Identifying Non-Conventionalised Indirect Directives: The Problem of Non-Prototypicality

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Abstract

While direct directives (DDs) and conventionalised indirect directives (CIDs) are inherently bound by form, non-conventionalised indirect directives (NCIDs) identify with a non-conventional context-dependent directive in the form of a hint. That all indirect directives constitute a sub-type of conversational implicatures stipulates that they comply with the same requirements as well as felicity and success conditions. To determine the identificatory and inherent properties of NCIDs, a manual utterance-by-utterance search of the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English was conducted to find samples of them analysis of which yielded that NCIDs need to pass the requirements of particularised conversational implicatures in addition to the two pre-requisites of replaceability and succeedability by a DD of differing semantic content. The analysis also showed that not all NCIDs meet all the requirements. It is possible for certain of the suggested requirements to be violated or only partially met, resulting in non-prototypical NCIDs. In particular, non-prototypicality was found to be rooted in the violation of succeedability or partial fulfillment of paraphrasability. Moreover, it was revealed that the number of the unfulfilled requirements involved in the generation of non-prototypicality is limited to one since unfulfillment of multiple requirements would invalidate the identity of NCIDs as conversational implicatures. The results of the analysis also warned against context-dependency and replaceability requirements leading to potential misconceptions on account of the rarity of alternative directive-cancelling context and selective synonymity, respectively.

Keywords: Corpus pragmatics, Indirect speech acts, Non-conventionalised indirect directives, Conversational implicatures, Non-prototypicality

1. Introduction

Violability of inter-participant mutual conversational expectations which enforce the cooperativeness of linguistic communication results in linguistic indirection (Grice, 1975). Inherently implicit in nature, conversational implicature is the paragon of indirection through observance or violation of communicative expectations (Levinson, 2008, Wilson & Sperber, 2012). The fact that accommodation of context-dependent implicit meaning which does not surface in the semantic content inheres in both conversational implicatures and indirect speech acts has been reason enough for indirect speech acts to be deemed a subset of conversational implicatures by neo-Griceans and post-Griceans alike. That both explicit and implicit speech acts have the potential of being indirect adds quite a bit of depth to the classification of directive speech acts, which may be the reason why the tasks of identifying and classifying them have been overlooked whenever non-conventionality is involved. Calling upon this very depth, this article will examine in detail the element of implicitness/indirectness in the case of directive speech acts and address some identificatory issues which arise because of the indirection and need to be accounted for before one can proceed to develop a classification of indirect directives.

To obtain a more collective view of indirect directive speech acts and a better understanding of the targeted research questions and suggested hypotheses, we will go over the theoretical background of indirect speech acts, different types of directives, and the foundation upon which a classification of directives can be based. Following that will be an outline of what identifying non-conventionalised indirect directive speech acts involves which encompasses an analytic checklist for the identification task. We will consider instances identification of which faces certain fundamental challenges. These will serve as counterexamples or outliers which pose a problem to the taken-for-granted prototypicality that has hitherto been attributed to non-conventionalised indirect directive speech acts as a sub-type of conversational implicata. I will then propose certain revisions and clauses to the identification process which will account for all non-conventionalised indirect directives rather than certain pure and theoretically immaculate ones. Finally, we will go through a discussion of how these findings can be interpreted in terms of the established hypotheses and their veracity or otherwise.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Directives

To address the overlap between Austin's (1962) exercitives and behabitives, Searle (1979) introduced directives to bind them by the unified principle of serving a speaker's intention to get their hearer to do a designated action, which has been a principle held in high regard and advocated ever since in the literature, including later classifications (Bach & Harnish, 1983; Hanks, 2018). More often than most speech acts, directives have been associated with the notion of more than one illocutionary force corresponding to a single form, aka indirection (Kissine, 2013). As the exemplar of indirection, indirect requests are known to primarily oblige politeness or efficiency in transacting conversational turns (Walker et al., 2011).

2.2 Speech Acts and Indirection

Identifying indirect directives requires awareness of the common features of indirect speech

acts. Clark (1979) pointed out six properties for them: a) multiplicity of meaning, b) logical priority of meanings, c) rationality, d) conventionality, e) politeness, and f) purposefulness. There are two issues to tend to here. Given Walker et al.'s argument for efficiency, there is little plausibility in attributing politeness and only politeness to all indirect speech acts. In my discussion of indirect directives, I will particularly rely on rationality and purposefulness to augment our perception of them and to criticise overgeneralisation of conventionality as an innate property of them, be it conventionality of meaning or conventionality of usage (Kroeger, 2022). To get that far, we must first consider a typology of directives and the features that set them apart.

2.3 Directives and Indirection

Directives have been subjected to various categorisations based on similar premises, including the degree of obviousness (Ervin-Tripp, 1976), explicitness of illocutionary force (Trosborg, 1995), and the directness of the strategies employed in performing directives (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989), of which the latter divided directives into direct directives (DDs), conventionalised indirect directives (CIDs) and non-conventionalised indirect directives (NCIDs).

Despite siding with Blum-Kulka et al.'s model in her analysis of directives in a corpus of Early Modern English and present-day English written texts, Moessner (2010) warned against a caveat originally brought up by Culpeper and Archer (2008) who pointed out that Blum-Kulka et al.'s categorisation accounted for all forms of directives with the exception of prediction/intention statements (as in *You and I will pick a few things up from the store*.) and *let*-constructions (as in *Let's meet at 8 a.m. tomorrow*.). The former they placed under DDs and the latter they added as a sub-type of suggestory formulae under CIDs, as demonstrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Classification of Directive Speech Acts Adopted from Culpeper and Archer (2008)

Impositive Strategies	• Mood derivable, e.g., *Clean up that mess.* • Performatives, e.g. *I am asking you to clean up the mess.* • Hedged performatives, e.g. *I would like to ask you to give your presentation a week earlier than scheduled.* • Obligation statements, e.g. *You'll have to move that car.* • Want statements, e.g. *I really wish you'd stop bothering me.* • Prediction/intention statements, e.g. *You and I will pay a visit to your friend.*
Conventionally Indirect Strategies	• Suggestory formulae, e.g. *How about cleaning up? / Let's clean up!* • Query preparatory formulae, e.g. *Could you clear up the kitchen, please?*
Non-Conventionally Indirect Strategies	• Strong hints, e.g. *You have left the kitchen in a right mess.* • Mild hints, e.g. *I am a nun* (in response to a persistent hassler).

While this typology is feasible, the principle upon which it is based can be deemed misguiding. It is stated to be directness, yet it comes accompanied by a fair amount of unclarity as to what we assume directness to be. Here we face two alternatives. The first is taking 'direct' to mean 'explicit,' which is counterintuitive due to the subjectivity involved in making judgments regarding explicitness. This would make the boundaries between the main types fuzzy. Surprisingly, this appears to be the case here. The alternative, to which I adhere, is taking 'direct' to be used in the sense that can be referred to speech acts whose conventional use (i.e., the use conventionally attached to the surface form) does not match their conversational use, such as indirect interrogatives which are primarily used as polite imperatives and not for requesting information. Not only is this alternative form-focused and essentially objective, but it also takes into account both conventions of meaning and conventions of use while relying more heavily on the latter. From this perspective, the above classification is questionable because apart from mood derivables, all the other subtypes listed under impositives theoretically constitute indirect directives. This is because an imperative is the only structure that can only be interpreted as a command/request. All the other subtypes can be interpreted as an assertion or inquiry as well as a command or request. To serve as the guideline to distinguish between direct, conventionalised indirect, and non-conventionalised indirect directives in the current research, I propose a slightly revised version of the above classification as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Revised Classification of Directive Speech Acts Based on Form-Focused Directness

Direct Strategy	•	Mood derivable, e.g., *Clean up that mess.*
Conventionally Indirect Strategies	•	Performatives, e.g. *I am asking you to clean up the mess.*
	•	Hedged performatives, e.g. *I would like to ask you to give your presentation a week earlier than scheduled.*
	•	Obligation statements, e.g. *You'll have to move that car.*
	•	Want statements, e.g. *I really wish you'd stop bothering me.*
	•	Prediction/intention statements, e.g. *You and I will pay a visit to your friend.*
	•	Suggestory formulae, e.g. *How about cleaning up? / Let's clean up!*
	•	Query preparatory, e.g. *Could you clear up the kitchen, please?*
Non-Conventionally Indirect Strategies	•	Strong hints, e.g. *You have left the kitchen in a right mess.*
	•	Mild hints, e.g. *I am a nun* (in response to a persistent hassler).

As previously indicated, in this paper I will mainly examine non-conventionalised indirect directives (NCIDs) – those performed via non-conventionally indirect strategies. These have been reported to be rare and incredibly less frequent than both direct directives (DDs) and

conventionalised indirect directives (CIDs) (Flöck & Geluykens, 2015). Considering that by adopting Blum-Kulka et al.'s model, they placed performatives and locution derivables under DDs rather than CIDs, there would have been an even wider gap between the proportion of NCIDs and that of CIDs had they used my proposed revised classification.

3. Research Questions and Hypotheses

In addition to their understudied nature, any attempt at conducting a more detailed and elaborate study of NCIDs will hit yet another barrier in the form of something that has been taken for granted, namely the process of identifying them which would involve listing the criteria an utterance must meet to be considered an NCID. This will be at the core of my agenda since it will lay bare an immanent attribute of NCIDs that plays a potentially undeniable role in identifying them as an implicit phenomenon. Accordingly, this research will address the following four questions:

- What are the criteria for identifying NCIDs?

- Are there any criteria that distinguish NCIDs from other conversational implicatures?

- Do all NCIDs pass all the criteria for conversational implicatures?

- If not all NCIDs pass every requirement for conversational implicatures, what requirements are liable to violation or partial fulfilment?

In view of the above questions, the veracity of the following hypotheses will be assessed:

- Hypothesis 1: As a type of particularised conversational implicature, NCIDs meet all the criteria for conversational implicatures.

- Hypothesis 2: There are cases of NCIDs which do not entirely meet all the requirements for conversational implicatures.

- Hypothesis 3: Not all requirements for conversational implicatures are violable by NCIDs.

4. Method

A prerequisite for identifying NCIDs is differentiating them from DDs and CIDs. Assuming a form-focused approach here is too simplistic a view of them and an incomplete one at that. While DDs and CIDs can only take certain structures, NCIDs can take any structure, including those associated with DDs and CIDs. What enables us to distinguish between them and NCIDs is context-dependency. Whereas the command in DDs and CIDs survives context change, the command in NCIDs does not. Let us consider an example. In the context where on a cold winter night, person A has left the door open while taking off their shoes, person B who is sitting at a table near the door can use any one of (1)-(6) to indirectly tell person A to close the door:

(1)   It's −15° outside.

(2)   Isn't it freezing in here?

(3)   Aren't you forgetting something?

(4)   Pay attention!

(5)   Could you not make me catch a cold, please?

(6)   Cold!

Bearing in mind the structural variety of NCIDs, the items that were sought after and identified as NCIDs are listed below:

A) Declarative sentences with CID structures involving the conventional illocutionary-force-carrying directive of all declaratives (i.e., *Be informed that…*), a directive conventionally attached to the CID structure, and a non-conventional context-dependent indirect directive,

B) Declarative sentences with non-CID structures involving the conventional illocutionary-force-carrying directive of all declaratives, and a non-conventional context-dependent indirect directive,

C) Interrogative sentences with CID structures involving the conventional illocutionary-force-carrying directive of all interrogatives (i.e., *Tell me if/wh-…*), a directive conventionally attached to the CID structure, and a non-conventional context-dependent indirect directive,

D) Interrogative sentences with non-CID structures involving the conventional illocutionary-force-carrying directive of all interrogatives, and a non-conventional context-dependent indirect directive,

E) Imperative sentences involving a non-conventional context-dependent indirect directive in addition to the directive in the surface form of the imperative,

F) Exclamative sentences involving a non-conventional context-dependent indirect directive.

To find naturally occurring instances of NCIDs, a manual search was conducted through 40 out of 60 sections of the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English (Du Bois et al., 2005). In addition to representing 'natural' data, as defined by ten Have (2007), this corpus offers audio recordings of the conversations, thus allowing access to the prosodic features of all the utterances. Despite having these advantages, however, one particular difficulty with SBC in studies of pragmatic phenomena is that it is pragmatically untagged, leaving the load of tagging to the researcher; hence the manual utterance-by-utterance nature of the conducted search.

In selecting the to-be-analysed sections, two factors were observed. The first was dialogicality of the section, which led to avoiding the 8 monological sections (Note 1) in the corpus. The second was diversity of inter-participant relationships. As such, sections with differing inter-participant relationships (such as intrafamilial, friend-friend, lawyer-client and mentor-trainee) were chosen. This ensured more generalisability for the results and findings.

Overall, the analysis consisted of: A) identifying and documenting instances of NCIDs, B) making a list of criteria for identifying NCIDs, C) checking whether all the samples meet all the requirements for conversational implicatures, and D) determining which requirements, if any, had the potential for being circumvented.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Identifying NCIDs

As noted earlier, NCIDs are a sub-type of conversational implicature. It is only natural that they are required to pass all the tests that conversational implicatures pass. Conversational implicatures are calculable, cancellable, reinforceable, non-detachable (paraphrasable), and context-dependent (Birner, 2021; Cummings, 2023). In my analysis, each identified sample of NCID which was calculable from the context was tested on the other said grounds to ensure its identity as a conversational implicature. Two tests were used as preliminary checks to ascertain whether the suspected utterance should be put to the subsequent tests. These attributes can be termed as 'replaceability' and 'succeedability' (Note 2). For every utterance of the analysed SBC section, I checked whether it could be replaced and followed by a DD which did not have the same semantic content as the utterance itself. Not sharing the same semantic content must be underscored here since every non-imperative utterance can be replaced by a directive with the same content. If an utterance met these two requirements, it would be put through the other four tests to determine whether it constituted an NCID. Figure 1 demonstrates the said tests in the form of a checklist applied to the NCID example from Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) where (7) is uttered by a lady in response to a persistent hassler:

(7)   I'm a nun.

#	Question	Yes	No
1	In that particular context, can you replace the utterance with an imperative (directive) that does not have the same semantic content but serves the same communicative purpose? - [I'm a nun. → Stop hassling me!]	✓	
2	In that particular context, can the utterance be followed by an imperative (DD) that does not have the same semantic content but serves the same communicative purpose? - [I'm a nun. Stop hassling me.]	✓	
3	Can you cancel the imperative (directive) by extending the utterance? - [I'm a nun, but I would gladly leave the nunhood for you.]	✓	
4	Can you reinforce the imperative (directive) by extending the utterance such that no redundancy is caused? - [I'm a nun, and what's more, I'm almost ready to be promoted to an abbess.]	✓	
5	Can you reword/paraphrase the utterance while keeping the same semantic content such that the imperative (directive) survives? - [I am a cloistered member of the Catholic church.]	✓	
6	Can you cancel the imperative (directive) by changing the context? - [The speaker's utterance is made in response to an interviewee who asks 'What is your current profession?']	✓	

	NCID	Non-NCID
Final Verdict	✓	

Figure 1. Checklist for Identifying NCID Sample in (7)

We can observe that (7) does indeed meet every requirement and passes as a prototype of NCIDs. In the case of NCIDs, it is not the conventional context-independent directive that paraphrasability tests, but rather the extra context-dependent conversational directive. If the latter survives paraphrasing, the utterance can be considered an NCID. All that said, the all-important question that we should ask this time around is whether this is a universal property of NCIDs, a question which warrants examining and comparing many samples. This would serve as a generalisability check as well as give us a nuanced perception of the potentially multi-layered nature of what makes an NCID.

5.2 The Problem of Non-Prototypicality

5.2.1 Pseudo-Paraphrasability

In exchange (8) from Section 42 of SBC, Kitty and her daughter, Kendra, are having an argument in the presence of Kendra's sister, Sabrina. Kitty is mad at Kendra for spending the previous night at her friend Melanie's house and lying to her that she had arrived home late. She insists that Melanie can confirm her story.

(8)   Kendra: I'll have Melanie call you.

        Kitty: Right. Melanie will call me to confirm your lie, you'll get a hold of her first. I know how that works.

Kitty's utterance conveys to Kendra the directive to not deceive her or take her for a fool. In passing the preliminary tests, the utterance can be replaced and followed by a DD with different semantic content as in 'I know how that works. Don't take me for a fool!' As for defeasibility, the directive can be cancelled by extending the utterance into 'I know how that works. But I want to give you the benefit of the doubt.' The implicature can also be reinforced by extending the utterance as in 'I know how that works. I know all your tricks.' The implicature is non-conventional since a paraphrase such as 'I'm aware of the way this goes,' would work just fine. We can eliminate the implicature by changing the context to a situation where a group of teenagers find an electric device, one of them asks 'Anybody know how to work this thing?' and another responds 'I know how that works. I've seen it on TV.'

On the face of it, all the required features are there, and the requirements are unconditionally satisfied. However, there is a small issue to be addressed concerning paraphrasability. Depite the provided paraphrase adequately denoting the content of the original utterance while upholding the implied directive, it is one of few that do – a difficulty posed specifically by the word 'work'. Most of its other synonyms, if not all, fall short of channeling the directive even though they are more stereotypical. Substituting 'work' with verbs such as 'function' and 'operate' as in 'I am aware of the way that functions/operates,' would not straightforwardly bear the directive. This paucity of freedom and flexibility in paraphrasing

gives the utterance not a full unconditional pass in paraphrasability, but a partial one, hence the resulting non-prototypicality.

Standing in opposition to this sample regarding (non)prototypicality is one which takes place within its proximity, where Kitty uses a very similar utterance with the same effect. In response to further attempts from Kelly to convince her of her innocence, Kitty utters: 'I know what you're doing.' This bears the same impact and passes all the tests. It can be both replaced and followed by a DD such as 'Don't take me for a fool!' It can be cancelled and reinforced by the same expansions I suggested for (8). The implicature does not survive in a context where in response to a player pantomiming an action in a game of charades, another player can utter 'I know what you're doing,' before they name the action. All that said, it is paraphrasability where the contrast between the two utterances lies. Unlike (8), there is little limitation in paraphrasing the utterance while maintaining the directive. Most paraphrases of the utterances – e.g., *I am aware of the action you are taking.* or *I am wary of the deed you are doing.* – still carry the directive and ensure paraphrasability, which along with the other requirements qualifies it as a prototypical NCID.

Some may appeal to the conventionality in the use of (8) such that it has gained some idiomaticity over time. While there might be some truth to this, it misses a focal point. This is not the only type of conventionality involved in my revised classification of directives in that the conventionality of CIDs is lexically and structurally bound, making them unparaphrasable. The directive in 'Can you close the door?' does not survive in the paraphrase 'Are you able to close the door?' because it is conventionally attached to *Can you…?* and the interrogative structure it is used in (Sadock, 1974). This is neither true of the directive in (8) nor the one in 'I know what you are doing,' as in both cases the directive survives paraphrasing. This partially idiomatical conventionality in an NCID does not always lead to non-prototypicality, as we can observe in (9) from Section 39 of SBC. At an aquarium personnel meeting, Kirsten is explaining how penguins abandon a chick during a year when there is not enough food for the entire family. Don jestingly puts a label on the phenomenon which Kirsten misses amid the laughs of the other participants.

(9) Kirsten: If at that point conditions don't seem to be sufficient to support raising two of them, it's kind hey, why bother.

Lori: Mhm.

Kirsten: And kick out one of the chicks. If it's a great year on fat, there's food, it's a beautiful day…

Don: It's called penguin euthanasia.

Kirsten: …they'll try to raise both.

I didn't catch that.

Kirsten's final utterance states that there was a problem with her auditory reception of Don's utterance and includes the directive 'Repeat what you just said!'. That will normally get Don to repeat his utterance with no need for a direct request. All the tests are routinely satisfied

including paraphrasability. Yet there is more to say in this regard as to how the word 'catch' can be paraphrased. We have a winning candidate in 'grasp'. 'I didn't grasp what you just said,' safely gets the directive across but other synonyms in that sense such as 'grab' and 'capture' fail to do so because in the sense of not having correctly understood or perceived something, it is 'catch' that has been idiomatically and conventionally used. Nevertheless, the conventionality is only partial because the utterance is essentially a statement and the wording and structure do not belong on the list of CIDs. As synonyms of the latter sense such as 'understand', 'get' or 'hear' do carry the directive if they replace 'catch' in the utterance, there is little limitation in paraphrasability, indicating that we are quite possibly dealing with a prototypical NCID.

5.2.2 Non-Replaceability

Another source of difficulty in the way of universal prototypicality arises from succeedability. We saw from the previous examples that for an utterance to identify as an NCID, it needs to have the capacity to be replaced and followed by a DD. I introduced these as the preliminary benchmarks for identifying NCIDs. While replaceability is crucially a must-meet criterion for any NCID, there are rare cases where succeedability is not reinforced. One such occurs in (10) from Section 59. A young couple, Cam and Fred, are joined by Cam's parents, Jo and Wess. The initial portion of the conversation revolves around football and Fred and Wess as big football fans. Fred appears to have won some money on a game and is asked by Cam to take them out to dinner, though in an interesting manner.

(10)   Cam: So he won,

Wess: And the score was twenty-four to nineteen in favor of Green Bay so he won fifty buck.

Jo: Good. Well, Freddy is gonna be happy.

Cam: So <u>where are you taking us to dinner?</u>

By preemptively asking a *wh-* question instead of and before a *yes/no* question, Cam presumes and places a responsibility on the addressee without giving them an opt-out option. One would normally confirm an addressee's intention of doing something before enquiring about the specifics such as the time or place of the action. Her utterance involves the directive 'Take us out to dinner!' and can be replaced with it. The structure, however, is not one conventionally used for a request. The directive is cancellable through expansion as in 'Where are you taking us to dinner? Just kidding.' It can also be strengthened through expansion as in 'Where are you taking us to dinner? This really calls for a special treat.' A paraphrase such as 'What place do you intend to convey us to in order to dine in?' bears the directive, signifying the non-conventionality. In a context where Fred priorly notifies the others of his intention to take them out to dinner, the utterance no longer carries the directive. All the requirements are unproblematically met except for succeedability. We said earlier that normally, confirmation-seeking *yes/no* questions precede detail-gleaning *wh-* ones. Never is this more evident than when they trade positions. An utterance such as (11) would be odd in possibly any context.

(11)   *So where are you taking us to dinner? Take us to dinner!

The resulting oddness directly leads to a clear violation of succeedability. The utterance unconditionally passes the other criteria but violates succeedability, and thus identifies as an NCID, but a non-prototypical one. This contrasts with other samples of NCID such as the one in (12) from Section 19. The conversation takes place between a couple, Jan and Frank, their children, Brett and Melissa, and Jan's brother, Ron. Melissa is doing her homework under the supervision of her parents, yet she has a great deal left to do and is not progressing fast enough, which leads to the following exchange of turns.

(12)   Melissa: One side of a page?

> It takes me a long time because I've got to go over the sentences, figure out if I'm gonna rewrite them or leave them the same, and just write them out.
>
> I can't write them exactly the way they are, because they stink.

Jan: Then you need to go downstairs and finish it.

Melissa: I'm fine. I'm not gonna do any better downstairs.

Frank: Melissa, <u>it's nine o'clock in the evening.</u>

Both Jan and Frank are attempting to get Melissa to work in a quicker more focused way. Jan's attempt comprises a CID on account of its form and the conventionality of the attached directive whereas Frank's attempt involves an NCID. His utterance incorporates the directive 'Hurry up with your homework!' which can both replace and follow the original utterance – as opposed to what we saw with (11). We can extend the utterance as in 'It's nine o'clock in the evening, but you have tomorrow as well,' such that the directive gets cancelled. We can also extend it as in 'It's nine o'clock in the evening and you're going to bed in half an hour,' thus reinforcing the directive. If Melissa is waiting to be picked up by her mom and asks Frank for the time, the utterance does not bear the force of a directive, signifying the context-dependency of the implied directive. As a result of the contrast between the NCIDs in (10) and (12) with regard to satisfying succeedability, the latter is licensed as a prototypical one.

Our discussion of non-prototypicality so far has shown it to be rooted in violating or partially satisfying certain requirements. Specifically, succeedability and paraphrasability are liable to generate this phenomenon. In the conducted search, no non-prototypical samples were encountered where other requirements were involved. Whether or not they can be requires a search on a much larger scale. Nevertheless, certain predictive presumptions can be made. As a defining attribute of any conversational implicature, context-dependency is highly unlikely to be prone to violation or even bending of any sort in the case of NCIDs. As the other identificatory attribute of NCIDs, it is equally unlikely that replaceability with a DD can be involved in non-prototypicality. Cancellability and reinforceability might be the only other probable culprits, even though it seems unintuitive as well since they have also been theoretically relied upon in defining conversational implicatures and distinguishing them from conventional ones.

Another important issue arises concerning the possibility of multiple requirements being violated or partially fulfilled. Throughout thesearch, no sample was observed where more than one requirement was violated. This is optimally feasible since more than one violation could potentially question or discredit the identity of an NCID. A temporary conclusion can be that non-prototypicality is caused by violating or partially satisfying only one of paraphrasability or succeedability requirements. In the case of succeedability, non-prototypicality corresponds with decisive violation whereas with paraphrasability, it corresponds with partial fulfilment. A further possibility is the partial fulfilment of succeedability such that the NCID cannot be directly followed by a DD but requires an intermittent word or phrase to do so. This possibility is neither as prominent nor as immediate as a misconception given rise to by non-prototypicality through non-succeedability.

5.2.3 Some Potential Misconceptions

Making judgements on the prototypicality of an NCID is prone to overgeneralisations and by no means void of misrepresentations. Two elements in particular provoke a tendency towards overgeneralising non-prototypicality judgements and thus inducing misconceptions, against which I must propose caveats. The first concerns recontextualising and basing judgments on context-dependency. There are cases where finding a practical alternative context where a target NCID is not maintained proves challenging. In some cases, the implied directive is present in almost any context such that it appears to be tied conventionally to the utterance, which would indeed be the case if it did not survive paraphrasing. To observe this, we need not look any further than Blum-Kulka et al.'s second prime example of NCIDs. To exemplify strong hints, they referred to the utterance, 'You have left the kitchen in a right mess.' It can safely be replaced and followed by a semantically different DD as in 'You have left the kitchen in a mess. Clean it up!' The directive can be cancelled by extending the sentence (e.g., 'You have left the kitchen in a mess. But it doesn't matter cause I'm cleaning up the whole house tomorrow anyway.). The directive can also be reinforced through extension (e.g., *You have left the kitchen in a mess. I want it even cleaner than it was within the hour.*). Rephrased as 'You have left the cooking area in a very disorganised state, it still retains the same illocutionary force. We see that the utterance fulfils these requirements beautifully. It is with context-dependency that things get interesting.

There is quite a degree of commonality in the use of 'You have left the kitchen in a mess,' to address a person who is responsible and request a counteract. But let us ask ourselves: what else can this utterance be used for? It is indeed very rare for the utterance to be used without the directive 'Clean up the kitchen!' What is expected of a prototypical NCID is to be dependent on the context and of the implicature to vanish with a change of context. This sample carries the directive in almost all the contexts one can think of. Perhaps the only context where the directive would drop is when criticising the addressee without expecting them to make amends. Another rare context would be when congratulating someone on having done a good job of making a mess with which they were tasked. This rarity of alternative directive-cancelling context casts a shadow on the pass we would grant the NCID on context-dependency. However, the existence of even one, albeit rare, alternative context does license context-dependency, rendering the NCID a prototypical one. It is the lack not

scarcity of alternative contexts that generates non-prototypicality.

A second potential misconception can arise from the concept of replaceability. Given that the structure of a DD consists of an imperative and CIDs also include imperatives, is it possible for NCIDs to be replaced with CIDs? That the answer to this is easily and unequivocally positive should not persuade us to dismiss it as a pedestrian question because it brings up a more pivotal question: Is it possible for an NCID to be replaceable by a CID but irreplaceable by a DD? This is a tempting proposition as there are cases where things certainly look that way. Let us pay another visit to the aquarium personnel meeting in Section 39. As the meeting goes on and the participants are busy talking, Kirsten realises that the meeting is taking longer than expected and decides to indirectly bring the session to a close.

(13)   Nicole: I never even thought of that.

Lori: I remember doing the penguin thing a year ago, but I don't remember that adaptation.

Don: No.

Lori: Oh well.

Kirsten: <u>We're gonna have to go up and do Q and A in three minutes.</u>

Her remark advises against continuation of the meeting. The directive is cancelled in 'We're gonna have to go up and do Q and A in three minutes, but we can delay it if we wish to.' It is strengthened in 'We're gonna have to go up and do Q and A in three minutes. We should have been there by now.' The semantically equivalent sentence 'We will need to move upstairs and conduct Q and A shortly,' carries the implied directive. In a context where in an office an employee asks their employer what the agenda holds for the day and the employer utters the sentence in response, the directive does not survive. In terms of replaceability and succeedability, however, we notice a curious aspect of this NCID. It seems that the best replacement for the utterance would be a suggestion-based CID such as 'Let's wrap things up!' or 'Could we finish up the meeting?' rather than a DD because the speaker (Kirsten) is also participating in the action she wishes to stop. A DD such as 'Wrap things up!' or 'Finish the conversation!' seems to fall short of accounting for this. A CID seemingly being the better substitute becomes more evident in part of Section 10. The conversation is between two board members of a local arts society, Phil and Brad. Phil is trying to engage Brad in a conversation about business, but he tries to disengage himself to go pick up his wife at a bookstore.

(14)   Phil: But, anyways, back to the first thing,

Brad: Okay.

Phil: what we were talking about was,

Brad: Yeah. <u>I've gotta pick up Pat.</u>

An extension such as 'I've gotta pick up Pat but I can ask her to Uber,' cancels the implied

directive whereas one such as 'I've gotta pick up Pat. She has been waiting there for twenty minutes,' reinforces it. The semantically identical alternative 'I need to go get my wife,' carries the same implicature. And if Phil had only asked Brad where he was going and had received the utterance in response, the implicature would not have survived. Analogous to what we observed about the previous sample, it appears that the better substitute for the utterance would be a CID such as 'Let's talk about this later!' or 'Could we talk about this later?' than a DD such as 'Stop engaging me in a conversation!' or 'Talk to me about this later!' which sound crude and pragmatically inappropriate. These CID alternatives would also work better for the purpose of succeedability as either could follow the original utterance and sound totally natural and appropriate. But how does this bode for the (non)prototypicality of (14)?

Answering this question and forming an opinion on the matter requires adopting a viewpoint of dichotomy rather than one of gradeability. This issue needs to be viewed from the perspective of whether or not a certain type of replacement is possible for an utterance rather than how appropriate a replacement is. It may seem considerably more appropriate to replace the NCIDs in (13) and (14) with the suggested CIDs, but it does not disallow using a DD. In truth, any self-exclusive, or perhaps even self-inclusive, suggestion can be superseded by a DD. Just because a CID alternative is pragmatically more appropriate does not rule out the use of a DD alternative. Politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Culpeper, 2011; Sifianou & Tzanne, 2021) may have more to say in the matter, but since a DD is indeed possible to replace the NCID with, the indirect directive passes the test of replaceability and succeedability and more generally that of prototypicality.

6. Summary and Conclusion

While classifying directives based on the directness factor can be accredited with full plausibility, the sense of directness on which one bases the classification is of the essence. Apropos of our earlier discussion, we can distinguish between two senses, one being substantially more objective than the other. In the first and more subjective of the two, we can take 'direct' to be synonymous with 'explicit' referring to the degree of the explicitness of a directive. Given the continuum that can be formed between explicitness and implicitness, a fair dosage of subjectivity is involved here. In the second essentially objective sense, we can take directness to denote a correspondence between the conventional and conversational uses of an utterance, which would stipulate that only imperatives constitute DDs. Any other structure with a context-independent directive constitutes a CID. Any utterance which carries a context-dependent directive constitutes an NCID irrespective of its form.

Fundamentally, NCIDs are expected to fulfil the same requirements as conversational implicatures. In the case of some conversational implicatures, the implicature can replace or follow the original utterance. This study evinced that since NCIDs imply a request, before calculability, cancellability, reinforceability, and paraphrasability, they must meet the preliminary requirements of being replaceable and followable by a DD of differing semantic content. These proved tremendously instrumental in identifying them. If an utterance does satisfy replaceability and succeedability, it can then be put to the other four tests passing

which qualifies it as an NCID, or rather a prototypical one for there are non-prototypical cases where a certain requirement is either violated or only partially satisfied.

As conversational implicatures, context-dependency is what the very identity of NCIDs hinges upon, making it an inviolable requirement. Replaceability with a DD is also vital. Closely following these two requirements are cancellability and reinforceability both of which proved to be essential as in the conducted search, no NCID samples were encountered where they were left unsatisfied. Succeedability and paraphrasability, however, proved to be challengeable. There was a sample which could be replaced by a DD but could not be followed by one, meaning that succeedability can be violated. There were also cases where paraphrasability was partially satisfied since not all semantically equivalent paraphrases would maintain the implied directive. It is worth noting that in no sample were both succeedability and paraphrasability unmet, which indicates that only one can be violated or bent in any given NCID.

The concept of non-prototypicality is prone to two misconceptions with respect to the unmet criterion. The first originates from the rarity of alternative directive-cancelling contexts. There cases in which alternative contexts where the utterance would not bear the implied directive are excessively rare, seemingly challenging the context-dependency of the NCID. However, in all such cases, there were one or in some cases two alternative contexts where the directive would drop. Theoretically, even the existence of one alternative context licenses context-dependency and suffices to refute the challenge. The second misconception arises from limitations regarding replaceability. In the case of some NCIDs, replacing the utterance with a suggestion-invoking CID seems more pragmatically appropriate than a DD. However, the prototypicality of an NCID is not bound by the pragmatic appropriacy of the replacing DD, and the mere replaceability of the utterance by a DD licenses prototypicality, no matter how (im)polite.

The politeness factor involved in NCIDs is only one of potentially many explorable avenues within the perspective of this study. Another more pressing research topic is developing a taxonomy of them. As their non-conventionality dictates, if one is to find patterns of occurrence for NCIDs, they are to take into account other criteria which can differentiate various samples from one another and at the same time group them together in different categories. NCIDs can be examined on the basis of two factors that could potentially serve as a pivot for categorising them, namely the speaker's goal behind the directives and the strategy used in performing the directives. The former is closely tied to the benefit the performer of a directive is pursuing, which justifies Hernandez and Mendoza (2002) listing the cost-benefit relation among the three most important aspects of what a directive can achieve. The trade-off may also be worth investigating in the case of NCIDs. Another area for future research is the teachability of strategic use of NCIDs as part of teaching the pragmatics of an L2, for which Olshtain and Cohen's (1991) overview of the various aspects of teaching speech acts to non-native speakers can be a useful resource. A fourth potential area for future exploration is one which falls on the interface of pragmatics and conversation analysis. As an aspect of conversational strategies, one can investigate whether speakers can elicit more preferred responses (Schegloff, 2007) through scaffolding NCIDs in prequel turns to reduce

even further the negative face threat involved in directives. Finally, a fifth ground for exploration can be the relation between the personality of a person and the frequency of NCIDs in their discourse such as linguistic intelligence. It has already been shown that the use of pragmatic phenomena such as implicata in one's discourse can be attributed to certain traits in their personality (Mohammadpanah, 2018; Mohammadpanah et al., 2018; Hamzehei, 2019; Mohammadpanah & Hamzehei, 2020). Favouring NCIDs over CIDs and DDs may yet prove to be suggestive of certain personality traits of the speaker. Overall, the concept of NCID is such a fertile ground for research that can promise applicability in practical domains such as advertisement, forensics, psychology, pedagogy, and SLA, to name a few.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

Note 1. The list of monological sections in SBC includes Sections 20, 21, 25, 27, 30, 38, 40, and 54.

Note 2. Replaceability and succeedability can be a property of other types of conversational implicatures in that the implicature can replace and follow the original utterance in the target

context. In this paper, however, it refers to the replaceability and followability of an utterance by a DD of differing semantic content.

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