’d go starts killing again.

Manson: Again? well, you guys are misinformed. I hadn’t killed anyone. I didn’t break the law, judge knew that but people didn’t want to hear it. The judge knew it. He washed his hands. He said, I know it but what can I do, people want dead.

Snyder: Judge never said that.”

Manson was the ringleader giving orders to his followers to commit crimes. He didn’t kill by his hands, hence he claims that he “*hadn’t killed anyone.*” The implicature is in Manson’s bold statements. They carry an ironical meaning, because the fact is the opposite of what is stated literally. By the ironical phrases he achieved the aims of evasion. Irony and **evasion** are accomplished by adopting lying as a defense mechanism. He provides incorrect information. Manson alleges that the judge is on his side and he gives the judgment of punishing Manson only to satisfy people. They are untrue because the judge sentences Manson and his followers to be executed according to pieces of evidences. Manson breaks the Quality maxim because he lies. Snyder comments by “*Judge never said that.*” This proves the insincerity of Manson’s claims.

Text: 5

“Snyder: What about Shay?

Manson: What about it?

Snyder: Well, what about it?

Manson: he got killed,

Snyder: Well, the word is you killed him.”

Manson totally rejects the murder accusation when he, in the previous text, states “*I hadn’t killed anyone,*” hence Snyder asks him about Shay. He is one of the victims who killed by Manson’s family. Manson replies by repeating the question, “*what about it.*” It is one of the tactics of **evasion** strategy. Due to his vagueness and uninformative information, the violation of the Manner and Quantity maxim is observed. It is obvious that Snyder is aware of Manson’s attempt to evade. As a result, he repeats the same question, “*well, what about it,*” because he insists on making Manson admits his act. Manson comments by saying “*he got killed,*” as if he is not responsible. Manson evades by denial the crimes that he convicted of. The interviewer confronts him directly by saying “*you killed him.*” He threatens Manson’s face.

Text: 6

“Snyder: did you cut the Hinman’s ear off?

Manson: Hell yes.

Snyder: Why did and how did that feel when you cut his ear off.

Manson: what did it feel like? Yeah, well, I had done what he said for about 20 years. I've done everything he told me to do and I got to thinking now why don't this guy do something I tell him to do. And he said, “no”, I said, “well how comes I'm always doing what you tell me to do but then you never do what I say do.” And he said “well blah blah blah.” So, I said, “now you do what I say” and he said “no”. I said, “you do exactly what I say” and he said “no, I'm telling you, I'm not asking you, I'm telling you, you do exactly what I said.” He said why would you get that? I said got it from my father in prison he gave it to me I had a little charm bracelet I used to carrying on when I was about that big...”

Gary Hinman was the first murder that Manson’s family did. He was a friend to some of them. He was a musician. On July 25, 1969, Bobby Beausoleil, Marry

Bruner and Susan Atkins were sent by Manson to Hinman's house to persuade him to involve with them, because they thought that he had money and they would get a benefit from his wealth. However, Hinman didn't agree. Thus they took Hinman as a hostage. After two days, Manson arrived. He tortured and cut Hinman's ear off. Then in the third day, he was stabbed to die by Beausoleil under Manson's direction. This is according to the confessions of the members Manson's family. Some reports that the reason of killing Hinman is because he rejected to record a song for Manson. https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manson_Family.

After admitting his wicked act of cutting Hinman's ear "**Hell yes**," Manson engages in a long speech to clarify the how and why he did so. He narrates dialogues that went on between him and the victim. The implicature is in the strategy of **evasion** because his answer doesn't match the question. He circumlocutes because he speaks a lot of things without benefit and ambiguously. He dodges the question. His goal of resorting to this device is to defend himself and his followers who killed Hinman. Quality, Quantity, Manner and Relevance maxims are apparently violated by Manson, because he speaks inaccurate, uninformative, unabbreviated, and irrelevance information.

Text: 7

"Snyder: Let me, let me, let me take you back to you wanting this man, Hinman.

Manson: I cut, to do, his ear off, because he was over Bobby and Bobby was a youngster and really didn't know what the hell was doing. He was a kid and he never had no man show him nothing. See so I was telling the boy. I sent the guys, he said you got my money. I said go ahead and get the money or leave him alone...

Snyder: (interrupts Manson) You're taking me to another story now and I'm thinking...

*Manson: No, I'm trying to tell you the same thing and we'll be here for **thousand years** and also not be finished."*

Most of Snyder's questions, along the whole interview, are posed more than one time or they are stated in other words, because Manson doesn't adhere to the questions and cuts Snyder's turns of speech. Snyder says, "**Let me, let me, let me take you back to you wanting this man, Hinman,**" in an attempt to get an answer to his

previous question of why did Manson cut Hinman's ear off? However it's a futile attempt, because Manson keeps on telling untrue facts and maintains his **evasion** by using implicit strategies. Bobby and Atkins, in their interrogations, said that Manson told them to kill Hinman. Manson tries to show that the reason of killing the man was he himself. The maxim of Quality is violated because he tells fabricated stories.

The phrase of "*thousand years*" is a hyperbolic everyday expression. Speakers may say it to deepen the effect of their ideas. Manson's employment of it is to enhance his claims. Hyperbole violates the Quality maxim. Manson wants to say that his narration of events is true but Snyder doesn't believe him even if he spends a lot of time discusses them.

Text: 8

"Snyder: ... That on the night following the killings at the house on Cielo Drive in Los Angeles, you accompanied four people to a home occupied by Mr. and Mrs Leow LaBianca.

Manson: Yeah,

Snyder: that you went inside that house and you tied them up and assured them that they were not going to be hurt. But you went back outside and sent Kassabian and KRENWINKEL and Watson and Atkins inside the house to kill them. True or false?

Manson: (silence).

Snyder: Did you do that? Cheers getting hot, huh. Did you do that?

Manson: Did I kill anyone? No."

Snyder mentions the details of a murder that was committed by Manson and four of his agents. Then he asks him to confirm or reject by merely saying true or false. Manson employs **evasion** overtly and covertly. Firstly he evades overtly when he doesn't comment on Snyder's question by staying silence. Silence is a reference to the unwillingness to answer the question. Then Snyder repeats the question, "*Did you do that?*" Manson evades covertly by saying "*Did I kill anyone? No.*" Since he didn't kill with his own hands, he deems himself as wasn't responsible for the crimes

carried out on his commands. By evasion Manson threatens Snyder's face and violates the maxim of Quantity, because he doesn't answer the question.

Text: 9

“Snyder: Did you go in and tie up the Leow on? Because that a very simple question.

Manson: That night,

Snyder: August 10th 1969,

Manson: That night, August 10th 1969,

Snyder: Did you? Why dodge it? Why dodge it? Why not answer yes or no once, and for all put it behind you?

Manson: Did I kill anyone?”

Snyder reformulates the question that he poses in the previous text. On the other hand, Manson goes on in his challenge to answer. He uses implicit techniques to **evade** from answering questions by repeating the time of committing the crime more than once then he denies it, *“Did I kill anyone?”* Snyder confronts his evasion directly *“Did you? Why dodge it? Why dodge it? Why not answer yes or no once, and for all put it behind you?”*. Snyder's positive face is threatened by Manson. It's obvious that Manson is an uncooperative speaker. Due to his ambiguity, the Manner maxim is violated. Quantity maxim also isn't obeyed, because the interviewer doesn't get answers to his questions.

Text: 10

“Snyder: Did you tie them up?

Manson: did I?

Snyder: Mm-hm

Manson: Well, we came down from a burning and,

Snyder: Let's stay in Los Angeles, August 10 1969.

Manson: There was a hole in the wall gang there,”

Snyder poses the same question again, however Manson again violates the two maxims of Quantity and Manner by maintaining his **evasion**. He evades by repeating the question as what he does in the previous texts. Then, to evade totally, he offers a different subject. He tries to change the topic. As Manson doesn't answer, the face of the interviewer is threatened.

Conclusion

The conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis of the data are:

1. Evasion is often used by criminals to avoid direct answers of many questions especially those concerning their crimes. Different tactics are employed to escape the answer. The criminal sometimes reply by: asking the same question, stating incorrect or irrelevant information, repeating a previous answer to a different question, and pausing or keep silence.
2. Both of them, the interviewer and the interviewee threaten the faces of each other. Along the whole meeting, Manson makes use of evasion to save his face from damage. Therefore he threatens the positive face of his interviewer by not being a cooperative interlocutor. On another hand, when the interviewer doesn't get answers to his questions, he confronts the criminal by his crimes, and his evasion tactics. They threaten the interviewee's face.
3. In most of Manson's replies, the maxims of the Cooperative Principle are violated or flouted.

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