



Q and R Principles

Jean Mark Gawron

Linguistics

San Diego State University

gawron@mail.sdsu.edu

<http://www.rohan.sdsu.edu/~gawron>

Say as much as you can, given principles R and Quality.

1. Bill has a C-average.

have a C-average $\overset{Q}{\rightsquigarrow}$ \neg have a B average

2. You must have a C-average in your major to graduate. [Q-implicature cancelled.]
3. We will close the school if some students get infected. [Q-implicature cancelled.]
4. You must have a passing grade on the final to pass the class. [Q-implicature cancelled.]

When Q goes wrong: I

1. Modality scale:

⟨ Necessarily, \emptyset , Possibly ⟩

2. Bachelors are necessarily unmarried.

3. Bachelors are unmarried.

4. Bachelors are possibly unmarried.

- (3) does not implicate bachelors are not necessarily unmarried. [no Q-implicature]
- (4) does implicate the speaker does not know (2) [a Q-implicature]

Intuitively: Use of the **basic, unmarked form** (3) does not implicate the negation of a stronger form. (2).

When Q goes wrong: II

1. Modality scale:

⟨ X and Y, X, X or Y ⟩

2. The kitchen and the bedroom are a mess.

3. The kitchen is a mess.

4. Either the kitchen or the bedroom is a mess.

- (3) does not implicate the bedroom is not a mess. [no Q-implicature]
- (4) does implicate the speaker does not know which room is a mess, the bedroom or the kitchen. [a Q-implicature]

Again: Use of the **basic, unmarked form** (3) does not implicate the negation of a stronger form. (2).

The role of economy

When the stronger of two alternatives is less economical, Q-implicature is blocked

Two principles in conflict

Q: Say as much as you can, given principles R and Quality.

R: Say no more than you need to, given Q.

Unmarked, economical briefer forms R-implicate stereotypical meanings; Marked, less economical, periphrastic forms are Q-restricted to non-stereotypical meanings.

Dependency on forms

1. *rectangle* q-implicates not-square because of the existence of the lexeme *square*
2. *triangle* does not q-implicate not-equilateral because there is no lexeme meaning *equilateral triangle* (no economical unmarked way of saying that). In fact the stereotypical triangle implicated by *triangle* does seem to be equilateral.

unmarked form	$\overset{R}{\rightsquigarrow}$	stereotype
marked form	$\overset{Q}{\rightsquigarrow}$	\neg stereotype

Stereotypes

(1a) Q-implicates the effect was achieved in a non-stereotypical way (pulling the plug, pleading with it).

- (1) a. He got the machine to stop.
- b. He stopped the machine.

(1b) R-implicates stopping the machine in an ordinary way (flipping the switch).

Stereotypes

(2a) Q-implicates a “tint not pre-empted by pink”.

- (2) a. Her blouse was pale red.
- b. Her blouse was pink.

Stereotypes

(3a) Q-implicates non-coreference of *she* and *her*, because the more economical (3b) functions to signal coreference.

- (3)
- a. She wants her to win.
 - b. She wants to win.

Stereotypes

The briefer determinerless (4b) R-implicates a socially stereotypical connection with the named institutions, and the less economical versions in (4a) just implicate motion towards them.

- (4) a. My brother went to the church, the jail, the school.
- b. My brother went to church, jail, school.

Stereotypes

- (5b) R-implicates a stereotypical mother relation to the speaker; the more periphrastic (5a) implicates a non-stereotypical relation, perhaps a stepmother relation.
- (5) a. That's my father's wife.
 b. That's my mother.

Understatement

(6b) R-implicates stereotypical possibility (average possibility); the more periphrastic (6a) implicates a non-stereotypical possibility, namely, bare possibility.

- (6) a. It's not impossible you will solve the problem.
- b. It's possible you will solve the problem.

(7a) R-implicates (7b)

- (7) a. I don't think he's coming.
 b. I think he's not coming.

Thinking not-p is the stereotypical way of not thinking p.

R-implicature **strengthens** a statement. In this case a general negative statement is being strengthened to a very specific way of making the negative statement true.

Speech Acts

(8a) R-implicates (8b)

- (8) a. Can you open the window?
 b. I am requesting you to open the window.

The less economical *are you able to open the window?* does not carry this implicature.

Summary

Q: Say as much as you can.

R: Say only as much as you need to.

Q-based implicature

Negative: based on the choice not to say something more informative

¬ stronger claim: $p \rightsquigarrow \neg q$ (when $q \rightarrow p$)

When an opposition to a stronger form exists, marked forms are q-restricted to the non-stereotypical case (*rectangle* \rightsquigarrow non-square)

R-based implicature

May not be calculated online (short-circuited conversational implicature, Morgan 1978; standardized nonliterality, Bach and Harnish 1979; Bach 1987; Horn 1989)

Strengthening: a general literal meaning is strengthened to a stereotypical case

Negative strengthening possible ($\neg p \rightsquigarrow q$, when $q \rightarrow \neg p$): Neg raising, understatement.