

## **Meaning and Communication**

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“If I didn’t know any words, you wouldn’t know what I mean.” This astute observation, made by my granddaughter Sophia when she was four, might suggest that knowing what a speaker’s words mean is all it takes to know what she means in using them and, indeed, that communicating is just a matter of putting one’s thoughts into words. Sophia didn’t suggest that and, indeed, the theme of this chapter is that communication is more complicated than that. For even if you know what my words mean, you might not know what I mean uttering them.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Words mean things, speakers mean things in using words, and these need not be the same. For example, if you say to someone who has just finished eating a super giant burrito at the Taqueria Guadalajara, “You are what you eat,” you probably do not mean that the person is a super giant burrito. So we need to distinguish the meaning of a linguistic expression – a word, phrase, or sentence – from what a person means in using it. To simplify matters, let us pretend that an utterance is always of a sentence (and, for mnemonic purposes, let our imagined *speaker* be a *she* and *hearer* be a *he*).

This chapter is concerned with the relationship between linguistic meaning and what speakers mean in using language. It will not take a stand on the nature of linguistic meaning itself, a difficult question on which there are many views, some of which are discussed elsewhere in this volume. However, we will assume that it is one thing for a sentence to have a certain meaning (or meanings, if it ambiguous) and another for a speaker to mean something, whether the same thing or something else, in using it. This leaves open whether what words mean in a language ultimately comes down to what speakers mean by them, as argued by Grice (1968) and by Schiffer (1972). We will assume also that speakers ordinarily, as members of the same linguistic community, share knowledge of the meanings of the expressions they use. This is part of their linguistic knowledge, which also includes knowledge of phonological (or orthographic) form and syntactic structure. What matters for us is that linguistic knowledge is only part of the knowledge that people bring to bear when they communicate

with one another. Our examples will only begin to illustrate how, mostly for efficiency's sake but sometimes for other reasons, people commonly try to communicate more than what their sentences mean, and often even manage to make themselves understood.

We will explore one particularly ingenious idea about this, due to Grice (1957). He thought that communication involves a special sort of intention on the part of the speaker and that successful communication involves a special sort of inference on the part of the intended audience. In using a sentence to try to communicate something, a speaker has an audience-directed intention that is in a certain way self-referential. Specifically, the speaker intends the listener to figure out what the speaker means partly on the supposition *that* the speaker intends him to do so. The hearer's job is to figure out what the speaker means, partly on the basis *that* he is intended to do so. This is possible because unlike intentions in general, a communicative intention is one whose fulfillment consists simply in its recognition. In zeroing in on what this involves, we will need to keep in mind that people generally do not use sentences merely to communicate but primarily to affect one another in various ways.

## LINGUISTIC MEANING AND SPEAKER MEANING

What we mean is generally connected, though sometimes only remotely, to what our words mean. To appreciate this, consider a case where there is no such connection at all. Suppose to gain entrance into a private club you must utter a three-word sentence whose words begin, respectively, with "a," "b," and "c." You say, "Always be cool," and you are let in. Clearly the meanings of your words are irrelevant to what you mean ("I'm a member – let me in"). You could just as well have said, "Antibodies battle chlamydia." But this is an exceptional case. Ordinarily the meanings of the words you use do matter. Nevertheless, their meanings do not determine what you mean in using them. There are various ways in which this can be.

First of all, this can be because *ambiguity*. A sentence can have more than one meaning because it contains an ambiguous expression, like 'bar' in (1),

(1) Because of his excessive drinking, Judge Jones was banned from the bar.

or because it is structurally ambiguous, like (2),

(2) The chicken is ready to eat.

Because of the lexical ambiguity in (1), a speaker, though being literal, could mean either that Judge Jones was banned from legal practice or that he was banned from a certain drinking establishment. Similarly, a literal speaker of the structurally ambiguous (2) could be talking about either a hungry chicken or a broiled chicken. In each case what the speaker means corresponds to only one of the things the sentence means.

Another way linguistic meaning can fail to determine what the speaker means is via *nonliterality*. For instance, although sentence (4) means something analogous to what (3) means,

(3) Farmer Frank was up to his ears in mud.

(4) Farmer Frank was up to his ears in debt.

a speaker is likely to mean something quite different. What he means is related to but distinct from the linguistic meaning, since he means that Farmer Frank was only figuratively up to his ears in debt. In other cases, involving *indirection*, a speaker means what the sentence means (or one of the things it means, if it is ambiguous) but means something else as well. If a friend asks you for something to drink and you utter (5),

(5) There's some beer in the fridge.

presumably you mean not only that there is some beer there but also that your friend may help himself to some of it. Finally, an utterance can be both nonliteral and indirect, as in a likely case of a mother saying (6) to her slightly sadistic son,

(6) I'm sure Felix likes having his tail pulled.

She means not only that the cat doesn't like having his tail pulled but also that her son should stop pulling it. These and similar examples (see Bach and Harnish 1979: chapter 4) illustrate different ways in which what the speaker means can depart from what the sentence means. The speaker may mean one of the things the sentence means, as with (1) or (2), something quite distinct from anything it means, as with (4), or both, as with (5).

There is a minor complication here. We need to distinguish what a speaker means *by* an expression and what she means *in using* it. This distinction is evident from (7), for example,

(7) Dr. Frankenstein's lavatory blew up.

where the speaker probably means laboratory by "lavatory." This distinction is also needed to handle utterances of ambiguous sentences like (1) and (2), where what a speaker means by her sentence does not include each of the things it means. In these cases what the speaker means by the sentence determines which meaning is operative in her utterance of them. With (4), however, there is no linguistic ambiguity. Despite what a speaker would mean *in using* the words "up to his ears," she does not really mean anything different *by* them than she would in uttering (3). The phrase seems not to be ambiguous but rather to have two uses, one literal and one figurative, one corresponding to its single meaning and the other a derivative one. The speaker is exploiting the single (literal) meaning of her words in order to mean something else in using them. With (5) the speaker means both what the sentence means and something else as well. When she utters "There's some beer in the fridge," she means *by* those words just what they mean (not quite, actually, since they do not specify the fridge in question). Yet *in* uttering (5) she means more than just that, namely that the hearer may help himself to some beer.

### **COMMUNICATIVE INTENTIONS**

Intuitively, to mean something in uttering a sentence is to intend to communicate something to one's audience. But what is it for an intention to be communicative? In his groundbreaking article "Meaning," Grice (1957) offered an original answer to this question. He observed that meaning something (trying to communicate it) is not simply a matter of thinking something and acting with the intention of somehow causing one's audience to entertain that thought. After all, one's intention could be covert. You might, for example, make self-deprecating remarks intending to get people to think you are modest. They might think that but certainly not if they recognize your intention. Nor is it enough that one's intention be overt. Say you point to a cracked window with the intention of getting someone to believe that the window is broken. Seeing that it is, they will come to believe that but not by virtue of recognizing your intention.

Grice's idea was that communicative intentions are intentionally overt and that this feature plays a special role in their fulfillment. That is, in trying to communicate something to others by saying

something, a speaker intends the audience to recognize that intention partly by taking into account that they are so intended. As Grice characterized the distinctively self-referential or “reflexive” character of communicative intentions, a speaker means something by his utterance only if he intends his utterance “to produce some effect in an audience by means of the recognition of this intention” (Grice 1957/1989: 220). Not just any sort of effect will do, and later we will consider just what sort of “effect” this is. But first we need to appreciate Grice’s basic idea.

To get a feel for it, consider what goes on in the following games, which have something in common with linguistic communication. Take the game of charades, in which one player uses gestures and other bodily movements to help the second player identify what she has in mind. The first player has a self-referential intention, for part of what she intends is for the second player to take into account the very fact that she intends her gestures etc. to enable him to figure out what she has in mind. Nothing like this goes on in the game of 20 questions, where the second player uses answers to yes-or-no questions to narrow down the possibilities of what the first player has in mind. Here the only cooperation required is honest answers on the part of the first player. Like charades, simple games of tacit coordination, first discussed by Schelling (1960: 54-58), also involve self-referential intentions. The first player selects and records an item in a certain specified category, such as a letter of the alphabet, a liquid, a mode of transportation, a city, or a US president; the second player has one chance to guess it. In this game either both win or both lose. Both win if and only if the second player guesses right without any help. But what counts as guessing right? That depends entirely on what the first player has in mind, and that in turn depends entirely on what she thinks the second player, taking into account that she wants him to guess right, will think she wants him to guess. The second player guesses whatever he thinks she wants him to guess. To appreciate how this cooperative guessing game works, play this game with a friend. Try additional categories too, and consider why some work better than others.

When players use the above categories, they usually both pick the letter ‘A’, water, cars, the city in which they are located, and the current president. Each ‘correct’ choice stands out in some salient way from other members of the category. Grice’s idea was in effect that successful communication

involves something of the same sort. In uttering a sentence, a speaker has something in mind that she is trying to convey and intends the hearer to figure out what that is; in hearing the speaker utter the sentence, the hearer tries to figure out what the speaker intends to convey, partly on the basis of being so intended. That is, the hearer is to take into account that he is intended to figure out what the speaker intends to convey. It is the meaning of the words uttered, of course, that provides the primary input (along with the fact that the speaker uttered them, presumably with the intention to communicate something), but what they mean does not determine what the speaker means. Even if what she means is precisely what her words means, the fact that she is speaking literally is not determined by what they mean – she could have meant something else. What is loosely called “context” plays a key role here, not in determining what the speaker means – that is a matter of the speaker’s communicative intention – but of enabling the hearer to ascertain (a different sense of “determine”) what the speaker means. Context comprises whatever other considerations the hearer is to take into account in so doing. It is information that is mutually available to the speaker and the hearer, information that the speaker intends the hearer to take into account in figuring out what the speaker means (see Bach 2005).

## **COMMUNICATION AND SPEECH ACTS**

If Grice was right, there is something distinctively self-referential about a communicative intention. But what is it that the speaker intends? What sort of effect does she intend to produce on her audience, partly “by means of the recognition of this intention”? We cannot take up this question until we reckon with the fact that utterances, though generally communicative, are not made just with communicative intentions – they are not *merely* acts of communication. As first investigated by Austin (1962) in his aptly titled *How to Do Things with Words*, a *speech act* is a multi-layered affair. In this respect they are no different from most intentional actions. Moving one’s arm in a certain way can, given the right intentions and circumstances, also be a case of pushing away a second plate of pasta, of sticking to one’s diet, and of trying to impress one’s spouse. Notice that this is not a series of actions but, rather, a single bodily movement comprising a multiplicity of nested actions. The same occurs when one utters a sentence.

### Utterances as three-level speech acts

Austin distinguished three distinct levels beyond the mere act of uttering a sentence. There is the act *of* saying something, what one does *in* saying it, and what one does *by* saying it. He dubs these, respectively, *locutionary*, *illocutionary*, and *perlocutionary* acts. Saying isn't just a matter of meaning what one's words mean. The locutionary act is, as Austin defined it (1962: 95), the act of using a sequence of words "as belonging to a certain vocabulary ... and as conforming to a certain grammar, ... with a certain more or less definite sense and reference" (this qualification is needed to allow for resolving any ambiguity and fixing any indexical reference). Importantly, Austin did not mean the act of uttering particular words, reported with direct quotation as for example in (8):

(8) Bernanke says, "Inflation is not a problem."

The locutionary act is reported, rather, with indirect quotation:

(9) Bernanke says that inflation is not a problem.

Bernanke did not have to use the words, "Inflation is not a problem," to say that inflation is not a problem. He did not even have to be speaking in English. Regardless of the means by which he said that, or even if he had uttered something else, say "Inflation is not on the horizon," he could have performed the illocutionary act of assuring the public that prices and interest rates won't go up significantly, thereby performing the perlocutionary act of assuaging at least one of their economic fears.

The sentence uttered does not in general determine the type of illocutionary act being performed. Just as we can do one of several different things in shaking hands – introduce ourselves, greet each other, seal a deal, or bid farewell – so we can use a given sentence in various ways. For example, (10) can be used, depending on who is speaking to whom and with what intention, as a prediction, a warning, a promise, a threat, or even an order.

(10) The riot squad will break up the demonstration.

It is partly, but only partly, because of what the sentence means that it has its various (literal) uses. After all, the sentence expresses, at least relative to a given context of utterance, a proposition about what a certain riot squad will do regarding a certain demonstration. However, the meaning of the

sentence does not determine whether it is being used to predict, warn, promise, threaten, or order.

And it certainly does not determine the perlocutionary effect which, depending on the illocutionary act being performed, could be anticipation, dispersal, assurance, fear, or action.

### **Communicative vs. perlocutionary intentions**

Now we can spell out the difference, corresponding to the distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, between a speaker's communicative intention and her further intention in uttering a sentence. Intuitively, an act of communication, linguistic or otherwise, is an act of expressing oneself. This rather vague idea can be made more precise if we get more specific about what is being expressed. Take the case of an apology. If you utter, "[I'm] sorry I smashed your car," and intend this as an apology, you are expressing regret, in this case for smashing the hearer's car. Indeed, it seems that an apology just *is* the act of (verbally) expressing regret for something one did that adversely affected the hearer. It is communicative because it is intended to be taken as expressing a certain attitude, in this case regret (for smashing the hearer's car). That is only the communicative aspect of an apology. When you apologize, you may intend not just to express regret but also, hoping the hearer thinks you're sincere, to seek forgiveness. Seeking forgiveness is distinct from expressing regret, even though in saying that you're sorry for smashing the hearer's car you are doing both.

In general speech acts are not merely acts of saying something and not merely communicative, illocutionary acts of expressing an attitude. They are also perlocutionary acts, performed to produce some effect on the audience. However, since the intended perlocutionary effect of a given type of illocutionary act can vary, it makes sense to distinguish different types of speech acts primarily by their illocutionary type, such as asserting, requesting, promising, and apologizing, which in turn may be distinguished by the type of attitude expressed. The perlocutionary act is generally, though not always, an attempt to get the hearer to form some correlative attitude, as this table illustrates.

<i>Illocutionary Act</i>	<i>Attitude Expressed</i>	<i>Intended Hearer Attitude</i>
statement	belief that p	belief that p
request	desire for H to D	intention to D
promise	firm intention to D	belief that S will D



apology

regret for D-ing

forgiveness of S for D-ing

These acts exemplify the four main categories of communicative illocutionary acts, which Bach and Harnish (1979: chapter 3), borrowing partly from the terminology of both Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), call *constatives*, *directives*, *commissives*, and *acknowledgments*.

If type of act can be distinguished by type of expressed attitude, then an act of that type is communicationally successful if the hearer recognizes the attitude being expressed, such as a belief in the case of a statement and a desire in the case of a request, along with its content (what is believed, desired, or whatever). Any further perlocutionary effect the act has on the hearer, such as inducing a belief or an action, or even just being taken as sincere, is not essential to its being a statement or a request and is not necessary for its success as an act of communication. It need not be sincere – the speaker might not actually possess the attitude she is expressing – and the hearer might not take her to be sincere. But there is no question about the speaker being sincere in possessing the communicative intention itself, for this intention must be identified before the question of her sincerity can even arise. One can be unsuccessful in conveying one's communicative intention -- by being too vague, ambiguous, or metaphorical, or even by being wrongly taken literally -- but not insincere about *it*.

### **SELF-REFERENTIAL INTENTIONS AGAIN**

Now we are in a position to fit Grice's idea of self-referential intentions, the key to his conception of communication, into the broader framework of speech act theory. This will enable us to pin down the sort of effect a speaker can intend "to produce in an audience by means of the recognition of this intention," and also to see why there is nothing paradoxical or mysterious about such an intention.

#### **The intended "effect"**

As Strawson (1964: 459) first pointed out, the relevant effect is understanding, rather than, as Searle (1969: 47) added, any further, perlocutionary effect on the hearer. And understanding, or what Austin (1962) called "uptake," is a matter of identifying what attitude (including its content) the speaker is expressing. We can think of meaning something as intending just such an effect: "to express an attitude is reflexively to intend the hearer to take one's utterance as reason to think one has that attitude" (Bach and Harnish 1979: 15). This formulation respects the difference between expressing

an attitude and actually possessing it, not to mention having a further intention toward the hearer (Siebel 2003 expresses some worries about this formulation). Whatever else a speaker may be doing in performing a speech act, her communicative illocutionary act is just the act of expressing that attitude. Communicating successfully, being understood, is simply having the expressed attitude recognized. It does not require the hearer to respond in any further way. The hearer need not even attribute a belief, desire, or some other attitude to the speaker. Identifying the attitude the speaker is expressing, whether or not one actually attributes it to her, is just the sort of thing that can be done by way of recognizing the speaker's intention for one to do it.

### **Reflexive paradox?**

Commenting on the notion of an intention "to produce an effect in an audience by means of the recognition of this intention," Grice remarked, "This seems to involve a reflexive paradox, but it does not really do so" (1957/1989: 219). It seems to because the intention is self-referential. Indeed, the air of paradox may seem to imbue the hearer's inference, inasmuch as the hearer is to identify the speaker's intention partly on the supposition that he is intended to do so. If meaning is supposed to be what people do whenever they speak to one another, there had better be nothing paradoxical about it.

It might seem paradoxical if one confuses iterative intentions with reflexive ones, as indeed Grice himself seems to have done. As Harman explains,

Grice himself originally states his analysis as involving a self-referential intention ... but, because of worries about what he calls "self-reflective paradox," he goes on to restate the analysis as involving a series of intentions, each about the preceding one. This turns out to lead to tremendous complexity in the resulting theory. Much of this complexity is artificial and due to Grice's refusal to stick with the original analysis and its appeal to a self-referential intention. (Harman 1986: 87-8)

As Harman stresses, Grice's move to iterative intentions led to increasingly complex formulations beginning with Strawson's (1964), followed by Grice's (1969) own, and culminating with Schiffer's (1972), each prompted by counterexamples to the previous formulation. As Harman suggests, sticking with a self-referential intention rather than invoking iterative ones avoids this complexity.

Resistance to reflexive intentions has been based not just on fear of paradox but also, it seems, on a misconstrual of what goes into the content of a communicative intention and into the hearer's

inference to it (Bach 1987, in reply to Recanati 1986). Here is the simplest case of this. It might seem that Grice's formulation, with its key phrase "by means of the recognition of this intention," requires that to understand the speaker the hearer must engage in some sort of circular reasoning. It sounds as though the hearer must already know what the speaker's communicative intention is in order to recognize it. However, this misconstrues what the hearer has to take into account in order to recognize the speaker's intention. The hearer does not infer that the speaker means that p (or is expressing, say, the belief that p) from the premise that the speaker intends to convey that p. Rather, operating on the assumption that the speaker, or any speaker, in uttering a sentence intends to communicate something or other (Bach and Harnish (1979: 12) call this the "Communicative Presumption"), the hearer takes this general fact, not the identity of the specific intention, into account in identifying that intention. The situation is analogous to that of the player in those coordination games we discussed. In both cases one has to figure out what one is intended to figure out partly on the basis that one is intended to, but not by knowing in advance what it is.

### **SAYING ONE THING AND MEANING SOMETHING ELSE**

Grice elaborated on the case in which a speaker says one thing and means something else instead or something else as well. Although he did not expressly invoke Austin's notion of locutionary act, he did rely on a notion of saying whereby what is said is "closely related to the conventional meaning of the ... sentence ... uttered" (1975/1989: 25). However, it is not identical to conventional meaning because there can be ambiguity or context-dependent reference. Usually only one conventional (linguistic) meaning is operative in a given utterance, and linguistic meaning does not determine what such words as 'she', 'this', and 'now' are used to refer to. But even with all that fixed, the speaker might not mean just what she says.

### **Implicating**

Grice coined the term *implicature* for what a speaker means but does not say. Whereas what is said may *imply* something, what a speaker *implicates* is a matter of her intention in saying it. For example,

suppose we're dining at a greasy spoon and I ask you what you think of the pasta you're eating. You reply with (11),

(11) It's covered with Parmesan.

probably implicating that the pasta is not very good. That's a matter of your communicative intention. But how do I recognize your intention? Grice's answer would be roughly this. Presumably you are giving an informative answer to my question, but saying the pasta is covered with Parmesan is on the face of it not very informative. So you must intend me to infer that you mean something more informative. Since I asked you for your assessment of the pasta and saying that it is covered with Parmesan, good though that is, does not tell me much about the pasta itself, you are inviting me to read an assessment of it into the fact that you said what you said and no more. I can infer that you have nothing else good to say about it, hence that you mean that it is not very good. I make such an inference partly on the basis that you intend me to. Notice that what I infer is that you *mean* that it is not very good. To understand you I do not have to infer that it is not very good or even that you believe that, contrary to Grice (1975/1989: 31).

Uttering something like (11) is not the only way that you could have conveyed without saying that the pasta was not very good. Suppose you had uttered (12), in a sarcastic tone:

(12) That's the best pasta I've ever tasted.

Here you intend me, taking it to be obvious that you don't mean that it's the best pasta you've ever tasted, to infer that you mean that the pasta is not very good. You intend the fact that you said something relevant but obviously false to be my basis for figuring out what you mean.

In explaining what goes on in such cases, Grice proposed a general "Cooperative Principle" and specific "maxims" – of *quality*, *quantity*, *relevance*, and *manner* – to account for how speakers manage to make themselves understood even when they do not spell out what they mean. Actually, these maxims are better thought of as presumptions, for it is on the presumption that the speaker is being truthful, relevantly informative, and otherwise appropriate that the hearer figures out what the speaker means. By saying something obviously false (or unjustified), underinformative (or perhaps overinformative), irrelevant, or in a strange way (say by being longwinded or pedantic), one calls the

hearer's attention to something ostensibly inappropriate about the utterance and, in effect, invites the hearer to reinterpret it, perhaps by considering what else one could have said instead, in such a way that it is appropriate after all. Note, however and contrary to popular opinion (see Bach 2006), that the maxims (or presumptions) do not apply only to implicature. Even when a speaker is being completely literal, meaning what she says and nothing else, the hearer reasons in essentially the same sort of way, although the reasoning is simpler, since he doesn't have to reinterpret the utterance. Also, the Cooperative Principle should be not understood to mean that interlocutors are or ought to be generally cooperative. It specifically concerns the aim of communication, not the further perlocutionary aims that people have in saying things to one another.

### **Implicating and indirect speech acts**

Implicating is a kind of indirect speech act, a special case of performing one illocutionary act by way of performing another. Consider our earlier example (5) and as well as (13), both uttered by you at a party of yours.

(5) There's some beer in the fridge.

(13) The gendarmes are coming.

In uttering (5) you could not only *tell* someone where the beer is but also indirectly offer them some. With (13) you could not only *inform* your guests that the gendarmes are coming but also indirectly warn them to quiet down. Notice that the direct illocutionary act need not be a statement. You might directly *ask* a question with (14),

(14) Do you know it's after midnight?

to *inform* someone indirectly that it is after midnight and perhaps also to suggest that it is time to go home. In these cases you have two communicative intentions (in uttering (14) perhaps three), one corresponding to each illocutionary act, and you intend your audience to recognize one by way of recognizing the other.

### **Between saying and implicating**

In contrasting saying and implicating, Grice allowed both for cases in which the speaker means what he says and something else as well (implicating and indirect speech acts generally) and ones in which

the speaker says one thing and means something else instead (nonliteral utterances, which Grice also counted as cases of implicating). We also need to allow for the case in which the speaker says something and doesn't mean anything (Bach 2001). Now Grice seems to have assumed that saying and implicating exhaust the cases of speaker meaning. He overlooked the possibility of an intermediate phenomenon, albeit one that also exploits the maxims. However, as others have since observed (Sperber and Wilson 1986; Bach 1994; Carston 2002; Recanati 2004), there are many sentences whose standard uses are not strictly determined by their meanings (even with ambiguities resolved and references fixed) but are not implicatures or figurative uses either. For example, if your child comes crying to you with a minor cut and you assure him,

(15) You're not going to die.

you do not mean that he will never die (that is false but irrelevant) but merely that he won't die from that cut. And if someone proposes going out to dinner and you say,

(16) [Sorry, but] I've already eaten.

you do not mean that you have eaten at some previous time (that is obviously true but irrelevant), but more specifically that you've had dinner that evening. In both cases you do not mean precisely what you are saying but something more specific. On the other hand, what you do mean isn't an implicature either. You are using each of the words in (15) and (16) literally, but you are not using the sentences themselves literally, in that you are leaving part of what you mean implicit.

In other cases, what the speaker says is not merely not as specific as what she means but is incomplete in the sense of not being fully propositional. If your spouse is honking the horn at you and you shout back with (17),

(17) I'm not ready.

you mean that you are not ready to leave. And if your spouse yells back,

(18) We'll be late.

she means that you will be late for the event you are both planning to attend. In neither case is there anything in the sentence that corresponds to the implicit reference. Although the speaker means something definite, the sentences themselves, even with the references of the indexicals 'I' and 'we'

fixed, lack determinate truth conditions. As with (15) and (16), though for a different reason (propositional incompleteness), what the speaker means is more specific than what the sentence means. These examples appear to violate the grammar school dictum that a sentence, unlike a mere word, phrase, or “sentence fragment,” always expresses a “complete thought” (I say ‘appear’ because some would argue that such sentences contain hidden constituents). We might say that whereas what a user of (15) or (16) means is an *expansion* of the sentence’s content, what a user of (17) or (18) means is a *completion* of the sentence’s content (this is Bach’s (1994) terminology, which differs from both Sperber and Wilson’s (1986) and Recanati’s (2004), whose frameworks are somewhat less Gricean).

Now several of Grice’s critics have pointed out that expansions and completions are not related closely enough to conventional meaning to fall under Grice’s notion of what is said but are too closely related to count as implicatures. That is because what the speaker means is built directly from what the sentence means. Recanati (2004) suggests that the notion of what is said should be extended to cover such cases (he goes so far as to offer a series of progressively more liberal notions of saying), but clearly he is going beyond Grice’s conception of what is said as corresponding to the constituents of the sentence and their syntactic arrangement. Sperber and Wilson (1986: 182) coined the word “explicature” for this in-between category, since part of what is meant explicates what is said. I propose calling these cases of *implicature* (Bach 1994), since part of what is meant is communicated not explicitly but implicitly, by way of expansion or completion.

## **SUMMING UP**

We have contrasted speaker meaning with linguistic meaning and examined Grice’s ingenious conception of speaker meaning, or communication, as involving a distinctive sort of self-referential intention directed toward an audience. To make this conception compelling, we needed to distinguish the specifically communicative “effect” of understanding from other effects on the audience. This required bringing in broader notions from speech act theory. With this framework in place, we then considered a variety of ways speakers can make themselves understood even if when, as is often, what they mean is not what they say.

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