A Contrastive Analysis: What is the Conventional Implicature? Is the "Bad" Content of a Slur Conveyed as a Conventional Implicature?

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ABSTRACT

The conventional implicature, arguably, refers to plenty of linguistic aspects with respect to episteme, metaphysics, as well as semantic criticism of language. Accordingly, the conventional implication consists of a sort of specific literal meanings, which slightly differ from the conversational implication. In addition to that, the particular taxonomy of slur words intends to utter a variety of dyslogistic, disparaging expressions in terms of bad or awful contents along with immoral conducts of a word. Hence, it is, apparently, debatable and doubtful that to what extent slur words can convey unethical substance in a way of the conventional implicature? This contrastive article, therefore, attempts to examine credible reasons for clarifying the thesis: the awful essence of pejorative words comes with a conventional implicature. Correspondingly, I have emphasised a few substantial findings such as combinatorial externalism, prohibitionism alongside expressivism. However, notwithstanding this semantic analysis, it is restricted to investigate epistemic and metaphysical affiliations in this regard.

Keywords: Combinatory Externalism, Conventional Implicature, Expressivism, Prohibitionism, Slur Words.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The philosophical concept of conventional implicature and slur terms play a key role in account of semantic analysis of language. In accordance with Grice (1989), there are a couple of implicatures: conversational implicature and conventional implicature. In general, 'conventional implicature' tends to associate with meanings of particular words rather than conversational outcomes (Bach, 1999, p. 327). In addition, 'slur words' are intimately connected with the class of pejorative expressions and attempt to convey a variety of emotional states, which are beyond the truth-conditional substance (Hom, 2011, p. 383). Despite this, the technical term 'implicature' simply connotes linguistic communication about some sentences, which are not entailed strictly (Lycan, 2019, p. 162). Therefore, it is apparent that there would be a puzzling stance of linguistic utterance in favour of the conventional implicature along with the awful content of a slur word. In response to this, I would expect this article to elaborate on the conventional implicature and defend the thesis that the bad content of a slur word brings out as a conventional implicature. The article begins by the nature of the conventional implicature; then, it will go on to the fundamental criteria for slur/derogatory words, a critique of combinatorial externalism, prohibitionism, and eventually, expressivism.

II. THE NATURE OF THE CONVENTIONAL IMPLICATURE

Preliminary, the fundamental phenomenon of the conventional implicature is a significant discourse of semantic analysis in terms of operative meaning and understanding. Grice's category of 'conventional implicature' certainly derives from the distinctive meanings of multiple sentences supervening the internal knowledge of linguistic expressions (Bach, 1999, p. 327); in fact, it constantly carries several specific words such as 'but', 'and', as well as 'even' in order to contribute to a wide range of implications in an utterance (Lycan, 2019, p. 162). Hence, it seems that there is a technical requisite of logical conjunctions, for instance, *it is raining, and it is Monday*. Accordingly, here 'and' would be considered as a *truth-functional connective* under a truth-table. Likewise, according to the view of truth-conditionality, there is a precise difference between the following sentences:

1. She is an American and she is patriotic.

2. She is an American, but she is patriotic.

Corresponding to commonsensical knowledge, the truth of the first proposition and the second proposition, reasonably, indicates a sort of contrast in respect of consistency and inconsistency (=what is consisted in and what is merely indicated that is not entailed in the sentence) (Stampe, 1975). Similarly, it is also probable that there is a standard distinction in-between *use* and *mention* such as word *salada* and the word *salada*. Nevertheless, this propositional difference is unable to be seen in a taxonomy of conversational implicature because it substantially depends on the conversational meanings of the linguistic terms. It is, therefore, clear that the account of conventional implicature has a vital role in semantic analysis of a linguistic expression.

Moreover, the Grice-inspired theory of the conventional implicature indicates several distinctive facets in contrast with the conversational implicature. Consequently, as Grice (1989) suggests, there are a few remarkable characteristics in the conventional implicature:

1. Conventional implicatures seem to be direct: if someone says, "He is a Canadian, but he is patriotic", it could instantly manifest that the speaker looks at a sort of suspense or tension between being a Canadian and being a patriot - in particular, there is no room for inference and then, resolving the maxim.
2. Conventional implicatures seem to be non-cancellable: "He is a Canadian, but he is patriotic", perhaps, it could be possible to imply that Canadians are not patriotic or anything, otherwise, it could not. However, it is unable to deny any of them.
3. Conventional implicatures seem to be detachable: it is plausible to say something alongside the same truth-conditional meaning without generating the implicature: "He is a Canadian, but he is patriotic", in fact, implicatures could still be produced in terms of *use* and *mention*.

On the other hand, the Gricean hypothesis for the conversational implicature appears to be inferred, cancellable, as well as non-detachable; then, it is likely that syntactic properties of a sentence cease putative facts of psychological reality due to context-free external meanings (Cole, 1975). Furthermore, many scholars hold the view that the taxonomy of conversational implicature literally refers to pragmatics of logical constants in favour of quality, quantity, relation, alongside manner (Edgington, 2006); then, it is widely believed that these linguistic components, initially, explore speaker's use of words and sentences opposed to truth-evaluable contents: truth and falsity. For these reasons, it becomes obvious that there is a crucial difference between the conventional implicature and conversational implicature.

III. The Fundamental Criteria for Slur/Derogatory Words

The taxonomy of slurs or derogatory words precisely derives from pejorative classification of linguistic expressions, which denote disparage or insult; indeed, the following perspective of 'slur' etymologically consists of rhetoric; powerful; insidious features in an utterance (Camp, 2013, p. 330); then, generally, it could exhibit a sort of unmoralistic notions even though there could be a wide variety of literature by reason of the conventional implicature, for instance, *swot* and *gammon*. By contrast, it has commonly been assumed that stereotype of slur words often articulates some extent of offensive; awful; bad; unethical meanings, for instance, 'shit', 'fuck', 'dick', 'bastard', 'faggot', etc. (Jeshion, 2013, p. 314). Thus, this complex of pejorative expression has been a considerable puzzle with reference to 'semantic externalism': 'Semantic externalism is the view that the meaning of a linguistic expression may supervene on more than the internal, psychological states of the speaker that uttered it, and hence, can also depend on external facts about the speaker's linguistic community; fact that the speaker may be entirely unaware of' (Kripke, 1972; Putnam; 1975 cited in Hom, 2012, p. 384).

Accordingly, it is apparent that slur words could show a wide variety of linguistic meanings by means of semantic externalism and internalism, which is supposed to be the conventional implicature (Farkas, 2006), for instance, *Barack Obama is a girly swot.* Thus, it becomes obvious that the bad content of slur words tends to convey a conventional implicature.

In addition, key substances of the awful content of slur words would necessarily be associated with a vast array of semantic sketches. Notably, there are a couple of predominant aspects in slur words with regards to the Gricean concept of conventional implicature. As Whiting (2013) puts forward, the first perspective of slur words is, contribute to what is uttered by the linguistic expression, and the next is, not being an outright part of uttered sentence by the use of slur words, otherwise, carried. For example,

1. John is a male homosexual.
2. John is a faggot.

Correspondingly, it is possible to realise that there is a crucial view of derogatory words in terms of pejorative content along with neutral counterparts. Similarly, according to Davis and McCready (2020, p. 2), the core intuition of slur words is unlikely to be 'mixed expressives'; in fact, it is thought that semantic content, invocational content of a linguistic phenomenon are encrypted as the substantial way of expressive content of a slur word:

'The utterance of a slur serves to impose its expressive content onto the context. That is, we think the expressive content encoded by a slur is dynamic and imposes a particular kind of context change' (Potts, 2005 cited in Davis and McCready, 2020, p. 2).

In spite of this, there is evidence to suggest that slurs are able to pick out three essential traits of conventional implicature:

1. Pejorative significance of slur words cannot be inferred, but direct: "Barack Obama is a girly swot", precisely seems to be direct; then, there is no room for awkward inference.
2. Pejorative content of slur words is detachable: "Barack Obama is a diligent student" seems to say the same thing without any derogatory constituents because slur words often have a neutral counterpart.
3. Pejorative substance of slur words appears to be non-cancellable: "Barack Obama is a girly swot", there is no reason to deny this proposition as there is nothing wrong with being a diligent student.

For these reasons, it is crystal clear that the disparaging account of slur words is able to convey the conventional implicature alongside multiple semantic analysis of linguistic phenomena.

IV. A CRITIQUE OF COMBINATORIAL EXTERNALISM

The derogatory content of a slur word has been promoted by the truth-conditional principle in respect of the conventional implicature; consequently, the certain use of a slur expression is identified as 'combinatorial externalism' by means of relevant combination of evaluative and descriptive notions (Whiting, 2013, p. 366). Therefore, the awful category of slurs is, presumably, demonstrated referring to external factors, which are related with social institutions such as ideologies and practices. According to Hom (2008 cited in Whiting, 2013, p. 367), this is determined as a complex thought of linguistic forms: 'ought to be subject to such-and-such discriminatory practices because of having such-and-such negative properties, all because of being such-and-such'. For instance,

1. A: The US Vice President is nigger.
2. B: A said that the US Vice President is a nigger.

In response to the following sentences, A's utterance merely represents a perceptive expression by someone else. In contrast, B's utterance tends to show an expression of racism. In this manner, it is evident that slurs are able to convey derogatory contents of the sentential utterances as the conventional implicature.

V. A CRITIQUE OF PROHIBITIONISM

Prohibitionism is another noteworthy perceptive of slur words in regard to the conventional implicature. Intuitively, this assumption intends to suggest that the disparaging subsistence of slur words are illegitimate as well as prohibited (Anderson and Lepore cited in Whiting, 2013, p. 368); then, violation of this ethical regulation, it could be caused to provoke offensive or awful meanings of speech acts. In particular, this often occurs due to the fact that most slurs are affected in negative; unfavourable; pessimistic connotations in terms of conventional implications; likewise, there is no availability of neutral counterparts, too (Richard, 2008 cited in Anderson, 2013). For example:

1. "Kike" means kike.
2. "Kike" is a derogatory word.

On this view, it might be plausible to realise that this account of awful words still remains socio-linguistic expressive meanings as concerns semantic sketch of the conventional implicature. In short, undeniably, it becomes apparent that the simple and straightforward account of prohibitionism facilitates the succinct correlation of slur words and the conventional implicature.

VI. A CRITIQUE OF EXPRESSIVISM

On the ground of slur words and the conventional implication, expressivism has a worthwhile prospect towards the positivism of derogatory taxonomy. As Richard (2008 cited in Anderson, 2013, p. 356) explains, this alternative way of expressivism certainly accommodates the linguistic attitude of slur words as *what is said*; in fact, this position goes to further argue that as an essential part of slur words, they have a sort of attitudes of contempt because the ethical rejection should be accepted by itself whilst picking up the linguistic role of neutral counterpart. For instance:

1. Stephine is British but brave.
2. Stephine is being British contrasts with her being brave.

Consequently, these kinds of linguistic expressions intuitively indicate broader scope of meanings in terms of semantic analysis. Hence, it has been argued that cognitive meaning and conventional implicatures

of some utterances may supersede truth-functional validity, too. However, owing to all these reasoned claims, it seems obvious that the offensive content of slur words, debatably, exhibits the conventional implicature.

VII. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the present article was to examine to what extent the conventional implicature can be understood as well as defend the thesis that the bad content of a slur is conveyed as a conventional implicature. In responding to this, I have discussed a few most significant supporting arguments such as the nature of the conventional implicature, the fundamental criteria for slur words, the critique of combinatorial externalism, prohibitionism along with expressivism. Notwithstanding these philosophical implications, it obviously seems that the account of derogatory words is able to convey the conventional implicature. However, despite these central arguments, there still remains some sort of problematic and puzzling concepts like semantic externalism, truth-functional validity, and expressionism. It is, therefore, necessary to go with a reasonable approach to tackle these linguistic issues in due course.

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