Conversational Implicature

Example 1

- A: Am I in time for supper?
- B: I’ve cleared the table.

What does B’s proposition?

CI: is the name given by some to non-truth-conditional aspects of meaning which are conventionally attached to particular linguistic forms.
How to recognize conversational implicatures.

1. Context dependence

An expression with a single meaning (i.e. expressing the same proposition) can give rise to different conversational implicatures in different contexts.

Example 2:

A: Have you cleared the table and washed the dishes?
B: I’ve cleared the table.
2. Defeasibility/cancellability
CI can be cancelled by additional material without contradiction or anomaly.

Example 3:
A: Did the Minister attend the meeting and sign the agreement?
B: (1) The minister attended the meeting.
(2) The minister attended the meeting: a statement will be issued later with regard to the agreement.
3. Non-detachability

The implicature is tied to meaning and not to form.

Example 4:

A: Have you cleared the table and wahed the dishes?

B: I’ve taken all the things off the table.
4. Calculability

A conversational Implicature must be calculable, using statable general principles, on the basis of conventional meaning together with contextual information.