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Exhaustiveness, Normativity, and Communicative Responsibilities

Abstract: In this paper we analyze and discuss Jennifer Saul's account of the famous Gricean notions of 'what is said' and 'what is implicated' and the alleged conflict between them and the so-called Speaker-Meaning Exhaustiveness Thesis (SMET), which is standardly attributed to Grice in the literature. SMET declares that speaker-meaning divides exhaustively into what is said and what is (conventionally or nonconventionally) implicated by the speaker. After a detailed interpretation of Saul's position, we argue that her analysis partly misconstrues the relation between Grice's theory of speaker-meaning and his normative account of conversational implicature. First of all, because SMET is not a genuine part of the Gricean theory of language and meaning – Grice was never committed to it. Secondly, Saul's interpretation of the Gricean account of conversational implicature does not reflect accurately his original ideas. Although we agree with Saul that conversational implicature has an essential normative aspect, her account cannot capture well the real nature of this normativity, since it does not identify its source and does not delineate its scope. Finally, we present an alternative, speaker-oriented normative interpretation of Grice's account of conversational implicatures, and argue that it fits better with the Gricean picture of communication and handles better the various problematic cases of conversational implicature than Saul's mainly audience-oriented interpretation.

Keywords: Paul Grice, Jennifer Saul, conversational implicature, speaker's meaning, what is said, what is implicated, normativity, communicative responsibilities, common ground

In memoriam László Kálmán

1. Introduction

In a series of influential papers (Saul 2001, 2002, 2010), Jennifer Saul argued for the claim that the speaker-meaning exhaustiveness thesis (SMET), which is standardly attributed to Grice in the literature, is in clear conflict with Grice's famous three-clause characterization of conversational implicature and his calculability criterion. However, according to Saul, this apparent incoherence 'should not be viewed as mere careless error' (Saul 2002: 245). While Grice's theory of meaning was formulated in a *speaker-oriented* way, i.e. it sets out conditions in terms of the utterer's communicative intentions, the fulfillment of which guarantees

that the utterer had in effect meant something by an utterance, his Theory of Communication worked towards a somewhat different goal: besides giving a detailed picture of how a particular utterance can convey speaker-meaning, Grice also aimed to capture in addition the *normative aspects* of language use with the help of his key notions of ‘what is said’ and ‘what is implicated’ – partly from the perspective of the *audience*. This explains why he did not embrace (and could not have embraced) SMET, contrary to what is commonly supposed in the literature on Grice. If we are to consider ‘saying something’ and ‘conversational implicature’ as normative notions, we should acknowledge the possibility that the speaker has failed to say or conversationally implicate what she meant – because her utterance did not meet certain normative standards. On this basis, Saul offered a mainly audience-oriented analysis of the Gricean (partly normative) concept of ‘conversational implicature.’ The account she gave of the normative character of conversational implicature aimed to capture those very constraints that the *audience’s state of mind* can impose on what the speaker may conversationally implicate (Saul 2002: 232).

In our paper we will give a detailed analysis of Saul’s position, and will go on to argue that her account partly misconstrues the relation between Grice’s theory of speaker-meaning and his normative characterization of conversational implicature. The reasons for our stance are twofold. First, we have independent arguments against treating SMET as a genuine part of Grice’s theory of language or of meaning. Surely one does not need to appeal to the ‘clear conflict’ between Grice’s normative account of conversational implicature (given by his three-clause characterization of conversational implicature or the calculability criterion) and SMET in order to show that Grice could not have been committed to speaker-meaning exhaustiveness, otherwise his theory of language would be incoherent – there is a much simpler way to achieve this goal. Second, we think that the conflict between Grice’s characterization of speaker-meaning and his (partly) normative account of conversational implicature must be rooted in the *normativity* of the notion of ‘conversational implicature’ rather than in the *audience-orientedness* of the analysis was given by Grice, as Saul seemingly supposes. One has no reason to account for the normative character of conversational implicature in terms of the audience’s state of mind (her presumption of the speaker’s cooperativeness and her assumption about the need for working out the content implicated) instead of the speaker’s state of mind – and we are convinced that Grice himself did not hold such a view. Consequently, Saul’s interpretation of the Gricean conditions of conversational implicature does not reflect accurately his original ideas. Although we agree with what Saul has said about the essentially normative nature of the concepts of ‘what is said’ and ‘what

is implicated,' we will show that Saul's account – unlike Grice's original one, at least as we interpret it – does not capture well the real nature of this normativity, because it does not identify its source and does not delineate its scope. This failure leads to some counterintuitive or vague results in some cases of conversational implicature which clearly shows the weaknesses of the account in question. At the end of the paper we are going to present an alternative, speaker-oriented normative interpretation of the conditions of conversational implicatures, and will argue that it fits better the Gricean picture of communication and handles better the various problematic cases of conversational implicature than Saul's mainly audience-oriented version.

2. Saul's Account of the Normative Nature of 'What Is Said' and 'What Is Implicated'

The core idea behind Saul's interpretation of Grice's 'twofold' theory of intentional communication can be summarized as follows. Whilst Grice has analyzed the concept of meaning entirely in terms of the speaker's communicative intentions, he tried to build some normative constraints into his theory of communication, particularly into the notion of 'what is said' and 'what is implicated.' As Saul puts it, 'For Grice, what speakers say and what speakers implicate is not simply a matter of what they intend' (Saul 2002: 229). That is why, *in the spirit of Grice*, one cannot be wholly committed to the speaker-meaning exhaustiveness thesis:

(SMET) Speaker-meaning divides exhaustively into what is said and what is (conventionally or nonconventionally) implicated by the speaker.¹

1 Although there is no explicit mention of this statement in Grice's oeuvre, many interpreters attribute it to him. (E.g. Neale 1992: 520; Neale 2005: 196; Gendler Szabó 2005: 2; Terkourafi 2010: 705; Petrus 2010: 9; Martinich 2010: 269) Their considerations are based principally on the following Gricean remark: 'for a large class of utterances, the total signification of an utterance may be regarded as divisible in two ways. First, one may distinguish, within the total signification, between what is said (in a favored sense) and what is implicated; and second, one may distinguish between what is part of the conventional force (or meaning) of the utterance and what is not. This yields three possible elements – what is said, what is conventionally implicated, and what is nonconventionally implicated – though in a given case one or more of these elements may be lacking. ... Furthermore, what is nonconventionally implicated may be (or again may not be) conversationally implicated' (Grice 1989: 41). For the sake of simplicity, we will discuss only the case of conversational implicatures.

For it may happen that the speaker actually means something but fails to say it (see Saul's 'near-sayings') or fails to conversationally implicate her intended message (see Saul's 'near-implicatures') – simply because her utterance actually does not satisfy certain normative conditions of saying or conversationally implicating. In such a case the speaker does mean a particular proposition, but she neither says nor implicates it; therefore, SMET must be false.

The mechanisms used by Grice to achieve this kind of normativity for the two notions ('what is said' and 'what is implicated') are nevertheless different. In order to *say* something, the speaker should use linguistic devices in a way that conforms to the standard use (roughly, the conventional 'force' or meaning) of them – or at least to one of the standard uses. As Saul puts it: 'for a speaker to say that P by means of a sentence S, it is not enough for her to mean that P – S must also be a sentence which (roughly) is *standardly used to mean* that P' (Saul 2002: 229) This is a genuine case of normativity: the speaker *should* proceed like this in order to meet her communicative obligations: 'Saying something does not guarantee audience uptake but does mean that the speaker has fulfilled her communicative responsibilities with regard to explicit content' (Saul 2002: 244)

If the speaker does not fulfill these communicative responsibilities or does not meet these communicative obligations, she cannot say (in the Gricean sense) the content which she meant to say or intended to say. According to Saul (2002: 236), 'this kind of case is quite common;' just consider malapropisms and poor translations (see also Zvolenszky 2012: 205–209). For example, some native German-speakers may utter in a restaurant the English sentence *I am becoming a steak* due to its phonetic similarity to the German *Ich bekomme ein Steak*; or somebody utters *Obama was killed* instead of *Osama was killed* misled by the acoustic resemblance of the two names. The intended propositions – 'I am ordering a steak' and 'Osama was killed' – are not said, because they relevantly differ from the conventional meanings of the sentences uttered, nor conversationally implicated, because the audiences were not supposed to work them out from the utterances while relying on the conventional meanings of the sentences uttered and on the presumption of the speaker's cooperativeness.

In order to *conversationally implicate* something, according to a plausible interpretation of Saul's account of Grice's theory of communication, (a) the speaker should think that the audience could work out the content that she intended to conversationally implicate (see clause 3* below), and (b) the audience should be under obligation to work out the implicature (see clause 1*, 2*, and the calculability criterion below).

Once again: whilst in the case of *what is said* the conventional meaning of the sentence uttered should be identified as being the crucial factor that imposes

tight normative constraints on conveying speaker-meaning, in the case of *what is conversationally implicated* the normatively expected presumptions of the audience – about the speaker’s cooperativeness (clause 1*) and about the apparent conflict of the speaker’s verbal behavior and her supposed cooperativeness (clause 2*, the calculability criterion) – play this role. Consequently, Saul reconstructs Grice’s three-clause characterization of conversational implicature as giving ‘mixed,’ but *mainly audience-oriented* conditions; according to her interpretation, clause 1 and 2 are normative claims about what is expected from the audience, and clause 3 is a descriptive condition concerning the speaker’s state of mind, the role of which is to ‘introduce some element of speaker control’ (Saul 2002: 231); namely to disqualify from being genuine conversational implicatures those propositions that had never come to the speaker’s mind at all, and were never considered by her as being treated by the audience as some sort of communicative meaning the speaker intended to convey.

GRICE’S ORIGINAL THREE-CLAUSE CHARACTERIZATION OF CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE
A man who, by (in, when) saying (or making as if to say) that *p* has implicated that *q*, may be said to have conversationally implicated that *q*, provided that

- (1) he is to be presumed to be observing the conversational maxims, or at least the Cooperative Principle;
- (2) the supposition that he is aware that, or thinks that, *q* is required in order to make his saying or making as if to say *p* (or doing so in those terms) consistent with this presumption; and
- (3) the speaker thinks (and would expect the hearer to think that the speaker thinks) that it is within the competence of the hearer to work out, or grasp intuitively, that the supposition mentioned in (2) is required (Grice 1989: 30–31).

And this is how Saul (2002; 2010) interpreted it:

SAUL’S THREE-CLAUSE CHARACTERIZATION OF CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE (SLIGHTLY SIMPLIFIED VERSION)

A speaker *S* conversationally implicates that *q* by saying that *p* if and only if

- (1*) *S* is to be presumed [by the audience] to be cooperative;
- (2*) the audience must assume *S* to believe *q* in order to preserve the assumption that *S* is cooperative;
- (3*) *S* thinks that it is within the audience’s competence to work out that the supposition mentioned in (2) is required.

The expressions ‘is to be presumed’ and ‘must assume’ should be understood genuinely normatively: the audience is *under obligation* to presume cooperativeness

on the part of the speaker and to calculate the conversational implicature in question (to assume that the speaker believes that content).

Additionally, Saul (2010) contended that not only Grice's three-clause characterization of conversational implicature should be in conflict with SMET, but also his calculability criterion, which was proposed by Grice as a necessary condition for conversational implicature.

GRICE'S ORIGINAL FORMULATION OF THE CALCULABILITY CRITERION:

The presence of a conversational implicature must be capable of being worked out; for even if it can in fact be intuitively grasped, unless the intuition is replaceable by an argument, the implicature ... will not count as a conversational implicature... To work out that a particular conversational implicature is present, the hearer will rely on the following data: (1) the conventional meaning of the words used, together with the identity of any references that may be involved; (2) the Cooperative Principle and its maxims; (3) the context, linguistic or otherwise, of the utterance; (4) other items of background knowledge; and (5) the fact (or supposed fact) that all relevant items falling under the previous headings are available to both participants and both participants know or assume this to be the case (Grice 1989: 31)

It is important to emphasize that Saul takes the calculability criterion also as a *normative* criterion which should be characterized in a mainly *audience-oriented* way.

Calculability very clearly does not require that an implicature actually be calculated. Instead it requires that it be *possible* for an implicature to be calculated. And Grice makes this abundantly clear by noting that even if the implicature can be intuitively grasped, the intuition must be 'replaceable by an argument' (Saul 2010: 176).

Immediately after stating the calculability criterion, after all, Grice goes on to list what information is to be used by the audience in calculating conversational implicatures. This strongly suggests that the audience is the one doing the calculating (Saul 2010: 177).

According to Saul's analysis, something is conversationally implicated only if the audience was under obligation to calculate the implicature in question and this can be true only if it was possible for her to do this – that is, she *could have been fulfilled* her communicative responsibilities. ('Ought' seemingly implies 'can' even within the realm of verbal communication.)

In sum: Saul's account of the conditions of conversational implicature seems to be genuinely *normative* and mainly *audience-oriented*. Not in the sense that the actual audience's actual beliefs and suppositions would determine whether the speaker had successfully implicated her speaker-meaning or not; Saul (2010: 175–176) makes it explicit that this would be a misinterpretation of the conflict between the calculability criterion (or the three-clause characterization) of conversational implicature and SMET. Instead, what really determines

whether the speaker has conversationally implicated something or not are those obligations under which the audience should (or should not) provide the aforementioned presumptions and work out the implicature. If she should make assumptions about the speaker's cooperativeness (clause 1*) and about the need for working out the content implicated (2*), then the speaker has conversationally implicated her speaker-meaning; otherwise she has not – irrespective of what else the audience or the speaker has actually presumed about the conversational partners' communicative intentions. Consequently, if the obligations do hold, then the lack of fulfilling the audience's communicative responsibilities does not 'cancel' the conversational implicature, as some of Saul's examples might illustrate. The first one is about a careless reader of a reference letter:

I know that Wesley is applying for a philosophy job, and I write a letter designed to communicate my low opinion of Wesley. I write (truthfully), 'Wesley's main virtues as a philosopher are punctuality, an attractive choice of fonts, and an encyclopaedic knowledge of illegal pharmaceuticals.' The audience, though certainly capable of working out from this that I think Wesley is a poor philosopher, reads too quickly, and takes away from the letter only the information that Wesley has encyclopaedic knowledge. They hire him, become disappointed, and complain to me. ... What I can do... is maintain that I conversationally implicated it: It *was* required in order to understand me as cooperative, and my audience *was* capable of working this out (Saul 2002: 244; emphasis in the original).

The second example is about a reader who missed a reference letter's irony (however, Saul did not use this term, possibly because she did not want to tackle problems associated with the Gricean account of verbal irony as a form of conversational implicature).

Take, for example, the following fictitious letter of reference, from an article in *The Onion*: / 'Karyn has an unusually insistent style of conducting business, undeniably effective in both achieving her goals and giving those she works with a greater awareness of her value, the value of their lives, how much they love their wife and two daughters, and how desperately they want to live.' / The author of the above letter seems to conversationally implicate that Karyn has threatened them. ... And yet, someone might miss it. Perhaps a careless reader might focus only on the praise early in the sentence, without reflecting much on what comes later. ... Understanding conversational implicature as a normative notion allows us to say that the author *did* implicate that Karyn had threatened him, even though the audience failed to pick up on it (Saul 2010: 180–181, emphasis in the original).

In these cases of 'communicative negligence' of the audience there is nothing that clashes with SMET: the speaker *did* conversationally implicate what she meant to implicate, even though the audience failed to pick up on it.

What are those circumstances under which the communicative responsibilities of the audience, given by clauses 1* and 2*, might be lacking? According to Saul's analysis, if the audience happens to be given some seemingly reliable (albeit possibly false) indication of the speaker's non-cooperativeness, she *does not have to presume* that the speaker must observe the Cooperative Principle; and in Saul's examples this presumption is indeed not present (Saul 2002: 234–235; Saul 2010: 171). For the sake of brevity, just consider her second example appeared in her 2010 paper:

imagine that I am writing a letter of reference for my student Amanda, a very poor philosopher. I want to make this clear to her prospective employers without explicitly saying it. So I write a letter consisting solely of (a): / '(a) Amanda has never been more than half an hour late to her appointments with me, and her dissertation fits nicely within the university's word limit.' / In writing this, I mean that Amanda is poor at philosophy. I fully expect the hiring committee to realise this. However, unbeknownst to me the hiring committee has been falsely informed that I always write pointless and uncooperative letters of reference. As a result, they do not take me to be implicating this. They take my apparently irrelevant letter to be a product of my uncooperativeness rather than supposing that I am trying to convey something that I don't want to say. Clause 1 has, it seems, not been met: There is no presumption of cooperativeness. According to the three-clause characterization, then, I have not conversationally implicated that Amanda is poor at philosophy. Nonetheless, I surely meant this (Saul 2010: 171).

Throughout this conversation between the author of the letter and the hiring committee, clause 1* was not satisfied, even though the author has meant something, in the Gricean sense, and tried to conversationally implicate her communicative meaning.²

Saul has offered another possibility for 'relieving' the listener from her communicative responsibilities for working out the conversational implicature the speaker intended to convey. If the audience is in fact not in a position to realize that by saying what the speaker said she has seemingly violated certain conversational maxims, then clause 2* is not satisfied: the audience *need not assume* that the speaker wants to communicate something else beyond what she says; and in Saul's examples this assumption is indeed not present (Saul 2002: 230; Saul 2010: 172). Let's see how this plays out in her second example:

2 'Clause 1* was not satisfied' should be read as saying that clause 1* was not in force and, as a result, the audience was not under obligation to presume the speaker's cooperativeness. Whether the audience has actually presumed it or not is quite irrelevant here. (The same applies in the next paragraph to this: 'clause 2* was not satisfied.'). We thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out this possible ambiguity.

Imagine that I am writing a letter of reference for another inadequate student, Beau. I take it that Beau is applying for a philosophy job, and I want to convey that Beau is a poor philosopher without saying it. So I write only (b): / '(b) Beau is always punctual and he is very good with word-processing software.' / By this, I mean that Beau is a poor philosopher. I expect the hiring committee to realise this. What I failed to realise, however, is that Beau is actually applying for a low-level secretarial job, requiring only punctuality and knowledge of word-processing software. His prospective employers find my letter very helpful, and have no reason to suppose that I meant to convey anything about Beau's philosophical abilities. Clause 2 was not met, so according to the three-clause characterization I have not conversationally implicated that Beau is a poor philosopher (Saul 2010: 172).

Since clause 2* was not satisfied, the speaker did not conversationally implicate her intended meaning.

It seems to us that the main reason and motivation for Saul to reconstruct the Gricean clauses 1–2 in an essentially normative and mainly audience-oriented way was to avoid counting any extravagant, particularly quixotic proposition as a conversational implicature – just for the reason that the speaker believed them and wanted them to convey. For instance, she regards as thoroughly counterintuitive the following analysis of Wayne Davis:

Carl says 'I feel sick' and Diane replies with 'A flying saucer is nearby.' Carl thinks what Diane said is false, and fails to see its relevance to his comment. Nonetheless, Diane 'might well have been [conversationally] implicating that Carl could get help from the doctors on the flying saucer.' (Davis 1998, 74) Because of Davis' understanding of conversational implicature, anything that the speaker means to convey by what she says is conversationally implicated. So speakers like Diane, with extremely eccentric beliefs, can successfully conversationally implicate all sorts of surprising things (Saul 2002: 240–241).

Saul found this analysis highly counterintuitive, because she thinks it should not be entirely within the speaker's control whether she conversationally implicates something, or not – and Grice surely 'had similar inclinations' (Saul 2002: 241).

She later repeated her explanation purely in terms of the calculability criterion:

imagine that I am writing a reference by which I mean to communicate that Charla is a terrible philosopher. ... But I am very poor at writing bad references, and somehow always find myself writing glowing, positive references. I am firmly convinced, however, that the glowing reference I have written will communicate my low opinion of Charla. As it happens, I am of course wrong: there is nothing that would alert the audience to my low opinion of Charla. This is just the sort of case that should clearly fail the Calculability test (Saul 2010: 177).

We get the same result: if the speaker has not ‘made the information available’ to the audience (see Saul 2002: 244; Saul 2010: 180), then clause 2* was not fulfilled, and consequently, the speaker failed to conversationally implicate her meaning.

Saul dubs these kinds of attempted-but-failed implicatures (featured previously in her four examples) ‘near-implicatures.’ These cases of ‘communicative misfortune,’ according to Saul’s analysis, differ considerably from cases of ‘communicative negligence’ (see the examples about Wesley and *The Onion*-article). Something happens in the background of the conversation – false rumors circulate about the speaker, someone else receives the reference letter instead of the originally intended addressee, the speaker holds extravagant beliefs or is communicating in an idiosyncratic style – which prevents the actual audience of the utterance from assuming what she would and should assume in normal circumstances. Consequently, the speaker fails to conversationally implicate her speaker-meaning.

In these cases of *near-implicatures* it’s easy to see why Saul speaks about a deep conflict between the characterization of conversational implicature (plus the calculability criterion) and SMET: the propositions the speaker intended to convey were surely meant by her, but since one or more of the required conditions has not been fulfilled, these were neither said (diverging significantly from any of the conventional meanings of the sentence uttered), nor conversationally implicated.³

3 It is worth noting that Saul attributed far less theoretical work to clause 3* than to clauses 1* and 2*. Although she speaks about the speaker’s communicative responsibilities in making available to the audience her intended message (Saul 2002, 245), she does not incorporate this requirement into the conditions of conversational implicature. Due to this omission she treats the cases of Diane with her ‘flying saucer’ and the author of the reference letter for Charla as analogous with the cases of ‘communicative misfortune’ (see above Amanda’s and Beau’s reference letters). Saul apparently holds that if a purported conversational implicature hasn’t been made available to the audience *for whatever reason*, including the speaker’s communicative negligence or some sort of communicative misfortune, the audience cannot be held responsible for working out that implicit content, therefore the speaker failed to implicate her speaker-meaning. This analogous treatment, however, seems to be counterintuitive. There is a significant difference between the cases of Diane and Charla, on the one hand, and those of Beau’s and Amanda’s, on the other hand, namely that in the case of the former two the speaker did not make the intended message available for the audience, so she did not fulfill her communicative responsibility, while in the latter cases some other factors ‘canceled’ the audience’s communicative responsibility. This may suggest an alternative account of the normative nature of conversational implicatures – which nevertheless significantly differs from Grice’s or Saul’s. According to this analysis the

3. General Objection: SMET Is Not Part of Grice's Theory of Meaning

The main reason why we deny the presence of the conflict in question in Grice's philosophy of language is that we think that – contrary to standard interpretations – Grice was never committed to SMET.⁴ So, we agree with Saul that this thesis should not be attributed to Grice, but we disagree with her in thinking that this understanding of Grice would be 'a natural one' (Saul 2002: 228). In the next paragraphs we are going to argue that SMET is far from being an essential part of Grice's philosophy of language. We will show this in two steps.

First, for Grice, utterances are not just verbal acts, but can be any kind of behavior by which the utterer could mean/convey something. However, saying involves 'some linguistic system' (Grice 1989: 88), while, on the other hand, all kinds of implications involve some sort of indirect act of meaning which depends on another direct, or central one in which the literal meaning of the uttered sentence plays crucial role (see Grice 1989: 122, 362; Davis 2007: 1660). Consequently, by a nonverbal utterance – for example 'a man in a car, refraining from turning on his lights, means that I should go first' (Grice 1989: 87), or 'the conductor meant ... by the rings that the bus is full' (Grice 1989: 214) – the utterer is actually meaning something which must be neither said, nor implicated (at least in cases of single, direct meaning-acts), since there were no linguistic system and no literal meaning involved in the gestures.⁵

Second, and more importantly, this can happen even in cases of verbal utterances: sometimes the conventional, literal meaning of the sentence uttered

speaker and the audience bear *shared communicative responsibility* for conveying and calculating conversational implicatures. So we have to change clause 3* with clause 3** in Saul's three-clause characterization: (3**) S should do enough to make the information available to the audience in order to justifiably think that it is within the audience's competence to work out that the supposition mentioned in (2) is required. According to this account, the theoretical job of Clause 3** would be to delineate the speaker's genuine communicative responsibilities.

- 4 Probably that is why Grice inserted the 'for a large class of utterances' clause into the passage introducing the distinction between what is said and what is implicated mentioned in note 1.
- 5 One of us argued in a paper that the distinction of 'what is said' and 'what is implicated' can be applied also to genuine cases of *pictorial* conversation – of course, with some appropriate changes in the theoretical machinery (see Bárány 2019). This account does not proceed smoothly along Gricean lines though.

plays absolutely no role in generating the proposition meant by the speaker. Consider some Gricean examples. The first is borrowed from John Searle who presented it as a counterexample to the Gricean analysis of occasional utterance meaning.

An American soldier in the Second World War is captured by Italian troops. He wishes to get the troops to believe that he is a German officer, in order to get them to release him. What he would like to do is to tell them in German or Italian that he is a German officer, but he does not know enough German or Italian to do that. So he 'as it were, attempts to put on a show of telling them that he is a German officer' by reciting the only line of German that he knows, a line he learned at school: '*Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühen.*' He intends to produce a certain response in his captors, namely that they should believe him to be a German officer, and he intends to produce this response by means of their recognition of his intention to produce it (Grice 1989: 100)

Grice contended that one might understand this example as being a real instance of non-natural occasional meaning (instead of being an instance of natural meaning), but, contrary to Searle's interpretation, he declared that by uttering this particular German sentence the speaker has meant that 'I am a German officer.'

Or consider the following Gricean example:

The proprietor of a shop full of knickknacks for tourists is standing in his doorway in Port Said, sees a British visitor, and in dulcet tones and with an alluring smile says to him the Arabic for 'You pig of an Englishmen.' I should be quite inclined to say that he had meant that the visitor was to come in, or something of the sort. I would not, of course, be in the least inclined to say that he had meant by the *words which he uttered* that the visitor was to come in (Grice 1989: 101–102, emphasis in the original).

It must be clear that in these examples the speaker did not say (in the Gricean sense) the proposition he has meant ('I am a German officer' and 'Come into my shop and choose from the products,' respectively), since the literal meaning of the sentence uttered was significantly different from the proposition that was intended to be conveyed by the speaker. At the same time, the speaker also did not implicate that proposition, since the literal meaning of the sentence uttered *has not played any mediating role* in the process of interpretation of the utterance. The Italian soldiers and the British tourist *cannot* work out the intended meaning of the utterance through grasping the literal meaning of the words – since they do not understand the relevant language (German and Arabic). Moreover, the audience also *did not need* to grasp the literal meaning of the sentence uttered in order to recognize what the speaker had meant in these examples. Consequently, the literal sentence meaning cannot be the crucial feature of the utterance which should be grasped by the audience in order to work out the speaker's communicative meaning; something else must play this role. This other feature might

be that the speaker's string of words sounds like a German sentence – and the shop owner's gestures and intonation point the audience towards the appropriate interpretation.⁶

Consequently, one can find many examples in the Gricean corpus of recurrent speaker-meaning that should not be considered as being said or implicated, even in cases of verbal utterances. Sentence meaning and speaker-meaning could come apart in numerous ways and conversational implicature is just one of them. Therefore, we cannot see how SMET could be a genuine part of Grice's theory of meaning and communication. To the contrary: it seems to us that Grice was never committed to this thesis.⁷

4. Problems with Saul's Account of the Conditions of Conversational Implicature

Saul's account gives a detailed picture of the normative character of the Gricean notions of 'what is said' and 'what is implicated.' We fully agree with her in how the conventional meanings of the uttered sentence constrain the speaker in saying what she can say. We also have no quarrel over the issue of near-sayings, since we fully acknowledge that these can be seen as real cases of speaker-meaning without saying or implicating. The slip of the tongue and the poor translation cases may be very similar to the examples of the American soldier and the Egyptian merchant, to the extent that in these conversational scenarios the literal conventional meanings of the sentences uttered did not effectively played any mediating role in the act of meaning.

On the other hand, Saul's mainly audience-oriented account of conversational implicatures seems to us somewhat problematic. Her analysis remains silent on at least two important matters. The first of these is how one can draw a clear distinction between cases of communicative negligence (of the audience) and communicative misfortune? For example, why should we think that the careless reader of the reference letter for Wesley was indeed under obligation to work

6 Grice explicitly used the notion of *mediating feature* in the definition of 'utterer's occasion-meaning' (at least in one particular version of it): 'Characteristically, an utterer intends an audience to recognize (and to think himself intended to recognize) some 'crucial' feature *F* [of the utterance], and to think of *F* (and to think himself intended to think of *F*) as correlated in a certain way with some response which the utterer intends the audience to produce.' (Grice 1989: 102–103; formal definitions: 103–105).

7 Wayne Davis (2007: 1660) reaches the same conclusion, albeit based on slightly different reasoning.

out the intended implicature, while in the example of Amanda, the reader of the letter, who was misled by some false rumors about the uncooperativeness of the speaker, was *not* under obligation to presuppose the speaker's cooperativeness?

It is hard to guess what would be Saul's stance in a case very similar to Amanda's example, with the only difference that the reader's reason for not taking the speaker as cooperative was that she tossed a coin before the conversation and decided that she would presuppose the speaker's cooperativeness only if it would be tails – and it was heads. What shall we say: this is an example of communicative negligence or of just misfortune? Was or was not the reader under obligation to presume the speaker's cooperativeness? Was it possible for the reader to avoid thinking about the speaker as being uncooperative? And what is the difference between this and the original case of Amanda?

Or let's take another example, a slightly modified version of the irony-deaf reader of *The Onion*. In this new version, I, one of Karyn's employees, said the above sentences ('Karyn has an unusually insistent style of conducting business') to a relatively new colleague. However, unbeknownst to me, the colleague was on the ASD spectrum, and had difficulties in grasping the point of ironical utterances, but her difficulty was not so serious as to deprive her of taking part in cooperative conversations. Although the audience could not grasp the proposition the speaker tried to convey, and therefore perhaps she *should not* do it either, I was not able to recognize this particular feature of the conversation. It is also hard to guess what would be Saul's opinion about this case. Did the utterer conversationally implicate the proposition she meant to be conveyed or not? It seems to us that no determinate answer can be provided by Saul's account.

What makes answering these questions even more difficult may be the fact that sometimes Saul explained the issue of the fulfillment of clauses 1* and 2* in her examples not in a normative, but rather in a descriptive way. For example, concerning Amanda's and Diane's example she declared that 'there is no presumption of cooperativeness' (Saul 2010: 171), and 'the audience must also need to believe that the speaker believes that P in order to preserve the assumption of the speaker's cooperativeness' (Saul 2002: 241). Elsewhere she suggested generally that what counts in connection with the fulfillment of the conditions of conversational implicature might be what the audience *actually* assumed or believed and not what normative requirements were present. See e.g.: 'we have seen that the audience's state of mind *can* impose constraints on what is conversationally implicated' (Saul 2002: 241, emphasis in the original).

We also think that these uncertainties were not mere 'accidents,' but stemming from another weakness of Saul's account, namely that her analysis remains silent also on where this normativity of conversational implicature comes from. What

are the sources of this normativity? And why do we want to account for this in terms of the *audience's* communicative responsibilities, in the light of 'Grice's obvious interest in speaker-meaning' (Saul 2002: 228)? Is it perfectly plausible to maintain that Grice wanted to provide 'mixed' conditions for characterizing conversational implicature? We are now turning to these questions.

5. The Real Foundation of Normativity: The Common Ground

In the spirit of Saul's account, we should say: in some conversational scenarios it might be uncertain whether the relevant conversational implicature has come into existence or not. Moreover, the analysis implausibly predicts the lack of conversational implicatures in other conversational scenarios (arguably in Amanda's case). Now, we will show that there may be conversational scenarios in which Saul's account does predict the emergence of the relevant conversational implicature – however it is highly counterintuitive! Let's consider the following example.

I think Cecil is applying for a philosophy job, and I would like to express my opinion that he is not a good professional. So I write in the letter of reference only the following sentence: 'Cecil is always punctual and he is so good with word-processing software that he never forgets to press space after a comma.' However, unbeknownst to me, Cecil is actually applying for a secretarial job. Nevertheless, the hiring committee finds my letter irrelevant, since punctuality and pressing space after commas are among the basic skills of a secretary. Consequently, since they suppose I am observing the Cooperative Principle and the maxims, they think I tried to convey the proposition that 'Cecil is not a good professional.' And they are right!

However, it is intuitively clear for us that I did not conversationally implicate this proposition. The overlap of the meant and the attributed propositions was a mere coincidence. So, although clause 2* (and the other two, plus the calculability criterion) was met, I still have not conversationally implicated that Cecil is not a good professional.

This conversational scenario shows that the real reason of lacking the relevant conversational implicature in Saul's original example of Beau cannot be that clause 2* was not met, since if this were the real reason, then the implicature would come into being in Cecil's case. We think that the real reason must be that there is another, completely general condition of conversational implicatures, namely that the utterer and the audience should take part in a common (mutually recognized) cooperative, goal-directed communicative process, and that is what is missing from both Beau's and Cecil's conversational scenario. As Grice famously puts it:

I wish to represent a certain subclass of nonconventional implicatures, which I shall call *conversational* implicatures, as being essentially connected with certain general features

of discourse; so my next step is to try to say what these features are. The following may provide a first approximation to a general principle. Our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did. They are characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction (Grice 1989: 26; emphasis in the original).

So we think this is the condition that was not met in Saul's original example of Beau: the writer of the letter and her audience were equally misconstruing whom they were communicating to, and what was at issue. *That* was the real reason why the purported conversational implicature has not been generated by the speaker.

The presence of conversational implicatures rests upon some general features of the conversation – for example, who are the parties and what is the topic and the purpose of the exchange. The so-called 'communicative responsibilities' of the conversational partners can be directly derived from these factors. Each participant in the communicative process should assume the responsibility of communicating just those propositions by which she effectively helps to achieve their mutually acknowledged goals – and justifiably expects the same attitude from all participants. The normative nature of conversation should be explained in terms of the participants' *mutually shared common ground*.

Grice's well-known Cooperative Principle and the conversational maxims serve a dual function: as theoretical tools they help grasp some salient features of human communication in an empirically adequate way, but at the same time they fulfill the role of being normative standards of communication, via which the conversational partners may raise rational expectations about each other's behavior. Grice discussed this dual function at length:

I would like to be able to think of the standard type of conversational practice not merely as something that all or most do *in fact* follow but as something that it is *reasonable* for us to follow, that we *should not* abandon. ... So, I would like to be able to show that observance of the Cooperative Principle and maxims is reasonable (rational) along the following lines: that anyone who cares about the goals that are central to conversation/communication ... must be expected to have an interest, given suitable circumstances, in participation in talk exchanges that will be profitable only on the assumption that they are conducted in general accordance with the Cooperative Principle and the maxims (Grice 1989: 29–30; emphasis in the original).⁸

8 Cf. 'There is good reason to believe that the participants' cooperative behaviour can only be explained assuming that we are dealing with essentially rational beings... Yet it is perfectly possible to interpret Grice's theory of speaker's meaning straight out as an analysis of rational communication' (Petrus 2010: 3).

Applying this consideration to the problem of conversational implicatures, it seems that if a speaker in a normal exchange of communication wants to convey that q by saying that p , she can be said to fulfill her communicative responsibilities and have made q available to her partner just in case she *did everything that can be done so as to justifiably expect from her audience to recognize* that she wanted to convey q . And finally, what she can justifiably expect from her audience depends on what belongs to the shared common ground; that is, what she knows about her audience, about the epistemic situation and possibilities of the audience, about what information the audience might have about her and the purpose and settings of the conversation, etc. Consequently, when the question arises whether the audience is justifiably expected to assume or think something or not, given that the speaker has fulfilled her communicative responsibilities, one has to provide the answer in terms of the *speaker's perspective embedded in the common ground*. And it will be quite irrelevant what we, the omniscient interpreters, know about the audience, and how we judge whether the audience could (and therefore should) arrive at the proposition in question or not. This interpretation can be nicely backed by a short definition of implicatum given by Grice in his *Retrospective Epilogue*:

an implicatum... is the content of that psychological state or attitude which needs to be attributed to a speaker in order to secure ... that a violation on his part of a conversational maxim is in the circumstances justifiable, *at least in his eyes* (Grice 1989: 370; our emphasis).

This speaker-oriented normative interpretation of conversational implicatures can be strengthened if we take into account an additional criterion of conversational implicatures, namely *cancelability*. Canceling an implicature is a matter of making available to the audience that the speaker does not intend to implicate the proposition in question. This clearly shows that the characterization of conversational implicature should not be mainly audience-oriented. If conveying a conversational implicature would be solely a matter of the audience's communicative obligations of making assumptions about the speaker's cooperativeness and about the need for working out the content implicated, it will be incomprehensible how the speaker can 'erase' these obligations by a simple *fiat*. Cancelability shows exactly that it should be, at least partly, within the competence of the utterer whether or not an utterance conveys a particular proposition as a conversational implicature.

In sum, we think that the best interpretation of Grice's normative characterization of conversational implicature would be presented *from the speaker's point of view*. The conditions of conversational implicatures are to be about the

audience-oriented intentions of the speaker. This interpretation seems to be in full harmony with the standard Gricean analysis of occasional utterer's meaning, according to which the audience-oriented intentions of the utterer are what makes an act meaningful.⁹ So, here is our interpretation of the three-clause characterization of conversational implicature and the calculability criterion:¹⁰

SPEAKER-ORIENTED THREE-CLAUSE CHARACTERIZATION OF CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE

By saying (or making as if to say) that *p* a speaker conversationally implicates that *q*, iff, leaning on the mutually known common ground, *the speaker justifiably expects* that

- (1S) he is to be presumed (by the audience) to be observing the conversational maxims, or at least the cooperative principle;
- (2S) the supposition (of the audience) that he is aware that, or thinks that, *q* be required in order to make his saying or making as if to say *p* (or doing so in those terms) consistent with this presumption; and
- (3S) (a) it is within the competence of the hearer to work out, or grasp intuitively, that the supposition mentioned in (2) is required, (b) the hearer thinks that the speaker expects this.

Furthermore, since clause 3* was formulated from the utterer's perspective even by Saul, we think that the account on what data the hearer might rely on in working out the implicature should be read *within the scope of the third clause*:

SPEAKER-ORIENTED INTERPRETATION OF THE CALCULABILITY CRITERION

The presence of a conversational implicature must be capable of being worked out; for even if it can in fact be intuitively grasped, unless the intuition is replaceable by an argument, the implicature ... will not count as a conversational implicature... The speaker justifiably expects (and would expect that the hearer thinks that the speaker expects this) that it is within the competence of the hearer to work out, or grasp intuitively, that the supposition mentioned in (2) is required, by relying on the following data: (1) the conventional meaning of the words used, together with the identity of any references that may be involved; (2) the Cooperative Principle and its maxims; (3) the context, linguistic or otherwise, of the utterance; (4) other items of background knowledge;

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- 9 Of course, this feature could be in favor of our interpretation only if one considers conversational implicature as a kind of speaker's meaning. Saul (2002: 237–238) raised the possibility of unmeant conversational implicatures, but she didn't committed herself to the idea that there can be implicatures that were not meant by the speaker. We think that in the Gricean framework there should be no room for unmeant implicatures, but in this paper we cannot argue for this claim.
 - 10 For similar approaches see Heck (2006: 31–32), Plunze (2010: 244–245), Neale (2005: 182), and Bach (2012).

and (5) the fact (or supposed fact) that all relevant items falling under the previous headings are available to both participants and both participants know or assume this to be the case.

6. Amanda, Beau, and Others

With this formulation in hand, we can handle the various examples of communicative errors mentioned above.

There are conversational scenarios in which the basic conditions of cooperative conversation have not been satisfied, that is, there is no common ground shared by the interlocutors due to some kind of fatal communicative misfortune. The conversational participants are in error concerning whom they are talking to, what is at issue, etc. In these scenarios the participants are *not engaged in real conversation at all*, so one has no ground to decide what the speaker can justifiably expect from her audience. That is why no conversational implicature is brought about in these examples. This is true to the cases of Beau and Cecil. Of course, in such a conversational scenario the utterer does mean a particular proposition, so strictly speaking SMET proves to be false. However, the failure of conveying the speaker's intended meaning has not arisen from the fact that some kind of communicative responsibilities of the audience were lacking. It occurred due to not being real conversation at all.

There are other conversational scenarios in which the basic conditions of cooperative conversation appear to be satisfied, but the conversational implicature the speaker intended to convey was not generated, simply because what the speaker expects from her audience is unjustified, that is, cannot be underpinned by the shared common ground. One can identify many demanding constraints on what an utterer could justifiably expect from her audience. As Grice (1971: 268) himself argues, if one intends to do something, then she 'should be sure that she will in fact do' that thing; in other words, she necessarily 'believes that her present will' that she does something, say, in one minute's time 'will result at the time in question in her doing that thing' (Grice 1971: 278). So, conversely, if she cannot rationally believe in the ultimate success of her act of willing – since, for example, the state of affair in question seems impossible – then she cannot intend to perform this act. Since implicating something depends heavily on the audience-oriented expectations of the utterer, a speaker cannot conversationally implicate something that she cannot rationally expect her audience

to work out leaning on the shared common ground.¹¹ This is what's happening in the example of Diane and Charla and in all other cases of the speaker's communicative negligence. In short, our account also rigorously excludes counting any extravagant, particularly bizarre proposition (stemming from the speaker's 'extremely eccentric beliefs') as a conversational implicature. Nevertheless, this kind of communicative negligence should not be explained *along the Gricean lines* by alluding to the fact that under these conversational scenarios the audience was not under obligation to work out the intended meaning – the crucial point might be that the speaker could not be justified in expecting that the audience would be capable of doing this. In such kind of cases, SMET also proves to be false, of course, and it is as clear from our speaker-oriented perspective as from Saul's audience-oriented one.

Finally, there are conversational scenarios in which the speaker, leaning on the shared common ground, justifiably expects from the hearer that she suppose all those things that are provided by (1S)–(3S), but actually these expectations have not been fulfilled. In the example of the reference letter for Wesley or the 'irony-deaf' reader of the article published in *The Onion* we can find a more or less identifiable common ground shared by the participants, and no fatal misunderstanding transpired about whom they were talking to and what was at issue. Therefore, the relevant conversational implicature was generated. However, we think that same is true about both cases involving Amanda (and perhaps about the case of the colleague with ASD). As far as the participants are sharing some kind of conversational common ground, the speaker *justifiably expects* from the audience to presume that the speaker is cooperative – and it makes no difference in this respect if the audience is actually misled by some false rumors about the speaker's bad intentions (or the speaker was not informed about the colleague's ASD). In a word: if the speaker's expectations are justified on the basis of the common ground, it does not matter if these expectations were actually fulfilled or not, and if not, whether the failure occurred due to a fault by the audience or due to some other factor.

Our account hopefully gives a systematically speaker-oriented normative interpretation of Grice's approach to conversational implicatures (instead of giving 'mixed' conditions for implicating, as Saul does), and fits well with the broader Gricean picture of meaning and communication.¹²

11 For a similar view see Neale (2005: 181).

12 We are grateful to Zsófia Zvolenszky and an anonymous reviewer for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this essay. In the course of research leading to this

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