Cancelability of Implicatures in Political Discourse

قابلية صور التلميح للإلغاء (اللغوي) في الخطاب السياسي

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Abstract:

Grice (1975) devised some tests to discriminate conversational implicatures from other forms of utterances. One of these tests is the cancelability test. Different scholars supported Grice's test, whereas others doubted the validity of this test. The current study sought to investigate the test of cancelability of implicatures in political discourse. Biden's press conference on the 16th of June 2021 was chosen to be the context of exploring the cancelability test. 15 utterances were chosen randomly from this press conference to be the items of a questionnaire that was directed to specialists in the field of linguistics. The results indicated that all the conventional implicatures are non-cancelable, whereas 6 out of 18 conversational implicatures are detected to be non-cancelable. No specific semantic, syntactic, or pragmatic features characterize the non-cancelable implicatures. Similarly, it is noted that non-cancelable implicatures could be canceled in any other context but not in the same political context.

Keywords: implicature, conventional, conversational, cancelability, Grice's test of implicature

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قابلية صور التلميح للإلغاء (اللغوي) في الخطاب السياسي

الملخص:

ميز جرايس (١٩٧٥) بين نوعين من صور التلميح: وهي التلميح التقليدي والتلميح الحواري. قدم جرايس عددا من الاختبارات لتمييز التلميح الحواري عن أي لفظ منطوق آخر منها قابلية صور التلميح الحواري للإلغاء (اللغوي). وقد واجه هذا الاختبار جدلا كثيرا. أيد بعض الباحثين هذا الاختبار في تحديد التلميح الحواري بينما شكك آخرون في قابلية هذا الاختبار للتطبيق على كل صور التلميح الحواري، لذا يسعى البحث الحالي لدراسة فاعلية "قابلية الإلغاء" في تمييز صور التلميح الحواري من صور التلميح التقليدي وخاصة في الخطاب السياسي. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف تم اختيار المؤتمر الصحفي للرئيس الأمريكي في السادس عشر من يونيو ٢٠٢١ لبحث قابلية صور التلميح المستخدمة في هذا المؤتمر الصحفي للإلغاء. خمسة عشر عبارة منطوقة تم اختيارها عشوائيا من المؤتمر الصحفي للرئيس الأمريكي لتمثل عناصر الاستبانة التي وجهت للمتخصصين في الدراسات اللغوية للتحقق من قابلية الإلغاء. بعد حساب نسب الاتفاق بين المتخصصين اتضح أن هناك اتفاقا على أن العبارات المنطوقة تنطوي على ثلاث من صور التلميح التقليدي وثماني عشر صورة من صور التلميح الحواري. اتفق الخبراء أن كل صور التلميح التقليدي قابلة للإلغاء بينما هناك شبه اتفاق أن ستا من صور التلميح الحواري غير قابلة للإلغاء. وبتحليل صور التلميح الحواري غير قابلة للإلغاء تبين أنه لا يوجد ما يميزها لغويا عن الصور القابلة للإلغاء.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التلميح التقليدي، التعريض الحواري، قابلية الإلغاء، اختبار جرايس لصور التلميح

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1 Introduction

It is uncontested that what is communicated in daily conversations goes usually beyond and above what is precisely said (Blome-Tillmann, 2013). In other words, people, through their utterances, often mean more than their literal words convey. Paul Grice, in his theory of conversational implicature in 1975 which is considered the first systematized framework of implicature (Wang, 2011), differentiated between what is said and what is implicated (Grice, 1975, 41-43).

Grice in his theory of conversational implicature differentiated between two types of implicatures: conventional implicature and conversational implicature (Grice, 1975, 41-44). The former is related to what the words in the utterance entail, while the latter is related to the context of the utterance not to the words of the utterance (Chapman, 2013, 161). Grice specified some criteria that characterize the conversational implicatures (Grice, 1975, 45). Among these criteria is the cancelability of the conversational implicatures (Korta 1997), which raised up a lot of argument (Blome-Tillmann, 2013). Bach (1994) and Recanati (1989) criticized this criterion and considered it not decisive in specifying conversational implicatures. However, the cancelability of conversational implicatures was considered trustful until Weiner in his essay referred to the insufficiency of this test (Weiner, 2006). A great number of researchers (e.g., Korta, 1997; Borge, 2009; Dahlman, 2013; Blome-Tillmann, 2013) supported Grice's cancelability test and explained that Weiner's examples on which he depended to indicate the insufficiency of the cancelability test are not genuine implicatures and they carry an ironic sense which could not be canceled like genuine conversational implicature.

2 Theoretical framework
2.1 Implicature

An implicature is a part of the meaning of an utterance that, while intended, does not strictly belong to "what is said" in the act of utterance and does not logically result from (Cruse, 2006, 85). Griffiths (2006, 7-10) identified implicatures as pragmatic inferences that determine what is

hinted by an utterance and he claimed that when interlocutors have the same language and knowledge background and are aware of the context in which the utterance is delivered, the implied meaning can be conveyed. Similarly, Yule (1996, 40) clarified that conveying meaning via implicatures is the speakers' choice, and the listeners are to determine the meaning that has been conveyed via the inferences, which will maintain the cooperative maxims, relevance, manner, quality, and quantity. Brown and Levinson (1987, 95) elucidated that the intended meaning result from the deviations from the maxims coupled with inferential reasoning. Grice differentiated between "what is said" and "what is implicated" (Neale, 1992). Grice's "what is said" is related to the semantic meaning of the sentence and is determined by the syntactic features of the sentence, as well as the processes of reference identification and disambiguation of context-dependent expressions. However, "what is implicated" is related to the pragmatic meaning of an utterance.

In linguistic studies, implicatures play a significant role. Five functions of implicatures in various branches of linguistics were noted by Levinson (1983, 97–100). (1) Implicatures are considered a paradigmatic example that indicates the influential function of pragmatics in explaining linguistic features. The concept of implicature appears to provide a useful functional explanation for several linguistic facts. (2) Implicatures offer explicit possibilities to interpret conversations in various dimensions, which are broader than what is literally conveyed by linguistic expressions. (3) The notion of implicature could have a significant impact on the simplifications of semantic descriptions and structures. This semantic simplification makes the adoption of semantics based on logical principles possible, as it goes beyond simply reducing problems in the lexicon. (4) Implicatures seem to be necessary if different fundamental facts about language are to be properly accounted for. For example, there is evidence that some syntactic rules are sensitive to implicature, and this implicature places interesting restrictions on the kinds of lexical items that can be used in natural language. (5) The principles that generate implicatures have very broad explanatory power, a few fundamental principles explain a wide range of seemingly unconnected facts.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987, 95), people tend to use implicatures to achieve a politeness purpose. Additionally, implicatures could be used to attract the addressees' attention, and to protect oneself while also attempting to exercise power, be polite, provide information, amuse audiences, and/or conceal certain information (Lazim, 2020). In political discourse, politicians frequently employ implicatures as a means of evading because it is easy to disavow inexplicit verbalized meanings (Chilton & Schäffner, 2002, 12).

2.2 Types of implicatures

Grice (1975, 43-44) distinguishes between two different kinds of implicatures: conventional and conversational implicatures. The former is an implicature that results from a specific word choice or syntax rather than through a set of cooperative maxims, in contrast to conversational implicatures. So, conventional implicatures do not require conversation to occur, nor do they require a certain context to be understood (Yule, 1996, 45). In other words, conventional implicatures are parts of the meanings of utterances that are not propositional in nature, but which have a stable link with specific language expressions and cannot be canceled without causing an anomaly (Cruse, 2006, 36). For example, "Mariana has succeeded", and "Even Mariana has succeeded" are propositionally the same, but the use of *even* implies that Mariana is the least likely to succeed. Some of the linguistic forms that are linked to conventional implicatures are implicative verbs (e.g., manage, fail), adverbs (e.g., already, also), subordinating conjunctions (e.g., although, despite), honorifics, and connectives (e.g., but, even, yet, and) (Fetzer, 2011, 42; Yule, 1996, 45-46). Although a conventional implicature cannot be canceled without contradiction, it is detachable in the sense that the identical truth-condition can be expressed in a form that eliminates (detaches) the inference (Huang, 2011, 413).

The characteristics of conventional implicatures could be summed up as follows:
- A conventional implicatures is an arbitrary part of the meaning that is not derived from the cooperative maxims, rather it is attached by convention to specific lexical items and/or linguistic constructs.

- A conventional implicature is determined by convention rather than being calculable by any natural procedure.
- A conventional implicature cannot be canceled and is not defeasible.
- A conventional implicature is detachable, as they depend on the lexical expressions used.
- A conventional implicature is not universal.

The second type of implicatures is the conversational implicatures. A conversational implicature results from the shared assumption that the speaker and hearer are rational agents who communicate logically and cooperatively to achieve a common objective (Horn, 2006, 7). Because the speaker assumes that the hearer would be able to get the proper meaning of what was said, the conversational implicature is made feasible (Saul, 2002). So, the maxims of conversation govern the rational interchange between the speaker and hearer (Grice, 1989, 26). In other words, a conversational implicature is generated when the speaker blatantly flouts a conversational maxim (quality, quantity, relevance, and manner) or fails to exploit it (Huang, 2011, 43).

Despite being the founder of the concept of conversational implicature in his lecture in 1967, Grice never provided a definition for it; however, Grice pinpointed some characteristics that distinguish this notion from others, such as conventional implicatures (Zakkou, 2018). Grice's characteristics of conversational implicatures can be succinctly summed up as:
- Conversational implicatures are calculable (Chapman, 2017, 65). It means that the speaker could calculate, or deduce, the conversationally implicated meaning of an utterance by adhering the maxims, along with the literal meaning of the words of the utterance, specifics of the context, and background knowledge (Chapman, 2020, 66).
- Conversational implicatures might be indeterminate (Fetzer, 2011, 43). When used in different contexts, the meaning expressed by an utterance may bring about different implicatures. However, in a given context, the set of associated implicatures may not always be precisely determinable (Wang, 2011).

- Conversational implicatures are characterized by non-conventionality (Levinson, 1983, 117). Their meaning is not inherent in the meaning of the lexical items used. However, inferring the meaning of a conversational implicature relay mainly on the context in which it takes place. Therefore, the implicature will change as the context does (Wang, 2011).
- Conversational implicatures are cancelable or defeasible (Levinson, 1983, 114).
- Conversational implicatures might be non-detachable (Wang, 2011). A conversational implicature could be maintained when utilizing a synonym of what is said since the conversational implicature is not connected to the linguistic forms used (Hawley, 2002).
- Conversational implicatures are cancelable (Fetzer, 2011, 43). A Conversational implication could be defeated or canceled without contradiction if new premises are added to the previous ones (Hawley, 2002).

2.3 The cancelability of the conversational implicature

Cancelability is one of the features of conversational implicatures that is heavily debated. According to Grice, a putative implicature is explicitly cancelable if the words used in the implicature can be coupled with a denial clause (Borge, 2009), or it can be contextually canceled if the form of the utterance can be employed in a context that expresses the speaker's disavowal of the implicature (Grice, 1975, 57). Despite his belief that all conversational implicatures are cancelable, Grice claims that the cancelability test is insufficient to prove the presence of a conversational implicature (Grice, 1989, 44). In other words, if a proposition is determined to be non-cancelable, it is therefore not a conversational implicature. If it is determined to be cancelable, it may be a conversational implicature and requires further testing (Zakkou, 2018).

Weiner (2006) argues that Grice's cancelability test is insufficient to establish the presence of a conversational implicature. Weiner explains that if an utterance is meant to be interpreted literally, it is unnecessary to check for the presence of a conversational implicature. In agreement with

Weiner, Blome-Tillmann (2008) notes that not all conversational implicatures are explicitly cancelable. Blome-Tillmann explains that a conversational implicature may not be cancelable in a particular context, but it might be in another. Therefore, Blome-Tillmann agrees with Grice's claim that all conversational implicatures are cancelable, either explicitly or contextually.

Weiner's claim is refuted by Dahlman (2013), who confirms the legitimacy of Grice's cancelability test. Dahlman, however, argues that because an implicature is an intentional speech act, the speaker whose utterance initiates it should have the intention to cancel it. Similarly, Åkerman (2015) agrees with Blome-Tillmann on the reliability of Grice's cancelability test. However, according to Åkerman, some conversational implicatures cannot be canceled by simply saying "But I don't mean that …," as doing so could result in a contradiction. Although Weiner's claim that not all conversational implicatures are not cancelable is not thoroughly accepted, cancelability of conversational implicatures require a more comprehensive analysis due to its pervasiveness in the philosophical debates (Blome-Tillmann, 2008).

3 Problem of the study

Grice's cancelability test of conversational implicature is controversial. Some previous studies support Grice's test and others diminished the validity of this test. This controversy is still open and there is no decisive conclusion. So, the current study seeks to further examine the validity of this test, especially in the political discourse.

Moreover, by reviewing the previous studies, it was found that the proponents and opponents of this test based their argument on virtual examples. Therefore, the current study aims to revisit the cancelability test by investigating conversational implicatures in real-life spontaneous conversations.

4 Research questions

- To what extent could Grice's cancelability test be considered valid in identifying conversational implicatures?
- What are the semantic and syntactic characteristics of the conversational implicatures that are liable to the application of the cancelability test?

- What are the pragmatic features of the non-cancelable conversational implicatures?

5 Methods

Biden's press conference that was held after meeting Putin on 16 June 2021 was chosen to be the data for the current study. This press conference is found to be loaded with different types of implicatures. Therefore, the cancelability of these implicatures is easy to be examined.

To investigate the cancelability of the conversational implicatures from the viewpoints of some specialists in the field of linguistics, 15 utterances were chosen randomly, from Biden's Press conference, to be the items of the "Cancelability of Implicatures" questionnaire, table 1. There were 17 sections in the questionnaire. The first section asks for the name and affiliation of the specialist, but it is not obligatory. The final section was an open-ended question where the specialists might provide any commentary regarding any of the utterances under investigation. Sections 2 through 16 all had 4 questions of the same type and number. The first question, which was a multiple-choice question, asked for the number of implicatures. The second question, which was also a multiple-choice one, asked about the potential types of implicatures. The third multiple-choice question asked if each triggered implicature could be canceled. The fourth question was an open-ended one to which the expert might add any comment. 15 specialists in the field of linguistics, professors, associate professors and lecturers of linguistics, were contacted via WhatsApp and Messenger with the questionnaire URL, https://forms.gle/mqNEZa8HZNDDzuCG9. Only ten of the specialists replied with their comments. Calculations are made to determine the percentages of agreement among the specialists on each implicature that was elicited.

Table 1

Utterances used in the "Cancelability of Implicatures" questionnaire

No.	The utterance
1	I know there were a lot of hype around this meeting, but it's pretty straight forward to me, *the meeting*.
2	A relationship that has to be stable and predictable.

No.	The utterance
3	We should be able to cooperate where it's in our mutual interest
4	I also told him that no president of the United States could keep faith with the American people if they did not speak out to defend our democratic values…..That's just part of the DNA of our country.
5	It's not about just going after Russia when they violate human rights.
6	I told him that unlike other countries, including Russia, we're uniquely a product of an idea
7	What's that idea? We don't derive our rights from the government. We possess them because we're born period and we yield them to a government. That's who we are. The idea is we hold these truths self- evident that all men and women.
8	I also raised the ability of Radio Free Europe or Radio Liberty to operate and, and the importance of a free press and freedom of speech.
9	I made it clear that we will not tolerate attempts to violate our democratic sovereignty or destabilize our democratic elections and we would respond.
10	The bottom line is I told President Putin that we need to have some basic rules.
11	That is to discuss and raise the issue of strategic stability and try to set up a mechanism where why we dealt with it...........The steps we need to take to reduce the risk of unintended conflict
12	We agreed to pursue diplomacy.
13	It was important to meet in person so there can be no mistake about or misrepresentations about what I wanted to communicate.
14	Over this last week, I believe, I hope, the United States has shown the world that we are back standing with our allies.
15	I also said there are areas where there's a mutual interest for us to cooperate

6 Results

The following conclusions were drawn by analyzing the responses of the specialists on the implicatures questionnaire. Concerning the first utterance, six specialists agreed that this utterance had three implicatures, two of which are conversational and one of which is conventional. While two of the specialists detected both conventional and conversational implicatures, two specialists believed there were only two conversational

implicatures. The conventional implicature was identified by 8 of the specialists (with a percentage of 80% of the specialists), and they concluded that it cannot be canceled. As for the first conversational implicature, all specialists concurred that this implicature is cancelable (with a percentage of 100% of the specialists). The second conversational implicature, on which only 8 of the specialists (with a percentage of 80% of the specialists) agreed that it is a conversational implicature, was designated as cancelable.

Only 7 out of the 10 specialists (with a percentage of 70% of the specialists) were able to identify a conversational implicature in the second and third utterances, and they all determined that these two implicatures could be canceled. For the fourth utterance, six of the specialists detected two conversational implicatures, whereas one expert identified both a conventional and a conversational implicature. Three of the specialists were unable to distinguish more than one conversational implicature. Regarding the fourth utterance's first conversational implicature, five specialists believed it to be non-cancelable. Seven specialists believed that it is possible to cancel the second conversational implicature.

A conversational implicature in the fifth utterance was picked up by six specialists. Although only one of the specialists believed it was cancelable (10% of the specialists), five of the specialists found this implicature to be non-cancelable (50% of the specialists). Eight of the specialists (80% of the specialists) agreed that the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth utterances, each of which had a conversational implicature and each of these implicatures could be canceled.

As for the eleventh utterance, eight of the specialists (80% of the specialists) concurred that it contained a conventional implicature that could not be canceled. One additional conversational implicature in this utterance was only picked out by six of the specialists. Five out of the six specialists concluded that this conversational implicature cannot be canceled (50% of the 10 specialists). Concerning the twelfth utterance, seven of the specialists concurred that this utterance had two conversational implicatures. Only one conversational implicature was

found by two of the specialists. Six specialists (60% of the specialists) agreed that the first conversational implicature could be canceled, but only five (50% of the specialists) thought the second conversational implicature could not be canceled. Regarding the thirteenth and fourteenth utterances, seven specialists (70% of the specialists) concurred that each of these two utterances contained a non-cancelable conversational implicature. However, two specialists (20% 0f the specialists) stated that the two implicatures in each of the 13th and 14th utterances are cancelable.

In regard to the final surveyed utterance, 7 specialists found a conventional implicature as well as a conversational implicature, while 2 specialists found only a conventional implicature. The conventional implicature was not cancelable, according to 8 specialists (80% of the specialists). One expert (10% of the specialists) discovered that the conversational implicature is non-cancelable, contrary to the beliefs of six specialists (60% of the specialists) who believed it to be cancelable. Table 2 summarizes the results elicited by analyzing the responses of the specialists on the "cancelability of implicatures" questionnaire.

Table 2
Summary of the results of the "Cancelability of Implicatures" questionnaire

Utterance	Type of implicature	Cancelability	No. of specialists who agree	Percentage
1	Conventional	Not cancelable	8	80%
	Conversational	Cancelable	10	100%
	Conversational	Cancelable	8	80%
2	Conversational	Cancelable	٧	70%
3	Conversational	Cancelable	٧	70%
4	Conversational	Not cancelable	5	50%
	Conversational	Cancelable	7	70%
5	Conversational	Not cancelable	5	50%
6	Conversational	Cancelable	8	80%
7	Conversational	Cancelable	8	80%
8	Conversational	Cancelable	8	80%
9	Conversational	Cancelable	8	80%
10	Conversational	Cancelable	8	80%

Utterance	Type of implicature	Cancelability	No. of specialists who agree	Percentage
11	Conventional	Not cancelable	8	80%
	Conversational	Not cancelable	5	50%
12	Conversational	Cancelable	6	60%
	Conversational	Not cancelable	5	50%
13	Conversational	Not cancelable	7	70%
14	Conversational	Not cancelable	7	70%
15	Conventional	Not cancelable	8	80%
	Conversational	Cancelable	6	60%

Concerning the open-ended questions, 2 of the specialists explained that although some conversational implicatures may not be cancelable in the current context, they could be canceled in other contexts. One of the specialists stated that Biden did not intend for any of his utterances to be subject to cancelation.

7 Discussion

The findings shown in table 1 showed that the specialsts concurred on the three conventional implicatures and the non-cancelability of these implicatures, whereas the specialists are at odds on the conversational implicatures. 99% of the specialists agreed on the number of the conversational implicatures which constituted 18 implicatures out of 21. However, the cancelability of these 18 implicatures are not endorsed by all of the specialists. The calculations of the commitment between the specialists revealed that 12 conversational implicatures are accepted, to a great extent, to be cancelable, whereas 6 of the conversational implicatures are agreed on, to some extent, to be non-cancelable. These 6 non-cancelable implicatures are illustrated and analyzed in the following.

[utterance 4] *"I also told him that no president of the United States could keep faith with the American people if they did not speak out to defend our democratic values.....That's just part of the DNA of our country"*

This utterance is an assertive statement that declares that democratic values are ingrained in all Americans, including presidents who must defend these values everywhere. This utterance embraces two

conversational implicatures, one of them might be canceled and the other could not be canceled. The implicature that could not be canceled implies that Biden as an American person believes in the democratic values. Throughout this non-cancelable implicature, Biden flouts the maxim of manner since he did not state the idea of watching freedom values everywhere explicitly. Otherwise, he hid his thought behind obscurity. This implicature could not be canceled because its cancelation eliminates Biden from the American Democratic values. In this context, this cancelation is not possible as it threatens Biden's situation among his people and the world. The second implicature that could be canceled implies that all the presidents of the USA should watch the democratic values. This could be canceled by saying "but I do not mean that all American presidents defended democratic values."

[Utterance 5] *"It's not about just going after Russia when they violate human rights"*

The previous utterance represents an assertion that is composed of an informative statement. Semantically, this utterance indicates that America cares about human rights everywhere, including Russia. Pragmatically, this utterance implicates that there is no bias in dealing with Russia and the actions taken by the USA are not directed to Russia but to any country that violates the human rights. This utterance flouts the maxim of quantity as Biden gives more information than expected. Previously, Biden indicated that the USA is interested in human rights everywhere. Then, he repeated this utterance with specifying Russia. The cancelation of this implicature by adding "but I do not mean there is no bias in dealing with Russia when they violate human rights" raises a diplomatic crisis as it indicates that there is bias in dealing with Russia and the actions taken by the USA are intended to be against Russia. So, in this context the cancelation is not possible. However, this utterance might be canceled in any other context in which bias could be accepted and does not cause a diplomatic crisis.

[Utterance 11] *"That is to discuss and raise the issue of strategic stability and try to set up a mechanism where why we dealt with*

it...........The steps we need to take to reduce the risk of unintended conflict"

Semantically, this utterance suggests that the two presidents discussed strategic stability and ways to lower the dangers of an unintended war. This utterance is made up of three declarative sentences. This utterance implicates that Russia, and the United States are engaged in an unintended conflict that poses dangerous consequences. This utterance could be considered a threatening speech act as Biden tries to convey that unless the two presidents come to a compromise, an unintended conflict with dangerous consequences could breakout. This utterance flouts the maxim of manner as Biden used ambiguity to hide his true intention. The cancellation of this implicature by adding "but I do not mean that there is an unintended conflict, and the conflict is intended" may lead to a world war as it stresses the idea that the conflict which is taking place now is intended and the war is the normal consequence for this cancelation. Biden did not, however, want to make his genuine intention known. Therefore, it is not possible to cancel this implicature in the current context.

[utterance 12] "We agreed to pursue diplomacy"

This utterance is a declarative sentence that means the two presidents accepted to move forward in the diplomatic steps. This utterance implicates that no war will take place now. This utterance flouts the maxim of relevance because, after briefly discussing the challenges he encountered in his conversation with the Russian president, Biden abruptly switched to a topic on which all parties could agree, namely the importance of pursuing diplomacy. If this implicature is canceled by adding "But I do not mean that no war will take place", it is considered a war declaration. In the current political context, the implicature is intended to be grasped by the recipients as there is no war and diplomacy receives the priority. The cancelation will result in a war between Russia and the USA.

[Utterance 13] "It was important to meet in person so there can be no mistake about or misrepresentations about what I wanted"

This utterance, which is made up of a declarative sentence, emphasizes the value of meeting in person to prevent misunderstandings and mistakes. This utterance implicates that meeting in person prevents misinterpretations. The quantity maxim is flouted in this utterance since Biden provided less information than was anticipated. He didn't go into detail about how meeting in person may help avoid misunderstandings. Without mentioning any potential misunderstandings that were avoided, Biden spoke later about the successes of his discussion with the Russian president. Canceling this implicature by adding "But I do not mean that meeting in person prevents misinterpretation", gives rise to the contradiction that meeting in person causes misinterpretation. This contradiction does not fit the current political discourse. However, it might be accepted in any other context.

[Utterance 14] *"Over this last week, I believe, I hope, the United States has shown the world that we are back standing with our allies."*

This utterance is composed of a declarative sentence which, semantically, means that Biden hopes that the USA had shown that they support their allies. The conversational implicature in the previous utterance indicates that there is a doubt about whether the USA backs standing their allies. This utterance flouts the maxim of quality as Biden does not provide a proof for his doubt. Canceling this implicature by using "but I do not mean that there is a doubt that the USA may not support their allies", contradicts with the aim of the summit between Putin and Biden. In this summit, Biden tries to prove that all the measures taken by the USA are to prove that the USA supports its allies. If there is no doubt about that, all the measures taken by the USA are to stir the Russian leaders and initiate a war with Russia. So, canceling this implicature is not suitable in the current context.

By analyzing the previous conversational implicatures, it is noted that no specific syntactic or semantic features characterize the propositions of the non-cancelable implicatures as all of the detected implicatures are composed of declarative sentences. In the analyzed utterances, within the political context, no irony or sense of humor are

reported as a characteristic for the non-cancelable implicatures. Pragmatically, it is noted that no specific pragmatic feature distinguishes the non-cancelable conversational implicatures as the four Grice's conversational maxims were flouted in the selected utterances. The maxims of relevance and quality were only flouted once each, but the maxims of manner and quantity were flouted twice each. Similarly, these implicatures could not be canceled in the current political context as all of them give rise to the contradiction which constitutes a crisis in the political discourse that may affect the diplomatic relations between countries. This result is in accordance with the results of Weiner (2006) who concluded that not all conversational implicatures are cancelable. Similarly, this result is consistent with the results of Recanati (1989) and Bach (1994) who concluded that Grice's cancelability test is not sufficient for identifying conversational implicatures as the intuitions of the speaker in a specific context should be considered. Although Blome-Tillmann (2013) agrees on the validity of Grice's cancelability test for the conversational implicatures, he indicated that some implicatures could not be canceled in the same context but the same utterance that include a conversational implicature could be canceled in other contexts. The non-cancelability of some implicatures in the chosen data might be explained in part by Blome-Tillmann's (2013) remark. In the current political context, where tact and word choice are crucial, some conversational implicatures are not liable to cancelation. These implicatures could, however, be canceled in any other context. Additionally, these findings are consistent with those of Dahlman (2013), who came to the conclusion that in order to cancel a conversational implicature, the speaker must intend to do so.

8 Conclusion

The current study sought to answer three questions. The first one was "To what extent could Grice's cancelability test be considered reliable in the political discourse?" A questionnaire that examined specialists' opinions on the cancelability of some implicatures from Biden's press conference on June 16, 2021, was used to answer this question. The results showed that, as Grice suggested, all conventional implicatures are non-cancellable. However, the specialists reported that

six of the conversational implicatures could not be canceled. This result may not be considered a contradiction to Grice's test as it was explained by Blom-Tillmann (2008) that a conversational implicature may not be cancelable in a specific context but the same implicature could be canceled in any other context. Given that the study's context is political, it is possible to view some implicatures as being non-cancelable because, in a political context, the speaker typically selects his/her words carefully and doesn't intend to cancel what has been said. Therefore, cancelation might not be possible in the same context. The same implicature, however, may be subject to cancelation if it is utilized in any other context. The current study's findings do not, then, disprove Grice's test's reliability, but they do suggest that it should be used cautiously in political discourse because certain implications in the same setting might not be cancelable.

The second question investigated in the current study was "what are the semantic and syntactic characteristics of the conversational implicatures that are liable to the application of the cancelability test?" This question was addressed by a semantic and syntactic analysis of the non-cancelable utterances. The findings showed that there are not any particular semantic or syntactic traits that define the non-cancelable implicatures. All of these utterances are assertive sentences that express Biden's position on the topics raised with the Russian president after their meeting.

In the current study, "what are the pragmatic features of the non-cancelable conversational implicatures?" was the third question that was looked into. The non-cancelable utterances were pragmatically examined to provide an answer to the previous question. According to the findings, non-cancelable implicatures do not have any particular pragmatic characteristics. Similarly, the four Grice's cooperative maxims are flouted in the six non-cancelable implicatures; the quality and relevance maxims are flouted just once each, while the manner and quantity maxims are flouted twice each. Therefore, it could be concluded that flouting any of the four conversational maxims may result in a non-cancelable conversational implicature.

The current study's findings do not refute Grice's test of the cancelability of conversational implicatures. The findings, however, show that it is important to explore speaker's intention to cancel the implicature. Similarly, it might not be possible to cancel an implicature in the same context, particularly if it is political. This is because in political discourse, each word is intended to be delivered as it is presented and canceling what is said is not an option.

9 Limitation

The current study focused on investigating the cancelability of conversational implicatures in the political discourse. Therefore, the findings are restricted to political discourse. Further research is required before generalizing the conclusions or extending these findings to any other context.

10 Further research

The cancelability of conversational implicatures needs to be further investigated in other contexts, such as religious, social, economic, etc. Also, it is advisable to develop and validate a measurement for assessing speaker's intention to cancel an implicature so that it can be used in future studies that call for speaker's intention.

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