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*Original article*

**Do Cairene Speakers Use Conversational Implicature in Their English?**

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## **0 Introduction**

This paper is extracted from my MA thesis entitled '*Conversational Implicature in English and Cairene Arabic: A study in Contrastive Linguistics*' (2007)<sup>1</sup>. It explores Conversational Implicature which is of great importance as it restores understanding and helps interlocutors communicate successfully. The aim of this study is to explore Conversational Implicature in Arabic, and in English by Cairene speakers. In addition, the study tries to test whether variables as age, sex and exposure to English have influence on the use of conversational implicature or not.

The study fills a gap in discourse analysis research since conversational implicatures in Arabic have not been seriously researched. The study, also, is significant as it contributes to research on contrastive linguistics because it explores the presence and use of conversational implicatures in Arabic and tries to contrast these to the conversational implicatures in English as spoken by Cairenes.

## **1 Conclusions**

This article summarizes the findings of the present thesis. In addition, it gives recommendations for further research.

The present study attempted to explore the use of Conversational Implicature in English and in Arabic as spoken by Cairenes. It tried to deal with topics such as whether

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<sup>1</sup>Abu-hassoub, M. (2007). *Conversational Implicature in English and Cairene Arabic: A study in Contrastive Linguistics*. Cairo: Ain Shams University. Unpublished MA thesis.

conversational implicature exists in Arabic or not, and how native Arabic speakers use both English and Arabic implicatures.

It, also, tries to tackle further issues such as the influence of age and sex on using implicatures in Arabic, and the effect of English proficiency on using implicatures in English.

The study is important because Arabic Conversational Implicature has not until now received a significant measure of attention. Therefore, the study contributes to the field of pragmatics. It fills a gap in pragmatics research since conversational implicatures in Arabic have not until now been seriously researched.

The study, also, is significant as it is considered of relevance to research in Contrastive Linguistics because it explores the presence and use of conversational implicatures in Arabic and contrasts these to the conversational implicatures in English as spoken by Cairenes. Therefore, the present study increases awareness of the different uses of Conversational Implicature in English and in Arabic.

The research, also, has a contribution to the study of the effective use of language in communication. It may help speakers use language skillfully for literary expression, or for public speaking in order to produce a particular effect in the mind of hearers.

In addition, the study contributes to the topic of inter-language or learner language. This discusses how nonnative speakers produce a speech act in a target language and how their pragmatic competence helps them grasp the target language features. The study, then, contributes to benefit second language learners.

The study found that implicatures exist in Arabic. Moreover, it revealed that Arabic exchanges involve implicature more than observance of the conversational maxims. There are implicatures in Arabic of percentage 62% of the total Arabic responses. However, observance of the maxims in Arabic is 38%.

The study, also, revealed that the English responses of the subjects included implicatures. Moreover, the implicature uses in English is more than observance of the maxims (59% vs. 41% respectively).

Therefore, it is clear that the Subjects use implicatures in their speech more than observance either in Arabic or in English. Consequently, the study of implicature is of real importance.

The participants did not largely tend to use implicatures out of mocking. They, also, did not tend to use implicature through spelling words out. The results revealed that there are some situations in which the participants use implicatures least. The subjects, in these situations, tended to explicate rather than implicate. These situations are mostly about topics such as: someone's feeling towards something, a discussion on an exact date or place, or a specified piece of information. These situations, perhaps, do not endure implicating. Or there may be no reason to implicate in such situations.

The results, also, revealed that there are some other situations where implicatures are mostly used. They are the same in English and in Arabic too. In these situations, few of the

participants observed the maxims and produced no implicature. Most of them implicated rather than explicated.

Generally, most of the participants tend to use implicatures mostly when they want to hide something (not doing homework for instance), to express bad feelings toward somebody (toward persons whom they do not like), to avoid impoliteness, to help people find places, to express their views about somebody's skill especially if he is not good, or to vindicate themselves.

In order to get accurate results, the subjects are divided into two groups. One of them is the participants who do not speak English. The other group is those who speak English.

As regards to the first group, the results reveal that most implicatures that are used by the subjects in Arabic are raised out of flouting the maxim of quantity. Most of these uses are due to over informativity. In other words, the subjects generally tend to give more information than what is required in their Arabic responses. Following the maxim of quantity, many of the participants tend to flout the maxim of relevance very much. The maxim of manner is the third most flouted maxim by the subjects. The least flouted maxim in order to raise conversational implicature in Arabic is the maxim of quality.

Regarding age, the results of the first group reveal that implicatures are used by younger participants more than by old participants. Younger participants tend to be less relevant, and more informative than the old participants do. However, older participants are

relatively less informative, and more truthful in their Arabic responses. The cause of this may be that the old participants are more responsible than younger participants.

Younger participants flout the maxims of quantity, relevance, and quality more than the old participants do. The old participants tend to be less informative rather than being more informative as they are linguistically more competent than the younger participants are. Older people express their ideas briefly, unlike the younger whose speeches tend to prolixity.

All participants flout the maxim of manner little. Young and old participants use the maxim of manner in Arabic likewise. They tend to be obvious and clear at most times.

Regarding sex, the study reveals that males generally use implicatures in Arabic more than females do at all ages. Females tend to be more talkative than males as they are more informative than what is required. However, males tend to be less relevant and less truthful in their Arabic responses than females do.

As regards to the second group, the results reveal that implicatures, that are used by the subjects in English, are raised out of flouting the maxims of quantity, relevance, manner, and quality in that order. This is the same order in the results in Arabic of the first group as stated before.

Therefore, the participants still flout the maxim of quantity more than the other maxims. Most of such infringements of the maxim of quantity in English tend to be less informative than what is required especially in the responses of the most English exposed

participants. This may mean that English proficiency has influence on using implicatures in English, and that English tends to be less informative than Arabic.

Regarding English proficiency, the results exhibit that the more the participants are proficient in English, the more they use implicatures in their English responses. Moreover, the study reveals that most of the implicatures in English by the subjects, who are more exposed to English, are similar to those expected English implicatures as published in English literature. The study reveals that learning English has a positive influence in terms of the use of expected English implicatures. The results disclose that the participants, who are exposed to English more than 20 years, respond in a way similar to English.

The results indicated that the participants, who are more exposed to English, tend to flout the maxim of quantity more than those participants, who are less exposed to English. However, most of the infringements of the maxim of quantity by the participants, who are more exposed to English, tend to be less informative than what is required. This is, perhaps, because of their relatively linguistic competence in English. However, the subjects, who are less exposed to English, tend to give more information than what is required to express their ideas.

The participants, who are less exposed to English, are less relevant than those who have a considerable amount of English. Ability of using cohesive devices and knowing variety of vocabulary might make the utterances of the participants, who are more exposed to English, more relevant than the other participants' are.

With regard to sex and the use of implicatures in English, males and females generally used implicatures in English alike. We have seen before that males used implicature in Arabic more than females. This can be explained in terms that males tend to use implicatures in Arabic more than in English.

In their English responses, males tend to be straighter, less truthful, and more informative than females. However, females are more obscure, less relevant and less informative in their English responses. Females tend to flout the maxim of relevance more than males. This is, perhaps, due that females prefer to be polite rather than to be relevant. Also, they prefer politeness over giving adequate information. Therefore, they are less relevant and less informative than males are. In contrast, males prefer being observant rather than being irrelevant in speaking about personal and private topics in particular.

From the preceding results, it is clear that implicature extensively exists in Arabic and in English as spoken by Cairenes. It exists more in Arabic. This is, perhaps, because Arabic is the native language of the subjects. Or, it is just because the manifestation of implicature in Arabic is more than that in English.

The study proves that there are some similarities in the uses of implicatures in English and Arabic. These may be due to, at least, three factors; first, age and second, the situations in which implicatures have to be used. The third factor is that implicature itself is likely to be a universal strategy in speech.

Likewise, implicatures are used either in Arabic or in English out of flouting the maxims of quantity, relevance, manner, and quality in that order. The most flouted maxim either in Arabic or in English is the maxim of quantity. Manner and quality are the least flouted maxims.

However, there are some differences in the usage of implicature. Arabic answers of the first group are, sometimes, different from the English answers of the second group. E.g., Arabic responses tend to be more informative. On the contrary, the English responses tend to be less informative. The participants of the first group hardly choose some of the expected English answers. However, the participants of the first group, especially who are more exposed to English, frequently choose the expected English answers. For instance, the participants of the first group do not tend to spell the words out as it is adopted in English. English uses the strategy of "spelling words out", as a way to implicate, more than Arabic does.

Implicatures that are raised as a result of flouting the maxims of relevance and quality are detected to appear more in Arabic than in English. However, the maxim of manner is flouted in English little bit more than it is used in Arabic. Therefore, implicature is a universal strategy, but its manifestation in Arabic is different from that in English.

## **2 Recommendations for further research**

The present study shows that there is a need for further research to tackle the issue of Conversational Implicature, especially the points that are not fully addressed until now. E.g. the study of conversational implicatures in Arabic as spoken by other speakers of Arabic, Upper Egyptians for example, Contrasting Arabic implicatures to implicatures in English as used by native English speakers, studying implicatures in written Arabic texts, addressing whether post questionnaires are useful in the study of conversational implicature or not, comprehending and interpreting Arabic conversational implicature, studying the factors that determine the primacy of observing the maxims in Arabic, and the reasons for generating conversational implicature e.g., conciseness, politeness, avoiding misconceptions? Finally, testing the influence of culture on using implicatures. All these topics need to be researched.