

# **Cancellation as Clarification or Contradiction: A Pragmatic Study of Verses from the Holy Quran**

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### **Abstract**

The duality of 'meaning' and 'saying' in the question: "Do you mean what you say?" can be inferred according to the speaker/hearer duality. It may apparently reflect some views: a hearer who is not sure of what the speaker really means by what s/he says, a speaker who may not say what s/he means, or speaker who does not mean what s/he says. Hence, there is no concordance between what is said and what is

meant. This consequently shows a distinction between an explicit and implicit meaning of the utterance. What is actually said and what is really implied is investigated by semantics and pragmatics respectively and even to use both disciplines to find out the distinguishing features. However, that question gives rise to still a number of problems in understanding and dealing with these two notions of such a conversational phenomenon.

The present paper investigates the explicit/implicit distinction of meaning within the available views of the two major theories of Grice's *Theory of Conversation* and *Relevance Theory*. Then, the focus shall be on *cancellability*, as it is proposed by Grice as a property of implicature, not only of what is said (or the theoretic-relevance explicature) but also of what is implied, i.e., what is really intended by the speaker. The focal theme, then, will be the idea that what might be thought of as *cancellation* can be interpreted as *clarification* or *reinforcement* of understanding meaning.

It attempts to show the transition of thoughts from cancellability or clarification as a test for distinguishing *implicatures* from *explicatures*, by tackling a pragmatic analysis of some verses from the Holy Quran. It has been found that what seems to be a contradiction in some verses of the Holy Quran is, in fact, a clarification and reinforcement of intended meaning.

**Keywords:** *Theory of Conversation, Relevance Theory, cancellation, clarification, reinforcement, implicatures, explicatures*

#### 1. Introduction

The recurrent question "Do you mean what you say?" may reflect

two things: 1) the hearer is not sure that the speaker really means what s/he says, and 2) the speaker may not say what s/he means, or may not mean what s/he says. Hence, this can show non-concordance between what is said and what is meant. This leads to the distinction between the explicit meaning and the implicit meaning of the utterance.

The first to make a distinction between the said and the implied is H. P. Grice (1975). His thoughts have paved the way to many attempts to ascribe the task of explaining meaning, whether explicit or implicit, to semantics and pragmatics respectively and even to use both disciplines to find out the distinguishing features of what is actually said and what is really implied. Though Grice's contribution has been great, it gives rise to still a number of problems in understanding and dealing with these two notions. Researchers since then have been trying to look for an explanation and/or justification to oppose to or even to modify Grice's proposals about this conversational phenomenon.

The present paper displays the distinction between the explicit and implicit meaning with regard to two major theories, namely

Grice's Theory of Conversation and Relevance Theory. Then, the focus shall be on cancellability, as it is proposed by Grice as a property of implicature, not only of what is said (or the theoretic-relevance explicature) but also of what is implied, i.e. what is really intended by the speaker. This property leads to the fact that what might be thought of as cancellation can be interpreted as clarification or reinforcement of understanding meaning.

This study is introducing an account of what cancellability means and how semanticists think it must be dealt with or reconsidered in distinguishing the explicit from the implicit. It is addressing questions like: What is cancellation? What is it that which is cancelled: the explicature or the implicature? Is cancellability really a process of cancellation or it is rather a process of clarification? Why? And, if it is clarification, what does it clarify?

However, there are opposing proposals as to Grice's proposal of the validity of cancellability test for the presence of implicatures. Due to the fact that the examples supporting and the counter-examples defying them, these proposals are labelled differently according to the different theories

their advocates adopt; some are with Grice's and others are against it.

To show the transition of thoughts from cancellability or clarification as a test for distinguishing implicatures from explicatures, a pragmatic analysis of verses from the Holy Quran has been made with the aim of shedding the light on the fact that what seems to be a contradiction in some verses of the Holy Quran is in fact clarification and reinforcement of intention.

## 2. The Explicit-Implicit Distinction from Grice to Relevance Theory

### 2.1 *The Explicit-implicit distinction*

Conversation is an important dynamic context of language use and interaction (Levinson 1983: 43) where a number of utterances are delivered by two or more participants who alternate speaking in a free manner (ibid.: 284).

According to Grice, the natural meaning of an utterance, or what Huang (2007: 187) refers to as the speaker-meaning or the total signification of the utterance, consists of what is said and what is implicated (ibid.). What is said is the very sentence uttered, or, for Grice, the explicit meaning that is semantically decided. However, what is implied is the speaker's

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intention conveyed by the utterance which is, in its turn, non-linguistically, and rather pragmatically, inferred by the hearer (Blakemore 1992: 27-8). For Grice, what is said is what the speaker expresses explicitly (i.e. explicature), whereas what is implied is what the speaker conveys implicitly, i.e. implicature (Kearns 2000: 271, 254).

Grice differentiates between the 'literal meaning' and the 'actual meaning' of an utterance. The first is the lexical meaning which is the domain of semantics and is arrived at through decoding the encoded meaning in the uttered words and the second is the contextual meaning which is the domain of pragmatics and is arrived at through relying on the extra information from the surrounding context when, where and how the words are uttered. Hence, the former is entailed whereas the latter is implicated. So, the process of understanding an utterance requires that the hearer knows the meanings of the words uttered, draws inferences on the basis of non-linguistic information, and assumes that the general standards of communication are met altogether (Blakemore 1992: 57).

Apparently, the said is the conventional meaning together with the truth-conditional content of the sentence uttered (Huang 2007: 187-8), hence helping determine the explicature. In such cases, as Grice proposes, pragmatics has no role to do as the floor is actually yielded to semantics. But what about cases like disambiguation and reference assignment where one might sometimes find that the uttered words are not clear enough to carry an explicit meaning? Is it enough to rely on semantics or shall pragmatics be involved? The encoded meaning in such cases needs additional information in addition to that provided by semantics in order for it to be explicit (Kearns 2000: 271). Nonetheless, Grice does not use the terms semantic and pragmatic with reference to what is said and what is implicated because he intends to notify that the linguistic meaning contributes to the implicated meaning of the utterance (Blakemore 1987: 22, 145-6 n.). This, in fact, contradicts the real distinction between semantics and pragmatics!

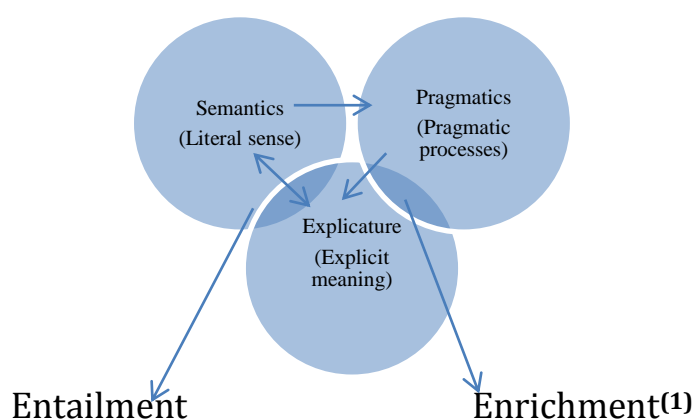
A useful classification of meaning into three levels has been suggested by Löbner (2002: 11) and shown in Table (1)

**Table (1) Three Levels of Meaning**

No.	Level of Meaning	Definition
1	Expression Meaning	The meaning of a simple or complex expression taken in isolation
2	Utterance Meaning	The meaning of an expression when used in a given context of an utterance; fixed reference and truth value (for declarative sentences)
3	Communicative Meaning	The meaning of an utterance as a communicative act in a given social setting

Wilson and Sperber (2004: 260) claim that disambiguation and reference assignment fall under the pragmatic principles which play a role in the recovery of implicatures as well as explicatures. Figure (1a) shows the relationship between semantics and pragmatics in the process of the full realization of

the explicature. It shows the role of pragmatics in providing enrichment to explicature. The literal sense of the utterance is contained in and entailed by the explicature and the pragmatic processes fill in a framework provided by the literal sense (Kearns 2000: 280).



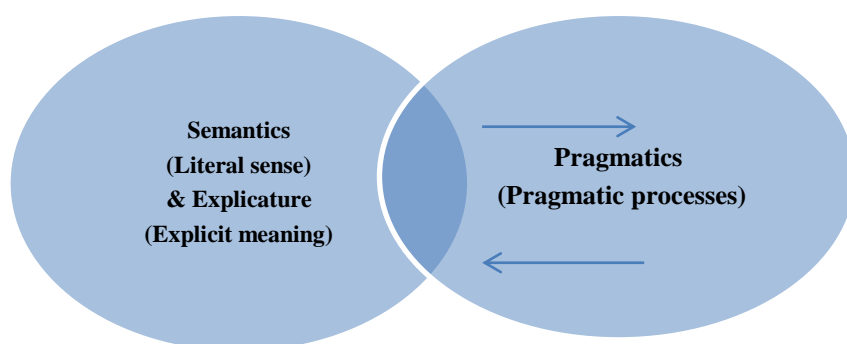
**Figure 1a: The Role of Pragmatics in Providing Enrichment to Explicature**

<sup>(1)</sup> 'Linguistically directed enrichment' (Kearns 2000: 280)

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If the literal sense and the explicit meaning are identical (Kearns 2000: 279), the relation is represented by Figure 1b which shows that the explicature falls under the field of semantics, though it gets its enrichment from pragmatics, and, since the literal

sense provides a basis for the pragmatic processes to enrich the explicature and at the same time it is entailed by the explicature, a loop relationship exists among them in order to finalize the explicit meaning of the utterance.



**Figure 1b: The Explicature in the Field of Semantics**

However, if the explicit meaning is intended to imply one or more other meanings, relying on the semantic meaning will not be sufficient, if not at all misleading. Then the hearer is to interpret this other meaning of the utterances whereby the participants interact in order for them to achieve communication. This requires from those participants to look for additional information that they can recover from the context and/or from the shared world of knowledge.

### ***2.2 Grice's cooperative principle***

According to Grice's theory of conversation the speakers, while communicating, conform to certain general principles of cooperation and that hearers interpret utterances having these principles in mind (Blakemore 1987:21; Kearns 2000: 255). In this respect, the maxims of cooperative principle constitute the set of factors that lead to interpreting the implicature(s) of any utterance. As a model for a better understanding of the speakers' intended meanings, Grice's 'Cooperative Principle' and for this principle to be well



observed, Grice proposes his famous four maxims of quality, quantity, relation, and manner. For the purpose of the present study, they can be reviewed as follows (Kearns 2000: 255):

i) Maxim of Quality: Try to make your contribution one that is true, do not say what you believe to be false, and do not say that for which you lack evidence.

ii) Maxim of Quantity: make your contribution as informative as required, and do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

iii) Maxim of Relation: be relevant; and

iv) Maxim of Manner: be perspicuous; avoid obscurity of expression; avoid ambiguity; be brief; and be orderly.

#### *2.2.1 Flouting the maxims*

Nonetheless, proposing 'the Cooperative Principle' does not suggest that communicators always mind this principle. Some speakers flout some, or all, of its maxims intentionally or unintentionally. Consequently, conversational implicatures, for instance, emerge, according to Grice, when these maxims are violated, particularly when the hearer notices that the speaker is doing that deliberately. This eventually leads the hearer to infer

that there must be an implied meaning behind this violation (Blok 1993: 21).

#### *2.2.2 Implicatures*

Implicature is a component of speaker's meaning. It actually constitutes one of the aspects of what is meant by a speaker's utterance "without being part of what is said" (Horn, 2006: 3). Following Grice (1961: §3). Horn (2006: 3-4) illustrated some subtypes of implicatures as follows:

1) a. Even KEN knows it's unethical.

a'. Ken is the least likely [of a contextually invoked set] to know it's unethical.

2) a. [in a recommendation letter for a philosophy position]

Jones dresses well and writes grammatical English.

a'. Jones is not good at philosophy.

3) a. The cat is in the hamper or under the bed

a'. I don't know for a fact that the cat is under the bed.

It is noticeable that the inference induced by (1a, a') is irrelevant to the truth conditions of the proposition. Therefore, (1a) is true only if Ken knows it's unethical. The inference is not cancelable without contradiction (see 1b below) but it is detachable in the sense that the same truth-

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conditional content is expressible in a way that removes (detaches) the inference as in (1b') Horn (2006: 4).

1) b. Even Ken knows it's unethical, but that's not surprising  
b'. Ken knows it's unethical, too.

Two types of implicature are recognized by Grice: conventional and conversational. The first type is the one that is derived from the connotations of the words used to express a proposition and these are like the word but which conveys that there exists a relation of contrast between the two conjuncts (Blok 1993: 19). Hence, the "detachable but non-cancelable aspects of meaning that are neither part of, nor calculable from, what is said are conventional implicatures" (Stalnaker (1974) in Horn, 2006: 4). The second type is the result of what is said rather than of how things are said which means that implicature is the result of explicature. Hence, implicature is not the result of the words uttered, but rather of the *propositional* content of the utterance (Blok 1993: 20). The inferences induced by (2 and 3) are said to be non-conventional, as they are calculable from the utterance of such sentences in a particular context (Horn, 2006: 4).

Furthermore, two types of conversational implicature are distinguished by Grice: generalized conversational implicature (GCI) and particularized conversational implicature (PCI). The first can be inferred without the need to a particular context; whereas the second requires a specific context to be inferred (Levinson 1983: 126).

### ***2.3 Relevance Theory***

The non-clear distinction between what is said and what is implied on the one hand and the explicature-implicature distinction on the other, along with the non-clear distinction between the conventional and conversational implicature, have paved the way for the Relevance Theory to make some modifications to Grice's Theory, particularly to the explicit-implicit distinction.

Relevance theory is based on the proposition that all Grice's maxims can be subsumed under one single maxim which is of *relevance*; out of this unifying maxim all modifications to Grice's theory spring!

For Relevance theory, the lexical meaning and the explicit meaning (hence explicature) are two distinct things where the explicature entails the lexical

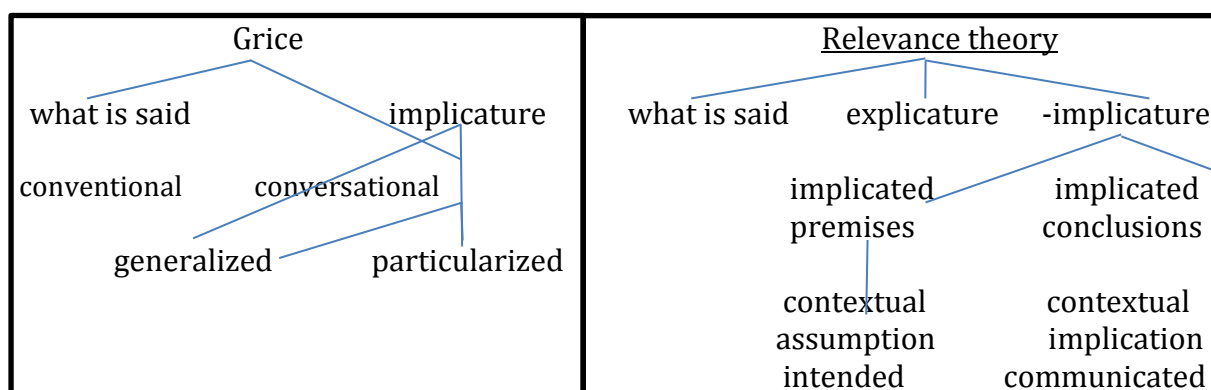
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meaning and provides an enrichment to arrive at the implicature(s). Besides, Grice's what is said equals the linguistic semantics but the relevance-theoretic explicature is parallel to Grice's generalized conversational implicature. An explicature plays a decoding and an inferential role to develop the linguistically incomplete logical forms encoded by the utterance to yield a full proposition which can be achieved through the pragmatic processes (Huang 2007: 189, 195). This reflects that pragmatics plays as much role as does semantics in the recovery of the explicature, which Grice fails to recognize (Huang 2007: 188). But what Relevance theory really considers as implicature is Grice's particularized conversational implicature (Huang 2007: 195).

Relevance theory identifies five components of interpretation as opposed to the two-component interpretation adopted by Grice; they are as Kearns (2000: 274) puts them:

- 1) The literal meaning of the words uttered;
- 2) First pragmatic level: reference assignment, disambiguation, interpretation of indexical expressions, giving the explicature as output;
- 3) The explicature, the main truth condition of what was said;
- 4) Second pragmatic level: further inferences taking the explicature as input, giving implicatures as output; and
- 5) The implicature(s).

Figure (2) sums up the differences between the notions of Grice's theory and those of the Relevance theory, the following bi-diagram clarifies the whole picture.



**Figure (2) The Differences between Grice's and those of the Relevance Theory**

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As Figure (2) shows, the distinction between the said and the implicature is clear-cut for Grice because these notions do not overlap across the fields of study. To prove this, Grice states that while what is said, or more precisely entailed, *cannot* be cancelled without contradiction, implicatures *can* be cancelled without contradiction. This is one of the features of the above distinction. Non-detachability is another feature that Grice implements as he states that *cancellation* and *contradiction* are two distinct notions. Meantime, Figure (2) shows that Relevance Theory comes to prove that cancellability cannot be a decisive difference between these two notions of what is said and implicature because there are implicatures that *can* be cancelled and at the same time implicatures that *cannot*.

### **3. Cancellability Failure as a Test for Explicit-Implicit Distinction of Meaning**

This section is an account of what cancellability means and how semanticists think it must be dealt with or reconsidered in distinguishing the explicit from the implicit. It is addressing questions like: What is cancellation? What is

it that which is cancelled: the explicature or the implicature? Is cancellability really a process of cancellation or it is rather a process of clarification? Why? And, if it is clarification, what does it clarify?

There are opposing proposals as to Grice's proposal of the validity of cancellability test for the presence of implicatures. Due to the fact that the examples supporting and the counter-examples defying them, these proposals are labelled differently according to the different theories their advocates adopt; some are with Grice's and others are against it.

Although Grice (1989: 44) thinks that all conversational implicatures are cancellable, he states that cancellability is not sufficient for concluding the presence of a conversational implicature. Nevertheless, Grice's (1989: 44) Cancellability Test states the fact that:

... a putative conversational implicature that p is explicitly cancelable if, to the form of words the utterance of which putatively implicates that p, it is admissible to add but not p, or I do not mean to imply that p, and it is contextually cancelable if one can find situations in which the utterance of the form of

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words would simply not carry the implicature.

According to Burton-Roberts (2010: 138), conversational implicatures are cancellable because they can be pragmatically inferred. Hence, inferences that can be pragmatically made from the part of the hearer can be cancelled from the part of the speaker. This is just made possible by virtue of the fact that Grice's *Pragmatic Cancellability Principle* is basically concerned with the cancellability of pragmatic inference. This principle states that what the speaker implies is not cancellable since it is intended and what the hearer infers is cancellable since he might not recognize what the speaker actually intended to convey.

Furthermore, Borge (2009: 150) confirms that conversational implicatures are generated by a speaker who takes advantage of the fact that the hearer will generally regard him as respecting the Cooperative Principle in a given context of communication. In such situations, the speaker intends the audience to draw contextual inferences about what s/he means and thus s/he can cancel any putative conversational implicature. Nevertheless, Weiner (2006: 127-8) argues that not all

conversational implicatures are cancellable. Agreeing to Weiner's (ibid.) proposal, Burton-Roberts (2010: 138) states that cancellation, accordingly, does not provide a test for the explicature/implicature distinction because what Grice refers to as the *generalized* conversational implicatures can be cancelled whereas the *particularized* conversational implicatures cannot. This latter proposal is also supported by Carston's (2002) claim that her explicatures, which are equal to Grice's generalized conversational implicatures, can be cancelled. Accordingly, explicatures cannot be distinguished from implicatures just by means of this phenomenon of cancellation.

Weiner (2006: 128) refers to cases of *explicit* cancellation of what is said where the *implied* meaning is not cancelled. This once again supports the non-validity of cancellation as a distinctive feature between the explicit and the implicit. In such cases, explicit cancellation fails because uttering *A implicates B* where uttering *A, but not B* does not commit the speaker to *A* without committing her/him to *B*. Accordingly, what is thought to be cancellation of the implicature is in fact a

*strengthening* of that implicature (Ibid.: 128; Blome-Tillmann 2008: 157-8). On his behalf, Blome-Tillmann (2008: 158) argues that although the implicature cannot be sometimes explicitly cancelled, it can be contextually cancelled if being considered as part of another context where the implicature does not rise.

Burton-Roberts (2010: 138) argues that cancellation must be dealt with in terms of the speaker's intention, though it cannot be on the level of intention itself because what is intended is intended and thus cannot be cancelled. He (ibid.: 142) states that if what is said is clearly explicating what the speaker intends to convey, then cancellation cannot take place and *clarification* rather takes place, particularly when the hearer fails to identify what the speaker necessarily intends to explicate. Meanwhile, even if the hearer identifies the speaker's actual intention, it becomes impossible to cancel the explicature because it becomes clear and then conveys what the speaker intends his hearer to recognize.

Hence, what is used to mean cancellation of what is said without contradiction, for Grice, must mean cancellation without

contradiction of intention (Burton-Roberts 2010: 138) because what is actually executed by the act of utterance is maintained by what is said and accordingly cannot be unsaid (ibid.: 142).

On the opposite side, for Carston (2002: 138) what can be cancelled is the explicature because it has nothing to do with the intended meaning since it is just an explanation of the actual meaning that is a development of the incomplete logical form of the uttered words. Whereas, on the other hand, implicatures cannot be cancelled but rather clarified because they are related to the intention of the speaker and what is intended cannot be cancelled simply because it is actually meant. Nevertheless, there are cases where the implicature can be cancelled because it is originally potential and thus unintended; these are the generalized conversational implicatures (Burton-Roberts 2010: 144), which means that not all conversational implicatures are cancellable. An utterance may only assume the form of cancellation but at the same time, it functions as clarification whether to the explicated or to the implicated meaning. Yet, from another perspective, in order for a

conversational implicature to be cancelled, a speech act is required. But, what if the first utterance is itself a speech act? Can the intended cancellation utterance really cancel it?

Cancellation must reflect sincerity; hence, it proves itself to be a speech act that has the force of cancellation. However, since conversational implicatures are forms of speaker's intended meanings and cancellation must involve both the speaker and the hearer, understanding the meaning and the force of an utterance from the part of the hearer makes it possible for the speaker to cancel an implicature (Borge 2009: 151, 153). Yet, this proposal means that the hearer's success in getting at the speaker's intended meaning helps the latter to cancel what s/he really means, the matter that contradicts Burton-Roberts's (2010: 138) proposal cited earlier.

To start the discussion of the examples upon which this study intends to apply the notions of contradiction, cancellation and clarification/reinforcement, it is important to emphasize the fact that the notions of strengthening and intensifying lead to another proposal of debates on whether the implicature, i.e. the actual

intention of the speaker, is being cancelled or rather clarified. Borge (2009: 149), for instance, argues against Weiner's (2006) proposal that not all conversational implicatures are cancellable. This is because the examples that Weiner (ibid.) refers to as non-cancellable implicatures are in fact *not* cases of cancellability but rather of reinforcement where cancellability cannot be traced<sup>(2)</sup>.

4. A Pragmatic Analysis of some Verses from the Holy Quran  
It is hoped that this study may support this proposal by explaining two examples from the Holy Quran by writing about reinforcement or even clarification or strengthening. The first is an example of cancellation with lexical contradiction and the second is an example of cancellation of a particularized conversational implicature. The first verse is from Surah al-Hajj and the second is from Surah al-Anbiyaa. The study shall also refer to a verse from Surah Yaseen to support the notion of speech act as related to the notions of cancellability, clarification, and reinforcement.

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<sup>(2)</sup> The example referred to here is that of Alice and Sarah on a crowded train (Weiner 2006: 128).

The three official translations of the Holy Quran by Al-Hilali and Khan (1999), Shakir (2001), Ghali (2008) are consulted to provide the English version of the verses to be analysed. These translations represent three different Islamic schools of thought represented by the publishers themselves: Darussalam- Saudi Arabia, Ansariyan-Islamic Republic of Iran, and Dar an-Nashr- Egypt respectively.

#### 4.1 The Explicature

##### Text 1

The first example is the second part of verse number two from Surah Al-Hajj (Pilgrimage):

وَتَرَى النَّاسَ

{سُكَارَى وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكَارَى}

This part comes within a context of two verses put as follows:

{يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ إِنَّ زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ شَيْءٌ عَظِيمٌ ① يَوْمَ تَرَوْنَهَا تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّا أَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُكَارَى وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكَارَى وَلَكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ ②}

Below are the three different translations

[Shakir] On the day when you shall see it, every woman giving suck shall quit in confusion what she suckled, and every pregnant woman shall lay down her burden, and you shall see men intoxicated, and they shall not be intoxicated

but the chastisement of Allah will be severe.

[Ghali] O you mankind, be pious to your Lord; surely, the earthquake of the Hour is a tremendous thing. On the day you will see it, every suckling female will get distracted away from whatever she has suckled, and every pregnant female will lay down her burden, and you see mankind as drunken, and in no way are they drunken but the torment of Allah is strict.

[Al-Hilali and Khan] O mankind, fear your Lord and be dutiful to Him! Verily, the earthquake of the Hour (of the Day of Judgment) is a terrible thing. The Day you shall see it, every nursing mother will forget her nursling, and every pregnant one will drop her load, and you shall see mankind as in a drunken state, yet they will not be drunken, but severe will be the Torment of Allah. (Surah al-Hajj No. 22: verse 2)

The following expressions are the ones that are subject to discussion:

- intoxicated but not intoxicated
- drunken and in no way are they drunken
- in a drunken state yet they will not drunken



The Arabic word for 'drunk' and 'drunken' is (سكاري), pronounced as /sʊkɑ:ræ/, plural of (سكران) pronounced as /sækrɑ:n/; in Arabic it means (ثمالي), pronounced as /θʊmɑ:læ/, plural of (ثمل) pronounced as /θəmIl / meaning 'intoxicated'. The two words, The Quranic one (سكاري) and its by-translation-suggested synonym (ثمالي) have a major sense in Arabic which is 'someone who has drunk alcohols' or 'who is drunk because he has had alcohol'.

Furthermore, there is an apparent linguistic contradiction in this part of the verse; this gives a sense of *cancellation* at the level of explication.

#### 4.2 Implications

To understand what the real implications of this part of the verse are, there should be a reference to the context of situation drawn by the two verses. The main elements of this context can be easily put in terms of the time, place, addresser, addressees, theme, occasion, purpose, intention, and nature of the text, etc. the text that draws the context of situation is again:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ إِنَّ زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ شَيْءٌ عَظِيمٌ ①  
يَوْمَ تَرَوْنَهَا تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّا أَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُكَارَىٰ وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكَارَىٰ وَلَٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ ②

1. O people! guard [sic] against (the punishment from) your Lord. Surely the violence of the Hour is a grievous thing

2. On the day when you shall see it, every woman giving suck shall quit in confusion what she suckled, and every pregnant woman shall lay down her burden, and you shall see men intoxicated, and they shall not be intoxicated but the chastisement of Allah will be severe (Shakir, 2001: 332)

The addresser is Allah the Almighty/ God of all the creations; the Lord of revelation of Quran to Prophet Muhammed.

The Addressees are all the people; hence they are addressed as "O people," (ibid.), "O you mankind" (Ghali, 2008: 332), or "O mankind" (Al-Hilali and Khan, 1999: 435). Al-Tabatabai (1997: 339-40) interprets the first verse saying that it addresses both the believers and the unbelievers in a way that every individual in each party will make use of. It threateningly warns the unbelievers and draws their attention to the 'punishment' (Shakir, 2001: 332) of the Allah the Almighty at the Day (of Judgement) and it preaches the

believers to be more faithful and obedient to their Lord<sup>(3)</sup>.

The setting is the Day of Judgement or the Doomsday, described as the 'Day' or the 'Hour'. The Verse describes the action of that Day to be very severe and unbearable. The choice of diction is intended; however, the very nature of the Classical Arabic tends to draw the image in a clearer way than that the translators and interpreters can describe by using English. So, the verse addresses all people and orders them to guard themselves against the Day of punishment (Shakir, *ibid.*) and be pious to their Lord (Ghali, 2008) and be beautiful to their Lord (Al-Hilali and Khan, 1999). It then describes the event of "the earthquake of the Hour" (*ibid.*) "of Judgement" (Ghali, 2008) to be a very severe, tremendous, grievous, and terrible thing. The use of the Arabic expression (زَلْزَلَةُ السَّاعَةِ شَيْءٌ عَظِيمٌ) includes all these senses. The word (زَلْزَلَةٌ) in Arabic, for instance, stands for the very furious, severe, and quick movement of an earthquake! It consists of the repeated syllable (زَلْ) which means 'slip'; so (زَلْزَلَةٌ) means slip-sloping furiously (Al-Tabtabai

1997: 340), a repeated action which indicates the very quick furious movement of Earth at the time of Judgment declaring the complete destruction of the globe and whatsoever it has: the land then is to be merged into the sea, the heaven to come down to the ground and fused with it, dimensions to disappear, all borders and partitions to be removed, and all bodies are to be restored like ghosts without spirits (Mughniyah 2003: 208).

Then the verse says: (يَوْمَ تَرَوْنَهَا تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّا أَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا) (On the day when you shall see it, every woman giving suck shall quit in confusion what she suckled, and every pregnant woman shall lay down her burden). Within the scope and situation of fear and horror, people can eye-witness and undoubtedly see that suckling mother will get distracted away from whatever she has sucked and will forget her nursling. So does a pregnant female who will lay down her burden and soon drop her load.

That day has been described by Allah in some verses from Ibrahim Sura (42-43) as follows <sup>(4)</sup>.

<sup>(3)</sup> Briefed and translated by the researchers.

<sup>(4)</sup> The Holy Quran, for the Muslims, is best interpreted and explained by the Quran itself as its verses often explain each other.

إِنَّمَا يُؤَخَّرُهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ تَشْخَصُ فِيهِ الْأَبْصَارُ  
مُهْطِعِينَ مُقْنِعِي رُءُوسِهِمْ لَا يَرْتَدُّ إِلَيْهِمْ طَرْفُهُمْ  
وَافْتَدَتْهُمْ هَوَاءٌ

These verses mean "He only respites them to a Day on which the eyes shall be fixedly open Hastening forward, their heads upraised and their hearts vacant" (Shakir, 2001: 261). It is a Day where people will be "hastening forward with necks outstretched, their heads raised up (towards the sky), their gaze returning not towards them and their hearts empty (from thinking because of extreme fear)" (Al-Hilali & Khan 1999: 337), their heart-sights as air (Ghali 2008: 261).

Within this scene of horror and fear, the expressions under investigation: (وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُكَارَىٰ وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكَارَىٰ) comes to mean "intoxicated but not intoxicated" (Shakir), "drunken and in no way are they drunken" (Ghali) or, "in a drunken state yet they will not drunken" (Al-Hilali and Khan).

#### 4.3 Discussion of Results

What actually happens is that the positive part of these expressions intends to convey the implicature that people at the Day of Judgment will look like as if they were drunken although they would not have taken any intoxicating drink. What might be apparently a contradiction of what is

linguistically encoded here is, in fact, meant to restrict the intended sense in the positive part to one of the features or senses of the expressions 'intoxicated' and 'drunken' which is 'rapt, enthralled, mentally or emotionally exhilarated or besotted' (Dictionary.com), while removing, at the same time, the other feature which is the major sense cited earlier. It is considered in this case as broadening the major sense meant by, to specify one lexical item, the word drunk.

The hearer might fail, in some cases, to infer the actual intention, namely the intended explicature, of using this word and in this case, the second part shall be, as Burton-Roberts (2010: 138) states, a clarification of the explicature. Hence, no other implicatures that might need to be cancelled shall arise. The implicature of this verse is "The day of judgment will be an awful day for the disbelievers and sinners. The extreme terror of this day will drive them to frenzy with terror" [Pooya /Ali Commentary 22: 2], cannot be cancelled by the negation of the same linguistic form used in the first part but what is cancelled is the essential sense that these forms might

evoke in the mind of the hearer. This seems to contradict what Borge (2010: 150) proposes that an implicature is explicitly cancelled if the cancellation does not give rise to a contradiction. But the so-called cancellation here gives rise to contradiction though, but at the same time, neither explicit nor contextual cancellation is taking place. For if we want to think of the implicature as being contextually cancellable, it might need to in another context of utterance in which it can be thought of to replace the original context at the time the verse has been cited. Yet, as a matter of fact, no possible context exists to have this verse being uttered in order for it to be cancellable in that other context. This part of the verse is a particularized conversational implicature that cannot be cancelled simply because it is connected with particular circumstances or context, and at the same time there is an *actual serious intention* that is conveyed through uttering the first expression; an intention that makes it impossible to cancel the implicature, because the addresser is Allah the Almighty Who does not need to contradict His saying by all means.

To relate the examples under investigation with the above-mentioned proposals, it is important to explain certain correlates that have been developed in this study.

i) Contradiction = not what is said

As contradiction is defined as 'a sentence that is necessarily FALSE, as a result of the senses of the words in it' (Hurford and Heasley 1983: 93), the affirmative as opposed to the negative form in the verse above shows that there seems an apparent linguistic contradiction; yet, what is actually meant by saying it is the deletion of some properties conveyed by what is said, not a cancellation of the implicature. This is what at-Tabatabai (1997: 341) confirms as he (ibid.) states that negating the case of being drunken after affirming it in the verse is just evidence that the state of the drunken and losing their minds out of amazement and astonishment is not at all the result of alcohol or so but a result of the severe grievous Torment of Allah.

ii) Cancellation = denying the explicature

As a matter of fact, what is cancelled in verse 2 above is the explicit, encoded, meaning of the

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first part of it which is 'some people are intoxicated by alcohol' (Thesaurus.com). At a profound level of analysis, one can see that it is the addresser's serious intention and the very nature of the situation that proves the non-validity of cancellation in this case!

iii) Cancellation = clarifying the intended implicature

What the second part of the verse really does is to clarify and reinforce the intended meaning, namely, the actual implicature of the utterance (Burton-Roberts 2010), which is that people will look like the drunken ones who have already drunk alcoholic drinks but actually they would not have drunk any alcohol. Furthermore, this view can be explained in terms of the idea that the purpose behind the use of such an implicature is fairly strong enough to support the denial of cancellation and for the interest of clarification and reinforcement.

### **Text 2**

The second example is verse number 69 from al-Anbiyaa (The Prophets) Surah:

فُلْنَا يَا نَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ  
{إِبْرَاهِيمَ}

[Shakir] We said: O fire! be a comfort and peace to Ibrahim;

[Pickthal] We said: O fire, be coolness and peace for Abraham, [Yusufali] We said, "O Fire! be thou cool, and (a means of) safety for Abraham!" (Surah al-Anbiyaa No. 21: verse 69)

To clarify the notion of cancellability while analysing this verse, another notion need be mentioned here; that is of speech act. And to support the discussion of this verse, another verse shall be referred to so that to prove that ALL that the Almighty Allah intends for it to perform an action is really an action that is maintained by His very words in the Holy Quran, and this is proved by verse number 82 from Yaseen Surah:

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ}

[Shakir] His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it: Be, so it is.

[Pickthal] But His command, when He intendeth a thing, is only that He saith unto it: Be! and it is.

[Yusufali] Verily, when He intends a thing, His Command is, "be", and it is!

(Surah Yaseen No. 36: verse 82)

This very verse confirms that when the Almighty Allah says for a thing to be, then it shall be. This meaning elaborates on explaining verse 69 cited above. Hence, the

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word fire from the first part of verse 69 along with the words comfort, peace, coolness, cool and safety from the second part of the verse show a contradiction in form, namely a lexical contradiction, because the senses of fire are contradicted by the senses carried by the words comfort, peace, coolness, cool and safety.

The case here is a contradiction of the linguistic semantics, nevertheless it is a speech act that conveys an actual intention and an actual act with a force of cancelling the encoded meaning or part of encyclopedic knowledge included in the word fire which are 'burning, blaze, heat, flames, scorching, luminosity and warmth' as Thesaurus.com cites them amongst the synonyms of the word fire. At the same time this speech act adds the action of changing the nature of fire into an opposite one, namely, that is of 'coolness' and 'safety'. The actual context of uttering this verse conveys the fact that fire has turned into a cool and safe status so that not to hurt Abraham. This means that the senses of fire have been changed into an opposite status which in its turn means that these senses have been cancelled, though the cancellation is a

temporary one due to the fact that it happened at that time in that very situation.

This analysis leads to another proposal that is related to the non-cancellability of particularized conversational implicatures. Since the actual meaning of fire has been cancelled in this specific particularized conversational implicature, i.e. the context of verse 69; the proposal that they cannot be cancellable is rejected, at least for some specific types of particularized conversational implicatures.

The encoded senses contained within the word *fire* have been cancelled and replaced by the action of uttering the opposite words. Just to return to a previous question that has been proposed earlier: Can a speech act cancel another speech act? This verse proves that it is possible though restricted only to the Almighty Allah.

### **5. Conclusions**

Although Grice's theories of meaning and conversation have been opposed by many other theories or proposals, his contribution to the field of pragmatics has been of great value, for what he ignored or failed to prove has been later on discussed and improved.

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His distinction between what is said and what is implied has not been so clear because what he has proposed to distinguish between these notions is not really distinctive. And one of the major problems that have evolved in this respect is the validity of the cancellability test which has been either supported as it is the case with Borge (2009) or defied as with Weiner (2006) and Blome-Tillmann (2008), or even modified and then reformulated as with Burton-Roberts (2010).

The analysis of the two verses from the Holy Quran in Section 3 supports some of these proposals and rejects others. As to the first example, it supports Burton-Roberts's (2010) proposal by showing that cancellation is a process of clarification that is

accompanied by a partial cancellation, which has taken the form of deletion of the major sense of the word drunk. On the other hand, the second example supports Borge's (2009) proposal that cancellation must be a speech act in order for it to function as such, which has actually cancelled all the senses that the word fire includes. This leads to suspecting the cancellability test as being a distinctive feature between what is said and what is intended/meant on the one hand and hence can also lead to suspecting the proposal that particularized conversational implicatures are not cancellable at all which has been rejected in the case of these verses.

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## الالغاء بين الايضاح والتناقض في بعض آي القرآن الكريم دراسة تداولية

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### الخلاصة

يمكن فهم ثنائية 'المعنى' و 'الكلام' في سؤال مثل "هل تعني ماتقول؟" وفاقا لثنائية 'المتكلم' و 'المستمع'. وهي بالظاهر تعكس بعضا من وجهات النظر مثل: مستمع غير متأكد مما يعنيه محدثه فيما قد قال أو متحدث لا يقول ما يعنيه بالضبط أو متحدث لا يعني ما يقوله فعلا. ولذا فلا توافق بين ما يقال وما يعنيه القول الأمر الذي يفضي الى فصل واضح بين المقول و المقصود. ولعل من المعروف ان كلا من علم الدلالة وعلم اللغة التداولي قد درسا المقول و المقصود من الكلام تباعا فوجدا اهم خواص كل

منهما. وعلى اية حال فان هذا السؤال قد أثار عددا من المسائل في فهم هذين المفهومين ، أي المقول والمقصود، و كيفية التعامل معهما في ظواهر مثل هذه. تتقصى الدراسة الراهنة التمييز بين المعنى الظاهر والمعنى الباطن في ضوء وجهات النظر المتوفرة من نظريتين رئيسيتين اثنتين للفيلسوف واللغوي بول غرايس هما 'نظرية التعلق'، (Theory of Relevance) و'نظرية المحادثة' (Theory of Conversation) وسيدور مدار الدراسة حول مفهوم اقترح كرايس تسميته بوصفه سمة من سمات 'الاقضاء' (implicature) وهو مفهوم 'الألغاء'

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تعزير (reinforcement) له. اذ انها تحاول بيان الانتقال بالافكار من الالغاء الى الايضاح بوصف ذلك الانتقال الية او اختبارا للتمييز بين الاقتضاء و الافصاح اعتمادا على التحليل التداولي لبعض آي من القرآن الكريم. وقد وجدت الدراسة ان كثيرا مما يبدو تناقضا (contradiction) في بعض آيات القرآن الكريم انما هو ايضاح و تعزير للمعنى المقصود من تلك الآيات ليس الا.

(cancellability) ليس لما يقال فقط أو لما اسماء كرايس 'افصاح التعلق النظري' (the theoretic-relevance) بل لما هو متضمن (explicature) ايضا، أي ما هو مضمّر مما (implied) عنه المتكلم فيما قال. وعليه فموضوع الدراسة الراهنة هو ان ما قد يظنه البعض على انه 'الغاء' قد يمكن تفسيره على انه 'ايضاح' (clarification) لفهم المعنى او