



التضمنين الحواري في مقابلات تلفزيونية مع ريتشارد راميريز وأوسكار راي بولن: تحليل دلالي

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## الخلاصة

الهدف الرئيسي من تقديم هذا البحث هو لدراسة التلميحات او التضمنين الحواري التي يستخدمها المجرمين في مقابلاتين تلفزيونيتين. هؤلاء المجرمون هم ريتشارد راميريز الذي اجريت مقابله في عام 1989 وأوسكار راي بولن في 2016. النظرية المتبناة للتحليل هي نظرية كرايس للمعنى الضمني والمبدأ التعاوني (1975، 1989). في البداية يتم تقديم شرح مفصل لنظرية التضمنين، انواعها، خصائصها، والمبدأ التعاوني. بعد ذلك يتم عرض تحليل البيانات. عدد من النصوص تم اختيارها من المقابلاتين على اساس نظرية التحليل. نتيجة بارزه تم الوصول اليها من خلال تحليل البيانات هي ان المجرمين لا يطيعون قواعد المبدأ التعاوني لخداع المتلقي. يضمنون المعاني للتهرب من اجابة الاسئلة عن جرائمهم. في بعض الأحيان يوظف المجرمين واحده او اكثر من الاستراتيجيات البراغمية ليدافعوا عن أنفسهم.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التضمنين الحواري، المبدأ التعاوني، ريتشارد راميريز، أوسكار راي بولن.

## Conversational Implicature In Richard Ramirez And Oscar Ray Bolin's TV Interviews: Pragmatic Analysis

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## Abstract

The main motif behind introducing this paper is to study the conversational implicatures that are used by criminals in two TV interviews. They are Richard Ramirez in 1989 and Oscar Ray Bolin in 2016, a day before his execution. The model of the analysis is Grice's theory of Conversational Implicature and the Cooperative Principle (CP) (1975, 1989). Firstly, Grice's discussion of implicature, its types, its properties, and the CP are shown. Then analyzing the data is presented. A number of texts are selected from the two interviews according to the model of the analysis. A significant result that is reached to by the researcher is that criminals exploit the maxims of the CP to deceive and mislead the addressee. They imply meanings to evade answering questions about their crimes. Criminals sometimes employ one or more of the pragmatic strategies such as circumlocution, to defend themselves.

**Keywords:** conversational implicature, Cooperative principle, Richard Ramirez, Oscar Ray Bolin.

## 1.1 Conversational Implicature

The theory of Conversational Implicature is one of the prominent and effective subjects in pragmatics. Furthermore, it's thought that it has influenced the popularity of pragmatics as a branch within the field of linguistics [1: 58].

Pragmatically, conversational implicature is understood as the indirectness in interaction [2: 73]. Conversational implicatures are implications that are based on the presence of language usage conventions, like the widely held belief that speakers should strive to be truthful [3: 134]. They are, according to Grice, vital in human connections. Even when individuals do not communicate their goals directly, what they are expressing in conversation is usually comprehended by the listeners [2: 63]. His foremost premise is on the relationship between the literal or the explicit meaning of a certain utterance and the assumption or the implicit meaning which can be deduced from that utterance. Grice determines the features of conversational implicature:

- (1) The implied meaning of the sentence is distinct from the exact meaning.
- (2) The speaker wants the listener to understand the statement's meaning and its implicature, as well as to be conscious that this is what the speaker means.
- (3) Context determines what a conversational implicature means.
- (4) Despite the fact that conversational implicatures are frequently obvious, they are neither "inevitable," nor logically required [4: 140-141].

Grice's primary concentration was cooperation, and an effort to make each person's contribution relevant to the current conversation. They are the only conditions for conversation to be successful. Even during heated arguments where neither party wants the other to gain any ground, where one may suppose the participants are being completely uncooperative, they are actually being collaborative in conversation if they attempt to: express their ideas without providing unnecessary or confusing information, keep to the issue or at least pertinent side topics and speak in a style that is understandable and reasonably brief [5: 42].

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 [2: 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" [6: 26]. Grice divides the CP into four categories and each one has a set of maxims and sub-maxims. They are:

- (1) **Quantity Maxim:** "give the right amount of information"

- a- Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange).
- b- Don't make your contribution more informative than is required.
- (2) **Quality Maxim:** "try to make your contribution one that's true."
  - a- Don't say what you believe to be false.
  - b- Don't say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
- (3) **Relevance Maxim:** be relevant.
- (4) **Manner Maxim:**
  - a- Be perspicuous.
  - b- Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
  - c- Be orderly.
  - d- Avoid obscurity of expression.
  - e- Avoid ambiguity [6: 26-27] .

Grice identified distinct thought processes that frequently result in conversational implicatures. They are as follows:

### 1- Observing the Maxims

Speakers have the ability of signaling their listeners to which extent they observe the maxims. The technique for that purpose is by including a set of intensifiers or phrases to their speech. These phrases are known as "*hedges*." Instead of speaking in a direct way like:

(1) *Smoking damages your health.*

A speaker may say it in one of the following ways:

- a- *All I know is smoking damages your health.*
- b- *They say smoking damages your health.*

While the phrase "*all I know*" hedges the maxim of Quantity because of the speaker's attempt to be "as informative as is required," the phrase "*they say*" hedges the maxim of Quality, since the speaker shows that the speech isn't of his/her [7: 78-80].

### 2- Violating the Maxims

In spite of Grice's assertion that interlocutors engage in ideal communication if they observe the maxims, he indicates that there are situations in which these maxims will be violated. Grice was well recognizing that speakers cannot always act in accordance with his maxims, he nonetheless contends that any exchange will still take place even if they are broken, stressing that the maxims enhance cohesion and relevancy rather than negating them [8: 109], for instance:

(2) *Husband: How much did that new dress cost, darling?*

*Wife: Less than the last one.*

The husband's question is about the price of the dress, but the wife hides that by not saying how much it is less than the last one. Her reply is "economical", that's why she violates the Quantity maxim. She also can be described as being not sincere, so the Quality maxim is breached [9: 40].

### 3. Flouting the Maxims

If speakers use metaphor, irony, euphemism, and hyperbole during speech, they are described as flouting the maxims [4: 145]. An example of metaphor is:

(3) *Juliet is the sun*

In (3) the writer supposes that Romeo flouts the Quality maxim. He is drawing attention to the similarities between Juliet and the sun and perhaps encouraging his audience to see her in a particular way, but he is also saying something about Juliet that may or may not be true, such as that she is superior to her peers, the focus of his life, and the object of his adoration. It is obvious that Romeo's comparison is not understood literally. Surly he doesn't mean that she is a body of gases in the sky, just like the material of the sun [10: 262].

A number of phrases termed by Grice as tautologies flout the Quantity maxim, since by saying a simple phrase, a great deal of meaning is intended as in the following example:

(4) *War is war.*

The uttering of (4) implies the destruction and the horror nature of the war in general, which means everything is possible to happen in it, not only this catastrophe [8: 111].

### 4. Opting out of Maxims

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. Another commonly cause of "opting out" is the possibility that providing the demanded data harms or endangers the speaker or someone else, for example:

(5) **Caller:** ... *um I lived in uh a country where people sometimes need to flee that country.*

**Presenter:** *Uh, where was that?*

**Caller:** *It's a country in Asia and I don't want to say any more.*

In the above exchange **the caller** makes a call phone to a radio discussion program complains to **the presenter** about the bad conditions in his/her country. However, when the presenter asks about that country, the caller, despite of his/her clear willingness to tell their difficulties, opts out of Quantity maxim by saying "**I don't**

*want to say any more,*” because of his/her fear to be punished by the authorities in that [11: 74-75].

## 5. Clash of Maxims

Communicators sometimes experience cases in which it is difficult to obey a Maxim without violating another one. It's probable that the speaker tries to follow the Quality maxim (has sufficient proof for what he/she claims) but, at the same time, violates the Quantity maxim (isn't be as informative as necessary) [6: 30], for example:

(6) *A is asking B about a mutual friend's new boyfriend:*

*A: Is he nice?*

*B: She seems to like him.*

If B's answer is merely, “No”, he/she observes the Quantity Maxim. However Quality Maxim is violated because it requires from speakers an evidence for their claims. B's reply involves only what he/she knows, “*She seems to like him.*” In this case B takes into consideration the demands of the Quality maxim. The result is a contradiction between the two maxims of Quantity and Quality [11: 66].

### 1.1.1 Types of Implicature

Grice distinguishes between two main types of implicature conventional and conversational. Lyons summarizes the main differences between these two types in the following quotation:

*The difference between them is that the former [the conventional implicature] depends on something other than what is truth-conditional in the conventional use, or meaning, of particular forms or expressions, whereas the later [the conversational type] derived from a set of more general principles which regulate the proper conduct of conversation (12: 272).*

The implicature of the conventional type is general and understandable to all interlocutors because it's stable to a number of utterances whereas the understanding of the conversational implicature type is linked to the context because of its changeable nature [1: 59]. The set of the main properties which distinguish the conversational implicatures type from the conventional implicatures are: **cancelability**, **calculability**, **non-detachability**, **indeterminacy** and **non-conventionality** [13: 13]. These properties also distinguish the type of conversational implicature from other types of inferences such as entailments [4: 149].

## 1.2 Analyzing Data

The data that the researcher adopts to be analyzed are two interviews with two American criminals, Richard Ramirez and Oscar Ray Bolin.

### 1.2.1 The First Interview: Richard Ramirez





The first interview is with the American serial killer and the rapist Richard Ramirez, who was also known as *The Night Stalker*. This title was used to refer to the criminal who committed the series of the crimes which were did by Ramirez before he discovered. His crimes happened in California during the period 1984-1985. However he stayed free till the year of 1989 when the court found him guilty of 43 crimes. They were as follows “thirteen counts of murder, five attempted murders, eleven sexual assaults, and fourteen burglaries.” [14]

The psychological analysts reported that the abuse Ramirez suffered from his childhood affected him. Thus he was described as a “made psychopath.” His father tortured him when he was still a child because of alcoholic drinking. He also was interested in Satanism and the occult. When he entered the courtroom for the first time, Ramirez shouted, “Hail Satan!” and raising his hand with a pentagram drawn on it. That was the symbol of Satanism.

During Ramirez’s trial period, there were women who admired his handsomeness. They were messaging him. One of them was Doreen Lioy. Their relationship developed to end by a marriage in the prison. However she broke it in 2009 when the investigations revealed Ramirez’s horrible crime of raping and murdering a nine-year-old girl, (Ibid.).

The date of the interview<sup>i</sup> was in 1989 by the interviewer Mike Watkiss.

#### **Text: 1**

*“Watkiss: What do you want the world to know about you?”*

*Ramirez: The world has been fed many lies about me. I have read very few truths.”*

The interviewer asks Ramirez about the idea or the picture which he wants the world to recognize about him. The implicit meaning in Ramirez’s speech is in the exploitation of the maxims. He breaches the maxim of Relation, because he does not answer the question as it is. He accuses the reports which were released about him by the public and the criminal investigations as false. He violates the Quality maxim because his crimes were proved by evidences. There were no fabricated stories about him.

#### **Text: 2**

*“Watkiss: Did you kill 13 people?”*

*Ramirez: It would be improper for me to comment on my LA convictions, and I, my pending case here in San Francisco....*

*Watkiss: You didn't kill 13 people?*

*Ramirez: Again, it would be improper for me to comment in any regard to that question.”*



Along the whole part which is published of this interview, Ramirez refuses to talk about his crimes. He **evades** implicitly by rejecting to comment on the question or presenting any idea. He does not show any cooperation to give the opportunity to exchange more ideas. Therefore Ramirez opts out from the Cooperative Principle and the maxims. This is done twice on the same question, because he claims that he made an appeal to the higher court to review the decisions concerning his condemnation. Therefore he doesn't want to tell something that can prove his conviction.

### Text: 3

*"Ramirez: I'll tell you what I gave up on love and happiness a long time ago.*

*Watkiss: why?*

*Ramirez: I don't care to explain that. Let the, let the quote stand for itself. People, people in this day and age are brainwashed and programmed like a computer at being nothing more than puppets. This nation, this country is founded in violence. Violent delights tend to have violent ends. It's, madness is something rare in individuals putting groups of people in ages. It is a rule. **Killing is killing**, whether done for duty, profit or fun. Men murdered themselves into this democracy."*

Ramirez doesn't answer the questions as they are posed by the interviewer. He discusses what he wants to reveal. He downgrades people when he likens them to puppets. The act he intends from this understatement is blaming. He blames the people and the nation of his time for his crimes. He wants to reveal that people are controlled by undeserved powers. He violates the maxim of Quality by accusing and understating the people. He flouts the maxim of Quantity by the phrase "**Killing is killing**." It is a tautology. He involves an additional meaning to what he says literally. He implies that the violent acts of killing are the same whether are done by governments or by criminals. He tries to lessen the effect of his crimes.

### Text: 4

*Watkiss: Are you, are you a worshipper of the devil?*

*Ramirez: No comment.*

*Watkiss: Come on, Richard.*

*Ramirez: I can tell you a little bit about Satanism.*

*Watkiss: Well, I'm interested in hearing what you got to say.*

*Ramirez: It is undefiled wisdom instead of hypocritical self-deceit. It is power, power without charity, a Satanist admits to being evil.*



In answering the question “*Are you, are you a worshipper of the devil?*” Ramirez evades explicitly. He violates the maxims of Quantity and Manner for he doesn’t comment in any way on the question, thus he is vague. After that he chooses to speak a little about Satanism. He advocates that he studied it and knew some about its philosophy. He describes Satanism as a pure wisdom. By the phrase of “*instead of hypocritical self-deceit,*” he **innuendoes** to the people who he earlier describes them as “*brainwashed and programmed like a computer at being nothing more than puppets.*” He implies that the people who don’t believe in Satanism are hypocrites and hide their evilness behind charity, however “*a Satanist admits to being evil.*” By this description he flouts the maxim of Quality because he reverses the well-known facts about people and the Satan who leads them to all the bad behaviors. Not the opposite as he says.

#### Text: 5

*Watkiss: You admit to being an evil, Richard?*

*Ramirez: We are all evil in some form or another, are we not?*

*Watkiss: I'm asking you the questions, my friend.*

*Ramirez: (laughing) Yes, I am evil, not 100%, but I am evil. Evil has always existed. Perfect world most people seek shall never come to pass and it's going to get worse. The great epics of our life is when we gain the courage to re-baptized our evil qualities as being our best qualities.*

Ramirez releases judgments and generalizes them. He tries to employ the **circumlocution** strategy by describing people as evil, “*We are all evil in some form or another, are we not?*” He uses the pronoun “*we*” to involve himself and the interviewer in a certain group of people who “*are all evil.*” The group he intends are unknown thus he flouts the maxim of Manner because he is ambiguous. The tag-question reveals Ramirez’s confidence in his thought to the point that he invites the addressee to agree with him. He flouts the maxim of Quality because he doesn’t specify an intended people and doesn’t provide an extent to his phrases.

The interviewer rejects to agree or disagree with him, “*I'm asking you the questions, my friend.*” Therefore Ramirez admits his evil character, “*I am evil.*” He condemns himself, but he justifies it after that. He considers his evil nature as normal. That’s why he also violates the maxim of Quality because his statements are untrue.

#### 1.2.2 The Second Interview: Oscar Ray Bolin (1962 – 2016)

An American killer who was executed after he was condemned for raping and murdering three women. He committed these murders in 1986 in Tampa,



Florida. The investigations didn't reach the killer for many years. Bolin and two other men abducted and sexually assaulted a waitress. She was a 20 years old. They tried to kill her but she escaped from them. Bolin was arrested for this crime and was sentenced to be prisoned from 22 to 75 years. Then the other crimes were discovered when Haffner, his ex-wife and her new husband hinted to the police about Bolin's involvement in other crimes. Then also his brother told on him [16]. The first victim was the 25 years old Natalie Blanche Holley. She was a night manager at a Church's Fried Chicken restaurant in Tampa. She ended her shift on January 25, 1986 and locked up the shop with another worker. Her body was discovered a few hours later and she had been brutally stabbed. Stephanie Collins, only 17 years old, was the second murder by Bolin. She was a student at Chamberlain High School. He also stabbed her and damaged her skull. Teri Lynn Matthews was the third woman who was killed by Bolin in the same year. She was 26 years old. He beat her and cut her throat then wrapped the body by a sheet. He told his ex-wife by these crimes.

The time of his execution was at 10:16 p.m., on January 7 in 2016 by lethal injection. WTVT made an interview<sup>ii</sup> with Bolin on the day before his execution. After being jailed for the last 28 years, Bolin referred to his execution as a liberation from the suffering that he experienced in prison.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar\\_Ray\\_Bolin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_Ray_Bolin)

#### Text: 1

*“INTERVIEWER: So I, I gotta ask you, how are you.. How are you feeling this morning?*

*OSCAR RAY BOLIN: [Laughing] Umm, I mean I don't know how this.. how you would expect someone to feel, they told you tomorrow you're dying, how would you feel? It's not some.. we all die but no one know the exact date and time. That's.. that's hard to deal with. But I'm at peace with myself. I mean as far as it's my release, my punishment is over. I've been here a 28 years now. I'm tired, so.”*

The interviewer asks Bolin about his feelings on the day before his execution. He includes an implicature in his answer when he violates the maxims of Quantity and Manner and when he begins the speech by the **interjection** “*umm*.” The two maxims are breached because he is little informative than what is recommended by the Cooperative Principle and ambiguous because his words are contradictory. He responds by asking her the same question but in different tone. When he says “*how you would expect someone to feel, they told you tomorrow you're dying, how would you feel?*” he intends the heavy sense that he is experiencing. Also he implies that there is no words that can disclose his sensation to the listener. It is extremely difficult for him to the point that he can't



reveal it. He tells the interviewer to put herself in his position and think what he may feel.

The meaning of the sentences *“I mean as far as it’s my release, my punishment is over. I’ve been here a 28 years now,”* is ironical because the opposite of what is stated would happen. They contradict what he describes before. In the beginning he mentions the difficulty of his thought about his dying in the next day, then he describes it as his releasing from punishment. He claims that by the execution he would get his liberty, but deep down he was in fear of what would happen.

### Text: 2

*“INTERVIEWER: Do you like yourself?”*

*OSCAR RAY BOLIN: Yeah. I’m.. come.. for.. myself.. There's a lot of things in my younger, in my past, you know, I wish I could change, but I'm at peace with myself. The States about to kill me and they think they're getting justice. But I'm not getting justice. I don't kill somebody outside, that's like.. and I ..They Killed me 28 years ago. And they locked me up. Now they're just releasing me.”*

Bolin here also violates the Quality maxim by which an implicit meaning is involved. The contradiction is also apparent in his turn of speech. He expresses his regret about what he did in the past and in his young days, but he doesn't mention these things that he wishes to change. He may refer to the crimes for which he was in prison for 28 years and would be executed. Then he accuses the government that would punish him and regards himself as a victim even though he hints at certain faults in the past. He denies the condemnation as a killer, *“I don't kill somebody outside.”*

Bolin's statements *“They Killed me 28 years ago. And they locked me up. Now they're just releasing me,”* flouts the maxim of Quality, because he doesn't mean it literally. He suggests that the sufferings that he experienced during the years in the prison were the real punishment. He was just like a dead person. The execution is the end of his anguish.

### Text: 3

INTERVIEWER: So, you're saying you didn't murder these women?

OSCAR RAY BOLIN: No.

INTERVIEWER: You didn't murder Natalie Holley?

OSCAR RAY BOLIN: No.

INTERVIEWER: Stephanie Collins?

OSCAR RAY BOLIN: No.

INTERVIEWER: Terry Lynn Matthews?

OSCAR RAY BOLIN: No, I didn't know. I'd never seen them. Never met them. And I haven't, I met them through photographs, the crime-scene photos, the newspaper articles. I've gotten along very well through newspaper articles and crime-scene photos, police reports.

What characterizes Bolin's interview is the maintenance of the denial and advocating the innocence and purity. Even though his crimes were proved by substandard evidence and witnesses, Bolin didn't admit his crimes till the time of his execution. In this text the interviewer asks him about the crimes for which he would be executed. However, he rejects totally any kind of condemnation. He violates blatantly the maxim of Quality by repeating the same answer of "**no**" for four times. Also he says that he never met those women and didn't know them. But he was convicted by raping and killing. It is reported about him that Bolin continuously maintained his innocence throughout his imprisonment. He looks and sounds like a nice enough guy which only makes the darkness underneath seems much more sinister.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar\\_Ray\\_Bolin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_Ray_Bolin)

#### Text: 4

INTERVIEWER: *Did they tell you what time the execution takes place?*

OSCAR RAY BOLIN: *Well, I think it scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Flies, like.. after 28 years in this, it's been in this box for 28 years, it's my release. My punishment is over, they can't hurt me no more. So..*

He repeats the same utterances throughout the interview, "***It's my release. My punishment is over.***" He seeks to emphasize the idea of his innocence from killing the three woman. Bolin's interaction is introduced by *well*. Here it refers to an implicit meaning of what is next. He flouts the maxim of Quality when he likens the execution to flying from punishment. He is executed because he is a rapist and a murderer and deserves this punishment. At the beginning of the interview he expresses his indescribable fear for being on aware on the time of his dying but now he describes it as a flying.

#### Conclusions

The researcher concludes the following points:

1. The two interviewees imply meanings either by only violating or flouting the maxims or by involving one or more of the pragmatic strategies. The pragmatic strategies they employ are: evasion (because they try to evade answering the questions about their crimes to defend themselves), innuendo (to show themselves as pure and other people are bad), circumlocution (to

revolve around the main idea and not admit reality), and interjections (to delay stating the required information).

Criminals are uncooperative and deceptive interlocutors. They violate the

2. CP maxims with the intention of misleading the interviewer and the audience.
3. Most of the implicatures that are recognized by the researcher in the two interviews are unintentional because they seek to cheat people by advocating guiltless nature not only to imply an additional meaning to what is said literally.

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**Note:** this study is a part from an M.A thesis under the title of "A *Pragmatic Analysis of Implicature in TV Criminals' Interviews*."

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MC5huwZoPZA>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxMZdvSv61M>