

“I Didn't Mean It That Way”: Speaker Intention and Sentence Implicature

There are several ways that what is conveyed by an utterance can go beyond the literal meaning of the sentence used. For example, if you ask me if there's a pizza restaurant nearby, and I say “Well, around the corner they sell something that they *call* pizza anyway.” I have not said, but I have communicated that I don't think their pizza is very good. I take “what is said” to be closely related to the conventional meaning of the words uttered. So in the above example, I uttered a sentence which in the context expressed the proposition that there is some person or people located around a specific corner that sell something that they identify as pizza. What I may have meant to communicate by phrasing my answer in this way, is that I don't think what they sell should be properly described as pizza. Alternatively, I could have been trying to communicate that I don't know what pizza is and so the most I can say is that I know a vendor that sells something that *they* call pizza, but I can't guarantee that it is actually pizza. In *Logic and Conversation*¹ H.P. Grice provided a theory for the phenomenon of a speaker communicating or meaning something other than what the sentence she used means.² Grice called this phenomenon “implicature” and identified three categories: conventional implicature, conversational implicature and generalized conversational implicature. Later theorists have modified or expanded on Grice's theory in order to account for

¹ Grice, “Logic and Conversation”.

² Or as I prefer, a speaker communicating or meaning something *by* saying something else.

cases of the communication of implicit messages that Grice's theory does not explicitly cover. These include theories of sentence-implicature, utter-implicature and audience-implicature.³

A second communicative phenomenon is when some or all of what is conveyed by an utterance is not what the speaker intended to convey. This can happen when a speaker fails to communicate what they mean or does not mean what they say. Excluding cases where the speaker is literally not heard or recognized as trying to communicate, one way that this can happen is when the speaker is mistaken about what the words literally mean in the context that she is in. For example if I say "Water is inflammable" because I want to tell you that water cannot be set on fire, what I have said is distinct from what I meant because I was mistaken about the conventional meaning of "inflammable". This can also happen when a speaker's audience infers information from the utterance that the speaker did not intend for the audience to infer.

In this paper I will argue that there are cases of speakers conveying an implicit message that they neither say nor mean. These cases cannot be captured by Grice's theory of implicature or theories of audience-implicature or sentence-implicature. Neither can they be explained as a case where a speaker is mistaken about the conventional meaning of the words she utters nor are they cases when a speaker's audience infers more from her utterance than she intended them to. I will propose a new category of implicature, utterance-implicature, to account for cases where an implicit message may have been conveyed regardless of whether or not the speaker intended to convey it. I will use the word "implicature" to refer to a message that is conveyed or communicated by saying something else and "implicate" to refer to the act of communicating or conveying something by saying something else.

³ Davis, *Implicature: Intention, convention, and principle in the failure of Gricean theory* ; Davis, "How normative is implicature"; Saul, "Speaker Meaning, What is Said, and What is Implicated".

Among other things, this new category of implicature will explain why an utterance can imply an offensive or prejudicial message even if the speaker does not intend to. Many verbal micro-aggressions against individuals in marginalized or oppressed groups fall under this description. One common example is when a person who is a member of a minority group is told “You’re so eloquent” by a seemingly well-meaning speaker. Although the speaker may not mean to imply that her interlocutor is surprisingly or unusually eloquent, because of features of the context of conversation that the speaker may not be aware of, her utterance does imply just that. We will return to this example later. For now, we will look at another example of implicature and see how it escapes classification under any of the theories that we will consider.

1. THE CASE

Imagine Amina (*A*) says to her friend Sherise (*S*) “I’m going to be bored by this class; it’s a philosophy class.” To which Sherise responds

(1) No it’s not. It’s fun and interesting.

In her response to *A*, *S* has not just conveyed the information that the class is fun and interesting, she has also implied something along the lines of:

(1*) In general, philosophy classes are not fun and interesting.⁴

However she has not said that philosophy classes are not, in general, fun and interesting. What she said, fixing the relevant references, was two statements: the first being that the class in question is not a philosophy class and second, that the class in question is fun and interesting. Therefore, the message that philosophy classes are not interesting or fun in general was conveyed implicitly. I will stipulate that in this case, *S* did not mean to convey this implicit message. Also *A* does not think that

⁴ An analogous conversation would be *A* saying “I don’t want this car; it’s a lemon” and *S* responding “No it’s not. It’s a Honda” implying that Hondas are not lemons.

S believes that most philosophy classes are boring because she has often heard *S* talk about how interesting her philosophy classes are. One can imagine *A* jokingly asking, “So you admit that philosophy classes aren’t fun and interesting?”

In the case described *S* did not mean or say what her utterance implied. We will start with Gricean implicature and show that the case described above is not captured by Grice’s theory.

2. GRICEAN IMPLICATURE

2.1 CONVENTIONAL IMPLICATURE

According to Grice, there are two main categories of implicature: conventional and conversational. Conventional implicature occurs when the conventional meanings of the words uttered determine what is said as well as what is implicated. Grice’s example is the sentence “He is an Englishman; he is, therefore, brave.” Not only has the speaker committed herself to the propositions expressed by the sentences, “He is an Englishman” and “He is brave”, she has also implicated, by virtue of the meaning of the words, that his being brave is a consequence of him being an Englishman.⁵

CONCLUSION 1

With that definition of conventional implicature, we can see that it does not describe the implicature generated by the utterance of (1); the conventional meanings of the words in (1), arranged as they are, do not implicate (1*).

⁵ Grice, “Logic and Conversation”, 314.

2.2 CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE

While conventional implicature is generated by the conventional meaning of the words uttered, conversational implicature is generated partly because of norms of conversation. Grice argues that one norm of conversation is that the participants make contributions that are required by the accepted purpose of the conversation. He calls this norm the Cooperative Principle. There are four categories of maxims under the Cooperative Principle: Quality, Quantity, Relation and Manner. If interlocutors are engaged in conversation, conversational implicature occurs when a speaker utters a sentence p , and in order to suppose that the speaker is observing the maxims of the Cooperative Principle, the hearer has to suppose that the speaker is aware of, thinks or believes that q .⁶ To do so, the hearer thinks to herself “The speaker said that p , but the only way to reconcile her saying that p with the assumption that she is still adhering to the Cooperative Principle is to assume that she is thinking that q . Further, she will know that I would have to assume that she thinks that q in order to account for her uttering that p being in accordance with the conversational maxims, and she has done nothing to prevent me from thinking that she thinks that q . Therefore, she intends for me to think that she thinks that q and has therefore implicated that q .”

For example, if Aisha is standing beside her broken down car on the side of the road and Siobhan stops and says, “There is a gas station around the corner”, if Aisha assumes that Siobhan is being cooperative and therefore observing the maxims of Relevance and Quantity⁷, then Aisha can assume that Siobhan said something that was relevant to the situation and also that Siobhan stated as much information as needed in order to be cooperative. To preserve this assumption, Aisha has to suppose that Siobhan believes that the gas station around the corner is in working order and one can

⁶ Grice, *Ibid.*, 317.

⁷ Make contributions that are relevant and contribute neither more nor less than is required

purchase gasoline there. If Siobhan believed that the station was not open then saying “There’s a gas station around the corner” would not be relevant or as informative as the Cooperative Principle would require. Further, Aisha supposes that Siobhan knows what Aisha would have to assume, and Siobhan does not prevent Aisha from assuming this by cancelling the implicature (saying “But I don’t know if the station is open” or something similar). Therefore, Aisha concludes that Siobhan intends for her to believe that Siobhan thinks that the gas station is open. So, Siobhan has conversationally implicated that the gas station is open by uttering “There is a gas station around the corner”.

On Grice’s definition, a speaker conversationally implicates that q by uttering p if:

- i. It is presumed that she is observing the Cooperative Principle.
- ii. The assumption that the speaker is aware or thinks that q is necessary to make her utterance p consistent with (i).
- iii. The speaker thinks (and expects the hearer to think that the speaker thinks) that the hearer is capable of recognizing (ii).⁸

One important feature in Grice’s theory of conversational implicature is that a speaker can only implicate a message that she intends to implicate. We can see that intention is necessary for implicature by examining what Grice says about speaker meaning and what he says about implicature.⁹

About speaker meaning, Grice says that a speaker S meant something by an utterance x iff for some audience A , S utters x with the intention to produce an effect in A by means of A ’s

⁸ Grice, “Logic and Conversation”, 317.

⁹ The following argument was given in Davis, “How normative is implicature”, 1655-1660.

recognition of that intention.¹⁰ Here is an example to illustrate the importance of intention in this definition of meaning: If I yell “Stop!” because I see you about to walk into a pole, I intend for you to believe that I have spoken, but I do not intend for you to believe that I have spoken by recognizing my intention for you to believe that I have spoken. Therefore, I did not mean “I have spoken” by my utterance of “Stop!” Another thing I intended for you to believe was that you should stop walking, and I intended that you would come to believe that you should stop walking because (in part) you recognized that I intended for you to believe that you should stop walking. Therefore, I meant “Stop walking” or “Stop walking now” by my utterance of “Stop!”

When Grice introduces the term “implicate” he says he does so in order to not have to choose between a “family of verbs for which *‘implicate’* is to do general duty”. These verbs include “imply, suggest, mean *etc.*” For Grice, the term implicate is defined as a way of meaning (suggesting or implying) something without explicitly saying it; since intention is necessary for meaning, intention is also necessary for implicating. Further, Grice defines conversational implicature in terms of implicature when he says that the above conditions (i)-(iii) are those under which a speaker that has *implicated* that *q* can be said have to *con conversationally implicated* that *q*.¹¹ Therefore conversationally implicating entails implicating, and since intentions are necessary for implicating, intentions are necessary for conversationally implicating.

CONCLUSION 2

The case of Sherise’s utterance conveying the message that philosophy classes are not generally fun or interesting is not a case of conversational implicature, because the speaker *S* did not

¹⁰ Grice, “Meaning”, 385.

¹¹ Grice, “Logic and Conversation”, 317.

intend to communicate (1*) by uttering (1). Since *S* did not intend to communicate (1*) or have her audience come to believe (1*) by uttering (1), she did not mean (1*). And since a speaker cannot implicate something that she does not mean, *S* did not conversationally implicate (1*). Additionally, while *S*'s audience *A* thinks that the implicit message (1*) was conveyed, *A* also believes that *S* likes philosophy classes, so *A* does not have to assume that *S* thinks or believes (1*) in order to preserve the assumption that *S* is observing the Cooperative Principle. Rather *A* can think "I know that *S* likes philosophy classes, so she must not think that philosophy classes are usually boring; she must have mistakenly worded her answer".¹² Therefore clause (ii) of Grice's definition of conversational implicature is not satisfied. For both of these reasons, (1*) is not a case of conversational implicature.

2.3 GENERALIZED CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE

Grice introduced a third category of implicature which he called "generalized conversational implicature". This category is meant to pick out the fact that the use of certain sentences, absent any special circumstances, always carries a certain implicature.¹³ For example if I say "Onika met with a woman yesterday" I have implicated that the woman that Onika met was someone other than her wife (or another woman that Onika is well acquainted with such as her mother). Even though generalized conversational implicature is almost always carried by the use of a certain sentence, it is not to be confused with conventional implicature, when the implicature is a result of the conventional meaning of the words. One way to see the difference between conventional implicatures and generalized conversational implicatures is that the implicatures of the latter category, but not the former, are more easily cancelled. So while I can say "Onika met a woman

¹² Note *A* does not have to think this in order to preserve the assumption that *S* is observing the Cooperative Principle but rather may think this to reconcile a statement that seems incompatible with what she knows about *S*.

¹³ Grice, "Logic and Conversation", 321.

yesterday. In fact, it was her wife” without sounding as if I uttered conflicting sentences, if I said “She works hard therefore she is strong, but her working hard has nothing to do with her being strong” it sounds like I don’t have a good grasp on what the word “therefore” means.

CONCLUSION 3

Sherise’s utterance conveying that philosophy classes are not interesting is not one of generalized conversational implicature because the use of (1) does not normally carry the implicature of (1*); a part of what generates the implicature (1*) is the conversational context, and in particular the statement that was made immediately before (1).

3. AUDIENCE-IMPLICATURE

Saul¹⁴ provided the helpful distinction of utterer-implicature and audience-implicature that helps to account for cases when a speaker or her audience is mistaken about an occurrence of conversational implicature.

Both categories of implicature are defined by altering two of Grice’s conditions for conversational implicature. A speaker utterer-implicates that *q* if:

(i_u) *The speaker thinks that* her audience presumes she is observing the Cooperative Principle

(ii_a) *The speaker thinks that* the assumption that she is aware or thinks that *q* is necessary to make her utterance *p* consistent with this presumption.

This allows for a case where a speaker attempts a conversational implicature but fails. In Saul’s example, a professor writes a reference letter for a student who she thinks is a poor philosopher. In her letter, the professor extols the student’s typing abilities and punctuality thinking that the search

¹⁴ Saul, “Speaker Meaning, What is Said, and What is Implicated”, 234-242.

committee with realize that she does not have a good opinion of her student. Unbeknownst to the professor, her student is actually applying for a job as a typist and so the search committee does not have to posit any further beliefs or intentions to the professor in order to take her as being cooperative. In this case, the professor utter-implicated that her student was not a good philosopher but did not conversationally implicate the message.

The parallel phenomenon of audience-implicature is defined by these two modifications of Grice's criteria:

(ii_a) *The audience believes that* that the supposition that the speaker is aware that, or thinks that q is required to make the speaker's saying p consistent with the presumption that she is following the Cooperative Principle

(iii_a) *The audience takes the speaker to think that* the audience is capable of recognizing the supposition in (ii_a)

Saul's example of audience-implicature is a case where a professor, mistakenly thinking that her brilliant student is applying for a job as a typist, writes a reference letter to a search committee of a philosophy department extolling the student's typing abilities. The professor's audience assumes that she thinks poorly of her student given the letter that they receive, but the committee is mistaken. The audience has audience-implicated a message that the speaker did not utterer-implicate.

CONCLUSION 4

The category of audience-implicature seems like it would be helpful in explaining how Sherise's utterance could have implied that philosophy classes are not fun and interesting without her intending to because audience-implicature does not require that the speaker intend to communicate the implicated message, rather the audience has authority about what is implicated.

However, the distinction does not help with the case as described because Amina does not believe that Sherise thinks that philosophy classes are generally not fun and interesting, and Amina does not think it is required that she believe Sherise thinks (1*) in order to maintain that Sherise is being cooperative. Amina can believe that Sherise is being cooperative and does not believe (1*) and still recognize that (1) conveyed (1*); condition (ii_a) is not satisfied. Therefore (1*) is not a case of audience-implicature.

4. SENTENCE-IMPLICATURE

So far we have been discussing implicature in cases where a speaker does the implicating or the audience assumes that the speaker has implicated a message. However, since I am interested in cases where the speaker does not intend to convey the implied message, and the audience does not always think that the speaker intended to convey the implied message, perhaps the notion of sentence-implicature will be useful. Davis says “a sentence implicates, roughly, what speakers using the sentence with its regular meaning would commonly use it to implicate”.¹⁵ For example, a sentence of the form “Some x” usually implicates “Not all x”. So speakers who use the sentence “Some died” with its conventional meaning usually implicate “Not all died”. Therefore, the sentence “Some died” sentence-implicates “Not all died”. This is similar to Grice’s generalized conversational implicature except it is not clear that Grice wanted to say that the *sentence* carried the implicature as opposed to the person using it; when describing generalized conversational implicature, as well as conventional implicature, in *Logic and Conversation* Grice confines the action of implicating to the speaker.

¹⁵ Davis, *Implicature: Intention, convention and principle in the failure of Gricean theory*, 7.

In contrast, Davis explicitly says that a sentence can implicate something that the speaker did not implicate. A speaker could use the sentence “Some died” as an understatement to communicate “All died”. Nevertheless, the sentence “Some died” still sentence-implicates “Not all died” even though in this case the speaker did not speaker-implicate “Not all died”.

Davis says that facts about a particular speaker or context never play a role in working out or generating a sentence-implicature.¹⁶ Rather, a sentence-implicature may begin as a speaker-implicature, but then it spreads from one speaker to another, becomes socially accepted, taught and repeated and eventually becomes a convention in a particular language.¹⁷ In addition to limiting implicatures like “some” or “several”, some uses of litotes are another example of what Davis calls sentence-implicature. Litotes is a linguistic device in which the speaker implies an affirmative by negating its opposite; some of them have become conventional to the point that they are now sentence-implicatures. For instance, a spectator watching a cricket match who sees a player knocked unconscious by a ball may say “That’s not good” as it is conventional to use the sentence form “X is not good” to mean “X is bad”. Because of the convention “That’s not good” sentence-implicates “That’s bad”, and in this case, the speaker speaker-implicates “That’s bad” as well. So although we cannot look to the facts about a particular speaker and particular context in order to work out a sentence-implicature, we can look to the conventions of particular language, or how speakers of a particular language generally use a sentence form.

CONCLUSION 5

¹⁶ Davis, *Implicature: Intention, convention and principle in the failure of Gricean theory*, 27.

¹⁷ Davis, “Implicature”, 8.

While the notion of sentence-implicature is helpful in analyzing how, “No it’s not. It’s fun and interesting” (1) could implicate “In general, philosophy classes are not fun and interesting” (1*) without Sherise meaning to, (1*) is not a case of sentence-implicature as it is described by Davis. (1*) is not a sentence-implicature for the same reasons that it is not a generalized conversational implicature; there is no convention of using sentences of the form “No it’s not. It’s fun and interesting” to mean or imply “In general, philosophy classes are not fun and interesting.” In the case of (1*) the facts about the particular speaker and the particular context do play a role in generating and working out the implicature.

5. SAYING WHAT WE DON’T MEAN

As stipulated in the example, Sherise did not intend to convey that philosophy classes were not usually fun or interesting. So perhaps we can capture how the words she uttered expressed this implicit message by looking at cases where speaker-meaning unintentionally differs from utterance-meaning, or when a speaker unintentionally communicates more than she meant to.

5.1 *MISTAKEN MEANING*

One way speaker-meaning can differ from utterance-meaning is when speakers use words mistakenly. This can happen through a slip-of-the-tongue that a speaker may notice right away or when a speaker is mistaken about what words means in the context that she is in. In the following examples, I take the context of conversation to be the situation in which the utterance was made. Aspects of the situation that could be relevant to evaluating an utterance include the external surroundings, what has taken place in the conversation thus far, the presumed common knowledge of participants and what is presumed to be commonly salient by the participants.

A speaker being mistaken about the conventional meaning of a word is a familiar occurrence. If a North American asks for a “biscuit” while in the U.K. and is confused when she receives a cookie, she was mistaken about what the word “biscuit” means in the linguistic community she was in. Similarly, a novice of French, mixing up the singular forms of *cheveux* and *chevaux*, may say “*J’ai un cheveu*” (I have a hair) when she means “*J’ai un cheval*” (I have a horse). In these cases, speaker-meaning unintentionally differs from utterance meaning because the conventional meaning of the utterance does not mean what the speaker intended to say.

5.2 UNINTENTIONAL INFERENCE

In addition to an utterance having a different conventional meaning than the speaker intended, a speaker’s audience can infer more information from a speaker’s utterance than the speaker intended because the speaker is mistaken about the context that she is in. For instance, if Sally innocently says to Adrian “I saw your partner last night at a restaurant” not knowing that the person in question told Adrian that they would be at the gym, Sally’s statement conveys more information than she intended it to. Adrian may infer from Sally’s statement that her partner was dishonest, but this message is not implicit in the meaning of the words nor does Adrian make this inference based on a recognition of an intention in Sally to communicate that Adrian’s partner was dishonest. Sally was unaware of the context that she was in, namely that what Adrian’s partner told her. While Sally was unaware of what her utterance suggested in this particular context, there are also cases when a speaker may be unaware of what their utterance usually implies or suggests. One such example is a speaker who tells her mechanic that there is oil on her struts without realizing that her utterance suggests that she needs new struts¹⁸.

CONCLUSION 6

¹⁸ Davis, *Implicature: Intention, convention, and principle in the failure of Gricean theory*, 7.

Even though Sherise did not mean for her utterance to imply (1*), it is not an instance of a speaker being mistaken about the conventional meaning of the words she used as Sherise knew what the utterance of (1) meant and she did not mistakenly use words that did not correspond with what she intended to communicate. Neither is it similar to the case of the dishonest partner where the audience made an inference based on what the speaker said, but the inference was not that there was an implicit message expressed by the utterance but rather was a non-linguistic conclusion drawn from what was said. One way to see the difference between (1*) and the information the Adrian inferred about her partner is that in the latter case the inference that is drawn does not rely on the ongoing conversational context or the literal meaning of the sentences; Sally could have conveyed the same information (that she saw Adrian's partner) in a number of different ways including using different words or even showing Adrian a picture and Adrian could have made the same inference. Whereas there was an implicit message conveyed by the utterance of (1) that does depend on the conventional meaning of the words that were used (and the syntax of the utterance). Also, because (1) does not usually suggest or imply (1*) it is not analogous to the speaker doesn't realize that saying she has oil on her struts suggests that she needs new ones.

6. UTTERANCE-IMPLICATURE

We have seen that our original case of an implicit message being unintentionally conveyed is not captured by Gricean theories of implicature nor sentence-implicature or audience-implicature. Nor is it a case of a speaker mistaking the utterance-meaning of the words she used or a speaker being ignorant about what can be inferred from her utterance. Rather we seem to have a case where a speaker uttered a sentence that carried an implicature in that particular context without the speaker meaning to convey the implicated content.

Here is the original case again:

A: I'm going to be bored by this class; it's a philosophy class.

S: No it's not. It's a fun and interesting class.

Because of the context, particularly the comment that *S* is responding to, *S*'s utterance implicated "In general, philosophy classes are not fun and interesting". The utterance implicated the implied message in this particular context although it would not implicate the same message in most other contexts. Much like sentence-implicature, what the utterance implicated does not depend on the intention of the particular speaker; the fact that *S* does not intend to convey the implicit message does not determine whether or not her utterance does. However, unlike sentence-implicature, the facts about the particular context do play a role generating and working out what the utterance implied, and there are times when the particular speaker or audience will play a role in determining what was implicated. I will use the term "utterance-implicature" to denote a sentence-implicature that is generated by an instance of a use of a sentence in a particular context. Speaker-meaning can deviate from utterance-implicature when a speaker is mistaken about the context she is in. This can be as simple as being mistaken about the reference of pronouns in the sentence she uses, as with what likely happened with Sherise. She did not immediately realize that her utterance of (1) meant "*This class* is not (a philosophy class). *This class* is a fun an interesting class" implicating a contrast between philosophy classes and interesting classes¹⁹. A speaker can also be mistaken about what her utterance implicates in a particular context because she is unaware of the language practices of her audience. To illustrate, suppose I live in the Baltimore metropolitan area and I am at a conference in Maryland speaking to someone and I say "I live in the city". I don't realize that my interlocutor lives in Baltimore City proper, and so she takes my utterance to implicate that I live in Baltimore City. While it is common for people who live in the metropolitan area to say "I live in the city" or even "I

¹⁹ In the same way someone might say "This car isn't a lemon. This car is a Honda."

live in Baltimore” to conversationally implicate that they live in the Baltimore metropolitan area when they are speaking to someone who does not live in Baltimore City, in this particular context, because of my audience, my utterance-implicates that I live in Baltimore City.²⁰ This is not an instance of sentence-implicature because although it is true that for some group of people, the use of the sentence “I live in Baltimore city” usually implicates that the speaker lives in the city proper, for another group of people the same sentence usually has a different implicature and so the particular speaker and the particular context do determine what is implicated in this case. There was an utterance-implicature even if my interlocutor doesn’t believe that I meant that I live in Baltimore City. Just as a sentence can implicate something that the speaker does not implicate, and an utterer-implicature can take place with or without audience-implicature, utterance-implicature is separate from audience-implicature, utterer-implicature, sentence-implicature and conversational implicature.

These are just two examples of aspects of conversational context that a speaker can be mistaken about that can lead to utterance-implicature without utterer-implicature or conversational implicature. The cases show that speaker intention does not determine what is utterance-implicated neither is it necessary for the audience to attribute an intention to the speaker to convey the implicit message.

7. SOME APPLICATIONS

The category of utterance-implicature can help us to better describe some cases when speaker intention does not fully determine what is conveyed, and a part of what is conveyed is an implicit message. Since our current categories of implicature require that the speaker intends to convey the implicit message, the audience takes the speaker to intend to convey the implicit message or a sentence usually implicates a certain message barring special circumstances, we don’t capture

²⁰ Note that the audience-implicature that I live in Baltimore city may have also taken place.

cases where the speaker intention doesn't determine what is implicated *and* what is implicated is context sensitive in a way that sentence-implicature and generalized conversational implicature aren't.

An utterance-implicature can take place in situations where the speaker is unaware of features of her audience's history that are relevant to the conversation at hand. Take a philosophy professor who consistently gets feedback on his student evaluations that he is a "harsh-grader" or that his class was "hard". He knows that colleagues in other departments who regularly have a class grade-average similar to his or lower do not consistently get the same feedback. Because of the context, the feedback could utterance-implicate "unfairly harsh-grader", "unexpectedly tough" or "harder than a philosophy class should be".²¹ And the implicature occurs even if the professor believes that his students do not intend to imply these messages. Each individual student who gives the professor this feedback may not be aware that the professor has heard the same feedback repeatedly and that similar professors in other departments do not receive the same consistent feedback. However, even though the students are ignorant of these two features of the situation, it is precisely these features that generate an utterance-implicature.

Utterance-implicature can also occur during interactions that members of a minority group or oppressed group in a society can have where a speaker does not intend to implicate a prejudicial or insulting message, but the utterance does so anyway. In these cases, the feature of the context that the speaker may be mistaken about is the knowledge of the cultural context that they are in as it relates to her audience in addition to features of her audience's history.

One case of this phenomenon has happened to me quite often while in the U.S.: A North American will ask, "Where are you from?" and I reply "Maryland". They then ask a follow-up question of the form "No, where are you *really/originally* from?" My interlocutor may not be aware

²¹ As with conversational implicature, we cannot definitively say what particular message was implicated.

that I hear this question often and that many minorities in the U.S. hear this question often. Because of the frequency of the question, and the answer that is usually expected (i.e. some other country), the use of that question in certain contexts implicates the message “What *country* are you from?” (which carries the further implication that I am not a North American). Compare this to a Caucasian who has a Bostonian accent but identifies as being from Florida; a speaker who asks the question “Where are you originally from?” will more likely mean to ask what state she is from; a Caucasian person usually has to have a distinctive attribute to elicit the follow-up question whereas for a person of color, their physical characteristics alone can be enough to prompt it. In this example, utterer-implicature and utterance-implicature often both occur, but that need not be the case.

A similar example is a member of a minority group being praised for being “eloquent” or “articulate”. If this person hears this praise often and notices that individuals in the majority group are not usually given the same compliment, within the minority group or to this particular person, this praise may come to implicate “You are surprisingly eloquent/articulate.” In many communities of people of color in the U.S. the implied message that a person of color is notably eloquent is insulting because it suggests that the expectation is that a person of color will not speak fluent, coherent and grammatically-correct English. Here the utterance-implicature is generated partly because of the identity of the audience and (usually) the speaker, so the same speaker can utter the same sentence with the same intention to someone else without generating either the implicature or the accompanying problematic connotation. If the same speaker says “You’re so eloquent” to someone who is not a member of a minority group, there may not be the utterance implicature “You’re surprisingly eloquent”. And if the same speaker is teaching an English as a Second Language class and praises a student for being eloquent, the utterance-implicature may or may not be generated, but the accompanying connotation will likely not be present.

Utterance-implicature can also help us to explain why even in cases when a speaker explicitly claims to not have a communicative intention, her utterance can still utterance-implicate a disavowed message. This can happen when a speaker acknowledges the utterance-implicature but denies utterer-implicature. For instance, a speaker who says to a woman “I don’t mean this in a sexist way, but you should smile more”. Political dog-whistles— when a speaker uses language that has an implicit meaning to a specific subgroup in a population — can also be cases where the speaker, preemptively or later, tries to deny having meant the implicated message. In these cases where we may have few resources to prove whether or not a speaker had a certain communicative intention, we can still be in an position to say whether or not there was an utterance-implicature because utterance-implicature is not determined by speaker intention.

CONCLUSION

Grice’s theory of implicature enabled us to examine the common practice of speakers meaning more than what they say and how an audience recovers the implicit message. Gricean implicature tells us when the conventional meaning of the words used generates an implicature and when speaker intention and the assumption that the speaker is following the Cooperative principle generates implicature. Later philosophers developed new theories in order to capture other phenomena. Saul’s utterer-implicature captures the distinct phenomenon of a speaker intending to implicate as separate from whether or not she succeeds, and audience-implicature captures when an audience recovers an implicit message, as separate from whether or not the implicit message was utterer-implicated. Davis’ sentence-implicature describes how a particular sentence or sentence form can carry an implicature regardless of a particular speaker or context. However there was no way of capturing cases when the use of a sentence in a particular context carries an implicature whether or not the speaker intends to communicate the implicit message and whether or not the audience believes that the speaker intends to communicate the implicit message. Utterance-implicature

captures these cases and shows that in the same way that a speaker can be mistaken about the conventional meaning of a sentence that she uses, she can also be mistaken about what the sentence she uses implicates in the context she is in. This expanded notion of implicature can be particularly useful in cases where a speaker denies having an intention to imply a harmful or objectionable message by advancing the conversation beyond what intentions we can plausibly attribute to a speaker and instead focus on what implicature we can attribute to an utterance and which features of the context make it so.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Davis, Wayne. *Implicature: Intention, Convention and Principle in the Failure of Gricean Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Davis, Wayne. "How Normative is Implicature." *Journal of Pragmatics* 39 (2007), 1655-1672.
- Davis, Wayne. Implicature. In *Oxford Handbooks Online*. Oxford University Press. 2016 DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935314.013.21
- Grice, H.P. Meaning. *The Philosophical Review* 66 no.3, 377-388. Cornell University, 1957
- Grice, H.P. Logic and Conversation. In *The Philosophy of Language*, 313-322, edited by A.P. Martinich and David Sosa. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- Saul, Jennifer. Speaker Meaning, What is Said and What is Implicated. *Nous* 36, no.2 (2002), 228-248.