

***I like you* may actually implicate ‘I love you’: A reconsideration of some scalar implicatures**

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A scalar implicature is a conversational implicature that is derived from a set of salient contrastive alternatives usually linearly ordered in semantic or informational strength such as a Horn scale. It is dependent on the non-use of the semantically or informationally stronger alternatives that could have been used in the same set. A typical example is that the use of the existential quantifier *some* implicates ‘not all’.

But this is not always the case. In this article, I discuss three ‘marked’ or ‘non-canonical’ cases of scalar implicatures in three different languages: (i) the use of ‘I like you’ to implicate ‘I love you’ in Chinese, (ii) the use of a general noun ‘person’ to refer to the speaker’s husband or her boy’s father in Malagasy, and (iii) the use of a weaker scalar expression to imply the meaning of its stronger alternative in English. I argue that contrary to a popular but erroneous view, this type of ‘marked’ or ‘non-canonical’ use is actually implicated in a classical way, with maximum theoretical parsimony, from Grice’s co-operative principle and its component maxims of conversation. I then provide a novel analysis within the same neo-Gricean pragmatic framework, combining both the Q- and I/R-principles. In this account, two aspects of scalar implicature are distinguished: epistemic and non-epistemic. For generating the non-epistemic aspect of scalar implicatures ‘from weak to not stronger’, Horn scales and the Q-principle are retained; for engendering the epistemic aspect of scalar implicature, a set such as <like, love> is treated as forming an Atlas-Levinson rather than a Horn scale and the computation of it is subject to the I/R-principle.

References: Bonnefon, J-F. et al. (2009). When some is actual all: scalar inferences in face-threatening context. *Cognition* 112, 249–258. Horn, Laurence R. (2010). From if to iff: conditional perfection as pragmatic strengthening. *Journal of Pragmatics* 32, 289–326. Huang, Y. (2014). *Pragmatics*. (2nd edition). Oxford University Press. Huang, Y. (2017). Implicature. In Huang, Y. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press, 155–179. Huang, Y. (in prep.). Conversational Implicature. Contracted to be published by Oxford: Oxford University Press. Levinson, Stephen C. (2000). *Presumptive Meanings: The Theory of Generalized Scalar Implicature*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.