

Investigating Conversational Implicature in Selected Ayahs  
in Al-Kahaf Sura in the Glorious Quran

A. Lecturer Riyadh Sarhan Jaboor  
A. Lecturer Rusul Aasim Abood

Abstract

This paper falls into four sections. Section one is an introductory chapter which defines the problem, the purpose, and the hypotheses of the study. It also specifies the procedure, the limit and the value of the study. Chapter Two is devoted to explain the maxims of implicature and the major types of conversational implicature with scratching the surface of conventional implicature. It also investigates the properties of conversational implicature. Chapter Three deals with the analyzing of selected ayahs in Al-kahaf sura in glorious Quran according to the maxims and types of conversational implicature. Finally, Chapter four sums up the conclusions arrived at, recommendations and suggestions for further studies

Section One

1.1 The Problem:

The term 'implicature' goes back to the philosopher Paul Grice, as laid down in his seminal article 'Logic and Conversation'. In Grice's approach both "what is implicated" and "what is said" are part of speaker's meaning. "What is said" is that part of meaning that is determined by truth-conditional semantics, while "What is implicated" is that part of meaning that cannot be captured by truth conditions (and therefore belongs to pragmatics (Mey, 2009:365

Implicature is a component of speaker meaning that constitutes an aspect of what is meant in a speaker's utterance without being part of what is said. What a speaker intends to communicate is (characteristically far richer than what s/he directly expresses (Horn and Ward, 2006:12

The notion of conversational implicature provides an explicit account for how it is possible to mean more than what is actually said, i.e. "more than what is literally expressed by the conversational (sense of linguistic expressions uttered" (Ibid: 3

:Consider this example

?Do you go to the party tonight (1)

.I have an exam tomorrow (2)

Logically speaking, (2) answer seems to have no communicative value when it is taken as an answer to the question raised since it expresses something irrelevant. But, when it is used in a conversation, clearly the speaker intends to communicate more than what is said. When the hearer hears this reply, he assumes that the speaker intends to communicate something and at the same time he assumes that the listener can work out what is intended. So, there is an additional meaning which is conveyed by the speaker. According to Yule (1996:35), implicature is an additional conveyed meaning.

In the example above, the meaning conveyed is that having an exam tomorrow requires studying tonight  
.and studying tonight cancels going to the party

Due to the fact that implicature is a component of speaker meaning that constitutes an aspect of what is meant in the speaker's utterance without being part of what is said, in applying implicature and its maxims on some selected ayahs of Al-Kahaf sura in the holy Quran, a lot of people may interpret these ayahs according to their knowledge. Thus, this leads the reader to (wrong interpretation). To overcome this problem and to be acquainted with the subtle use of implicature, readers need a comprehensive study tackling this subject. The present study is an attempt to fill this gap. In addition, this paper tries to answer the question of how the types of conversational implicature can be identified in the glorious Quran

## 1.2 The Aims:

:This study aims primarily at

1. Studying implicature in terms of its concepts, purposes, and types.
2. Showing the factors that play a great role in understanding implicature.
3. Applying the maxims of implicature to Al-Kahaf sura in the glorious Quran.
4. Identifying the types of conversational implicature in the glorious Quran.
5. Coming out with conclusions and pedagogic recommendations.

## :The Hypotheses 1.3

:It is hypothesized that

1. The maxims of implicature can be applied to the glorious Quran.
2. Some maxims are breached more than others.
3. There is difficulty in identifying implicature in the holy Quran.
4. The types of conversational implicature can be applied to the glorious Quran.

## 1.4 The Procedures:

To achieve the aims of this study and verify or reject its hypotheses, the following procedures are

:adopted

1. Providing a thorough background of implicature.
2. Analyzing five ayahs in Al-Kahaf sura in the glorious Quran and investigating which maxim is mostly breached which the readers should be aware of in order to avoid the wrong interpretation and at the same time applying the types of conversational implicature according to the breaches of these maxims.

## 1.5 The Limits

This study is limited to conversational implicature and its maxims which are usually used in conversations and how they could be applied to some selected ayahs of Al-Kahaf sura in the glorious

Quran. The sample of this paper comprises five ayahs of Al-Kahaf sura. They are chosen because there is a breaching to each maxim of implicature in each Ayah

## 1.6 The Value of the Study

The investigation undertaken here is hoped to be theoretically and practically significant. It is hoped that this study will be of value to those interested in tackling the religious texts pragmatically and teaching and learning English as a foreign language

*Section Two*

*Theoretical Background*

Grice's Theory of Implicature 2.1

Grice's theory, in which he develops the concept of implicature, is essentially a theory about how people use language. He suggests that there is a set of overarching assumptions guiding the conduct of conversation. These assumptions can be considered guidelines for efficient and cooperative ends. He identifies four maxims of conversations or general principles underlying the efficient cooperative use of language which jointly express a general cooperative principle

### - The Cooperative Principle

The principle that makes your conversational donation such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the agreeable purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged

:The maxims are

1. Quality: try to say only what is true (don't say that for which you lack adequate evidence; don't say what you know to be false).
2. Quantity: give the right amount of information (not too little, not too much).
3. Relevance: make what you say relevant to the topic at hand.
4. Manner: be clear (avoid ambiguity, excessive wordiness, obscurity, etc.).

(Mey, 2009: 366)

According this theory, an addressee can infer a speaker's implicature based on the assumption that the speaker is being cooperative and is adhering to Grice's maxims. However, when a speaker violates or 'flouts' one or more of these maxims, an implicature is also generated

Hedges and Hedging the Maxims 2.2

There are certain kinds of expressions speakers use to mark that they may be in danger of not fully adhering to the maxims of conversations. Hedge an expression which weakens a speaker's commitment to some aspect of an assertion

.As far as I can see, the plan will never succeed (3)

Hedges are used by speakers to show that they are conscious of the maxims. They show their consciousness of the quality maxim by a set of expressions as the initial phrases in the following examples

(4) As far as I know , they are married

(5) I may be mistaken, but I thought I saw a wedding ring in her finger.

Cautious notes or hedges of this type can be used to show that the speaker is conscious of the  
:quantity maxim as in the initial phrases of the following

(6) As you probably know, I am terrified of bugs.

(7) To cut a long story short, we grabbed our stuff and ran.

(8) I won't bore you with all the details, but it was an exciting trip.

Markers tied to the expectations of relevance can be found in the middle of the speakers' talk when they say things like "oh, by the way" and go on to mention some unconnected information during a conversation. Speakers also may use "anyway" or "well, anyway" to indicate that they may have drifted into a discussion of some possibly non-relevant material and want to stop. The expectations of manner may also lead speakers to hedges of the type shown in the initial  
:phrases of the following

(9) I'm not sure if this makes sense, but the car had no lights.

.I don't know if this is clear at all, but the other car was reversing(10)

All of these examples of hedges are good indications that the speakers are not only aware of the maxims, but that they want to show that they are trying to observe them. Perhaps such forms also communicate the speakers' concern that their listeners judge them to be cooperative conversational  
(partners (Yule, 1996: 38-9

### Types of Implicature 2.3

.There are two major types of implicature: conversational and conventional implicatures

#### Conversational Implicature 2.3.1

This is the type of implicature that is being discussed so far depending on the assumption that, as Grice claimed:" speakers are cooperative and adhering to the four maxims mentioned earlier when they  
".are talking

:There are different types of conversational implicature. They are

##### Standard Implicatures 2.3.1.1

These are conversational implicatures which can be inferred from an utterance, provided we assume that the speaker is following the maxims of conversation as far as possible. Consider this  
:scenario

(11) A: Can I speak to Jane?

.B: She's in the shower

A will deduce from B's answer that this is an inconvenient time to speak to Jane, although B does not explicitly say so. What justifies A's inference? Part of the answer is that B will assume that A is obeying the Maxim of Relation, and that the answer is therefore relevant. The most obvious relevance is  
(that calling Jane to the phone would cause inconvenience (Cruse, 2006:169-170

##### Generalized Implicature 2.3.1.2

This is the type of implicature which requires no particular contextual knowledge. One common example in English involves any phrase which an indefinite article of the type "a/an X" such as "a :garden and a child" as in the following example

(12) I was sitting in a garden one day. A child looked over the fence.

The implicature here is that the child and the garden are not the speaker's because if they are, he .(would be more specific (more informative; following the quantity maxim) (Yule, 1996: 41

A number of generalized conversational implicatures are communicated on the basis of a scale of .(values and are consequently known as *scalar implicatures* (ibid :Generalized Implicature has two types which are

### (A) Scalar Implicature

Certain information is always communicated by choosing a word which expresses a value from a scale of values. This particularly in terms of expressing quantity as in the following scales where terms are :listed from the highest to the lowest values

<all, most, many, some, few>

<always, often, sometimes>

When producing an utterance, a speaker selects the word from the scale which is the most informative :and truthful (quantity and quality) in the circumstances as in

(13) I'm studying linguistics and I've completed some of the required courses.

By choosing "some" in the example above, the speaker creates the implicature "not all" which is a scalar implicature. The basis of scalar implicature is that when any form in a scale is asserted, the negative of all forms higher on the scale is implicated. The first scale mentioned above has "all", "most", and "many", higher than "some". So, in saying "some of the required courses", the speaker also creates other ."implicatures like "not most" and "not many

One noticeable feature of scalar implicature is that when speakers correct themselves on some detail, :they typically cancel one of the scalar implicatures as in

(14) I got some of this jewelry in London- um in fact I think I got most of it there.

Here, the speaker initially implicates "not most" by saying "some", but then corrects himself by actually ."asserting "most". That final assertion is likely to be interpreted with a scalar implicature "not all

### (B) Clausal Implicature

Clausal implicature is part of quantity generalized implicature in which two contrast sets are needed. Let {know, believe} be a contrast set. Then the utterance "the doctor believes that the patient will not recover" implicates "the doctor may or may not know that the patient will not recover". The crucial point is that clausal implicatures indicate uncertainty about the truth of the embedded sentence. Note that, because <know, believe> also form a scale, there is a scalar implicature as well: in this case it implicates 'the doctor does not know that the patient will not recover'. In other words, the complex or compound

sentence which contains the subordinate or coordinate clause which is used to express the proposition is  
 .(either true or false (Mey, 2009: 368

### Particularized Implicatures 2.3.1.3

Sometimes, conversations take place in very specific contexts in which locally recognized inferences are assumed. Such inferences are required to work out the conveyed meanings which result from the particularized conversational implicature. Because they are the most common, they are :typically just called implicatures. Consider this example

(15) A: Has your boss gone crazy?

.B: Let's go get some coffee

In order to preserve the assumption of cooperation, B has to infer some local reason (for .(example, the boss may be nearby) A makes an apparently non-relevant remark (Yule, 1996: 42-3

A distinction can be drawn between two types of conversational implicature. An implicature counts as 'generalized' if it is a default reading that is to say it arises unless it is explicitly cancelled and is to that extent independent of context. For instance, some of the parents came to the meeting would normally imply that not all of them did. But, in some of the parents, if not all of them, came to the meeting the implicature 'not all' is cancelled. The fact that this is not anomalous shows that we are not dealing with an entailment. A 'particularized' implicature is one that depends on specific contexts and is not a default message component. For instance, Jane is in the shower does not convey a default message :component 'She cannot come to the telephone'. This requires a particular context

(16) A: Can I speak to Jane?

.B: She's in the shower

(Curse, 2006: 169-170)

### Conventional Implicature 2.3.2

These are components of the meanings of utterances which are not propositional in nature, but which have a stable association with particular linguistic expressions and which therefore cannot be cancelled without anomaly. For instance, "Pete hasn't registered yet" and "Pete hasn't registered" are propositionally identical, but the presence of "yet" in the former implicates that Pete is still expected to arrive (still and already have similar properties). Contradicting this leads to oddness: (?)Pete hasn't registered yet and I know for a fact he does not intend to. Another example is the 'interrogative' aspect of the meaning of a question such as Why are you here? which cannot be described as true or false and which leads to anomaly if denied: ?I don't want to know the reasons for your presence, but why are you .(here? (ibid

Conventional implicatures are non-truth conditional inferences that are not derived from the maxims. There are four conjunctions associated with this type of implicature. The first two are mentioned above which are "but" and "yet". The other two are "and" and "even". "Even" implicates that the .(event is contrary to the expectation like in "even John came to the party" (Levinson, 1983: 127

Conventional implicatures differ from the conversational ones in all the distinctive properties outlined earlier. For example, conventional implicatures are not cancellable because they do not rely on defeasible assumptions about the nature of the context. They are detachable because they depend on the particular linguistic items used (e.g. if you substitute "and" for "but", you will lose the conventional implicature. But retain the same truth conditions; they are not calculated using pragmatic principles and contextual knowledge, but rather given by convention. For example (there is no way that given the truth conditions of "but" you can derive or calculate that there is a contrast between the two conjuncts).

(Finally, they have no determinate context or meaning and they are not universal (ibid: 128

### Properties of Conversational Implicature 2.4

:There are certain properties that are assigned to conversational implicature

'Cancellable' (or 'defeasible'), that is, they are relatively weak inferences and can be denied by the speaker without contradiction. For instance, B's reply in the following would normally be taken to mean

: 'I don't intend to tell you

?A: How old are you (17)

.B: That's none of your business

If B added 'But I'll tell you, anyway' this would cancel the inference, but B would not be guilty

.of self-contradiction. This is characteristic of conversational implicatures

'Context sensitive', in that the same proposition expressed in a different context can give rise to

:different implicatures

.A: I think I'll take a shower (18)

.B: Jane's in the shower

. 'This implicates 'You can't take a shower just yet', not 'Jane can't accept a phone call

'Non-detachable' that is, in a particular context the same proposition expressed in different words will give rise to the same implicature. In other words, the implicature is not tied to a particular form of

words. For instance, if B in 2 above had said 'That doesn't concern you', the implicature would be the same

'Calculable', that is to say they can be worked out using general principles rather than requiring specific knowledge, such as a private arrangement between A and B that if one says X it will mean Y

.(ibid: conversational implicatures

'Non-conventional' that is, not part of the conventional meaning of linguistic expressions (Levinson, 1983: 117

).

'Reinforceable' that is, they can be reinforced by explicitly stating them and if done so, this appears to be less redundant than repeating the truth-conditional content or presupposition

They are universal since they are based on general, rational principles of actions and derivations based

.(on general knowledge and truth conditional content of the utterance (Rast, 2004: 72-4

This chapter is concerned with demonstrating implicature in some selected ayahs of Al-Kahf sura in the glorious Quran. As a first step of analysis the chapter is narrowed down and five Ayahs have been selected in which there is breaching to the maxims of implicature

text1 (بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ)  
( وَكَذَلِكَ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِيَتَسَاءَلُوا بَيْنَهُمْ قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ )  
(الكهف:18)

(In the Name of Allah the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful)  
Likewise, We awakened them (from their long deep sleep) that they might question one another. A speaker from among them said: "How long have you stayed (here)?" They said: "We have stayed (perhaps) a day or part of a day".

(Al-Hilali and Khan, 1419A.H.: 385)

In this ayah, a question may impose itself which is "why do we have the expression (يوماً او بعض

This expression makes clear that there is a breach to the maxim of quantity in order to avoid "(يوم) breaching the maxim of quality, that is, there is a conflict between these two maxims and the implicature that those people who have slept in the cave are hesitated or , (الطباطبائي:2004 :205), as stated by unsure in their conversation among each other about the exact time of their sleeping. This hesitation is caused by what they have seen in their cave. Everything is changed, it looks as though they slept a day or less than

الشيرازي(2007 :470) claims that the main cause behind the use of this expression (يوماً او بعض يوم) refers to the fact in which they somehow realize that their sleeping is (بعض يوم) or (يوماً) instead of using not normal. They conclude this from what they have seen from their appearances, their hair, and from what has been done to their clothes. All these changes and even the changed position of the sun have given them hints that their sleep is abnormal. So, this breach of quantity summarizes the whole idea into one expression and this serves the concept of language is economic. On the other hand, these ayahs scalar and clausal implicatures are types of generalized conversational implicature and they are conveyed by this breaching

Text2

( وَلَبِثُوا فِي كَهْفِهِمْ ثَلَاثَ مِائَةٍ سِنِينَ وَازْدَادُوا تِسْعًا )  
(الكهف: 24)

And they stayed in their Cave three hundred (solar) years, adding nine (for) (lunar years).

(Al-Hilali and Khan, 1419A.H.: 388)

In this ayah, the maxim of quantity is also breached in order to avoid breaching the maxim of quality as what was mentioned in the previous chapter that the maxims of quantity and quality are almost always in conflict. This ayah gives the reader a very clear number about their staying in the cave

(ثلاث مائة) and leaves no space to the wrong interpretations. The maxim of quantity is breached by saying states that the implicature is that (2007:482) الشيرازي, Thus (ثلاث مائة وتسع) instead of saying (وازدادوا تسعاً) the total period of their staying and sleeping in the cave is 309 years, but the separation between the first number and the second in this ayah instead of putting them into one phrase directs the readers to the difference between lunar and solar years. In this respect, those people slept 300 anomalistic years and 309 lunar years. Thus, this breaching to the maxim of quantity leaves no space to the wrong interpretations. Furthermore, this breaching is considered one of the strongest ways of expression since the holy Quran summarizes a fact the needs more elaboration into one simple expression. However, the resulted implicature in this breaching is the particularized conversational implicature because it requires (particular context which is the types of the years (lunar and solar

Text 3

( قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّكَ رَجُلًا )  
(الكهف:36)

His companion said to him during the talk with him: “Do you disbelieve in Him who created you out of dust (i.e. your father Adam), then out of Nutfa (mixed semen drops of male and female discharge), then fashioned you into (?a man

(Al-Hilali and Khan, 1419A.H.: 390)

This ayah and the next two are considered as a response from the faithful man to the man who claimed that he has got his wealth, slaves, and power by himself. In the response of the faithful man, the maxim of quantity is breached twice and the implicature is analyzed into two sides. The first side, the faithful man mentioned the process of our creation and how the man is created from dust then semen as claims that this part of the ayah gives the (2004:308) الطباطبائي (من تراب ثم من نطفة ثم سواك رجلا). Al- implicature which is that this man of wealth and slaves was proud of himself (in comparison to Allah) in .claim of his independency in what he had and in his exceptional power and ability

The second side which consists of the second breach to the maxim of quantity is represented by

This (وهو يحاوره) and (قال له صاحبه) repeating the same meaning in the same phrase by these words repetition of the meaning of (telling) imposes an additive meaning (i.e. implicature) which is stated by Ibid: 309) that although the unbeliever was proud, the faithful man was having faithful) الطباطبائي calmness and gravity. He listened to that proud man and kept his propriety and smoothness in his .conversation with him

that the breaching of the maxim (10-509 :2007) الشيرازي Another interpretation can be raised by of quantity introduces the reader to the idea of blasphemy that is not mentioned in the ayah itself at all. Although the unbeliever did not mention his infidelity in his speeches in the former ayahs, the faithful man considered him in this ayah as a blasphemer. The faithful man used to breach the maxim of quantity to redirects the readers and that unbeliever that if a man disbelieves in doomsday and the hereafter, he would be considered as an unbeliever in his Creator Who is Allah. As a result, the faithful man tries to

draw the readers' attention to the facts of mankind creation and the existence of Allah. Moreover, the particularized conversational implicature is also conveyed in this breach of this maxim

Text 4

(قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا)  
(الكهف: 74)

(In the Name of Allah the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful)  
( Khidr) said: “ Did I not tell you that you can have no patience with me )  
(Al-Hilali and Khan, 1419A.H.: 397)

In this ayah the maxims of relevance and manner are breached. These two maxims always come to be breached together. Whenever the maxim of relevance is breached, the maxim of manner is also states that the implicature is that there is a sense of rebuke from the (2004:348) الطباطبائي, breached. Thus faithful man to Musa (AS) as if he did not listen to the faithful man's advice or he did not hear what that (صبراً) man told him from the beginning of their journey. The ambiguity is arisen by the use of the word .What sort of patience is it? And about what Musa (AS) should be patient states that at the end of this story between Musa (AS) and the faithful man, (الشيرازي: 2007: 547) the reader is going to realize that the faithful man has special metaphysical knowledge. This man was able to know the future of every single action by the permission of Allah. He knows the internals of the (وكيف تصبر على ما لم تحط به خبراً). externals, and this is not under the ability of Musa (AS) as in this ayah refers to the fact that Musa (AS) was already told that he should not ask (لك) The use of the pronoun about what would be going throughout the journey. Furthermore, since the maxim of relevance is .breached, the standard conversational implicature is resulted in this ayah

Text5

(حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ بَيْنَ السَّدَّيْنِ وَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمَا قَوْمًا لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ قَوْلًا)  
(الكهف: 92)

Untill, when he reached between two mountains, he found, before (near))  
(.them (those two mountains), a people who scarcely understood a word  
(Al-Hilali and Khan, 1419A.H.: 398)

In this ayah, the maxim of quality is breached. This Ayah describes a particular tribe of people that they could not understand any language. Thus, this leads to a conclusion that they could not even speak, because one who could not understand any language, obviously, he could not speak. While this Ayah gives such impression, the next Ayah contradicts the former one. It proclaims that those people are able to speak. As a result, this contradiction raises the ambiguity, that is, the breaching of the maxim of .the quality clarifies that this breaching of quality maxim implies the simplicity of those (395 :2004) الطباطبائي people or refers to their language. It is strange and different from all known languages at that time in which he claims that this (الشيرازي :2007: 576) Another interpretation can be imposed by breaching of quality maxim expresses that those people have no ability to understand the content of the .speech. In other word, they lack the intellect

However, the conveyed implicature in this ayah is the particularized conversational implicature because it requires a particular context. Thus, this context in this ayah is come to be the ability of those .people to communicate

In addition, it is possible to go through a short distinction between the types of conversational implicature. Generally speaking, implicature has two major types which are conversational and conventional implicature. According to what the paper tackles in the theoretical section and because of the limits of time and study, the distinction will apply the types of conversational implicature rather than the conventional implicature on these selected ayahs and the latter can be left for further research. The :types of conversational implicature are shown in the table below

.Note: (+) means that this type of implicature is generated  
 .means that implicature is not generated (-)

Table (1): The Generated Types of Conversational Implicature

.Text No	Types of Conversational Implicature			
	particularized	Standard	Generalized	
			Scalar	Clausal
-Text -1	-	-	+	+
-Text-2	+	-	-	-
-Text-3	+	-	-	-
-Text-4	-	+	-	-
-Text-5	+	-	-	-

*Section Four*

Conclusion

The applying of the maxims of implicature on Al-Kahaf sura in the glorious Quran shows clearly that these maxims can be applied to religious text in Arabic. Thus, this means that the first hypothesis is .validated

It is also concluded that in these ayahs of Al-Kahaf sura in the glorious Quran, conversational implicature is mostly conveyed by the breaching of the maxim of quantity which is almost always in conflict with the maxim of quality and at the same time more than one type of conversational implicature can be applied to the glorious Quran as in Text number1. So, the second and the fourth .hypotheses are also validated

Furthermore, it is concluded that the difficulty of understanding implicature in these selected analysed ayahs in Al-Kahaf sura in the holy Quran. There is a difficulty in understanding the implicature in these analysed ayahs which is caused by the complication of the language and the conventionality of the expressions used. Thus, this complication and conventionality can be only clarified by those people .who have strong immersion in such texts

#### Recommendation and Suggestion

This study practically can be conducted as a test for fourth year Iraqi EFL learners, specially for .this grade, because they have studied implicature in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year classes

The test can be divided into recognition and production levels, so according to such a test, it will .be hypothesized that Iraqi EFL learners can recognize implicature in glorious Quran

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