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An Animated and Narrated Glossary of
Terms used in Linguistics
presents

Implicature

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What is an implicature?

An implicature is something meant, implied, or suggested, and yet is distinct from what is being said.

Example:

Suppose someone said, "*With a sigh, Grizzly closed its eyes for the last time.*"

The speaker may be implicating: Grizzly dies.
There is nothing in the sentence that says that Grizzly dies.

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Communicating Implicatures

Implicatures are not always successfully communicated.

E.g.

With a sigh, Grizzly closed its eyes for the last time.

The speaker may be implicating: Grizzly dies.

But the listener may think the speaker is trying to implicate that Grizzly is now blind.

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Establishing Implicatures

- Because implicatures are rarely explicitly expressed, it is very hard to establish if the listener/reader has grasped the intended implicature.
- As such, any inference about the implicatures obtained from an implicature-loaded expression is subject to debate and requires clarification from the author of that expression.

The End