

The Teachability of Pragmatics in SLA: *Friends'* Humour through Grice

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ABSTRACT: The development of L2 learners' pragmatic competence plays a key role in the achievement of communicative competence. Thus, we have designed an activity for students of English that aims to explain the generation of humour through language applying Grice's model of conversational implicatures to four stretches of discourse from *Friends*. The analysis of the sample suggests that (1) the Gricean model is still a powerful tool to explain the generation of humorous situations by means of language, and (2) it is a useful device for second language learners to infer the correct meaning of language in real life situations.

Key words: Pragmatic competence, Grice's Cooperative Principle, humour, audio-visual material.

RESUMEN: El desarrollo de la competencia pragmática en aprendices de lengua extranjera es fundamental en el logro de la competencia comunicativa. Por ello, hemos diseñado una actividad para estudiantes de inglés basada en la aplicación del modelo de implicaturas conversacionales de Grice a una serie de fragmentos de discurso de *Friends*. El análisis sugiere (1) que el modelo de Grice todavía explica eficazmente la generación de situaciones humorísticas a través del lenguaje, y (2) que es un instrumento útil para que los aprendices de lenguas extranjeras puedan inferir el significado correcto del lenguaje en situaciones reales.

Palabras clave: competencia pragmática, principio cooperativo de grice, humor, materiales audiovisuales.

1. INTRODUCTION

A linguistic theory that only addresses purely linguistic issues must be considered an incomplete linguistic theory. Effective communication cannot be achieved if extralinguistic factors are ignored, and it is here that pragmatics comes into the picture. Over the past years different definitions of pragmatics have been provided; however, most authors agree on defining it as the study of the negotiation of meaning in interaction which takes place between speaker and hearer in a given context of utterance (Leech, 1983; Levinson, 1984; Thomas, 1995; Yule, 1996). In particular, pragmatics deals with the mismatch between what is said and what is really meant since, in most communicative scenarios, speakers mean more than they say in a strictly semantic sense.

In keeping with the Communicative Approach to L2 teaching, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001) includes pragmatic competence as one of the main components of the learner's communicative competence, together with linguistic and sociolinguistic competences. Recent years have witnessed an increase in the body of research on the development of L2 learners' pragmatic competence (Alcón Soler, 2005; Bacelar da Silva, 2003; Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Eslami-Rasekh, 2005; Jung, 2001; Kasper 2001b; Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993; Kasper and Rose, 2002; Kasper and Schmidt, 1996; Martínez et al., 2003; Rose and Kasper, 2001). Many studies support the teachability of pragmatics and report on the benefits this provides for mastering speech acts, conversational implicatures, conversational management and pragmatic fluency. In fact, most classroom research provides evidence on the benefits obtained in *explicit* metapragmatic instruction (Kasper, 2001a). Hence, language teachers would benefit from research done on L2 learners' acquisition of pragmatic language skills (Cenoz and Valencia, 1996).

Studies of L2 pragmatics have so far dealt with a wide range of topics such as cross-cultural issues relevant in L2 teaching (Nunn, 2003), the relationship between pragmatics and grammatical ability (Takahashi, 1996; Bardovi-Harlig, 1999), lexical pragmatics (Bibok, 2004; Blutner, 1998; Maruenda, 2003-2004), the role of stress, intonation and tone of voice as sources of potential implicatures (Gabrielatos, 2002), the role of pragmatics in the new media (Ho and Swan 2007), the pragmatic uses in L2 writing (White, 2001), or the need to use authentic language in the classroom (Crandall and Basturkmen, 2004; Gabrielatos, 2002) and in L2 materials.

Together with Austin and Searle's theory of Speech Acts, Grice's (1969) Cooperative Principle has been one of the most influential models within the field of pragmatics. Over the years, Grice's theory has been continuously revisited (Horn, 1984; Levinson, 1984; Sperber and Wilson, 1995), and its influence in contemporary pragmatics is still unquestionable today (Mey, 2002).

In line with research that recommends explicit pragmatic instruction, this article seeks to promote the explicit teaching of pragmatics in the L2 classroom. With that purpose in mind, we have devised and implemented a sample activity that analyses authentic language excerpts of the popular sitcom *Friends* using Grice's Cooperative Principle. The activity was carried out with second-year university-student participants; however, we consider this kind of activities equally suitable for lower educational levels, such as secondary education, because their competence in English is adequate – Tateyama et al. (1997) showed that pragmatic routines are teachable to students with a basic knowledge of L2 – and Grice's model is part of the Common European Framework.

This article has two main aims: first, to test the validity of Grice's model as a suitable methodological tool for L2 learners' pragmatic competence and awareness in terms of its explanatory and analytical power; and, second, to show the validity of this model to explain the generation of humour through language from the perspective of the speaker. In doing so, we also discuss the different uses of humour and the motivating role of audio-visual materials in L2 teaching.

2. METHODOLOGY

For the activity that we are presenting in this paper we have gathered a corpus of 23 fragments of a popular sitcom called *Friends*. This choice has been motivated by the need to incorporate authentic language in the L2 classroom. Quoting Gabrielatos (2002: 45),

Awareness can be achieved by using either authentic texts, or specially constructed texts which successfully simulate authentic use. Of course texts alone cannot raise learners' awareness; teachers need to guide learners to discover relevant cultural aspects of communication, as well as provide support in the form of explanations and further input.

We are aware that the dialogues in a sitcom cannot be considered 100% authentic, because they have been artificially created by a group of script-writers for a certain purpose. Nonetheless, the scripts of *Friends* capture the main features of authentic language in a fine way, and they are a good source of everyday, natural expressions.

Furthermore, the use of audiovisual material in the classroom has turned out to be successful for several reasons. In the following sections we briefly introduce the theoretical framework for our activity, we deal with some of the advantages offered by the use of audiovisual material, we summarize the main characteristics of the sitcom *Friends*, we provide the most relevant features of the subject participants, and we explain the procedure followed in the implementation of the activity.

2.1. Grice's model as a framework for pragmatic tasks

Grice's ideas about *conversational implicatures* were presented in a series of conferences held at Harvard University in 1967 (the William James lectures). As mentioned in the introduction, despite the continuous amendments made by different authors to Grice's Cooperative Principle, it still constitutes a valid model for explaining pragmatics to second-language learners. On this occasion, we have made use of Grice's model to explain one of the most problematic aspects of language for second/foreign language learners: humour.

As mentioned earlier, when we speak we communicate more than we actually say, and when it comes to humour this statement becomes even more significant. Humour originates, among other things, in plays on words, second meanings, and cultural factors, all of which may go unnoticed to the learner if interpreted literally. Thus, in order to avoid confusing – and even uncomfortable – situations, teaching this pragmatic aspect of language becomes indispensable.

The notion of conversational implicature is central to the study of pragmatics. It deals with questions related to the lack of match between signifiers and signifieds, as well as with why we actually mean more than we say. In his theory of conversational implicatures, Grice suggests that there is a set of components that lead speakers in their conversations. These components result in principles and maxims that, as Beaugrande & Dressler (1992: 118) indicate, are not rules that speakers must follow obligatorily; that is, they are not prescriptive. Grice postulates the co-operative principle as a means to guarantee the communicative process. It goes as follows: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged." (Grice 1975, cited in Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 33) This principle is developed into four maxims which in turn comprise nine submaxims (Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 33-34):

Maxims of Quantity:

- Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
- Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Maxims of Quality: Try to make your contribution one that is true.

- Do not say what you believe to be false.
- Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

Maxim of Relation: Be relevant.

Maxims of Manner: Be perspicuous

- Avoid obscurity of expression.
- Avoid ambiguity.
- Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
- Be orderly.

Grice focuses exclusively on those implicatures that are generated within the limits of conversation, the so-called conversational implicatures. This type of implicatures instigates the principles of conversation (cooperative principle and the corresponding maxims). The generation of implicatures follows at least two paths: on the one hand, speakers can generate implicatures by simply observing the maxims (Levinson 1984:104); on the other hand, speakers can generate implicatures by violating the maxims. Grice (cited in Escandell 1993:96-97) distinguishes at least four ways of breaking or violating the maxims, namely, *violation* itself, which is done quietly and unostentatiously; *opting out*, i.e. by giving explicit information that a maxim cannot be satisfied; *clash* between maxims; and *flouting*, i.e. breaking a maxim by exploiting it and expecting the listener to notice this. As Grice points out, this violation sometimes results from the speaker's inability to observe the maxims, due to linguistic incompetence as well as to other types of deficiencies.

2.2. Audiovisual resources in the classroom

In the introduction we have already mentioned the need to use authentic language in L2 teaching, for which audio-visual materials is a good source. On top of that, there are several reasons for using audiovisual material in the classroom:

- a. Guarantee of success: the use of audiovisual material in the classroom breaks the monotony of the everyday routine and motivates the student.
- b. No need for training: the introduction of multimedia material and equipment in the classroom is useless if the teaching staff does not learn how to use it appropriately (Burbules and Callister 2000). Fortunately, by contrast to other new technologies, audio-visual material does not involve (advanced) training in multimedia on the part of the faculty.
- c. No need for high investments in material (in addition to saving money on staff training).
- d. No need to *slice up*: as Sherman (2003) says, films are used frequently in class, but they may be problematic because they are usually too long and, consequently, time-

consuming, boring, or leading to plot loss. As a result, the teacher has to adopt different measures, such as *slicing up* the film into different episodes and showing them over several days (*Salami tactic*, Sherman 2003: 19), or telling the story of the film and showing only some selected parts (*Illustrated talk*, Sherman 2003: 18). The material we have selected, by contrast, is a series of 22-minute-long episodes; hence these problems are avoided.

- e. Natural language: film language –used in a broad sense- is often regarded as the most faithful representation of natural speech.
- f. Cultural input: *Friends* offers *culturally authentic materials* (Davis 1994: 15). Thus, although this is not one of the aims of this activity, students learn customs, traditions, and attitudes that may turn useful in everyday conversation while watching the episodes.
- g. Functions of audiovisual material in the classroom: Rodríguez Diéguez (1977, cited in Santos Guerra 1998: 122) mentions several functions of audiovisual material in the classroom, among which the following stand out: 1. *Motivating function* (the use of images breaks the monotony of the class and catches the student’s attention); 2. *Vicarious function* (images are a more adequate means of communication than language in certain contexts); 3. *Explicative function* (although this work focuses on the explanation of verbal humour, images are necessary to understand some humorous scenes); and 4. *Aesthetic function* (which pervades the whole series). Santos Guerra (1998: 124) incorporates one more function that is usually assigned to comics and which, in our opinion, is made-to-measure for sitcoms, as they entertain and make the audience laugh out loud: the *Recreational function*.
- h. Canned laughter: most texts focus on the visual part of audio-visual material and forget that sound –voice, canned laughter, screams, applause, and so on - also plays a role in the generation of humour. Although canned laughter is a manipulative procedure, we believe that it is an extremely interesting and useful device in the context of the classroom. The majority of students have neither developed a deep intuition of the foreign language nor assimilated all popular expressions, both of which hinder full understanding of the jokes. However, canned laughter triggers some reaction on the students that leads them to reanalyse the lines they have just heard and, therefore, grasp more jokes that would otherwise go unnoticed.

2.3. The sitcom: *Friends*

Friends is a popular American sitcom whose success lies to a great extent in the humorous character of its discourse. The sitcom relates the everyday stories of a group of friends from New York: Ross, a sensitive intellectual, and his obsessive and extremely ordered sister, Monica; Chandler, the most ironic and sometimes cynical member of the group and his naive flatmate, the good-looking actor Joey; Phoebe, a lunatic and eccentric “singer” and masseuse; and the snobbish but charming Rachel, whom Ross has always been deeply in love with since high school. The six of them meet up regularly at a café called “Central Perk” and in their flats, and there spring up funny and crazy anecdotes. As Ross (1998: 93-94) points out, there is no real or pragmatic aim in their talks, «rather it’s part of enjoying being yourself in the company of mutually appealing people”. Furthermore, «knowing other people well means that talk need not be so explicit, but can rely on all sorts of shared knowledge and assumptions»

(Ross 1998: 93), which brings about a large number of *implicatures*. In this work we have focused exclusively on verbal implicatures because we aim to explain the generation of humour by means of language, but visual humour also plays a relevant role in this sitcom and should be considered in future research.

2.4. Subject participants

The subject participants were fifteen second-year university students of English (Magisterio de lengua extranjera: inglés), whose ages ranged between nineteen and twenty-one years old.

2.5. Procedure

This activity has been designed and carried out on the basis that the teaching of pragmatic competence is fundamental for L2 learners. To implement it, we have opted for an explicit kind of instruction, because Billmyer's (1990) and Bouton's (1994) experiments show that those students who receive explicit instruction in implicature do better than those who do not. Thus, following Tateyama et al. (1997), we described, explained, and discussed implicature with our students, and we provided the necessary input and practice, although not in this order. The activity was carried out during two different classes as follows:

Class 1: the students watched an OV episode of *Friends* in class. During the process, they wrote down, as literally as possible, fragments of dialogues which amused them. Afterwards, since they were non-native speakers, we gave them the original scripts and we worked on them. Once more, they were asked to identify fragments of dialogues which they thought funny and, whenever possible, to explain why; this task turned out to be easier than expected thanks to the images which were still fresh in their minds. Subsequently we discussed the different explanations suggested by the students and we presented Grice's (1975) model of conversational implicatures as an alternative to explain the generation of those humorous lines. Then we applied Grice's maxims to some stretches extracted from one of the episodes as we describe in section 3.

Class 2: we watched two more episodes of the sitcom and the students applied the same method to the fragments they selected. Having completed the task, we discussed the solutions put forward for the students in each case, emphasising the reasons why they were right or wrong. Our conclusion, as we explain in section 4, is that a practical approach to theoretical issues like Grice's model provides the students with a deeper understanding of these questions and with the means to use them in an appropriate way.

3. ANALYSIS OF EXAMPLES

In the following, we present, as illustration, four of the twenty-three excerpts of oral discourse that we prepared for the explanation in class. As the analysis shows, plays on words have a main role in the generation of humour in this sitcom.

Example 1. The One With The Football.

- A1. MONICA: *Huddle up.*
 B1. JOEY: *(To his team) All right, huddle up, huddle up, right over here.*
 C1. PHOEBE: *Wait for me! Wait for me! Oh cool, this is my first huddle.*
 A2. MONICA: *Ok.*
 C2. PHOEBE: *Ok, so what do you guys really think of Chandler?*
 A3. MONICA: *Ok, Phoebe you know what you're doing, right?*
 C3. PHOEBE: *Yeah.*
 A4. MONICA: *Ok, Joey's gonna catch it, and you and I are gonna block.*
 C4. PHOEBE: *What's block?*
 A5. MONICA: *Phoebe, I thought you said you knew what you're doing?*
 C5. PHOEBE: *I thought you meant in life.*

CONTEXT: the group of friends meet to play rugby. The captains, Monica and Ross, have just chosen teams. Monica's team is formed by Joey and the histrionic Phoebe who, in theory, knows how to play, but in fact she does not.

In this example, Phoebe involuntarily departs from the maxims several times. On the one hand, she misunderstands the word *huddle*. C is unable to choose the appropriate meaning in the present context, namely "gathering the team players to plan the next move". Due to this misunderstanding, C2 unconsciously breaks the Maxim of Relation, since her statement is not relevant at that moment. A1 is not calling to a meeting where people exchange opinions about other people or topics, much less to gossip about Chandler, a member of the rival team.

The second unconscious violation¹ of a maxim on the part of C is also born from the same misunderstanding. C still thinks that this is a meeting among friends to talk about their business, hence she is unable to interpret the utterance in A2 properly. However, none of the other interlocutors is aware of the error in C3, given that "Yes" is a very ambiguous piece of discourse that hides at least two implicatures: "Yes, I know what I am doing right now; that is, I know the rules of this game», which is the most straightforward given the context and, consequently, the one inferred by A and B from the utterance in C3; and "I thought you meant in life", an implicit content in C3 brought about by an erroneous inference from the utterance of A3. Since A and B, competent speakers, bear in mind the first implicature and there is no correction on the part of C at that time, the conversation goes on with no *apparent* damage. Nonetheless, the utterance of C4 reveals the fact that her previous statement meant something different from what the interlocutors have inferred; that is, she meant "I know what I am doing with my life". This is due to her ignorance of the basic rugby term *block*. From that moment onwards, A5 realizes that C cannot play rugby, a fact that is definitely confirmed in C5.

Example 2. The One With All The Poker.

- A1. CHANDLER: *Rach, Rach, we gotta settle.*
 B1. RACHEL: *What?*

1. Although *violating* a maxim means *quietly and unostentatiously* breaking a maxim (Grice 1975), we will use this label here in a general sense to refer to all those cases in which the speaker departs from any maxim.

A2. CHANDLER: *The... Jamestown colony of Virginia. You see, king George is giving us the land, so...*

CONTEXT: Chandler, Rachel and some other friends have been playing poker. Rachel has lost and she has not yet paid off her debt yet to Chandler, whom she owes quite a lot of money.

It seems that B wants to avoid responsibility, that is, she tries to avoid paying Chandler. Thus, her utterance must not be interpreted as a lack of communicative competence but as a mere attempt to act dumb. A2 immediately infers this from her speech and openly breaks the first submaxim of the Maxim of Quality: “Do not say what you believe to be false.” A2 is purposefully –and ironically– using the verb “settle” with the meaning “to colonize.” The resulting implicature is clear: “Rachel, do not pretend you don’t know what I mean. You know that you owe me money, so you must behave honourably and give it to me” Chandler is the most ironic character of the series; therefore it is easy to identify ironic touches and even sarcasm in his utterances.

Example 3. The One With The Worst Best Man Ever

A1. PHOEBE: *No, it’s all right; it’s probably false labour. They said that, that can happen near the end, just somebody get the book.*

B1. MONICA: *Rachel get the book! The book!*

C1. RACHEL: *Okay, Okay! Here!*

B2. MONICA: *The Bible?*

C2. RACHEL: *I don’t know!*

CONTEXT: Phoebe is getting to the end of her pregnancy. Her friends take care of any single movement she makes. Right now she has just had some contractions.

A1 asks for *the book*; not any book, but a precise book. Before going into the analysis of this example we must bear in mind Escandell’s (1993: 24) words when analysing the following text: “If you don’t close the door, Kiko will run away”

Es verdad que la lengua proporciona pistas nada desdeñables: nos dice que el objeto debe cerrarse pertenece a la clase de los que suelen ser designados con el nombre de puerta. Pero, en cualquier caso, sólo la situación puede proporcionar los datos necesarios para decidir que el interlocutor se está refiriendo precisamente a aquella puerta que impida de manera más eficaz que Kiko -quienquiera que sea- se escape².

In our example, the clues provided by language tell us that the object required by C1 belongs to the set usually known as *book*. Besides, we know that the identity of the book is known by the interlocutors and, above all, by C1. This is inferred from the use of the definite article *the*.

2. [Our translation] “It is true that language provides not inconsiderable clues: it says that the object that must be closed belongs to the class of those usually designated as door. But, in any case, it is only the situation that can provide the necessary data to decide that the interlocutor is referring, precisely, to that door that prevents, in the most efficient way, that Kiko –whoever he/it is- runs away”.

The utterance in A1 could be analysed as follows:

A1 means “I order (any of) you to go to the place where the object belonging to those designated as *book* is; this book deals with childbirth; you know which book this is; we need that book urgently. I order you to take it and bring it to the place where I am right now”.

In our opinion, B1 infers the implicature properly and assumes that, likewise, C1 has made the same inference. However, C1 has inferred only part of the implicature successfully, namely, the part corresponding to the urgent order; hence C1 runs to bring the book as soon as possible. Nevertheless, C1 fails to infer an essential part of the message, i.e., the identity of the book required. It could be argued that this failure is due, precisely, to the lack of precision of the order. Thus, the Maxim of Quality would be unfulfilled. Nonetheless, this argument lacks force since context provides that information: we all know that Phoebe is in a delicate situation; she is about to deliver and what she needs is obviously a book on labour and childbirth. However, as we have seen, C1 infers the following: “I order you to go to the place where the object belonging to those designated as *book* is; you know which book it is; it contains information about spiritual help (the Bible), which I need right now. I order you to take it and bring it to the place where I am right now”. Thus, C1 infers that what A1 needs is spiritual help and, consequently, gives her the Bible. As an explanation we could argue that C1 is very nervous and she thinks that her friend is in such danger that only a miracle, i.e. spiritual, instead of medical, help can save her.

Example 4. The One Where Ross Finds Out.

A1. CHANDLER: We’re not running today. It’s Sunday.

B1. MONICA: So What?

A2. CHANDLER: It’s Sunday, Monica. It’s God’s day!

B2. MONICA: Ok, if you say stop, we stop.

CONTEXT: Chandler’s friends have noticed that he has put some weight on and they suggest that he does some exercise. Monica volunteers to help him. At the beginning, Chandler tries hard to keep up with Mon, but after a while he tries to avoid her and her hideous trainings.

This is an interesting excerpt for analysis within the framework of Grice’s theory. Several aspects must be taken into account. Let us begin by utterance A1. *A priori* it could be said that the utterance “it’s Sunday” has nothing to do with the first part of such utterance “We are not running today”. From this it might be derived that the Maxim of Relation is not being observed, but the reality is that any competent speaker can intuitively understand the fact that the reason why A1 refuses to run is because it is Sunday. Therefore, B1 makes this inference properly despite the absence of causality markers that signal such relationship in discourse. Nonetheless, although B1 acknowledges the causality relationship existing between the two parts, she does not believe the content transmitted coherent, and this lack of understanding is coded in “So what?” It is precisely because it is Sunday that the day is perfect for running. With regard to the type of implicature generated in utterance A1, if any, it is not clear whether it is a non-conventional or a conventional conversational generalized implicature. Grice states that context is not necessary in any of the two cases and that both derive directly from the meaning of words; the difference lies in the fact that conventional implicatures are produced

when the Cooperation Principle –and its maxims- are invoked. As Escandell (1993: 101) says, Grice himself acknowledged that it is not difficult to confuse both types.

Moving on to the next utterance by Chandler, we can observe an overt violation of the Maxim of Quantity, given that A2 does not meet the first submaxim, “Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange);” in other words, he is making use of a tautology to justify his first utterance:

“Sunday” is equivalent to “day of the Lord”.

Let us now see some aspects related to the production of implicatures:

If we refer to A2 utterance as *P* and to its implicature as *Q*,

P: “It is Sunday, Mon. It is the day of the Lord”

Q: “*That is only a cheap excuse to let you know, Mon, that I do not feel like running at this precise moment*”

the resulting implicature would be explained as follows:

Utterance A2, *P*, implies *Q* iff:

1. B2 is aware of the overt violation of the submaxim of Quantity
2. A2 really thinks *Q*
3. A2 thinks that B2 and A2 know that B2 is able to figure out the maxim –in that case, *Q* is required-.

For B2 to figure out *Q*, B2 must know –or at least think that she knows-:

1. the conventional content of A2 utterance; that is to say, *P*
2. the Cooperation Principle and its maxims
3. the context (i.e., Chandler is fed up with exercise), which is relevant to the generation of the implicature.
4. part of the information in depth (*P* is a tautology)
5. that 1-4 is knowledge common to both speaker and addressee

From all this derives that:

1. in his second statement, Chandler has said that he does not feel like running
2. there is no reason to think that Chandler is not observing the maxims or, at least, the Cooperation Principle.

3. for Chandler’s words to imply that he does not feel like running while observing the maxims or the Cooperation Principle, he must really think that he does not feel like running

4. Chandler must be aware of the fact that both speakers know that, in order to be considered a cooperative speaker, it must be understood that he does not feel like running.

5. Chandler has not done anything to stop Mon thinking that *P* implies *Q*.

4. CONCLUSION

Although we acknowledge the schematic character of Grice’s proposal and the need to further develop it, we believe that his theory of principles and maxims is apt to explain the generation of humour, at least as regards its basic tenets.

The Gricean model has turned out to be a useful tool to understand the following questions: (1) how to generate humour based on language, (2) how speakers have to show

a high degree of knowledge of the strategies used in communication, and (3) how the latter practically becomes a mere game of hypotheses about the intentions of the speakers. Likewise, by means of the analysis presented above, we have tried to provide support for the idea that we communicate, or at least try to communicate, more than we actually say, and that we exploit the resources that language offers to unexpected limits. Although the corpus sample has been selected bearing in mind the analysis and it shows comic and extreme situations of everyday life, it is quite faithful to reality; that is, every conversation we have is a series of –purposeful or accidental- implicatures.

Although we have not compared different teaching methods to the question of implicature, the results of the exercises carried out by our students suggest that explicit instruction works effectively in the teaching of pragmatic competence. Nonetheless, it would be interesting to implement another experiment for the teaching of implicature using a more deductive, teacher-directed approach and compare the results obtained.

Finally, the use of audiovisual material in the classroom has proved to be a useful tool for several reasons: (1) it helps catch the students' attention and raise interest, (2) this interest motivates them to work, (3) as a result, the students get involved in the tasks they have to carry out, and (4) all this paves the way for the explanation of more complex subjects such as Grice's Cooperative Principle and its role in the generation of humour. To this we should add that audiovisual material can be a more adequate means of communication and transmission of information than language in certain contexts, thus becoming more explicative. In other words, audio-visual material has proved that it fulfils all the functions put forward above, namely the *motivating*, *vicarious*, *explicative*, *aesthetic* and *recreational* functions, which therefore results in educational benefits.

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