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SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION WITH AN UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER

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ABSTRACT

Since Paul Grice, 1975's theory of communication, the assumption that language exchanges are, in principle, cooperative endeavors has prevailed as a universal pragmatic baseline. An UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER exploits an expression that is susceptible to more than one interpretation. They know that it is not the speaker's intended meaning but, uncooperatively, choose to pursue their own ultimate conversational aim instead of the speaker's while still maintaining the impression of cooperation.

Cases like these do not seem to fit into Grice, 1975's theory since they are exchanges that are not based on mutual cooperation. So, the questions are whether Grice, 1975's account would have to be updated, abandoned or if there is a way to include such uncooperative exchanges into what, according to how his theory is interpreted here, can be called successful communication. In case these examples are possible to be included, what are the ramifications for a definition of successful communication?

I argue that it is possible to include exchanges involving an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER into what can be called successful communication according to Grice, 1975 and that it can be analyzed using his tools as a basis. To do so, I propose a two-step process building on an adaptation of Grice, 1975 distinction between a common immediate aim and ultimate aims, which I take to be applicable to aims in conversation. To the interpreter's first, cooperative, step I attribute rational understanding of the speaker's intended meaning by virtue of recognizing this intention and the common immediate aim of the conversation. After that, the interpreter explores potential other possible interpretations from the basis of the speaker's literal utterance and, in an intuitively uncooperative move, decides to exploit them to follow their own, diverging ultimate aim. Having become an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER, during the second step, they steer the conversation toward an aim of their own benefit by accessing another set of possible worlds in which their other interpretation is the one that was intended by a counterpart speaker. Utilizing the connection between the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETATION and the speaker's utterance via a traceable variety of meaning (e.g. an ambiguous expression) the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER maintains cooperation with respect to the aims of the counterpart speaker in another possible world. They can claim deniability with respect to any uncooperative behavior on the grounds of what also *could have been* plausibly meant by the speaker's literal utterance. By formulating a coherent response that makes their other interpretation explicit, they not only make it very

clear that they are not opting out of the conversation but they also suggest their interpretation to be added to the COMMON GROUND of the conversation.

The UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's strategy is uncooperative in a folk understanding of the word as well as in the pursuit of another ultimate conversational aim instead of the speaker's. In my interpretation of Grice, 1975's ideas, however, conversations with an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER have to be labeled successful in that the speaker's intended meaning is recognized, there is no honest misunderstanding and, furthermore, the interpreter responds in a coherent way. Ultimately, discussing the examples in this thesis leads to the formulation of three basic characteristics of successful communication that I think are compatible with Grice's ideas: underlying intention-recognition, rational cooperation in recognizing the common immediate aim of the conversation and giving a coherent response as well as the possibility for each participant to accept all interpretations used in the exchange to be added to the COMMON GROUND.

It's the job that's never started as takes longest to finish.

— J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of The Rings*

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ACRONYMS

CG Common Ground
CI Conventional Implicature
CP Cooperative Principle
GCI Generalized Conversational Implicature
HHU Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf
ISA Indirect Speech Act
QUD Question Under Discussion
RSA Rational Speech Act
RT Relevance Theory
SAT Speech Act Theory
SDRT Segmented Discourse Representation Theory
SI Scalar Implicature
UIM Uncooperative Interpreter's Meaning

1 INTRODUCTION

[. . .] what a sentence implies depends on its semantic content,
while what a speaker implicates is a matter of
his communicative intention in uttering the sentence.

— Bach, *The Top 10 Misconceptions about Implicature*

In order to illustrate the phenomenon of the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER[1], let us consider an attested example from an interview following the G7 summit in 2022 during which former German chancellor Olaf Scholz was asked a question about security guarantees the G7 members agreed upon for Ukraine:

(1) Reporter: [. . .] könnten Sie konkretisieren, welche Sicherheitsgarantien das sind?
('[. . .] could you specify which security guarantees those are?')

Olaf Scholz: Ja, könnte ich. [pause] Das war's.
('Yes, I could. [pause] That's it')

[Pressekonferenz G7-Gipfel, 2022 (*my translation*)][2]

Here, the interpreter (Scholz) does arrive at the intended meaning of the speaker (Reporter) by looking beyond *what is said*. He recognizes the intended primary illocutionary act as a *directive* conveying a request using the deontic interpretation of the modal *could*. But Scholz refuses to comply with the clear request for information and deliberately chooses to direct the conversation toward another, not intended interpretation. The secondary illocutionary act - a directive conveying a question about ability using the root meaning of the modal - was not intended but can also plausibly be interpreted from *what is said*.

UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS exploit the core of what Bach, 2006 describes in the quote at the top of this page: knowing what sentences can mean is a related but different matter from recognizing what a specific speaker in a specific situation intends their utterance of a certain sentence to convey. While an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER recognizes the speaker's intended meaning, they choose to react to

1 I am using INTERPRETER here as a technical term instead of HEARER in order to emphasize the active role they play in communication. In Grice's description of a HEARER, their active part pretty much ends with computing an implicature. While that does not mean that Grice did not think further, in his published work on meaning and conversation a discussion of the hearer's point of view, strategies or influence is almost completely absent. Using the term INTERPRETER, I hope, gives a little more credit to their influence on successful communication.

2 Thank you to Hana Filip for pointing me toward this example.

another possible interpretation that could also have been drawn from the same sentence.

1.1 THE PUZZLE

One of Grice's most relevant contributions to the philosophy of language (1975, 1989) is the observation that all communicative acts are carried out in mutual expectation of cooperative behavior. Cooperation is exemplified as assumption of rational behavior in conversations. I suggest that Grice, 1975's theory of meaning and communication can be interpreted as distinguishing between two broad scenarios:

- cooperative, successful, communication in which the interpreter recognizes the speaker's intended meaning and conversational aims
- failed communication in which the interpreter either opts out of the conversation or truly misunderstands the speaker's intended meaning

The puzzle that arises from examples like (1) is that they do not seem to comfortably fit either of these two scenarios. The interpreter (Scholz) can safely be assumed to recognize the intended "request"-meaning of the speaker (Reporter) as well as the common immediate aim to elicit information. So communication would have to be characterized as successful in the way Grice's ideas are interpreted here. His response, in contrast, reflects what appears more like a failed communication: in an intuitively uncooperative move, Scholz chooses to follow his own ultimate aim of the conversation rather than the speaker's. By responding as if he interpreted (1) in the sense of the secondary illocutionary act even if he did, in fact, understand the speaker's intended ultimate aim as a request for a list of specific guarantees he avoids the expected answer.

At this point it would also have been possible for Scholz to just say *I will not take any more questions from you* or *The question period is over now* to opt out of the exchange. Instead, he is careful to make sure not to opt out of the conversation. With his coherent answer he can uphold the impression of cooperation toward the ultimate aim of the conversation by reacting to another meaning of the speaker's utterance that, under different circumstances, given other speaker's intentions, would also have been perfectly reasonable to be interpreted from the same literal utterance.

1.2 MAIN QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS

Cases like (1) lead me to ask the following main questions:

1. Can such exchanges still be called part of successful communication in the sense of Grice?

2. Are they counterexamples leading to a need for reformulating or discarding Grice's theory of communication?

The main claim of this thesis is that it is possible to integrate communication as in (1) above into Grice, 1975's framework as it is interpreted here. The crucial point for achieving that is a separation of different aims in cooperation, which is, as I claim, warranted also by adapting Grice's original ideas. Grice, 1975 differentiated, in a non-verbal context, between a *common immediate aim* of a conversation and *ultimate aims* (which, according to Grice, may diverge). I argue that the common immediate aim can be thought of as achieved via the minimal amount of cooperation necessary for successful exchange of information.

Grice briefly mentions situations in which mutual cooperation cannot be easily assumed. Such exchanges, though are not to be considered the primary kind of communication his theory applies to. In his eyes, they merely mimic rational cooperation.

> "Moreover, we have to remember to take into account a secondary range of cases like cross-examination in which even the common objectives are spurious [...] but such exchanges honor the cooperative principle at least to the extent of aping its application"
>
> [Grice, 1989 p.370][3]

The most recent theoretical environments using Grice, 1975's fundamental concepts for the application to unusual cases have been concerned mostly with how his ideas have to be re-shaped, re-formulated or overall challenged in order to account for certain types of examples, situations or concepts.

In particular, Grice, 1975's notion of IMPLICATURE has been analyzed, discussed and used in further development of a great variety of theories since its introduction (for a rough overview of this vast field, see Allott, 2018). Tightly connected to the notion of cooperation and Grice's maxims, challenges arising from implicature calculations in, for example, 'uncooperative situations' have been used as arguments against Grice, 1975's theory by, for instance Asher and Lascarides, 2013

3 COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE (CP): "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged."(Grice, 1975 p.45)

(see 7.2 for more on that). A current debate concerns the plausibility of deniability in the use of, for instance, implicatures – a key feature mainly related to their cancellability (e.g. Camp, 2018, Dinges and Zakkou, 2023 or Peet, 2024). Deniability in general and, specifically, with respect to UIM is briefly discussed here in 3.3.2.1.

The notions of cooperation, rationality and inference have been adapted in game-theoretic contexts (e.g. Frank and Goodman, 2012; Franke, De Jager, and Van Rooij, 2012; Asher and Lascarides, 2003; Parikh, 2019) by modeling them in terms of bayesian inferences, utility functions and coordination of goals. Using probabilities to calculate the likelihood of how a given speaker might construct their utterance as well as how a respective interpreter can arrive at the speaker's intended meaning these theories formalize Grice's concepts to account for phenomena that seem to fall out of a standardly cooperative exchange like, for example 'dogwhistles' or to challenge Grice's notion of cooperation in general (see 6.1.2 and 6.2.2 for more on these theories).

Grice, 1957's basic notion of speaker intentions is another point of contention throughout the recent literature. Minimalist accounts such as Lepore and Stone, 2016 argue that successful communication is based on semantic rules and disambiguation much more than on recognition of intentions. A little less drastic point is brought forward by, for example, Gregoromichelaki et al., 2011 or Mosegaard Hansen and Terkourafi, 2023 use alleged counter-examples like *split-utterances* to question the generality of intentions for understanding meaning.

The interpreter's strategy, shown in cases like (1), where another possible interpretation of the speaker's literal utterance is used as a basis for the interpreter's verbal response is described above as UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER'S MEANING (UIM). The exchange can be labeled *successful* in the basic sense that the speaker's intention and the common immediate aim of the conversation are recognized. The interpreter then decides to exploit another possible interpretation of the same literal sentence meaning; one which is quite blatantly not the one intended by the speaker. They frame this as though it had been the intended one in order to pursue their own, personal ultimate aim of the conversation while upholding the overall impression of being cooperative.

For this strategy, I propose a two-step process during which the interpreter first understands the speaker's intended meaning and their conversational aim through my implementation of Grice's cooperative, rational, and (largely) automatic intention-recognition. After an intermediate stage where the interpreter actively decides to exploit the variety of possible interpretations, the second step then involves the interpreter's deliberate backtracking of the speaker's utterance to its literal meaning. From there, the interpreter in my proposal accesses a set of different possible worlds containing a counterpart speaker who intended the other possible interpretation. The possible worlds

accessible from the literal meaning of the speaker's utterance are separated from any irrational and inaccessible interpretations by invoking the BACKGROUND. It is further shown how, by means of their verbal response, the interpreter presents the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETATION as a live possibility to be accepted into the COMMON GROUND by the original speaker. Their coherent response serves this purpose as well as signaling that the interpreter did not misunderstand and is not opting out of the conversation. This way they also can claim plausible deniability with respect to uncooperative behavior and, in some cases, with respect to understanding the intended interpretation in the first place.

I generally assume an intention-based account (specifically that of Grice, 1957-1989 with support from other intention- and Grice-based theories) for the understanding of meaning, communication and cooperation as the analytical backbone of the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's examples. For a detailed explanation as to why intentionality is the fundamental basis of human communication, how UIM can help support this claim and for a discussion of the above-mentioned counter-examples see chapter 7. This thesis is supposed to show that the fundamental concepts of Grice's theory are still relevant and sufficient to provide a solid basis for an analysis of UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER'S MEANING in terms of successful communication. While they certainly have to be enriched and interpreted in a specific way in order for them to be fitted into an account of the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER'S **strategy**, there is no need for a reformulation or even discarding his ideas in light of the examples presented in this thesis.

1.2.1 *Overview of the dissertation*

The structure this thesis follows began with the short introduction above (chapter 1) during which I described the phenomenon of UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER'S MEANING (UIM), the puzzle it poses for a traditional analysis and a short sketch of the proposed solution. What follows is a short layout of the empirical landscape of UIM examples (chapter 2) including a section on two phenomena that seem very similar but are to be clearly separated from my phenomenon. This chapter also tells the origin story of the first example of UIM I encountered and summarizes the main characteristics of what is and what is not an instance of UIM.

Chapter 3 begins by introducing the tools that are necessary for my account of successful communication with an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER. The account is then theoretically defined in terms of common immediate and ultimate conversational aims within a two-step process using COMMON GROUND, possible worlds and plausible deniability. What follows is an exercise of the theoretical proposal

using one specific example case. I include a few words on the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's responses and what can be learned from the way these interpreters express their (other) understanding of what the speaker literally said within how they respond. To then support the claim that an inherent, hardly deniable connection between the intended and the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETATION licenses the impression of cooperation of an UIM, a taxonomy of the variety of possible source phenomena for UIMs is presented in chapter 4, each source phenomenon illustrated with specific examples.

The theoretical background is outlined according to my understanding of accounts regarding meaning, communication (5) as well as rationality and cooperation (6) including a discussion of what I think are common misconceptions of Grice's concept of mutual cooperation. Chapter 7 discusses the impact of and connection between UIM, my understanding of Grice's concepts and other accounts starting with the reasons for and advantages I see in using an intention-based account. This is followed by a comparative discussion of theories of humor and UIM examples as well as *Relevance Theory*, respectively.

The final chapter of this thesis (8) brings together all insights gained by taking a closer look at examples of UIM. It includes a re-evaluation of the notion of *successful communication* and the characteristics my examples help define for it. Finally, I conclude with the most important take-away messages and an outlook on what could be done in the future that was beyond the scope of this thesis.

2 EMPIRICAL LANDSCAPE

When I talk about language (word, sentence, etc.),
I must speak the language of every day

— Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* 120.

2.1 PERVASIVENESS OF THE PHENOMENON

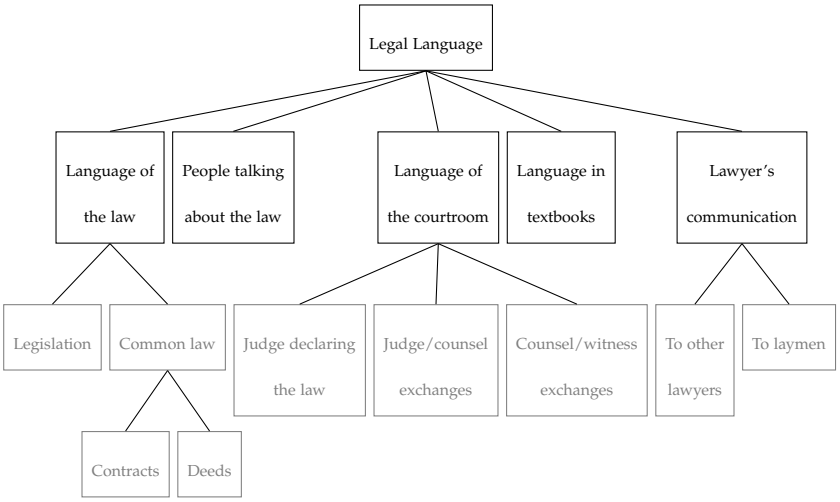
Situations like in (1) that were described in chapter 1 do not seem to be rare exceptions of especially devious interlocutors. The phenomenon occurs through a variety of areas of our everyday life with the interpreter's motivations being manifold; from a simple pun to lighten the mood to serious attempts to get out of legal or other responsibilities. There is a wide range of cases in which the speakers' utterance of expressions susceptible to more than one possible interpretation is deliberately exploited by interpreters who use this communicational strategy for their personal gain.

In the following I will introduce the pervasiveness of the phenomenon with a couple of tangible examples, roughly sorted by the specific purpose or goal an interpreter might see in using the phenomenon for their communicational benefit in the respective cases. You may notice that the boundaries between these categories are fuzzy and some examples would fit into more than one of the categories or are hard to be confidently placed in any of them. For example, the vast majority of the examples included in my data set has at least *some* notion of humor to it. It is one aspect of the characteristics of this phenomenon that interpreters "get away with it" more easily when they frame their response in a slightly humorous way. I do not think that, as a result, all areas of application of UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER'S MEANING (UIM) are just humorous. This would not do the variety justice that underlies this communication strategy, which is also productively used to comment on the literal language that was used by the speaker or to escape legal ramifications. This categorization is supposed to be a means of showing the pervasiveness with which the phenomenon permeates our everyday lives – it is not meant as a comprehensive, binding taxonomy.

2.1.1 *Legal context*

Quite generally, it can be said that the law would not exist without language. Law is a construct that is build within what Searle, 1996 calls SOCIAL REALITY. Our world consists of a system of institutional facts (like the concepts of money, property, marriage etc.), several of those constituting our legal system, that is created and maintained non-consciously by the member of the society that built these systems. Language is used to establish institutional facts in the sense that it is used to impose on one element a function that this element now symbolizes something else, e.g. "a law". The tricky part is that we use the same language that created these institutional facts as a meta-language to talk about them.

Legal language can be used as an umbrella term that includes a variety of different ways communication can occur withing the legal field. Adapted from Trosborg, 1997, the following table presents a rough overview of what counts as *legal language*:



[Trosborg, 1997]

Figure 2.1: Legal language

The vast field of language in a legal context has been subject to investigation and discussion from almost that point on when language was used to formulate laws, rules and guidelines of our society. Its somewhat controversial nature is rooted in the characterization of that register called *legal language*, as well as the concept of *language of the law* as being nothing else but the exact same natural language that is used in everyday discourse. Tiersma, 2006 mentions legal language as a *sublanguage* of ordinary English, meaning that our natural language (and not a specially developed or constructed one) is the tool that is used for the description and formulation of legal texts and -interaction. In the specific legal use, though, this language is arguably different

than it would be in a conversation in a non-legal context. Tiersma observes that "although most rules governing ordinary conversation also apply to legal language, the language of law is in many important respects quite different from ordinary *speech*. On the other hand, it is much harder to distinguish legal language from ordinary but highly formal *written* language." (Tiersma et al., 2015 p.27)

> "But once we understand that such terms [*e.g. trust, complaint, assault, etc.*] have ordinary non-legal as well as technical meanings, we find ourselves faced with the important and under-analyzed problem of legal technical language, and one of the relationship between legal technical language and the law's own frequent use of ordinary language."
>
> [Tiersma et al., 2015 p.35]

The discrepancies between what legal language is supposed to achieve and the linguistic tools that are used within this kind of language that is, still, just ordinary everyday language are the reason for the legal context to be a source for the phenomenon presented here, too. Not only are the incentives to purposefully 'misinterpret' a legal formulation very high – in the end it might yield an opportunity to avoid punishment in some form or the other. Legal formulations also contain purposefully vague expressions, ambiguities and formulations that would, in ordinary exchanges, be interpreted differently than the rules in language of the law dictate (see, e.g. Endicott, 2022).

As becomes evident already by this very short introduction, the special nature of legal language and its use and treatment of expressions susceptible to more than one interpretation constitutes a whole research area on its own, which would go beyond the scope of this work. I will, however, present a few additional examples in this section that show how the interpretation of language of the law (e.g. statutes) oftentimes results in confusion about or deliberate exploitation of non-intended interpretations.

2.1.1.1 *Language of the law*

The first encounter of a debate over legal formulations that are (purposefully) susceptible to more than one possible interpretation was during my M.A. studies at Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf (HHU)[1]. The main example I used in my M.A. thesis (Schwarz, 2017) emerged out of a situation I was personally connected with, during which students and teaching personnel (as well as, ultimately, HHU's legal staff) debated over the interpretation of a specific formulation from HHU's university regulations:

1 This subsection is largely based on Schwarz, 2017.

(1) *Beteiligungsnachweis-e* *werden* *nicht benotet* *und*
Certificates.of.participation-PL AUX.PASS not graded and
sind *nicht an* *Bestehensgrenze-n* *geknüpft.*
be.PL not on passing.requirement-PL linked.
('Certificates of participation are not graded and are not linked to passing requirements')

[HHU, 2014 (*my translation*)]

This sentence, and especially its core phrase 'nicht an Bestehensgrenzen geknüpft' (*not linked to requirements for passing the class*), can be and has been interpreted in (at least) two different ways: one interpretation results in having certain requirements which merely are not (and cannot be) specifically defined, yet. The other interpretation assumes that there are no requirements at all. Which interpretation is meant by whom depends on the context in which it is used and on the intentions of the person who uses it.

In this case, the context is that it appears in the legal text that constitutes the university regulations of the HHU. Therefore, the person who formulated this sentence can probably not be made out as a single individual but it can be said that the legal team responsible for the formulation of those regulations can be seen as having intentions about its use that are shared and agreed upon by the legal individuals as well as by the head of the university. So *the HHU* can be abstracted to be the user in this case.

The origins of the two different interpretations are differentiated as follows: the relevant authorities of the HHU formulated the sentence with the intention for it to be interpreted as *there are no specific requirements – the teaching staff should be enabled to define those requirements individually upon their specific needs*. On the other hand, there were students who interpreted the exact same sentence along the lines of *not linked to requirements can only mean that there are absolutely no requirements for passing a class*. This resulted in a debate about requirements for classes and, ultimately, an only narrowly avoided court case.

When being faced with an unusual problem like this, almost opposite interpretation of one sentence in a legal context, it is important to get the overall background behind this one sentence. I believe the source of the puzzle to be a critical view on the university regulations and its specific formulations in general. This critical view resulted from the introduction of a new law in German Universities, the so-called 'Hochschulgesetz' or 'Hochschulzukunftsgesetz' (*act on higher education* or *act on the future of higher education*). Starting September 2014 the "Hochschulgesetz" introduced new regulations on Universities, including articles regulating *freedom of teaching*, *the enablement of studying part-time* and *prohibition of compulsory attendance in classes*.

In Article 4 (2), the 'Hochschulgesetz' says:

> §4 (2) "[...] Die Freiheit der Lehre umfasst insbesondere die Durchführung von Lehrveranstaltungen im Rahmen der zu erfüllenden Lehraufgaben und deren inhaltliche und methodische Gestaltung sowie das Recht auf Äußerung wissenschaftlicher oder künstlerischer Lehrmeinungen [...]."
>
> [NRW, 2014 §4 (2)]

Roughly transferred, this article says that a lecturer and/or teacher is (within the limits of the specific teaching responsibilities) free to teach any content they choose using any teaching method and is allowed to express their opinion on the relevant scientific content. The article on part-time studying is formulated in a relatively straightforward way and just says that it is the University's responsibility to organize the curriculum in a way that also allows for part-time studies.

Overall, the 'Hochschulgesetz' introduced a new set of laws that drew the attention of authorities, as well as students to all formulations in the university regulations that have to do with requirements for the passing or failing of a class. Students took the 'Hochschulgesetz' article on attendance and started to question the compulsory attendance of any kind of class and since the term 'vergleichbare Lehrveranstaltung' (*comparable kind of class*) had not been specified at all nobody seemed to be sure if the class or tutorial under discussion was allowed to demand attendance for credit. As a first reaction, according to a strong recommendation by the university lawyer, compulsory attendance was abolished completely in any class or tutorial. This was done to avoid any legal vulnerability on the part of the teaching staff and other authorities. Now the plan was to leave the task of defining thresholds of passing and failing the classes to the teaching staff. This was when my thesis' specific example sentence *Beteiligungsnachweise werden nicht benotet und sind nicht an Bestehensgrenzen geknüpft.*('Certificates of participation are not graded and are not linked to requirements of passing the class.') [HHU, 2017 p.22] moved to the center of attention because this exact sentence was originally formulated to enable the teaching staff to set the thresholds at their personal discretion.

During summer of 2014 I had been a teaching assistant in one of the introductory classes and since attendance had been abolished completely at that point, my main task was grading the homework which served as requirement for the students to be admitted to the final exam. [2]

There was a number of students who put a great amount of time and effort into finding the paragraph in the University Regulations

2 The homework was merely graded according to 'pass' and 'fail' because the university regulations do not allow for a system with a scale of grades (for example A, B, C etc.) since these homework are not an exam. So much, at least, was clear at that point in time.

that regulates the 'Beteiligungsnachweise' ('requirement for active participation') for which the homework were a requirement. Having found the main example sentence (1), which became my thesis' core example, these students maintained that this sentence cannot be interpreted in a different way than: *There cannot be ANY requirements for the part of the active participation and every student enrolled in the class should automatically be admitted to the final exam.* The group of students with help of the lawyers now threatened to sue the university because the requirements seemingly interfered with the regulations of the new 'Hochschulgesetz'. [3]

In another meeting of the officials, the teaching staff and the university lawyer, it was decided that, it was the legally safer option to let all students of this introductory class be admitted to the final exam without having to fulfill any requirements beforehand. It was a rushed decision that was influenced by the pressure of the lawyers threatening to sue the university and by the uncertainty the interpretation of that one sentence caused. In the end the authorities, understandably, just wanted to come to an agreement with everyone involved – students, teaching staff and the lawyers. During further discussion it turned out that this decision had only been a workaround to avoid a trial but what was left for me by incident was a linguistically interesting, yet unsolved clash of two different interpretations of the sentence in (1).

Formulations in legal texts like rules and regulations, as described in the example above, underlie a highly normative corset of conventions developed among lawyers and other legal professionals that make them hard to interpret for someone without any legal background. This special style of writing, though supposedly clear from a lawyer's perspective, is prone to confusion and misunderstanding when interpreted by non-experts. "The language of legal documents contains many long and complex sentences because the writers of such documents need to produce texts that are (a) clear, precise and unambiguous, and (b) all-inclusive." (Swales and Bhatia, 1983). As Kurzon and Kryk-Kastovsky, 2018 describe, the people responsible for drafting legal texts go great lengths in order to avoid ambiguities and make their text as applicable for every imaginable situation as possible[4]. This results in a highly normative style of writing, containing long, hard to parse sentences that, as observed by Swales and Bhatia, 1983, contain even constructions which, almost exclusively, occur in legal or similar bureaucratic texts, such as complex prepositions (*in respect of*, *in accordance with*, *a view to*, *in pursuance of* , *for the purpose of*, etc.). Such constructions, used with a very specific purpose in a legal text are prone to a variety of possible interpretations depending on the measure of interpretation that is deployed in a given situation.

3 Interestingly the exact same passage had been in the university regulations for years and had never caused any problems up to that point.

4 See Danet, 1980 pp.476-486 for more features by which this is supposedly achieved.

Purposefully vague formulations in legal language are commonly used to make them universally applicable, like in (2). This is a well-documented strategy in legal language, recently discussed, for example, by Colonna Dahlman, 2022: "[...] as the legislator cannot foresee all the specific future cases where the legal norm might be activated, the legislator consciously makes use of vague or non-specific terms and expressions in order to give the interpreters the discretion to decide whether the norm is to be applied or not, given the conditions that hold in the specific case at hand". In the case of (2), though, the possibility to interpret *unmittelbar* in many possible ways that cannot be made unequivocably clear to laypeople in any given situation lead to abolishing the mask mandate around shops completely after people who were fined for violating the mandate took legal action against that decision (a situation comparable to (1)).

(2) *im unmittelbaren Umfeld* (*within direct periphery*) from the German Covid security-act [describing the perimeter for mask mandate around shops]
intended to mean any area surrounding the shops in which the social distancing could not be fulfilled (e.g. parking lot, narrow paths or entrance area)
other possible interpretation: just the small radius in front of the shop due to the formulation *unmittelbar* (*direct*)

[ovg.nrw.de, 2021 (*my translation*)]

2.1.1.2 *Language of the courtroom*

The language of the courtroom underlies strict normative aspects that are usually absent in everyday colloquial exchanges. There is, first and foremost, the circumstance that any person on the stand is legally required to answer unless they'd incriminate themselves, which they'd, again, have to make verbally clear (e.g. by invoking their 5th amendment right) – they are not allowed to just say nothing and any longer pause before answering might be used to their disadvantage. Also, every witness has to swear to abide very strictly to (and neither flout nor violate) Grice's MAXIM OF QUALITY (the legal paraphrase of which is *tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth*) or otherwise face serious personal consequences. All this leads to a great lack in conversational freedom in the court of law. As Lakoff, 1989 remarks, "In the American courtroom, the dialog is adversarial: the uncovering of the truth will be damaging to at least one of the parties, who is therefore understood as likely to conceal any damaging admissions." The special situation of a legal inquiry (e.g. a deposition, cross-examination or interview) poses constraints on the interlocutors' communicative behavior: "In cross-examination [...] the order of speakers is fixed in advance, and whatever else is

accomplished interactionally, their discourse must be 'fitted' into the mold of question-answer sequences. This means that, in contrast with spontaneous conversation, there is no negotiation over the right to speak or over what may be said." (Danet, 1980 p.539). Defendants or witnesses who do not wish to incriminate themselves have to construct every utterance very carefully and would not want to say too much (because anything they say can be held against them) "many utterances in serious legal settings count more than they would in other settings and that these utterances tend to be cast in verbal formulas or rituals" (Danet, 1980 p.543). In (3), the defendant (Cipollone) uses this to his advantage by restricting his answer in such a way to the literal interpretation of the question that he can avoid saying anything more at that point.

(3) Q: [...] and who on the staff did not want people to leave the Capitol?
Cipollone: On the staff?
Q: In the White House.
Cipollone: I don't ...I can't think of anybody, you know, on that day, who didn't want people to get out of the Capitol [...]
Q: What about the president?
Cipollone: She [*the questioner*] said the **staff**. So I answered.

[GovInfo, 2022]

It is because of the gravity every word in court can possible have that witness statements usually are kept short, precise and without the rhetorical 'flourishing' that is oftentimes present in more casual communication settings. According to a Chief Justice, a witness in cross-examination is encouraged "[...] to abandon for an hour or two his habitual method of thought and expression, and conform to the rigid ceremonialism of court procedure. It is not strange that frequently truthful witnesses are misunderstood, that they nervously react in such a way as to create the impression that they are either evading or intentionally falsifying" (Frank, 1973) Nonetheless, the oftentimes humorous and not very straightforward strategy of deliberately reacting to another possible but not intended interpretation is employed by witnesses to try to produce an image of likability and charisma. Sometimes, the special situation of a witness in cross-examination whose every word is meticulously investigated results in over-careful responses as in (4), in which the witness interprets *all your life* in a deliberately wide sense that was clearly not the intended one. *All your life*, when it is uttered in a past-tense environment, is usually strengthened to something like *all your life* ***up to now***; the witness in (4) interprets it with respect to their own full life span and responds accordingly. While it could just have been a joke, there is also the valid possibility that being aware of the gravity of a witness statement in

court lead this witness to resort to the answer that, technically, is more accurate (and therefore more compliant) than a simple *yes* would have been. UIM can also be used for the opposite aim as seen above in (3), where the witness used the deliberately narrow interpretation of *staff* as a means to avoid a more detailed answer.

(4) Lawyer: Have you lived in this town all your life?
Witness: Not yet.

[justia.com, 2022]

In the exchange between lawyers and the court, the dynamics are different since both parties are legal experts (as opposed to, for instance, lawyer-witness-exchanges as above) and a discussion about the interpretation of specific legal formulations can get very technical and specific, as can be seen in (5), where the vague phrase *for any purpose* is interpreted in an extremely wide way by the attorney that extends the purpose of a deposition from its intended meaning of *use the questioning of the client toward any aim that the attorney sees fit* to the use of the physical object of a printed copy of a deposition with any purpose:

(5) Attorney: Your Honor, at this time I would like to swat [opposing counsel] on the head with his client's deposition.
Court: You mean read it?
Attorney: No, Sir. I mean to swat him on the head with it. Pursuant to Rule 32, I may use the deposition 'for any purpose' and that's the purpose I want to use it for.
Court: Well, it does say that.
quiet pause.
Court: There being no objection, you may proceed.
Attorney: Thank you, Judge.
Thereafter, defendant's attorney swatted plaintiff's attorney on the head with the deposition.

[Black, 2008]

The attorney in (5) uses the other possible meaning of the vague formulation *use the deposition for any purpose* to express discontent with the opposing counsel and/or the content of their client's deposition on the one hand but also to make a joke on the other hand. The circumstance that the court, in this case, cannot seem to argue Rule 32 not to be possibly **meant** to be allowing such an action is an example for the linguistic technicalities that play a role in the interpretation of the law.

2.1.2 *Jokes and puns*

The, at least among my data sample, richest area for this communicational behavior are jokes and puns. These are exceptionally common in the vastness of social media, especially on platforms whose main purpose is condensed short-text interaction (like, for example, 'X' (formerly 'Twitter')) where opinions or short replies have to be expressed within a limited number of characters. In the following example (6), the commentator exploits the comparative-ellipsis of the speaker's utterance which results in a structural ambiguity (Rooth, 1992). What clearly is the speaker's intended meaning here is a comparison of the amount of humor and political ideas with respect to the political party CDU while the joke answer is a question based on a comparison between the amount of humor of the political party CDU and that of political ideas.

(6) *Die CDU hat exakt so viel Humor wie*
The CDU have.3SG exactly so much humor.NOM.SG as
gut-e politisch-e Idee-n
good(PL)-NOM/ACC political(PL)-NOM/ACC idea-PL
('the CDU [German Christian Democratic Party] has exactly as much humor as good political ideas')

Wieviel Humor hat denn eine gut-e
How.much humor have.3SG then a good(SG)-NOM
politisch-e Idee?
political(SG)-NOM idea(sg)

('how much humor does a good political idea have?')

[Outfluencer [@Rechtsamwald1], 2023(*my translation*)]

But not only the users' personal posts are commented in this way, another very popular source for jokes are newspaper headlines of articles posted on these social media platforms. Headlines are notorious for being kept very short and oftentimes elliptical (see Jenkins, 1990 for more on headlines and ellipsis) thus containing ambiguities or being otherwise susceptible to multiple interpretations [5]:

(7) Headline: New York Will Stop Requiring That Food Must Be Ordered With Alcohol.
Comment: City officials realized that the original policy was unfair to kids, who legally couldn't order alcohol

[drcopp, 2021]

5 See, for example Bucaria, 2004 for an overview of how ambiguities in newspaper headlines, generally, provide a rich source for jokes an puns and the *Language Log* blog (https://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/) for a host of more examples.

(8) Headline: The first genome of a single human
Comment: So I guess all attempts to map the human genome so far were on married people?

[Roberts [@garicgymro], 2023]

In (7), for example, different interpretations arise from the focus stress set on either *food* or *alcohol*. The speaker's intended meaning sets the focal stress on *food*, so in this case New York would be getting rid of the requirement of buying food anytime alcohol is ordered. Another possible interpretation, though, sets the focus on *alcohol* resulting in the basis for the comment, which assumes that, before the requirement was abandoned, there was no possibility of ordering any food without an adjoining alcohol order. (8)'s comment is based on a lexical ambiguity of *single*, which can be interpreted here either as *one individual*, as was intended by the speaker or as *not in a committed relationship*, which is the basis for the comment's UIM.

Indirect interaction used in social media posts to create a joke for other users (similar to the commenting on newspaper headlines above) can also be based on notes and signs, which are also usually kept short and in a sort of stenographic style which makes them prone to different interpretations:

(9) Sign: Toilet out of order. Please use floor below.
Comment: I'm not pissing on the floor

[No Context Brits [@NoContextBrits], 2023b]

(10) Sign on door: This door is alarmed.
Sticky note on sign: what startled it?

[No Context Brits [@NoContextBrits], 2023c]

In (9), the different interpretations result from underspecification: the intended meaning of the sign's inscription includes a conceptual strengthening of the phrase *use floor below* to something along the lines of *use the toilets on the floor below*. The comment, instead, bases the UIM on an interpretation without such strengthening which would result in an order to use the floor below as a toilet. (10), on the other hand, includes a lexical ambiguity of *alarmed*, which can be interpreted as *equipped with an alarm system* just like what probably was the intended interpretation or as *startled*, like the interpretation used as UIM basis in the comment.

Scripted jokes and puns, as, for example, in books, TV-shows, movies or pun collections are a slightly different matter because there is no 'real' interpreter (or none at all in some cases) showing the existence of another interpretation by their formulation of an answer or comment. These cases rely on the other possible interpretation to

be created by the reader or hearer of the joke (like in (11)) or a fictional character who is created to play the part of the interpreter (like in (16).

(11) We will sell gasoline to anyone in a glass container

[O'Boyle, 2000 p.508]

(12) Therapist: Your wife says you never buy her flowers. Is that true?
Husband: To be honest, I never knew she sold flowers.

[WholesomeMemes [@WholesomeMeme], 2023]

In (11), the UIM is based on a structural ambiguity resulting in what probably is the speaker's intended (because more salient) meaning that can be paraphrased as *If you pay, you'll get some gasoline in a glass container* as well as another possible interpretation that has pun-character because, given our background knowledge, it sounds absurd: *Anyone being in a container of glass will then get gasoline if they pay*.

(16) contains a lexical ambiguity of the pronoun *her*, which can be used as an accusative object as well as a possessive modifier. The speaker's (therapist) intended meaning in the joke in (16) is the accusative. The UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER (husband), in contrast, responds as if he interpreted the possessive-meaning instead.

2.1.3 *Metalinguistic commentary*

Interpreting a possible meaning that was not the one intended by the speaker also provides a possibility for the interpreter to subtly comment on the speaker's use of words or expressions. Many of these examples would also fit into the 'jokes and puns'-category since commenting on what a speaker said in such a way almost always uses a sarcastic or humorous tone; they are, however, distinct as a category in one aspect that is the explicit commentary on the wording of the speaker's utterance (sometimes even by literally repeating it). Humorous or not, this is the core aspect behind this category of the interpreter's strategy. Some formulations are inherently ambiguous, such as *may* in (13) – while the context is very obvious, the interpretation of another possible meaning here is used to comment on the speaker's formulation.

(13) Sign in York Museum Gardens:
Please do not cycle in the Gardens. You may injure a young child or elderly person.
Comment: You can't cycle but you can injure people? Bit f**ed up...

[James Keegans [@Jimjam91], 2018]

The speaker's intended meaning here is the possibility of a causal relation between cycling and injuring people via the epistemic reading of the modal *may* while the comment reacts as if it gave permission to injure people while prohibiting cycling. An interpretation using the deontic reading of *may*.

One very specific area of use as metalinguistic commentary concerns flagging the speaker's use of a *generic masculine* in languages that have such a feature (e.g. German). There is a discrepancy between the conventionally intended gender-neutral use of the German generic masculine and its grammatical (masculine) gender. It is assumed to be understood in languages with a generic masculine that the masculine is the unmarked form that comes without special semantics (contrary to the feminine) and can therefore be used generically (Yatsushiro and Sauerland, 2006; see also Sudo and Spathas, 2020 for insights from Greek). The following grammaticality of (14-a) opposed to the questionable formulation in (14-b) shows the foundation for this assumption; you can see that Hans and Maria can be subsumed as *Lehrer* but not as *Lehrerinnen*:

(14) a. Hans und Maria sind Lehrer.
b. *Hans und Maria sind Lehrerinnen.

[Trutkowski, 2018 p.85]

A wide variety of research shows that, cognitively as well as psychologically, the generic masculine is by far not as inclusive as its name and use suggest (for an overview, see Gygax et al., 2008 or Irmen and Linner, 2005). Current studies suggest that the masculine generic is indeed strongly biased toward masculine explicit (e.g. Schmitz, 2022; Schmitz, Schneider, and Esser, 2023). They found that there are semantic features linking supposedly gender unmarked forms stronger to masculine explicits than to feminine ones which causes a strong masculine bias despite the intended inclusivity. "masculine generics and explicits show highly similar semantic features, while feminine forms live in their own parts of the semantic space. Thus, when a generically intended masculine form is encountered, its explicit masculine counterpart is co-activated to a high degree – its feminine counterpart is not [...] This, in turn, is an explanation for the masculine bias in masculine generics observed in previous studies and the present one." (Schmitz, Schneider, and Esser, 2023 p.26) The evidence from Schmitz, 2022 and Schmitz, Schneider, and Esser, 2023 suggests that the ambiguity between the generic and the masculine reference of masculine German nouns underlies a heavy bias toward the masculine explicit; a perception that is expressed by the deliberate exploitation of this bias in (15) below. Here, the interpreter's comment flags the use of the *generic masculine* in German, which is supposed to but, according to many, does not automatically also include women:

(15) *Werde unser Kolleg-e! Wir suchen 70*
Become our(M) colleague(M)-SG! We search 70
Journalist-en und Digitalexpert-en.
journalist(M)-PL and digital.expert(M)-PL
('Become our colleague (m)! We are looking for 70 journalists (m) and digital experts (m).')

Ihr sucht 70 Männer??
you.2PL search 70 man.PL

('You are looking for 70 men??')

[Hanisch, 2018 (*my translation*)]

In (16), the funny remark of the reporter (Fabian Köster) comments on a meta level on von Notz's use of the phrase *auf die Schiene gestellt* as a metaphor for bringing something on the way. The humorous clash pointed out by the reporter is due to the literal meaning of the conventionalized fixed expression that refers to railroad tracks.

(16) Konstantin von Notz (German green party): . . . wir haben auch was auf die Schiene gestellt. . .
('. . . we did also put quite a lot on track. . . ')

Fabian Köster (ZDF Heute Show): naja, auf die Schiene jetzt auch nicht so richtig, wenn man sich die Bahn mal anschaut.
('Well, not really ON TRACK, if you take a look at the state of the German railroad system. . . ')

[HeuteShow, 2024 (*my translation*)]

(17) Interviewer: What do you think of Western civilization?
Gandhi: I think it would be a good idea.

[boredpanda, 2019]

In (17), the interviewer, when uttering *think of. . . ?* referred to the concept denoted by the noun *Western Civilization* in order to get Gandhi to comment on it. Gandhi, in his response, instead referred to another possible interpretation that splits this noun phrase into the noun *West* and the de-verbal nominalization *civilization*. Its interpretation can be thus be paraphrased as (*civilizing the West*) With his response, he did not only express his refusal to comment but also suggests there to be no such thing (yet) as Western Civilization in his eyes.[6]

6 Thanks to Heather Burnett for pointing out to me this approach of interpretation for example (17). Any unclarity or mistakes are, of course, my own.

2.1.4 *Mixed and unique cases*

Almost anywhere there is a form of categorization, there are also exceptions or mixed cases. Naturally, this also applies for the occurrence of UIM examples. The boundaries between categories are fuzzy, some examples bear traits of more than one of the categories I introduced so far. There also is a number of examples with quite unique characteristics that do not comfortably fit the mold of any of the categories, yet are still individually different enough not to be placed into another, new category together.

One illustrative mixed case involves, for example, a humorous answer in a legal environment that is used to avoid a clear(er) answer to a question, as in (18):

(18) Lawyer: And where was the location of the accident?
Witness: Approximately milepost 499
Lawyer: And where is milepost 499?
Witness: Probably between milepost 498 and 500.

[Boren, 2016]

The UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER deploys the strategy of deliberately reacting to another possible interpretation of the speaker's utterance in order to avoid a clear or informative answer to the question. The lawyer's use of the indexical expression *where* provides a basis for the interpreter's uncooperative strategy here because what is expressed by such an utterance depends on the context and can vary greatly with the speaker's intentions in the particular situation of the utterance. *Where is milepost 499?* also is, without any further context, rather vague and can be plausibly understood to aim at eliciting quite different information; such as *Where is milepost 499 with respect to the nearest exit / Where is milepost 499 with respect to the towns by the highway / etc.*. The UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER in (18), since they know they are in a hearing about an accident they witnessed, can be assumed to understand the context and aim of the lawyer's question (roughly *provide relevant information on the accident's location*) but exploit the question's other possible interpretation in order to avoid providing the information asked of them. They, additionally, use a humorous answer, probably to be able to plausibly deny their uncooperation (they could say something along the lines of *This was a joke, of course, milepost 499's location is...*). This overlap is common with the category of legal context where clear answers are avoided frequently but also with jokes and puns.

Another mixed case example is a combination of a joke and a form of metalinguistic commentary as in (19):

(19) Interviewer: . . . viermal den Deutschen Fernsehpreis verlore-ÄH gewonnen.
('. . . four-time lose-EH winner of the German TV award')

Hill: verloren? Ja, wo isser denn hin?
('lost? So, where did it go?')

[Sat1, 2023 (*my translation*)]

This example is based on the polysemy of *verloren* (*lost*), which (in English as well as in German) has a sense that can be interpreted as the opposite of winning and one sense that means *misplaced*. The UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER (Hill) notices that the interviewer misspoke but also perfectly well understands that with their intended meaning, the speaker would have referred to the *opposite of winning*-sense. She decides to exploit that sense in favor of the other possible interpretation of *lost* in order to comment on a metalinguistic level on the obvious slip of tongue and also to make a joke of it.

One prime example of a unique UIM case is (20), here repeated from chapter 1. The interpreter (Scholz) avoids giving a clear answer to the question asked by the reporter. By reacting to the literal, root meaning of the modal *could* used in the utterance in a polite indirect speech act[7] he avoids a reaction to the primary illocutionary act that had been intended: the clear order to list specific security guarantees.

(20) Reporter: [. . .] könnten Sie konkretisieren, welche Sicherheitsgarantien das sind?
('[. . .] could you specify which security guarantees those are?')

Olaf Scholz: Ja, könnte ich. [pause] Das war's.
('Yes, I could. [pause] That's it')

[Pressekonferenz G7-Gipfel, 2022 (*my translation*)]

Another very unique example of a sort-of aversion is Churchill in (21) who uses UIM in order not having to acknowledge the misstep he is overtly made aware of. He does so by (similar as Scholz above) reacting to the intended root meaning of the modal *must*, which expresses physical necessity as if the speaker had intended the deontic meaning

7 *Could you* is used to be explicitly polite – technically, all questions are orders (to give an answer), this is why they are often softened by modals to appear more polite. "The more particles in a sentence that reinforce the notion that it is a request, rather than an order, the politer the result." (Lakoff, 1973 p.56) According to Lakoff, 1973, using these hedges is a strategy more often employed by women out of social pressure. That the reporter asking Scholz about security guarantees was a women is an important detail in light of Lakoff's observations.

(obligation). Moreover, he then answers the rhetorical question as if it was not meant rhetorically.

(21) Member of Parliament: Mr. Churchill, must you fall asleep while I'm speaking?
Churchill: No, it's purely voluntarily.

[boredpanda, 2019]

What was here formulated as a rhetorical question by the member of parliament was *intended* as an indirect speech act of an emphatic statement (see Egg, 2007) along the lines of *It is exceptionally rude to fall asleep here!* the ultimate aim of which would have been an admission of guilt of impolite behavior by Churchill and maybe an apology. To avoid adhering to what would have been the expected reaction to the speaker's intended meaning, Churchill employs the strategy of reacting to the primary illocutionary act (in this case, a genuine question about the physically unavoidable necessity of falling asleep) involving the root meaning of the modal *must* as if it was intended as a question about **deontic** obligation in the sense of *Are you under the obligation/is anyone forcing you to fall asleep…?* and then denies this deontic obligation; thereby ignoring the intended secondary illocutionary act (*You are being rude.*).

Both, (20) and (21) do also bear a humorous notion in the interpreter's answer[8]. While this appears to be intended to weaken the uncooperative notion of their reactions, these examples are not classical jokes or puns but rather humorous speech.

One other unique case is (22): here, the interpreter uses the UIM strategy to bend the originally intended rules of a bet. The elliptical formulation uttered by the 'wall street guy' is used by Frank in order to be able to avoid adhering to the rules according to the intended meaning of *300-400 push-ups*, which would not have allowed for less than 300 push-ups to be considered a win of the bet. Instead, he uses another possible, more literal interpretation that amounts to *3-400 push-ups*, according to which 4 push-ups are enough to count as a 'win':

(22) Frank: Just to be clear, I take all the money if I can do between three and 400 push-ups?
Wall Street Guy: Er, 600 says, "No way, Gramps!"
Frank: Oh, nice. All right?
proceeds to perform four consecutive push-ups
Frank: Are you not entertained?
Wall Street Guy: Hey! Hey! Whoa! Whoa! You said you were gonna do between three and 400.

8 In example (20), the humorous notion is not immediately clear from the transcription but there exists video footage from this interview that shows Scholz chuckling and smiling while giving his answer.

Frank: Right, I won the bet.
Wall Street Guy: You did four push-ups, bro.
Frank: Four is between three and 400, right?

[Outlaws, 2024][9]

Overall, these examples show that the phenomenon discussed in this thesis is pervasive throughout our everyday interactions but also that this interpreter's strategy is quite flexibly applicable to a variety of situations and utterances, which makes a clear-cut categorization difficult. A feature that is shared, though, by all examples in my database is that the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETATION has to be based on **at least** a highly conventionalized formulation that can be interpreted in more than one way, for the most part it is based on some clearly identifiable feature in the literal wording of the speaker's utterance which makes it susceptible to more than one interpretation.

2.2 WHAT LOOKS LIKE UIM BUT IS NOT

Before moving on to a proposal of how successful communication with an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER can be analyzed I would like to take the time and discuss two phenomena that, at first glance, seem to be very similar to the examples I just introduced above. Because the phenomenon discussed in this thesis is still underexplored, it is easy to confuse it with similar strategies that have to do with non-literally communicated meaning and a perceived discrepancy in cooperation. I choose here to discuss *maxim suspension*, *dogwhistles* and *dodging* as they are all phenomena widely discussed throughout their areas in the literature and were mentioned to me as probably similar to UIM when I was talking about my examples. But I do not want to suggest the phenomena similar to UIM to be limited to those cases.

2.2.1 *Canceling the* MAXIM OF QUANTITY

Fox, 2014, in his account of SCALAR IMPLICATURES (SIs) presents a context in which a speaker is generally **not** assumed to be fully cooperative: in a scenario like a game show, the host is not revealing all information they have about where the prize money is hidden for the contestants to find. It is part of the game that the host does, indeed, know very well where the money is but that they, when saying something like *There is money in box 20 or 25* are instructed not to reveal all information they have.[10]

Fox, 2014 distinguishes what he calls a *pragmatic* from a *grammatical* approach when it comes the computation of SIs: the pragmatic ap-

9 Thanks to Tim Grasshöfer for this example.
10 Thanks to Jacopo Romoli for bringing this phenomenon and its resemblance to UIM to my attention.

proach he attributes to Grice and more Grice-based theories, according to Fox, 2014, uses a non-specialized cognitive system based on general principles of rational behavior to derive SIs while the grammatical approach retrieves such implicatures via grammatical mechanisms.

The basic presumption is that if we have a disjunctive sentence like *John talked to Mary or Sue*, it standardly carries the SI that John did not talk to both, Mary AND Sue and also what is called an *ignorance inference* that the speaker is ignorant about the truth of the individual disjuncts (whether it was, in fact Mary/ in fact Sue John was talking to). The implicature is, under the pragmatic account, computed via assumption of the MAXIM OF QUANTITY (MQ)[11] – that the speaker intentionally did not use the more informative conjunctive alternative. "The Ignorance Inferences follow directly from MQ whereas the exclusive inference (the SI) follows from MQ in conjunction with the extra assumption of an opinionated speaker (the auxiliary assumption that the speaker is opinionated about the alternative conjunctive sentence)" (Fox, 2014 p.5).

Now, in situations like the game show, the speaker cannot be assumed to be cooperative with respect to the MAXIM OF QUANTITY and they can also not be assumed to be ignorant because it is known that they know exactly where the prize is hidden. Fox, 2014 concludes that, in such a context, the MAXIM OF QUANTITY is suspended.[12] The pragmatic approach would then predict SIs to be categorically unavailable in these contexts because this approach relies on the MAXIM OF QUANTITY for their computation. The grammatical approach has the advantage of using grammatical strengthening mechanisms to retrieve the SI nonetheless.

On the surface, this looks like a phenomenon that resembles UIM: cooperation cannot be completely assumed but communication nonetheless works somehow. There are a few important differences, though, that distinguish Fox, 2014's game show situations from examples of UIM. First of all, the (expected) uncooperation in the game show context is on the side of the speaker, but UIM is an **interpreter**-based strategy. Secondly, it is true that the speaker is expected to hold back information for the sake of the game but the interpreter does, nonetheless, cooperatively compute the exclusivity inference (SCALAR IMPLICATURE) from the utterance of *There is money in box 20 or 25*. In

11 "1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange) 2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required." (Grice, 1975 p.45).

12 A point that could also be argued for that there is no actual uncooperation in the first place. On the contrary, as argued by Meyer, 2013, the quantity maxim's formulation (specifically the phrase "*for the current purposes of the exchange*") is exactly constructed such that speakers do not always have to reveal **all** relevant information: " it seems like the reason why the speaker is avoiding a stronger statement is precisely because he is obeying QUANTITY: For the purpose of the Quiz Show, anything stronger than *A or B* would be more informative than required." (Meyer, 2013 p.167). The issue Fox, 2014 discusses, though, remains independently from this argument.

fact, in doing so, the *interpreters* in the scenario described by Fox, 2014 are even more cooperative than they might reasonably be expected to be in a situation where the speaker not providing all information they can be assumed to have. The circumstance that they also not compute ignorance inferences that would standardly be expected to be drawn from the disjunction shows that they know, and know that the host knows that the context regulates the speaker's informativeness – an identification of *what is said*.

The, overall, main difference between these phenomena in any case is that, in Fox, 2014's example, the intended implicature is managed to be conveyed despite an impression of uncooperative behavior on the side of the speaker while in UIM examples, a clearly **not** intended other possible interpretation is being exploited by an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER despite the speaker behaving cooperatively.

2.2.2 *Dogwhistles*

Dogwhistles are a feature of communication "[...] that sends one message to an outgroup while at the same time sending a second (often taboo, controversial, or inflammatory) message to an ingroup." (Henderson and McCready, 2019 p.223) This is a phenomenon often found in political discourse that has been scientifically discovered and named not before comparably recently (in the 1980's, according to Saul, 2018). As general characteristics, dogwhistles can be expressed overtly or covertly and also some phrases or utterances contain dogwhistles even though the speaker did not intend them to be conveyed: "Dogwhistles may be explicit or implicit, and within each of these categories they may be intentional or unintentional." (Saul, 2018 p.361)

Henderson and McCready, 2019 give one of the most recent accounts of dogwhistles, which argues against previous implicature-based accounts. They propose a purely pragmatic account that divides two types of dogwhistles – enriching ones, which expresses the speaker's true identity and identifying ones, in which an addendum to the overt message is sent to a knowing audience. Their account differs from previous accounts insofar as they model dogwhistles using an extension of the 'Sociolinguistic Signalling Games' (Burnett, 2016, Burnett, 2017).

They distinguish three main properties of dogwhistles:

i dogwhistles are not part of conventional content, so speakers are able to avoid (complete) responsibility for what they convey

ii dogwhistles are semi-cooperative – that is, they are meant to convey part of their meaning to only one segment of the audience while hiding it from the rest of the audience, and

iii while deniable, dogwhistles are risky

So, in summary, dogwhistles are deniable, address only part of the audience and are risky. According to Henderson and McCready, 2019, they can, as a group, be divided into two types, which they call *identifying* and *enriching* in Henderson and McCready, 2024:

1. Type 1, identifying dogwhistles, are characterized by the content sending one message to all audience members. Meanwhile, the dogwhistle transmits the speaker's true identity to a sub-audience. Examples for this type are situations as the following:

   > "In a 2016 Reddit AMA Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein was asked about the party's platform vaccines and homeopathy. She said:
   > (3) By the same token, being 'tested' and 'reviewed' by agencies tied to big pharma and the chemical industry is also problematic"
   >
   > [Henderson and McCready, 2019 p.222]

   In the example above, the word 'Big Pharma' just means large, faceless pharmaceutical corporations (parallel to 'Big Agriculture', etc.). Through the dogwhistle, however, the speaker transmits the identity of a vaccine denier because of the phrase being prominently used in vaccine-denial discourse. (Henderson and McCready, 2019 p.226)

2. In Type 2, enriching dogwhistles, the content sends one message to all audience members and the dogwhistle parallely places an addendum on that message for a sub-audience. An example here comes from representative Paul Ryan who, on a 2014 radio program said:

   "(5) We have got this tailspin of culture, in our inner cities in particular, of men not working and just generations of men not even thinking about working or learning the value and the culture of work. [...] (Henderson and McCready, 2019 p.223)
   The dogwhistle in (5), according to Henderson and McCready, 2019, is the phrase 'inner-city' for which Ryan was criticized afterward. This phrase is often used as a code or euphemism for racialized views of African American neighborhoods and can transport a racist addendum on the whole message.

To analyze Type 2 dogwhistles Henderson and McCready, 2019 use the tools of standard signaling games. "Our basic analytic strategy is to use signaling games in which there are signals with two possible meanings, one an enriched version of the other, and then to let recovery of the enriched version be tied to recognition of the relevant persona by interpreting messages as pairs of truth-conditional meanings and social meanings of the form $\langle m, [m] \rangle$ (where [m] is the social meaning of m, as defined above), on which payoff conditions are imposed." (Henderson and McCready, 2019 p.240)

They are, moreover, able to identify Type 1 dogwhistles as a special case of Type 2 dogwhistles in which the enriched meaning is null. They see a parallel to pragmatic enrichment cases (such as discussed by Recanati, 2004), in which the literal reading of, for example *You're not going to die* has to be pragmatically enriched by something like *from this cut* in order to be a coherent response to a crying child. "We think the difference is that standard cases like the above are entirely contextually conditioned, while Type 2 dogwhistles seem to be the result of a conventional association: once the persona is identified, the additional meaning becomes apparent to the interpreter" (Henderson and McCready, 2019 p.241)

They conclude that dogwhistles do not seem to fall in the prototypical semantics/pragmatics meaning categories because they ordinarily provide new information (so they are not presuppositional) and their meaning is not fully conventional (they are cancelable[13]) but they are not derived via Grice's principles of conversation (they are not computable through maxim flouting and the CP like CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES) and their interpretation arises from background assumptions about social meaning. "They are simultaneously conventional and socially dependent. In this sense, dogwhistles seem to occupy a genuinely new niche in the characterization of not-at-issue meaning" (Henderson and McCready, 2019 p.243)

> "There is a sense in which dogwhistles are an ubiquitous phenomenon: much communication involves underspecified meanings which can in part be resolved by learning more about the speaker and her intentions. Sometimes hearers need only recover affect, whether positive or negative [...]"
>
> [Henderson and McCready, 2019 p.243]

Dogwhistles do share some similarities with UIM at first glance. For instance, both share the feature that various possible interpretations of the same utterance are available for speaker and listener. Furthermore, whether the dogwhistled content is successfully communicated depends on the speaker's intentions being recognized by the in-group audience.

On the other hand, when taking a closer look, dogwhistles are, in crucial aspects, a completely different concept; at times even working in the opposite way than UIM. The main differences are, for one, that dogwhistles are (in the majority of cases) a speaker-intended phenomenon that is used deliberately in order for a specific group of

13 Note the difference between *cancellability* and *deniability*. Standardly, implicated meanings can be canceled and literally expressed meanings cannot while deniability is more complex. As Dinges and Zakkou, 2023 point out: "directly communicated contents are sometimes deniable, while indirectly communicated contents are sometimes undeniable".

people to arrive at its enriched or identifying meaning. UIM, on the contrary, is a strategy employed by the **interpreter** specifically **diverging** from any intended meaning of the speaker. Secondly, dogwhistles are deniable because they are not part of conventional content. UIMs, on the other are based on the literal basis of *what is said* and that it can hardly be denied. It is the reference to literally expressed content that licenses the other, not-intended, interpretation of what the speaker uttered to be used as a basis for the interpreter's uncooperative response. Simultaneously, another interpretation of the same literal meaning is used by the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER to uphold some form of cooperation toward the ultimate conversational aim. So, while the goal of doghwistles is to communicate deniable content, UIM specifically targets the non-deniable content of an utterance.

One kind of dogwhistles described by Saul, 2018 might possibly lead to an interesting connection between the two phenomena. She mentions the existence of unintentional dogwhistles that involve unknowingly mentioning a word or phrase which could, if used intentionally, potentially be a dogwhistle: "Unwitting use of words and/or images that, used intentionally, constitute an intentional dogwhistle, where this use has the same effect as an intentional dogwhistle." (Saul, 2018 p.368)

The possibility of that happening means also that an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER might assign dogwhistles to utterances of people who, in fact, did not have any such intentions. That is, if they accidentally used a word or phrase that has the *possibility* of being used as a dogwhistle. Because dogwhistles are deniable, NOT having intended them as such is equally hard to prove. So, there is the possibility of an unintended dogwhistle to be exploited by characterizing it as an intentional one via the strategy of UIM.

Especially in politics, every uttered word or phrase by any given person has the opportunity to be exploited like that to associate with them certain personae with specific preferences, political views and/or association with certain social groups via dogwhistling. How productive or unproductive this kind of UIM would be in the end is another matter that depends on how conventionalized the dogwhistle already is so that the assumption for it to be another possible meaning of the speaker's utterance is reasonable enough. Such a conventionalization would, however, render its characteristics and employability as a dogwhistle much less plausible. After all, a broader awareness of potentially covert messages or personae behind certain words or phrases automatically minimizes the implicit and deniable potential of the dogwhistle. In other words, the whistle gets too loud.

2.2.3 *Dodging*

From some of the examples I presented in this chapter it could also be assumed that the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's strategy resembles the common communication strategy *dodging*. Dodging is a term used primarily in the field of communication studies and social psychology. According to Clementson, 2018a "Literature seems to use the term 'dodging' as an umbrella term encompassing terms including evasion, equivocation, strategic ambiguity, obfuscation and topic avoidance.". While clearly distinct phenomena, all the individual strategies that can be summarized as covert dodging are types of deception, which is generally described as "intentionally, knowingly, and/or purposely misleading another person" (Levine, 2014 p.379) but they are separated from the special type of deception that is a blatant lie. So, covert dodging-types are different deception strategies that are used to change the topic, all covertly employable, few possibly overtly employable (e.g. obfuscation or topic avoidance) and, maybe most importantly, all considered deceptive to various degrees. In order to elucidate what is meant here by *dodging*, some scholars, following Rogers and Norton, 2011, refer to Jack Dawkins' character in Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* (Dickens 1839). They use it to describe one sub-case that Rogers and Norton, 2011 call *the Artful Dodge*: Jack is a cunning pickpocket distinguished by his artful ability of deceptively re-directing people's attention by chatter so as to steal from them without being detected, and so he is labeled *the artful dodger*. Politicians are the group of people most infamous for dodging but there are also examples of "corporate executives avoiding reporters' requests for their expectations for the next fiscal quarter, employees sidestepping their bosses' questions as to why they are late for the third straight day, or spouses evading their partners' inquiries as to their whereabouts the previous evening." (Rogers and Norton, 2011).

The covert dodging strategy, according to what seems to be assumed in the literature, is to be distinguished from the blatant and obvious overt dodge, which leads to two broader dodging sub-classes:

- overt dodge: implicating refusal to answer, ignoring the question or opting out of the conversation – too overt to successfully deceive
- covert dodge: deceiving by managing not to answer to the original question without it being detected.

This distinction is also shown by the efforts described throughout the dodging-literature to either manage ramifications of overt dodges or conceal detection of covert ones: "Although it is true that resistant and evasive responses are commonplace, these are managed with considerable care. When resistance is done overtly, interviewees take steps to control the damage that may be caused thereby. When it is

done covertly, there are corresponding efforts to conceal the resistance or at least to render it less conspicuous." (Clayman, 2001 p.439)

Burgoon et al., 1996 do use their own variant of Grice, 1975's theory of communication in order to show how deceptive discourse like dodging is a covert manipulation of information, carried out via maxim violation so as to hide the deceptive act as best as possible. This indicates that, when it comes to applying Grice, 1975's theory of communication to dodging, as is repeatedly done in the relevant literature, communicational success via intention-recognition and cooperation in the sense of Grice's rational understanding of non-literal meaning is confused with success of cooperation in terms of ultimate aims of the conversation (e.g. a 'successful dodge' without losing the interlocutor's trust). Dodging literature seems to treat a dodge that goes undetected as successful and what would be considered a successful blatant violation of a maxim in Grice, 1975 as unsuccessful and unwanted because it would be detected by the interpreter (like a successful implicature).

As I understand it, an overtly carried out dodge that would either be an implicature indicating *I am not willing to give the answer you expect me to give* or an opting out is considered a failed dodge because it is detected by the interpreter and therefore not deceiving. A covert dodge, on the other hand, is considered successful because it lets the speaker change the subject without the interpreter realizing: "The objective of artful dodgers, of course, is to avoid answering the actual question and to ensure that listeners fail to notice." (Rogers and Norton, 2011 p.142). As Rogers and Norton, 2011 find in their studies, though, one crucial characteristic of successful deceptive dodges is that the interpreters fail to recall the actual question that was asked before the speaker dodged it. At this point, at least if the tools used to analyze it are Grice's, the communication that was taking place would have failed because the dodger's intentions are not recognized. The communication was progressing up to the point that the dodger understood the question and recognized the speaker's intention for the dodger to give specific information. After that, however, if the dodger's answer is intended to avoid the specific topic of the question but this intention is not recognized and, in fact, not even the original question is still common knowledge between interlocutors this part of the communication process failed. The answer the dodger then gives would, as far as I interpret Grice's ideas and their application, have to be treated as a new instance of communication with different aims and intention(s). In other words: a failed dodge would be successful communication and a successful dodge would mean failed communication, analogously.

While the success of a dodge is measured in terms of how likely it is to be detected by the interpreter or whether the speaker 'gets away' with it ("we explored how listeners' assumptions about the relevance

of speakers' answers set the stage for speakers to choose not to answer the actual question they were asked without negative consequences." Rogers and Norton, 2011 p.145), UIMs are primarily successful on a more technical level because they are constructed upon the literal basis of the speaker's utterance, exploiting another possible interpretation of what the speaker said. The reason UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS might 'get away' with their strategy – how they are able to maintain an impression of cooperation toward the ultimate conversational aim – is that their other interpretation is not random but another epistemic possibility from the utterance's literal meaning.

One attested example of a successful dodge that is used in the literature is by former US president Bill Clinton who used the strategy of *paltering* (a true statement deceptively omitting relevant information) in his response as he was asked by a reporter about "... a past sexual misdeed, he presumably wanted to avoid telling a 'lie of commission' and he instead answered by asserting that 'there is not a sexual relationship'. Clinton paltered by making a claim that was technically true in the present tense, aimed at giving a misleading impression." (Clementson, 2018a)

> Lehrer: You had no sexual relationship with this young woman?
> Clinton: There is not a sexual relationship. That is accurate.
>
> [Clinton, 1998 *my emphasis*]

Clinton's response does not exclude the possibility for an affair that occurred in the past but, now, in the present is over and done with. "To the casual listener it might seem that Clinton has denied an affair altogether." (Clayman, 2001 p.439) This example clearly shows how the dodger (Clinton) deliberately alters the question before answering to his own statement of it instead of the original question.

Moreover, it illustrates the inconsistent analysis resulting from combining Grice's original ideas with how literature on dodging interprets their own examples. While Clinton, admittedly, appears somewhat cooperative in giving an an answer and not opting out; if the dodge is successful and not detected, intention-recognition with respect to his intend to change (and not answer) the original question has failed and so has the communication at that point. This is where phenomenon I introduce as UIM as well as, especially, my analysis of it according to Grice differ profoundly (see section 2.3 for a clear delimitation with examples): UIMs are instances of successful communication toward the common immediate aim of the conversation. Interpreters use the literal foundation of *what is said* to base their responses on and their strategy is neither intended to be deceiving nor covert – on the contrary, their responses mostly are constructed in a way as to make clear to the original speaker (and a potential audience) exactly what interpretation it is based on.

The main factors that might somehow connect UIM to dodging in a way are the cooperative-appearing nature of giving an answer as well as the emphasis on not wanting to opt out. These factors distinguish such a strategy from a blatant refusal to react, which could also be a dodge, but an overt one. The UIM example in (23), in fact, could be classified as an overt dodge in the sense that the interpreter (Sabine), in her answer, by referring to the ability interpretation of the modal *can* used in Mae's polite indirect speech act intended to demand information, Sabine is overtly responding to the underlying literal meaning, the secondary illocutionary act. She is blatantly violating the MAXIM OF RELATION thereby implicating *I understood the demand for information on my work but I will not comply.*

(23) Mae: Can I ask what you're working on?
Sabine: Of course you can *ask*. But I don't have to tell you anything.

[Eggers, 2014 p.57]

This, of course, would not be rated as a particularly successful dodge in, for example Rogers and Norton, 2011's sense, because it is blatantly obvious; as Grice's implicatures are supposed to be.

What is striking is that a vast amount of work on dodging (see, for example, Clementson, 2018a & 2018; Rogers and Norton, 2011; McCornack, 1992 & 2014; Levine, 2014; Donovan-Kicken et al., 2013) does indeed see the necessity to analyze *dodging* using or at least referring to Grice, 1975's theory of communication. As appears to be a pattern in non-philosophical fields, there seem to be some missed details in the understanding of what I think Grice's original intentions were behind, for example, the COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE and the MAXIMS (which are not norms regulating conversation) or his notion of COOPERATION (which is not necessarily in complementary distribution with deception). In fact, Burgoon et al., 1996, for example, show their misuse of Grice's theory when they argue for their category of *personalization* as being a characteristic that, in their eyes, escaped Grice. They observe that "it seems to be an inherent presupposition of all discourse that, unless otherwise stated, utterances are presumed to belong to those who utter them." (Burgoon et al., 1996 p.55), thereby unveiling a gross lack of basic understanding of what SPEAKER MEANING is and how Grice analyzed meaning in terms of (speaker) intentions as well as how that influenced the nature of a CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE. I elaborate on the most prevalent of such miscues about Grice's terms in section 6.2.3.

Nonetheless, the systematic indispensability of Grice's ideas for the analysis of general phenomena of rational communication provides another argument for the main motivation of this thesis. Using Grice's original tools, as they are interpreted here, as a basis for analyzing

the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's strategy is the straightforward way when dealing with instances of rational communication.

2.3 MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF UIM

I gave a few examples of the phenomenon I am dealing with and of the different areas of everyday life it can be encountered in as well as two specific phenomena that seem similar but are to be distinguished from what I call UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER'S MEANING. In what follows I am going to dissect the different aspects that are involved in such kinds of communicative situations as well as explain the nature of the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER and what role the speaker plays in a phenomenon focused on *interpreter's* meaning.

It seems trivial but I should first address what UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's clearly are **not**. First of all, they are not cooperative with respect to the *ultimate* goals in a conversation and not on a level that would, colloquially, be associated with cooperative behavior. It would, for example, be cooperative, when asked *Could you tell me the time?*, to respond with something along the lines of *Sure! It's 4.30pm.* or even *I'm sorry, no, I don't have a watch on me.*

UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS, faced with such a question, would respond something like *I could do that, indeed.* (without actually, cooperatively, telling you the time or explain why they're not able to). Although the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's strategy oftentimes seems to pursue an ultimate aim of not having to answer a question or of getting out of a negative situation, they also do **not** opt out of the conversation. It would be easy to get out of answering a question by, for example, just leaving the situation as, e.g. Rita Ora did in the interview in (24):

(24) Reporter: [...] there has been a lot of rumors that Calvin Harris [is] not releasing some of your stuff ...
Rita Ora: Thank you.
leaves.

[Associated Press, 2014]

UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS, however, are adamant **not** to opt out of the conversation but to shift it toward the direction of their own ultimate aim. Olaf Scholz in (20) could also just have opted out of the conversation but instead chose to give an answer that would also be possible to be interpreted from what the reporter said, thereby behaving like it was the speaker's intended meaning of the question that he, seemingly cooperatively, answered.

So, intuitively, the term UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS describes interpreters who are behaving uncooperatively in some way and who exhibit the use of a specific interpretation that was not the speaker's

intended one. Now, *behaving uncooperatively* is in itself already an admittedly vague description that can be understood in a variety of ways: a person cutting in front of others in line is behaving uncooperatively. If you're asked for directions to the nearest train station and describe the path to the closest supermarket instead it is also, objectively, not a very cooperative thing to do – neither would be cheating in a football game just to take away the win. The phenomenon I describe, though, sets a strong focus on verbal or written communication. While non-linguistic surroundings and behavior, naturally, also influence such situations those are not at the center of my observations. UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS tend to behave uncooperatively in the above described, non-linguistic way: their interpersonal behavior is usually neither particularly helpful or nice, nor does it work in favor of reaching any ultimate agreement between speaker and interpreter in a conversation. They mostly try to deceive, mock or tease the speaker or otherwise take advantage of the general situation. While it is uncontroversial that this is uncooperative behavior, there are particular characteristics that distinguish UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS from other types of rude, vicious or mischievous interpreters: they *understand* perfectly well what the speaker's intended meaning was supposed to be and what the common immediate aim of the conversation is. Their uncooperative behavior is, thus, deliberate and no accident. Moreover, they do not construct just **any** answer that suits their means but is completely unhinged from the speaker's original utterance. They, instead, carefully use an alternative possible interpretation that exhibits some form of connection to the speaker's original utterance in order to validate their UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER'S MEANING (UIM).

Let me show some more examples to illustrate the distinctions I draw from cases I consider instances of an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER to cases that might be instances of other sorts of deceiving or strategically uncooperative communication. The first example involves a strategy that is also very common, especially in politics, but different from my phenomenon: giving answers to the question you **want** to answer instead of the one you were asked. This would, for example, include the phenomenon of *dodging* discussed above which is a strategy to, rather recklessly, throw in the content you'd like to talk about (because it is flattering for you or avoids a negative impression) with little regard for the content of the originally asked question:

(25) Eric Cortellessa: So as President, would you consider withholding American military assistance to Israel to push it to winding down its war?
Donald Trump: Okay. So let me, I have to start just as I did inside. [*Asks an aide to turn down the air conditioner.*] I don't have to go through the whole thing. But as you know, Iran was broke. Iran is the purveyor of –

> Cortellessa: No, I know that but would you –
> Trump: No, but think of the great job I did. It would have never happened. It would have never happened. You wouldn't have had - Hamas had no money. Do you know that?
> Cortellessa: I do understand that, sir, I just want to know –
> Trump: No, but I hope it can be pointed out. During my term, there were stories that Iran didn't have the money to give to any - there was very little terrorism.
>
> [Staff, 2024]

In (25), Donald Trump behaves in this way. It seems fair to assume he understood what the question was intended to mean and that the common immediate aim of him and Cortelessa is an exchange of information. But he clearly did not want to give an answer to this speaker's intended meaning. This pattern, so far, resembles an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER. Strikingly though, Trump's answers are missing any traceable linguistic link to a formulation used by the speaker (Cortellessa) by which he could argue to have answered the question. Trump **does** give answers and is not signaling to be opting out, but he diverges from the question's original content without any connection or traceable line of argumentation. As I discussed in 2.2.3, executed in a successful way, dodging the question is not to be regarded as an instance of successful communication. Trump's strategy here is different from what I call an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER who wittily exploits a speaker's literal formulation to steer the argument toward their own personal gain. He seems to just, without any rational intention, shift the topic to the answer he would like to give instead of one that would answer the speaker's question. The fine-grained difference here is that this interpreter (Trump in (25)) cannot pretend to have understood the question in another possible way and can also not, technically, argue to have given an answer to the original question. Interpreters using this strategy have to accept possible criticism of not having answered the question at all while true UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS can 'get away with it on a technicality'. An UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's response upholds the impression of cooperation on a technical level, not only just by giving a coherent answer but due to a connection to the actual, literal utterance of the original speaker.

Another important distinction to draw is that of the initial understanding of the speaker's utterance. There are also a number of cases, especially in scripted jokes or TV-series dialogues whose humorous notion or witty comeback by scripted interpreters hinge largely on the interpreter's misunderstanding of the original speaker's utterance:

(26) Sheldon: [. . .] you might want to see an otolaryngologist. It's a throat doctor.
Sheldon: Depending on the depth, that's either a proctologist or a general surgeon.
(*Leonard holds up a sign reading 'Sarcasm'*) Oh!

[TBBT, 2009]

The interpreter in (26), Sheldon, is scripted to just not understand the sarcastic metaphor the speaker (Penny) intended to express via her utterance. He does react to another possible interpretation of the speaker's utterance – which is the non-sarcastic, literal meaning. He does that, though, not like an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER from a point of understanding the speaker's intended meaning (and more) but more out of an innocent unawareness. While this is helpful for the humorous aspect of the interaction, it is also a good example for what is certainly **not** a case of what I mean by UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS. The interpreters in my phenomenon have to be clearly identifiable as understanding the speaker's intended meaning and then **deliberately** choosing another possible interpretation of the same literal content. If the interaction is as in (26), then the intention-recognition between Penny and Sheldon simply fails. Is that case, between those two characters, communication is, as I interpret it, not successful and the humorous aspect of the whole interaction happens merely on a meta-level for the understanding audience.

If we combine the above two characteristics – lack of coherent responses as well as no underlying understanding of the communicated content – we can also exclude the most extreme examples. In situations like, for example, debates but also when two (or more) people are in a heated verbal argument it happens that what should be an interaction is reduced to just throwing sentences at each other, sometimes even simultaneously. Communication is no longer a back-and-forth but either person just wants to make their point regardless of any mutual understanding or coherent responses. These examples usually exhibit a huge amount of cross-talk that prevents all parties from listening to each other and understanding the uttered content. As an illustration of the situations I am talking about take the following exchange from the 2020 presidential debate:

(27) TRUMP: So why didn't you get the world – China sends up real dirt into the air. Russia does. India does. They all do. We're supposed to be good. And by the way, he made a couple of statements. The Green New Deal is a hundred trillion dollars. . .
BIDEN: That is not my plan.
TRUMP: . . . not 20 billion . . .
BIDEN: The Green New Deal is not my plan

> TRUMP: . . . You want to rebuild every building.
> BIDEN: . . . If you knew anything about . . .
> TRUMP: Well, you want to rebuild everything
> BIDEN: If he knew anything about . . .
> WALLACE: Gentlemen . . . Gentlemen . . .
> TRUMP: He made a statement about the military. He said I said something about the military. He and his friends made it up, and then they went with it. I never said it.
>
> [Presidential Debate, 2020]

In (27) there is significantly much *talking at each other* instead of *to each other* and while there seems to be some minimal understanding happening (at least on one side of this exchange), the responses do not seem to be very coherent, basically just hammering down the same point repeatedly and jumping between topics.

As described above, the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER in the sense understood here has to be distinguished from two other classes of interpreters, based on whether they recognize the speaker's intended meaning and the common immediate aim and follow the ultimate aim of the conversation.

1. UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER (UI). The UI successfully and cooperatively recognizes the speaker's intended meaning and the common immediate aim of the conversation. They deliberately shift the conversation's direction toward their own ultimate aim by exploiting a different possible interpretation of what the speaker literally said.

2. COOPERATIVE INTERPRETER (CI) The CI successfully and cooperatively recognizes the speaker's intended meaning and they recognize and accept both the common immediate aim and ultimate aim of the conversation. Communication is successful and cooperative in all respects.

3. FAILED INTERPRETER (FI). The FI either opts out of the conversation or does not recognize the speaker's intended meaning because they truly misunderstand the speaker's utterance, resulting in a lack of upholding cooperation and, thus, failed communication.

The distinction between the above groups of interpreters can be illustrated using Grice, 1975's example of a CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES generated via violating the MAXIM OF RELATION: The example is "At a genteel tea party, *A* says *Mrs. X is an old bag*. There is a moment of appalled silence, and then *B* says *The weather has been quite delightful this summer, hasn't it?*" (Grice, 1975 p.54) The implicature is computed because *B* has *blatantly* refused to make what HE says relevant to *A*'s preceding remark. A cooperative interpreter (CI) – *A* again, in this

case – assumes *B* to still be upholding the COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE and, thus, reflects on possible intended meanings of their seemingly irrelevant utterance. This leads to the computation of the implicature that *B* would like to change the topic. *B*, as an interpreter in the above exchange, recognizes the speaker's intended meaning, responds to their utterance (so, does not opt out) but seems to be following a different ultimate aim in this exchange (to change the topic). Intuitively, that sounds a lot like an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER (UI)[14]. Two important factors distinguish *B* from an UI, though: First of all, *B*'s response lacks the necessary connection to the literal basis of what *A* said. UIM, to be eligible as such, have to be derived from another possible interpretation of what the speaker said; in Grice's example above, *B*'s response bears no recognizable connection to the literal basis of their utterance. This is also connected to the second factor that excludes such implicatures from being grounded on an UIM: *B*'s response to *A* is deliberately **not** coherent. It is neither an answer to a question nor identifiable as a clarifying remark or similar coherence structures. In Grice's example this is, of course, deliberate since the core of a *violation* of the relation maxim is that the utterance has to seem SO blatantly incoherent and irrelevant such as to trigger *A*'s implicature computation on grounds of thinking *It cannot be that B meant **that** by saying X, so they must mean something else/more by means of putting it that way*. Since *B* has to successfully recognize *A*'s intended meaning to utter an insult about Mrs. X in order to try and change the topic by means of the implicature, they are not a failed interpreter (FI) here. It can, furthermore, be assumed that *A* (as do we while reading the example), in turn, successfully recognizes *B*'s intended meaning as *I would not like to continue talking about Mrs. X in that way* and since *A* seems to adhere to what *B* expressed, they seem to be following the same ultimate aim, too. Grice's example is, thus, an instance of what can be called cooperative communication in an ideal or standard sense.

2.4 SUMMARY

This chapter presented a broad overview of the distribution of the phenomenon of UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER'S MEANING throughout the communicational landscape of our society. Examples were roughly ordered according to the area of application (in legal language, jokes and puns, as metalinguistic commentary or in mixed and unique cases) as well as two delimiting examples of phenomena (dogwhistles and dodging) that seem similar but exhibit crucially different parameters setting them apart from UIM. The language of the law is particularly prone to be involved in the exploitation of non-intended

14 Thanks very much to Julia Zakkou who brought up the discussion about this similarity of the interpreter's conversational moves during the defense of this thesis.

possible interpretations due to the fact that statutes, legislative texts or contracts are usually formulated in order to be applicable to as many situations as possible so that they do not have to be adjusted with any occurring legal case. This leads to a natural susceptibility to more than one possible interpretation for these texts. The language of the courtroom is slightly different but similarly constrained by a corset of communicational rules and conventions which lead to rather non-natural exchanges. The, for my data set, richest area of UIM is the use for jokes and puns. Whether scripted jokes or spontaneous puns, the surprise about the other possible (not intended) interpretation to which the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's response refers leads to a humorous or funny effect for the original speaker as well as for any potential audience. A little less obvious but also a commonly-used area of application is the use as metalinguistic commentary. Here, the reaction to another possible but not the speaker's intended meaning is used as a subtle but effective commentary on the language the speaker used in their utterance.

Apart from the humorous notion being present in a vast number of examples, there generally is some degree of overlap between the categories. It happens that an example is a joke in a legal environment or a metalinguistic commentary as a joke; almost all combinations are possible. Additionally, cases like (1) from the introductory chapter of this thesis seem to be unique in that they cannot easily be placed in a specific category – the interpreter avoids giving an answer, but in a funny way. This flavor of the interpreter's strategy finds application in practically all areas involving legally or socially binding discourse; anywhere where it matters what exactly has been said and how this reflects on the person who said it.

Communication strategies that bear a certain resemblance to UIM examples are, among others, dogwhistles and dodging. I have shown in which crucial ways these strategies differ from the phenomenon of UIM in order to delimitate and narrow down what the nature is exactly of the phenomenon at the center of my investigation. Dogwhistles, as well as dodging are first and foremost exploitation strategies carried out by the speaker while UIM is an interpreter-strategy. Furthermore, dogwhistles are not part of the literal content of the speaker's utterance while UIM explicitly refers to the speaker's literal utterance. A dogwhistle's content is, in most cases, plausibly deniable by the speaker while UIM are based on non-deniable literal content and merely the interpreter when formulating their response might be able to plausibly deny, not the content of their utterance, but uncooperative behavior.

Dodging, while also an avoidance-strategy behaves crucially different from UIM in that dodging speakers seek to hide their intentions to dodge, for example, a question. A successful dodge remains undetected by the interpreter. This sort of deceiving is not what is at play in UIM; an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER might try to dodge a

question openly by exploiting the speaker's literal utterance. In terms of dodging, this openness would result in an unsuccessful dodge.

Further examples in 2.3 showed how, specifically, instances of UIM can be set apart from other occurrences of similar situations. The most important characteristics of what actually constitutes an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER have been identified as understanding the speaker's intended meaning and the common immediate aim of the conversation. This excludes, for example, situations in sitcoms in which characters truly misunderstand each other for the amusement of an audience as well as cross-talk situations in which 'communication' consists of throwing arguments at each other without listening or responding coherently to what the other person is saying. Three types of interpreters can thus be distinguished, only one of which is the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER at the center of this thesis.

Generally, I have shown here what possible motivations there can be for employing the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's strategy and then delimitated it from phenomena that can look very similar at first glance but are, in fact, significantly different and developed criteria for determining whether a certain situation is an actual instance of UIM. In the following chapter I will now present my proposal of *how* successful communication with an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER works.

3

COMMUNICATION WITH AN UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER

[. . .] it is the rationality or irrationality of conversational conduct which I have been concerned to track down rather than any more general characterization of conversational adequacy.

— Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*

3.1 MAIN HYPOTHESIS

The main hypothesis pursued here is that exchanges involving an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER constitute successful communication according to how Grice's ideas are implemented here and that can be analyzed using a basis of Grice's tools[1]. As discussed at the end of the previous chapter, there are specific characteristics explicitly distinguishing the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER which are summarized shortly again here:

> The UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER as they are referred to here is the interpreter who deliberately shifts the conversation's direction toward their own ultimate aim by exploiting a different possible interpretation of what the speaker literally said, even though they first successfully recognized the speaker's intended meaning and the common immediate aim of the conversation.

While Grice does not explicitly state in his publications that successful communication can be understood in terms of intention-recognition, for it to be at the heart of success of communicative endeavors is one plausible interpretation compatible with his claims. For a more detailed explanation of this point and an elaborated summary of further characteristics determining successful communication following from the analysis presented here see chpt. 8.1. In order to be able to determine to what extend and based on which parameters communication with an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER can be called successful, the following basic description is, at first, applied and later developed:

1 The work presented in sections 3.1 and 3.2 is partly based on and expands upon ideas appearing in Schwarz, 2026.

> SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION as it is characterized in this thesis has as its basis the recognition of the speaker's intended meaning as well as of the common immediate aim of the conversation.

The UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's behavior is intentional and deliberate while it is still based on the (mostly) automatic understanding of the speaker's intended meaning. Apart from understanding the speaker's intended meaning and being cooperative toward the common immediate aim of the conversation, the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER also gives a coherent response which is connected to another possible interpretation of the speaker's utterance that was not the speaker's intended one. Incoherent exchanges would, according to Grice not be rational and not cooperative "Our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did." (Grice, 1975 p.45).

3.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The main proposal this thesis advances is that exchanges involving an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER can be called successful communication in my understanding of Grice, 1975's ideas, capitalizing on an adaption of his distinction between a common immediate aim and possibly diverging ultimate aims in cooperative transactions to verbal communication. This is supported by Grice's introduction of the following non-linguistic example that subtly links it to communication:

> "[...] talk exchanges seemed to me to exhibit, characteristically, certain features that jointly distinguish cooperative transactions:
> 1. The participants have some common immediate aim, like getting a car mended; their ultimate aims may, of course, be independent and even in conflict – each may want to get the car mended in order to drive off, leaving the other stranded. [...]"
>
> [Grice, 1975 p.48]

According to the interpretation of Grice's ideas advanced here, the common immediate aim in a conversation is the exchange of information that is carried out via a successful recognition of the speaker's intended meaning. In Grice, 1975 (p.45) he describes exchanges as cooperative efforts in that "each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction."

In his car repairing example, as given above Grice, 1975 specifies that the ultimate aims of respective participants in a non-verbal transaction

can be independent from or even in conflict with each other. This can also be interpreted in terms of ulterior motives interlocutors would like to achieve by virtue of a conversation. Ultimately, this distinction leads me to assume a two-step process underlying the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's strategy.

Compare Grice's example above with my example of UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER'S MEANING (UIM) from chapter 1, repeated here in (1) below:

(1) Reporter: [...] könnten Sie konkretisieren, welche Sicherheitsgarantien das sind?
('[...] could you specify which security guarantees those are?')

Olaf Scholz: Ja, könnte ich. [pause] Das war's.
('Yes, I could. [pause] That's it')

[Pressekonferenz G7-Gipfel, 2022 (*my translation*)]

The context in Grice's example is a car repair. The common immediate aim is to get the car mended. In example (1), the context is a press conference, and the common immediate aim is for Scholz to provide information, based on reporter's questions. The ultimate aims of the two participants, however, diverge. In the car repairing situation, one of the participants ultimately would like to drive away with it, leaving the other person stranded. The reporter's ultimate aim in (1) is to get information about which security guarantees were discussed in a meeting in which Scholz participated. Scholz's ultimate aim is not to provide this information.

The UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER uses a strategy that is, in the first step, cooperative without any caveats: they successfully recognize the speaker's intended meaning and the common immediate aim of the conversation. In a second step then, they uncooperatively pursue their own ultimate aim which deviates from that of the speaker. By instead following the immediate and ultimate aim of a counterpart speaker in another possible world the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER manages to uphold the impression of cooperation despite ignoring the initially understood speaker's intended meaning. They achieve that by way of being cooperative with respect to their common immediate aim with the counterpart speaker in another possible world; a world in which this speaker *intended* the other possible interpretation and shares the deviating aim(s). The UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER then additionally relies on Grice's principles of conversation in their verbal response. From that response, the speaker is expected to work out the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER'S different possible interpretation of their utterance as well as the deviating ultimate aim pursued by that.

The proposal presented here integrates the following three main strands of research.

First, it assumes Grice's theory of meaning and conversation in order to motivate the strategy of the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER. The exchange in which the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER participates constitutes successful communication in so far as this interpreter successfully understands the intended meaning of the speaker and cooperatively recognizes the common immediate aim of the conversation, as is characterized by Grice (e.g., Grice 1975, and elsewhere). In my example (1), for instance, the speaker's (reporter's) intended meaning in terms of a request for information is successfully recognized and the common immediate aim of recognizing that an interview is about exchanging information is met. While the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER provides a response that is uncooperative in that it deviates from the ultimate aim of the speaker, but in compliance with Grice's theory, albeit compatible with another aim of the conversation, which the speaker's utterance also sanctions under its different interpretation. In (1), for example, his response is compatible with the meaning another speaker could quite plausibly also have intended by uttering the same sentence (i.e. asking about ability). This interpretation suits Scholz's diverging ultimate aim of not wanting to answer the question he originally understood to have been intended. This way he can still claim to have been cooperative by giving a coherent response. Grice, 1975's (p.48) characterization of cooperative transactions as, among other features, "mutually dependent" leads me to take coherence as an additional factor determining success in communication.

This account of UIM is based on Grice's fundamental ideas of intention-recognition (Grice, 1957), rational cooperation (Grice, 1975) and the central goal of any cooperative conversation, which I take to be the exchange of information or influence or what Grice, 1968 calls an *M-intended effect*. "[...] observance of the CP and maxims is reasonable (rational) along the following lines: that any one who cares about the goals that are central to conversation/communication (e.g., giving and receiving information, influencing and being influenced by others) must be expected to have an interest, given suitable circumstances, in participation in talk exchanges that will be profitable [...]" (Grice, 1975 p.49)

Grice, 1968 and Grice, 1969 distinguishes the literal meaning of a word or sentence from an individual speaker's intended meaning. So the possible meaning(s) a word or sentence can have in the given language are distinguished from its meaning if it is used by a speaker to mean something **by** it in a given situation. I assume Grice's explication of literal meaning(s) in terms of intentions as well as of what speakers standardly mean by certain words and sentences.

"One might suggest that a full specification of sentence meaning (for indicative sentences) involves reference to the fact that the indicative form conventionally signifies an intention on the part of the utterer to induce a belief [...]" (Grice, 1969 p.168).

For the analysis presented here, it is not only useful to rely on Grice's distinction between a common immediate aim from ultimate, possibly diverging ones (Grice, 1975) but also on his mentioning situations in which the exchange of information is carried on in adversarial situations, where conversational interests clash. "Collaboration in achieving exchange of information or the institution of decisions may coexist with a high degree of reserve, hostility, and chicanery and with a high degree of diversity in the motivations underlying quite meager common objectives." (Grice, 1989 p.369).

His idea of how ultimate conversational aims can diverge while rational information exchange still prevails can account for the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's ability to exploit other possible interpretations while adhering to the general CP. Apart from Grice, 1975's briefly mentioned notion of diverging ultimate aims (in his car-repair example), his focus stays mainly on what **speakers** intend to convey by their utterances and not so much on what interpreters might go on to do with it. This is where further theories and concepts have to be taken into consideration to thoroughly analyze the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's second step.

The second main strand of research which informs this thesis is Searle's philosophy of language and mind. Searle voiced a central point of criticism toward Grice, 1957's theory of meaning, emphasizing the importance of conventions in the determination of meaning. Searle uses the example of an American Soldier in WWII is captured by Italian troops who would like to communicate to the Italians that he is a German officer but doesn't know enough German or Italian to just **say** so and instead recites a German poem he learned in school in order for them to recognize their intention to communicate *I am a German officer*. Searle's argument is that the words the American Soldier uttered can in no way be intended to **mean** *I am a German officer*. "The reason we're unable to do this is that what we can mean is a function of what we are saying. Meaning is more than a matter of intention, it is also a matter of convention." (Searle, 1965 p.8) (see chapter 5.1.3 for more on the "American Soldier"-example)

While Grice was not as convinced as Searle that meaning *always* has to be a matter of convention. In the end, as a reaction to the debate with Searle, he added it as one characteristic, but, as he emphasized not the **only** one for defining meaning: "I do not think that meaning is essentially connected with convention. What is is essentially connected with is some way of fixing what sentences mean: convention is indeed one of these ways, but it is not the only one." (Grice, 1989 p.298)

Searle (e.g. Searle, 1996, but also 1980; 1983 and 1992) describes the underlying idea behind human behavior to be that every intention to do anything can only be formed against a set of biological and cultural resources that have to be available. For meaning in language, specifically, he describes that "The simplest argument [...] is that the literal meaning of any sentence can only determine its truth conditions or other conditions of satisfaction against a background of capacities, dispositions, know-how. etc., which are not themselves part of the semantic content of the sentence." (Searle, 1996 p.130)

In what follows during the analysis of the strategy behind UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER'S MEANING (UIM), it will be further specified that those interpretational paths that are still rational and possible as UIM-basis are distinguished via the BACKGROUND knowledge and abilities from interpretations that are too far from any rational basis and would result in failure of communication (see chapter 5.2.1 for a more detailed introduction to Searle's BACKGROUND).

Third, when it comes to the knowledge and beliefs about the content of exchanges that are shared by interlocutors as well as how this body of information is structured, I turn to Stalnaker, 1973's concept of the COMMON GROUND (CG) and, specifically, his (2008; 2014) model of the CG in terms of possible worlds: "In the simple picture, the common ground is just common or mutual belief, and what a speaker presupposes is what she believes to be common or mutual belief." (Stalnaker, 2002 p.704) Stalnaker's CG and MUTUAL BELIEF are fundamentally rooted in Grice's ideas of, for example, the CP and the maxims as well as rationality and intention-recognition: "when speakers mean things, they act with the expectation that their intentions to communicate are mutually recognized. This idea leads naturally to a notion of common ground – the mutually recognized shared information in a situation in which an act of trying to communicate takes place." (Stalnaker, 2002 p.704) Particularly, the fluency of the CG as Stalnaker describes it, the way it changes and adapts depending on how the conversation and with it the speakers beliefs progress and change makes it useful as an explanatory basis for the UIM strategy: "The way contexts change in response to the moves that get made in a language game can be explained in terms of the contents of the beliefs that define the common ground, and the speakers' presuppositions." (Stalnaker, 2002 p.720) (see chapter 5.2 for more on how Stalnaker analyzes the COMMON GROUND in terms of possible worlds).

For an UIM analysis, it is not only vital to look at the possibilities of meaning for a given utterance; the interplay between a speaker and an interpreter also calls for a framework of what knowledge about which of the meaning(s) is shared and, thus, what can reasonably be mutually expected to be known by the interlocutors during a conversation. Since the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER exploits the literal meaning(s) a given utterance can also possibly have, it is important to have a model of

how other possible varieties of interpretations can be explored. The sets of possible worlds that make out the COMMON GROUND according to Stalnaker, 2008 (based on ideas from Lewis, 1979a) provide a way for me to illustrate how an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER exploits a counterfactual world of *what could also have been meant* as their basis for their uncooperative interpretation and, ultimately, for their response while keeping in mind the speaker's intended meaning in the actual world, too.

3.3 PROPOSED ANALYSIS

As briefly mentioned above, I suggest an analysis of the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's strategy in terms of a two-step process during which first, the speaker's intended meaning as well as the common immediate aim are successfully recognized. Subsequently, the interpreter based on the literal meaning of the speaker's utterance derives a possible meaning which is albeit different from that which the speaker intended, but which better fits the **interpreter's** ultimate aim, i.e., UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER'S MEANING (UIM). This two-step process is in compliance with Grice, 1989's distinction between conversational rationality and the interlocutors' ultimate conversational interests that go beyond that. In order for communication to be successful in how Grice's ideas are implemented here, intention-recognition and cooperatively recognizing the common immediate aim of the conversation is necessary and, as a basis, sufficient. This, crucially, is separate from any further ultimate aim or conversational interests interlocutors might want to achieve via the exchange. The motivation for this implementation stems from Grice, 1975's specifications of different conversational aims explained above. But additionally from his separation of rationality from further interests as in, for example, the following: "[...] we may expect principles of conversational rationality to abstract from the special character of conversational interests." (Grice, 1989 p.369)

So, the circumstance that UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS mostly have some ulterior motives behind using their strategy (e.g. to avoid clear answers, appear cunning or make a joke) can be looked at independently from them following principles of communicating successfully.

3.3.1 *Speaker's intended meaning(s)*

One of Grice's central concepts is the speaker's intended meaning: the meaning that a speaker, at that moment in that context intends their particular utterance to convey. Nerlich and Clarke, 2001 illustrate two variants of speakers intended meaning(s) using ambiguous or polysemous expressions. In their picture, speakers can either only consciously activate one of the possible meanings and also only intend

to convey this meaning. Alternatively, speakers can also consciously activate and deliberately **intend** to convey more than one of the possible meanings an expression can carry. The latter is often used in advertising or in scripted jokes.

These two alternatives of how many of the meanings of an ambiguous or polysemous expression are consciously activated when a speaker utters a sentence can be related to UIM examples involving utterances also containing expressions that are amenable to many different possible interpretations in a context. A competent speaker of a language can be expected to be generally aware of different interpretations of a given utterance, albeit subconsciously. Assuming mutual rational cooperation, they can still expect an interpreter to arrive at what their utterance is **intended** to mean. There are, however, differences in the interpretations a given speaker can consciously intend their utterance to have, especially when it comes to ambiguous or polysemous expressions.

An UIM example involving a speaker who only intended to convey one of the expression's possible meanings is (2).

(2) xxxlutz_de: Wir halten uns ab jetzt lieber raus
('We'd rather stay out of this from now on')

Deutsche Bahn: Während der Fahrt bitte nichts raushalten. Danke.
('Please refrain from holding anything outside during the ride. Thank you.')

[Bahn, 2025 (*my translation*)]

Here, the term *raushalten* is polysemous between *to stay out of sth.* and *to hold sth. outside of sth.*. It is intuitively clear that the speaker (xxxlutz_de) only consciously activated and intended their utterance to refer to the *to stay out of sth.*-interpretation and probably did not actively think about another interpretation. The context of train rides that is introduced by the account of *Deutsche Bahn* (the German railroad company), however, also allows for exploitation of the other possible *to hold sth. outside of sth.*-interpretation that is introduced as another possible interpretation to the COMMON GROUND via the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's response.

In cases of the second possibility used in advertising or scripted jokes where the activation of both meanings is deliberately intended by the speaker, what would be the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETATION is implicit and left to the imagination of the audience. An example of UIM used in a scripted joke is (3):

(3) Street Sign: FINE FOR PARKING
Driver: I thought it was fine to park here.

[nnll33, 2024]

In this example, the speaker (in this case the person who wrote the joke) clearly deliberately intended for both possible meanings (*It's o.k. to park here* and *There will be a fine if you park here*) to be activated in order for the joke to work. There is, though, a fictional character (the driver) who assumes the role of an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER exploiting the ambiguity of *fine* and thereby introducing the other possible interpretation to the COMMON GROUND of the conversation.

Various studies and literature on ambiguity and polysemy look into the degree and potential of activation of different meanings in different contexts. Bach, 1979, for example, describe for ambiguities that the availability of meanings can vary, depending on the different individuals, situations or specific expressions: "On hearing an expression, sometimes we are aware that it is ambiguous – we may even have each meaning in mind. At other times we are not aware of the ambiguity; either we do not know one of the meanings or one of them fails to come to mind." (Bach, 1979 p.245) Crucially, however, the vast majority do so from the perspective of an **interpreter** being confronted with ambiguous or polysemous words or utterances (see, e.g. Williams, 1992; Seidenberg et al., 1982). Right now, this seems to be the only reliable way to get valid data on psychological processes like meaning activation. Meaning activation in speech production is incredibly difficult to measure and, therefore, underexplored thus far. One study I was able to find that investigated language production was Gao and Gu, 2024 who found that, in spoken language, speakers who are aware of ambiguous expressions use more gestures and speak more carefully with longer pauses than speakers who are not aware of any ambiguous expressions in their utterance.

For the sake of a comprehensive description of the UIM phenomenon it is worth acknowledging the difference in the speaker's decision to convey different possible meanings. There are, after all, noticeable differences in examples that are deliberately constructed for the sake of making a joke or the deliberate use of vague formulations in legal documents and examples in which the interpretation that is the basis for the interpreter's reaction comes as more of a surprise to both, the speaker and a potential audience. This section is supposed to raise awareness of the fact that there is a difference in the speaker's intended meaning(s) when it comes to how the possibility for an exploitation through UIM is either accepted (e.g. in legislative texts) or even encouraged (as in scripted jokes like (3)) or not taken into account at all (as in (2)) by the respective speaker.

3.3.2 *The uncooperative interpreter's steps*

Here, it is shown how an account of the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's strategy can work on the basis of applying the tools introduced by Grice, 1975 even though the interpreter acts uncooperatively in following another ultimate aim. According to this view, interpreters follow a two-step process with an intermediate phase during which they actively decide to become an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER and access another possible world to explore the possibilities of what *could* also have been meant by the speaker's utterance. The first of these steps has at its basis Grice, 1957's concept of intention-recognition and is cooperative in that the immediate common aim of the conversation is recognized. In the second step, the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER then backtracks the interpretational path to the literal sentence meaning and invokes a counterpart speaker in another possible world who, in that world, intended their utterance to mean the other possible interpretation. Based on what is the case in this other world, the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER then uses a coherent response as a reaction to the speaker's utterance that, on the one hand, signals that they are not opting out of the conversation and, on the other hand, introduces for the speaker and/or an audience as *live* their other possible interpretation to be accepted into the COMMON GROUND (CG). This strategy allows the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER to follow their personal ultimate aim of the conversation without causing the communication to fail and upholding the general CP. In the following, each step will be described in turn:

First step:

In Grice's terms, the first step is what can be called a cooperative move: an interpreter understands the speaker's intended meaning of the utterance by recognizing that they are supposed to recognize the speaker's intention(s) behind uttering this particular string of words in that particular situation.

If intention-recognition is successful, there is understanding and, if the common immediate aim of the conversation is also, cooperatively, recognized as a result, the communication according to how I interpret Grice can, principally, be called successful. The result of understanding of the speaker's intended meaning was characterized by Austin, 1962 as achieving UPTAKE: "Generally the effect amounts to bringing about the understanding of the meaning and of the force of the locution. So the performance of an illocutionary act involves the securing of uptake." (Austin, 1962 p.116) This was, though rather reluctantly, corroborated by Grice, 1989 who compared the recognition of a meaning$_{NN}$ to some form of UPTAKE. "[...] my analysis already invokes some form of 'uptake' (or a passable substitute therefore), when I claim that in meaning$_{NN}$ a hearer is intended to recognize

himself as intended to be the subject of a particular form of acceptance, and to take on such an acceptance for that reason." (Grice, 1989 p.352)

This rational and cooperative interpretation process is what occurs naturally in our everyday communication and for the most part without actively thinking about it. There is, at this point, also the possibility (though it is not always the case) that the interpreter arrives at more possible interpretations of the uttered expression than just the speaker's intended meaning. As we have seen in the characterization of the intended speaker's meaning(s) above, it is possible that the interpreter arrives at more possible meanings than the speaker was even actively aware their utterance can have.

Counterfactual uptake enrichment:

Between the first and second step – that is, somewhere gradually between (mostly) automatic understanding and deliberate reinterpretation – interpreters, based on their automatic understanding of the speaker's utterance in step one, now reflect on the utterance's multiple possible interpretations as well as the opportunity to exploit them: the UPTAKE of the speaker's utterance is enriched by what can be described as a counterfactual thought process in the sense of *what could have been meant*. Should it be the case that the speaker's and interpreter's *ultimate* conversational aims diverge or are even directly opposed this also factors in during this step. At this stage, there would still be the option to be what is described at the end of section 2.3 as a COOPERATIVE INTERPRETER: they might silently discard their individual ultimate aims in favor of being a cooperative interpreter and react according to following the speaker's conversational aim(s). Should the interpreter choose to follow their **own**, diverging, ultimate aim, they form the deliberate and conscious decision at this point **not** to adhere to what would be uncontroversially cooperative but to exploit the uttered expression's literal meaning.

Second step:

The COUNTERFACTUAL UPTAKE ENRICHMENT, if it results in the decision to exploit another possible interpretation, leads the interpreter to adopt the strategy of an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER as they are understood here. With a basis of having understood the speaker's intended meaning and what it is the speaker would like to achieve by uttering it, this interpreter exploits the literal meaning of the utterance in order to steer the conversation in the direction of their own ultimate aim instead of the speaker's.

In the next subsection I will examine and lay out in detail the interpreter's second step, which, in short, works as follows: after having recognized the speaker's intended as well as another possible meaning and having decided on exploiting it, the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER backtracks the interpretation process to the literal meaning of the utterance and accesses another possible interpretation, compatible with

Grice's principles of interpretation. This other possible world is not part of the COMMON GROUND (CG) between the original interlocutors but licensed as a possible interpretation by the literal meaning underlying *what is said* against the BACKGROUND knowledge. While already having been cooperative toward the common immediate aim of the original speaker in the first step, the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER now maintains this cooperation with respect to the common immediate aim of the **counterpart** speaker in the other possible world. Finally, when taking their turn as speaker, the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER utters a coherent response, thereby still following Grice's description of a cooperative exchange: "The contributions of the participants should be dovetailed, mutually dependent." (Grice, 1975 p.48) This is comparable to, albeit richer than what Asher and Lascarides, 2013 call a RHETORICALLY COOPERATIVE move[2]. They are thereby indicating not to be opting out of the conversation, not just having misunderstood the utterance and they can also introduce their other possible interpretation for the original speaker as well as for any potential audience to accept it as part of the CG.

In the context U of the speaker's utterance U, it is CG not only what was said but also what the speaker intended it to mean in the given context. Furthermore, since both participants of this conversation consider themselves as well as each other at the center in this world, it is also CG that they mutually believe each other as well as themselves to be at the center of this world; to have understood the intended meaning and to have their intended meaning understood, both recognizing the common immediate aim of the conversation in that world. Stalnaker, 2008 specifies that "even though belief *states* are represented by sets of centered possible worlds, the *contents* of belief can be taken to be ordinary propositions-sets of uncentered possible worlds". In UIM then, the common belief set contains centered worlds of the speaker's as well as the interpreter's common belief states but also propositions denoting sets of uncentered possible worlds. (see 3.1).

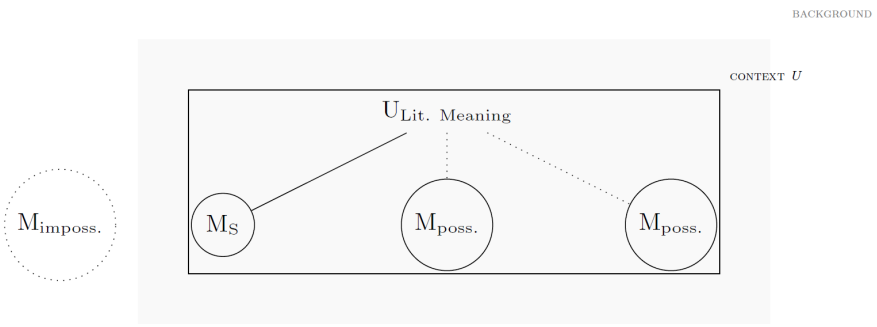


Figure 3.1: worlds in U

2 "A rhetorically cooperative move is a speech act one would expect from a speaker who fully cooperates with his interlocutor." (Asher and Lascarides, 2013 p.3).

Apart from the set of worlds that usually is represented by the actual world – the one in which the speaker's intended meaning is true (M_s) – there are other possible sets of worlds representing live possibilities of interpretations. These are interpretations that could also be true for utterance *U* in the context, given a counterpart speaker intended *U* to have this other meaning. [3]

U's context as well as the general BACKGROUND against which all utterances are interpreted build the threshold between those sets of worlds representing possible interpretations in *U* and those sets of worlds representing meanings that would not be possible to reasonably argue as having been intended by a counterpart speaker. For example, in the imaginable set of worlds $M_{imposs.}$, an interpreter might assume "You said *It is cold* but you COULD have meant by it *Pigs can fly*". Under any pretense of rational cooperation as well as basic meaning conventions, that would be a ridiculous assumption. This does not mean that it is impossible to utter a counterfactual like that but if someone were to say something like that or act as if they understood *It is cold* to mean *Pigs can fly*, they might be suspected to just not have understood *U* in the first place. The worlds outside of what is reasonable to assume against the BACKGROUND are therefore not live possibilities and no suitable candidates for UIM. In the context of *U*, speaker and interpreter, as result of intention-recognition during step one described above, place themselves as well as each other in the world M_s that is the world in which the speaker's intended meaning is true, and the interpreter successfully understood it from *what was said*, recognizing the common immediate aim of the conversation. The utterance *U* as well as the set of worlds including the speaker's intended meaning and the common immediate aim of the conversation builds the COMMON GROUND of the conversation (see 3.2).

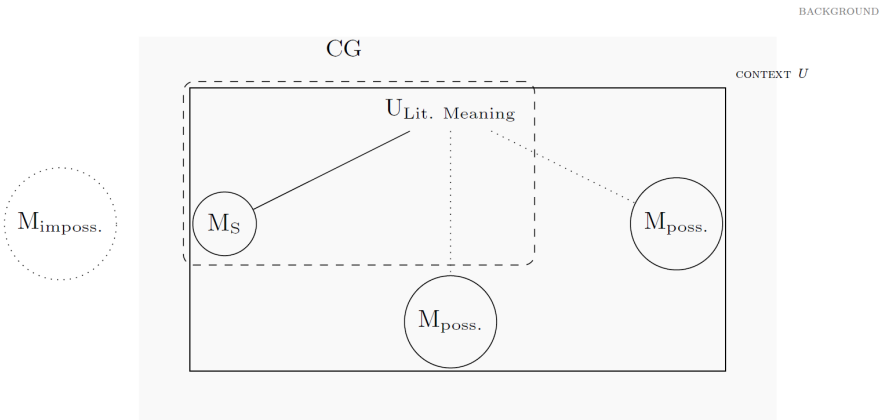


Figure 3.2: common ground worlds in *U*

3 The term LIVE POSSIBILITY is a technical term in formal semantics that can be assumed to have its origins in the philosophical Pragmatism of William James who, as early as 1896, talked about 'live hypotheses': "A live hypothesis is one which appeals as a real possibility to him to whom it is proposed." (James, 2008).

The sets of worlds in context *U* are possibilities of what *could* have been meant given slight variations of speaker's intentions. They are loosely ordered according to their closeness to the speaker's intended meaning. These possibilities are not necessarily (yet) live for the original speaker but became live possibilities for the interpreter during their intention-recognition process in step one. All sets of worlds that are live possibilities as interpretations of *U* are relatively similar and close to the world in which the speaker's intended meaning is true (M_S). It is a necessary condition that the utterances which are (successfully) used for UIMs in my examples are, by virtue of their literal meaning or that of one of their constituents, susceptible to various interpretations; there are thus multiple possibilities that would make them true with respect to different speaker intentions or different information states in a given conversation. Each of these possibilities is a set of epistemic or doxastic alternatives in Stalnaker, 2014's idea of the CG. Naturally, also outside of what is CG between participants of the conversation, there are sets of worlds that are epistemic possibilities as interpretations of *what is said*. These live possibilities can now be back-tracked and traced by an interpreter who might have arrived not only at the speaker's intended meaning but also at another possible interpretation of the sentence's literal meaning – one that might plausibly also have been intended. The UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER who decided to exploit on of the live possibilities in favor of their own ultimate conversational aim traces back their interpretational path to the literal meaning of S's utterance and via the accessibility relation place themselves at the center of a counterfactual set of worlds where a counterpart speaker (S_c) *actually intended to mean* the other possible meaning of their utterance. (see 3.3) This set of centered worlds relates to one of the live possibilities in *U* but it is not part of the set of worlds that make up the CG because it has not been accepted (or even consciously realized for that matter) by the original speaker so it cannot be part of the set of common belief worlds, yet.

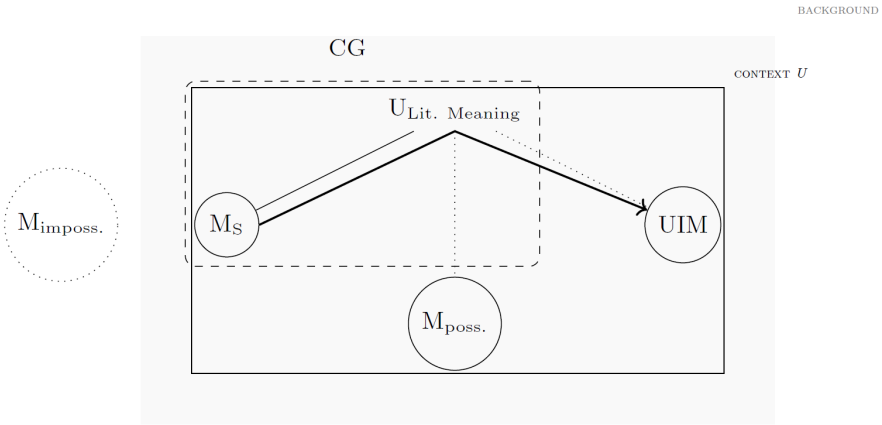


Figure 3.3: UIM in *U*

As briefly mentioned above, the live possibilities that are accessible for the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER are further delimited from sets of possible worlds that would be counterfactual, too, but not within range for exploitation as UIM. This delimitation is achieved via the BACKGROUND that separates possible worlds accessible from the literal meaning of *U* while upholding cooperation from sets of worlds that are either nonsensical or too far from what could rationally be called a live possibility of *U*. Worlds that are outside of the BACKGROUND's limitations on possibilities can also be accessed but lack the rational plausibility needed to uphold cooperation for the interpreter. Using such worlds as a basis for interpretation would result in failure of communication because it would just be assumed that the interpreter did not understand S's intended meaning in the first place. While the speaker still places themselves as well as the interpreter in the CG-set of worlds (M_s), the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER places themselves as well as a speaker's counterpart who intended the other possible meaning in that world in the counterfactual set of possible worlds indexed 'UIM'.

What the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER does is similar to but even more elaborate than Searle, 2010's idea of 'exploiting the background' because they use information that is COMMON GROUND between the participants (*what is said*) just to choose a counterfactual set of belief worlds. These are not CG but are within the limitations of live possibilities provided by the BACKGROUND with respect to the speaker's literal utterance. By their response to the original speaker, they additionally present to them (as well as to a possible audience) as *live* the possible interpretation that was the basis for this response. Not only does this coherent response help them upholding some form of cooperation toward the ultimate aim of the conversation, it also presents the UIM as something the speaker is invited to accept as an update of the CG.

3.3.2.1 *Deniability in UIM*

This section will offer an additional explanation for how an impression of cooperation can be upheld as part of the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's strategy. Plausible deniability can offer a basis for their upholding an impression of cooperation toward the speaker's ultimate aim while, in fact, uncooperatively exploiting their utterance in favor of the interpreter's very own and different ultimate conversational aim.[4] The UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER uses a connection between the speaker's intended meaning and their uncooperative interpretation through the literal basis of *what is said*. The speaker's utterance is

4 In game theory and discourse analysis as well as in the literature on deniability (e.g. Camp, 2018) a strategy like this is often called *strategic communication* or an *uncooperative situation* while it is still placed within Grice's theory. A few issues with both terms and related ones in connection with how I understand Grice's original ideas are explained in more detail in 6.2.

COMMON GROUND between interlocutors, the speaker is committed to and, to a degree, also responsible for it. So by basing their response on the literal meaning of the speaker's utterance – on what *could plausibly also have been meant* – the *uncooperative interpreter* can claim deniability with respect to being uncooperative, also denying responsibility for the mental states they came to have upon interpreting this utterance. Fricker, 2012 attributes a certain amount of commitment and responsibility to a speaker when they explicitly state a proposition *P* but, on the other hand, explains how such commitment and responsibility can be denied by a speaker when their utterance included non-explicit communication, such as implicatures. She bases her account on her understanding of Grice's principles of communication. "On my own favoured account, a hearer who forms belief in what she has been knowledgeably told thereby gains knowledge in virtue of the fact that she has a sound justificatory basis for her belief available: *S* told me that *P*, and not easily would she have done so unless she knew; so *P*." (Fricker, 2012 p.63)

Fricker uses the 'knowledge norm' (*K-norm*) for assertion "one should assert that *P* only if one knows that *P*." (Fricker, 2012 p.62) to put the focus more on knowledge instead of just truth, suggesting that the *K-norm* should be replacing Grice's MAXIM OF QUALITY[5].

Building on this principle, Fricker constructs the idea of accountability and responsibility for a speaker's utterances: "The overt and undeniable taking responsibility for truth of what she puts forward as true in an explicit speech act of telling is an essential part of what gives acts of testifying their epistemic force, as a source of belief and knowledge." (Fricker, 2012 p.63)

She distinguishes varieties of explicitly stating a message to be safe that it is understood, which compares to TESTIFYING, from non-explicit communication. To what is characterized as non-explicit communication belong, on the one hand, 'inexplicit primary messages', which she compares to Grice's meaning$_{NN}$ in that they have to be worked out from context and background knowledge. On the other hand, there are 'secondary messages' or IMPLICATURES: "These implications may be logical, nonlogical, or so-called Gricean conversational implicatures." (Fricker, 2012 p.72) Fricker's main point is that speakers opt for implicit secondary messaging for two main reasons.

> "First, the familiar motive of economy – why take the trouble to spell out all the implications (logical, nonlogical, conversational) of a fact when I can rely on my audience to arrive at these for themselves? [...] 'There's coffee in the pot', one says, and leaves it to one's companion to figure out that this is an invitation to help herself to some. [...]

5 "Do not say what you believe to be false and
Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence." (Grice, 1975)

> Second, and no less significant in some (though only some) cases: to enable a message to be conveyed, while being deniable, disavowable, by its sender. This second feature is one that is widely exploited in all kinds of social situations, especially those involving strategy, power, and motives and plans that participants wish to remain concealed or unacknowledged."
>
> [Fricker, 2012 p.85]

As an example for the latter case, Fricker gives the situation of someone having friends over for a barbecue and they are out of charcoal (resembling Grice's 'gas station-example'). "You reply, 'There's a garage just down the road.' [...] Assuming you conform in your utterance to the Gricean conversational maxims, you will have said this because it is relevant to the conversational context created by my opening remark; which it will be only if I can get charcoal at the garage. [...] On my return, I complain to you, 'I went to the garage, and they didn't have any charcoal.' You may reply, 'I just told you about the garage, I never said they would definitely have charcoal.' " (Fricker, 2012 p.85) So, in secondary messaging, deniability is possible with respect to the implied content – in this case, the implicated message via the MAXIM OF RELATION that the gas station has charcoal. "It is only what a speaker explicitly states that she incurs overt, full and undeniable responsibility for the truth of. Things she leaves it to her audience to figure out, even if she fully expects and intends the audience to figure them out, and this is part of the perlocutionary point of her utterance, are not committed to by her – not, at any rate, to the same full and undeniable extent." (Fricker, 2012 p.85)

Fricker, 2012 constraints deniability to implied or implicated content, what she calls 'secondary messaging'; this might, however, not be the whole picture. Peet, 2015 emphasizes that deniability can also be applied to assertions and *what is said*. Mental states such as intentions are, after all, private and the speaker's intentions also play a role in recovering *what is said*. So a speaker could, in some cases, deny the meaning an interpreter recovered from *what is said* to be a correct representation of the speaker's intended meaning. Generally, Peet, 2015 describes deniability as follows:

> "An agent has plausible deniability about intending to communicate a proposition p with an utterance u of a sentence s if that agent is able to tell a story (with at least some degree of believability) about their attitudes and expectations at the time of utterance such that a reasonable agent with those attitudes and expectations could utter s with no intention to communicate p."
>
> [Peet, 2015]

This makes deniability even more widespread and problematic than it would be according to Fricker, 2012's analysis. "If recovery of an asserted content requires extensive appeal to knowledge context then the speaker will often be able to claim that the audience recovered the wrong proposition, thus disclaiming responsibility for the audience's belief." (Peet, 2015) A very important point for the analysis of UIM made by Peet, 2015 is that deniability and its problematic nature is a two-way-street: "[...] In some cases contextual indeterminacy seems to grant audiences the freedom to recover the meaning they find most convenient. [...] example: one's partner may say that they are going to have coffee at the local café, and one might interpret them as meaning that they are going to the café *now*, using it as an excuse to drink the last of the coffee. One might do this even if one knows that they might be planning to go later (in which case they may still want some of the remaining coffee)." (Peet, 2015 p.5, footnote 2)

Further elaborating on Peet, 2015's account, Camp, 2018 draws on the importance of the conversational record or, more specifically, the COMMON GROUND for plausible deniability: "The key feature of denial, I think, is that it trades on the gap between what is in fact mutually obvious to the speaker and hearer, on the one hand, and what both parties are prepared to *acknowledge* as mutually obvious, on the other." (Camp, 2018 p.49) The boundaries between what is *plausible*, *possible* or *impossible* to deny are fuzzy and characterizations highly context-dependent. As Camp, 2018 points out, a crucial feature of how an insinuation can be plausibly denied by a speaker is its non-literalness taken together with probabilities of counterfactual possibilities: "In effect, she pretends to be in a slightly different conversational context C', governed by an alternative set of interpretive assumptions I', which differ from I in crucial but relatively intangible ways, such as the relative ranking of salience among features or objects, or the relative probabilities of various counterfactual possibilities. Given these differences, the calculation of U plus I' delivers $M(Q)'$ rather than $M(Q)$ as U's implicated content." (Camp, 2018 p.49).

Camp, 2018's calculation, taken together with Peet, 2015's characteristic of a 'two-way-street' compares to what I think applies to the understanding of plausible deniability with respect to an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER (UI): the indeterminacy provided by the speaker's utterance of a word, expression or sentence susceptible to more than one interpretation leads to, firstly, a plausible deniability for the interpreter in the sense that they can reflect back the responsibility for recovering the intended interpretation to the speaker. They are, in many cases, able to claim *How am **I** supposed to know for sure you intended THIS interpretation when another one is just as as likely to be a potential interpretation?!*. Secondly, it provides plausible deniability with respect to them acting uncooperatively in a deliberate way. They are able to refer back to the indeterminacy of the speaker's original

utterance to claim they remained cooperative during the exchange while deliberately following their own ultimate aim in a different possible world in which a counterpart speaker intended the other interpretation of the same literal utterance.

Fricker, 2012 calls the uncertainty about the exact thoughts and intentions of a given speaker DODGY EPISTEMICS. This uncertainty is why it is at all possible for an UI to exploit utterances susceptible to more than one interpretation. An interpreter's calculation of what would be admissible as a possible interpretation according to Camp, 2018 goes as follows:

> "For the alternative interpretation *M(Q)'* to be *admissible* – or above the threshold of 'plausible deniability' – it must be reasonable to calculate *M(Q)'* on the basis of the uttered sentence's conventional meaning *F(P)*, the commitments undertaken in the conversation to this point, and some set *I'* of epistemically accessible presuppositions consistent with those commitments, in a way that renders *U* at least minimally conversationally cooperative."
>
> [Camp, 2018 p.50]

Camp, 2018's calculation fits into the characterization of how the UI uses a counterfactual other possible world with a counterpart speaker during the second step of their interpretation process in order to shift the conversation toward their own ultimate aim while upholding cooperation with respect to the counterpart speaker's aims. It is reasonable to calculate the UIM on the basis of the uttered sentence's conventional meaning, which is susceptible to more than one possible interpretation in a context, taken together with what is COMMON GROUND between the interlocutors and a set of epistemically accessible presuppositions that are consistent with what is COMMON GROUND as well as what the uttered expression can standardly be taken to mean. These commitments make the UIM admissible to be presented as a live possibility by the UI in the given context while maintaining a form of cooperation toward the counterpart speaker's aims.

3.3.3 *An example case*

At this point I would like to use a specific UIM example in order to add some practicability to the theoretical presentation of my account.

(4) Lori Garver: . . . we need to understand asteroids better.
Neil deGrasse Tyson: just to add to Lori's point: to understand an asteroid is not a psychological session 'tell me about you, asteroid' – it is physically.

[*Cosmic Queries – NASA v. Billionaires with Lori Garver* 2022]

Example (4) is an interaction between two scientists who have a spontaneous, non-scripted conversation about asteroids on a podcast. Lori Garver, in this setting, utters the sentence *we need to understand asteroids better*. This sentence contains the polysemous word *understand*, which, as is (at least subconsciously) clear to any competent user of the English language, can have a variety of meanings[6], depending on how, by whom and with which intentions it is used. While it is intuitively obvious that, in the context of a scientific podcast on the physical behavior of space objects Garver's intended meaning involves a physical, scientific understanding of the nature of asteroids, deGrasse Tyson, in his remark, appeals to another, the psychological, meaning *understand* can also have.

Neil deGrasse Tyson's need to make this clarifying remark, on the one hand, is surely supposed to be a joke. On the other hand, the remark's explanatory nature can be interpreted as a hint toward the meaning availability with regard to the different possible meanings of *understand*. The surprise that causes the funny notion of this utterance leads me to believe that – before deGrasse Tyson's comment – the conscious availability of this other meaning of *understand* might have been backgrounded, not only in Lori Garver's case but also in the case of a majority of the audience of the podcast.

I will now go explicitly through the interpreter's steps: first, the interpreter (Neil deGrasse Tyson) hears and interprets Lori Garver's utterance. He, rationally as well as automatically, recognizes the speaker's (Lori Garver) intended meaning and in the process also disambiguates the polysemous term *understand* that she used in her utterance. At this point, UPTAKE is achieved and the communication is successful. The interpreter is cooperative with respect to the common immediate aim of the conversation that is information exchange in a casual conversation setting. Now, deGrasse Tyson seems to also have arrived at another possible disambiguation for *understand* that could very well have been the intended one in another situation and/or another speaker. So far, though, the interpreter's behavior is still abundantly cooperative with respect to how Grice's ideas are implemented here.

During the COUNTERFACTUAL UPTAKE ENRICHMENT phase here then, deGrasse Tyson backtracks his interpretational process from step one back to the literal meaning of the utterance and deliberately decides not to respond with what would be a cooperative comment toward the **ultimate aim** of the speaker (e.g. some comment along the lines of *Exactly, Lori, the physical characteristics of asteroids are still underexplored.*) in favor of following his own ultimate aim of making a humorous explanatory comment exploiting the other possible interpretation of what Garver said.

6 See the Cambridge Dictionary entry for *understand*: *understand* 2025.

The second step evolves out of and overlaps with the COUNTERFACTUAL UPTAKE ENRICHMENT: the NOW UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER, Neil deGrasse Tyson, has backtracked his interpretational process and re-interpreted the literal meaning of the speaker's utterance with respect to the other possible meanings of *understand*. These meanings, in example (4) build a cluster of sets of (uncentered) possible worlds in the current context. The world where the speaker's intended meaning is true is a set of centered worlds containing the speaker (Lori Garver) who intended the *scientific characteristics*-meaning as well as the information that she, herself also places herself in that world. It also contains the cooperative interpreter (Neil deGrasse Tyson before he decided to exploit another possible interpretation) who understood this interpretation and recognize the immediate common aim. This set of centered worlds, together with the set of uncentered worlds containing the literal meaning of the speaker's utterance is the current COMMON GROUND between speaker and interpreter (as well as a possible audience) in this interaction. The other, uncentered, sets of possible worlds containing propositions of possible meanings of *understand* are not (yet) part of the COMMON GROUND and can be evaluated against a BACKGROUND of know-how and capacities that divides them into live possibilities accessible from the actual world via literal meaning(s) of *understand* and impossible meaning(s) that are inaccessible from the actual world and too implausible to be called a live possibility (see 3.4).

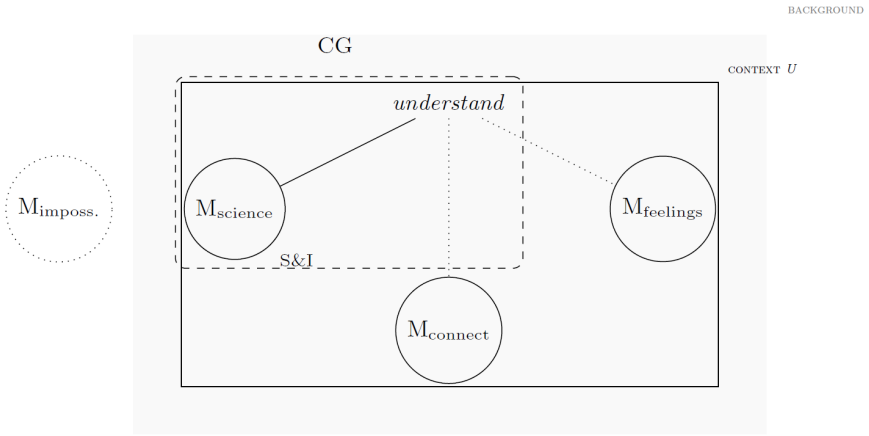


Figure 3.4: meanings of *understand*

For example, the meanings of *understand* that present as live possibilities (apart from the speaker's intended *scientifically investigating*-meaning) are *understanding each other – having a personal connection* and *understand s.o. feelings*. An implausible interpretation that would be blocked by the BACKGROUND as a live possibility accessible from the utterance's literal meaning would, for example, be something easily identifiable as a true misunderstanding (e.g. a mishearing of the word *understand* as something that sounds similar). Alternatively,

interpreter's responses that cannot at all be traced via any meaning conventions to a plausible interpretation of the utterance's literal meaning would also be ruled out by the BACKGROUND as a live possibility: for example, in (4), a response like *Just to add to Lori's point, my parents also always cared about plants a lot.* would probably just cause significant confusion. This admittedly ridiculous example is supposed to show that an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETATION is bound by some constraints because, to paraphrase Searle, 1965, you cannot say anything and mean **anything** by it because there are conventional constraints on what the literal words that are used can mean.

Staying within the conventional constraints of how the utterance *we need to understand asteroids better* can be interpreted, Neil deGrasse Tyson, the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER in (4), uses an epistemic accessibility relation via the literal meaning of Lori Garver's utterance to access another counterfactual set of possible worlds containing one of the other possible interpretations based on the polysemy of *understand*. While the speaker, Garver, still places herself as well as deGrasse Tyson in the set of worlds that is COMMON GROUND between both interlocutors, deGrasse Tyson now places himself and a counterpart speaker in the counterfactual centered set of worlds in which the *feelings*-interpretation is the (counterpart) speaker's intended meaning. This way he can remain cooperative toward the common immediate aim, albeit with respect to the counterpart speaker in this different world. (see 3.5).

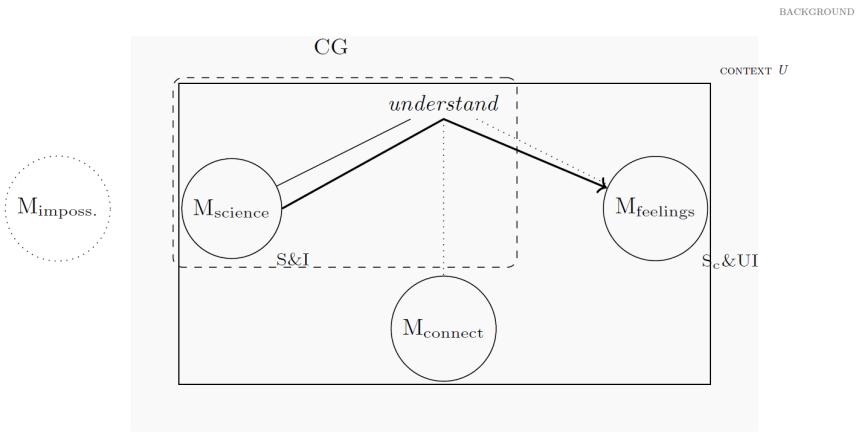


Figure 3.5: accessing the UIM of *understand*

By taking this other possible meaning as a basis for his interpretation, deGrasse Tyson can uphold cooperation toward the conversational aims of a counterpart speaker while subtly diverging from the original speaker's ultimate aim in order to make his humorous remark. The polysemous meanings here license the UIM as something that *could have been meant* under slightly different circumstances. Moreover, the conventional meaning of Garver's literal utterance as well as the COMMON GROUND between the interlocutors, taken together

make the UIM's uncooperativity admissible to be plausibly denied. Neil deGrasse Tyson can quite plausibly claim that he couldn't know if there wasn't someone who would have interpreted Garver's utterance in the *asteroid's feelings*-way.

While the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETATION *understand the asteroid's feelings* is not initially COMMON GROUND between the two interlocutors (and a potential audience), deGrasse's remark that is based on this interpretation then also presents it as a live possibility and as something to be accepted as a COMMON GROUND-update to Garver and the audience. I will talk more about the special characteristics of the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS' responses in the next section.

3.3.4 *A brief look at the interpreter's response*

UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS, when taking their turn in the conversation, react to the speakers in their specific conversational situations in a not-nonsensical way and with a coherently related speech act that would be expected at that point. This move reflects what Grice, 1975 described in "The contributions of the participants should be dovetailed, mutually dependent" but can also be compared to a RHETORICALLY COOPERATIVE response following the terminology of Asher and Lascarides, 2013 (see 7.2 for more on that topic). For example, a question is followed by an answer (as in (5)), a statement is followed by a rhetorically connected comment (as in (2)) or what seems to be a clarification question or an elaboration and so on. This way, they make very clear that they neither want to opt out of the conversation nor that they just misunderstood. The connection between what the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER takes as basis for their interpretation and the meaning that was intended by the speaker, however, is stronger than the rhetorical connection Asher and Lascarides, 2013 draw in their level of RHETORICAL COOPERATIVITY – for an UIM, it is not enough to have a coherently related speech act. More importantly, in the phenomenon discussed in this thesis, the connection can be traced back via some sort of ambiguity, polysemy, vague words or sentences and other types of interpretation varieties anchored in the conventional meaning of the words used in the utterance.

Overall, the speaker's intended meaning is conveyed to and understood by the interpreter by virtue of adhering to the COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE (CP). In fact, it goes even further because, in formulating an answer when taking their turn, the interpreter, themselves, adhere to the CP since it is in their interest to convey their awareness and use of the original utterance's other possible interpretation to the original speaker. To make that more precise consider the very first example again:

(5) Reporter: [. . .] könnten Sie konkretisieren, welche Sicherheitsgarantien das sind?
('[. . .] could you specify which security guarantees those are?')

Olaf Scholz: Ja, könnte ich. [pause] Das war's.
('Yes, I could. [pause] That's it')

[Pressekonferenz G7-Gipfel, 2022 (*my translation*)]

Scholz in (5) deliberately just repeats the *I could* in order to convey to the reporter his understanding of the other interpretation of that phrase. Although, in a folk understanding of the term, this is not a very cooperative move, when observed according to how I interpret Grice's technical term of cooperation in a rational sense, the interaction has to be seen as successful: the speaker's intended meaning is understood and the common immediate aim is recognized. Furthermore, in order to make his response understood, Scholz also again relies on principles underlying rational communication. He expects the reporter to recognize his intention to implicate that he will not respond as he is expected to but also does not want to say so explicitly. So, his answer constitutes also, again, an instance of successful and cooperative communication since it's a commonly-used pattern of behavior that can be expected to be recognized by the reporter as well as the audience.

An interesting, multi-layered example showing the impact of an UIM response that carries implicated messages, itself, is (6). The UIM here is based on the German metaphorical use of *hetzen* (*to incite* or *to rush*) used by the interpreter (Bosetti) to comment on the commentator's obviously rude intended interpretation (*to incite*) by shifting the expression's reference to the less rude interpretation (*to rush*):

(6) User: Bosetti hetzt den Frieden herbei.
('Bosetti is ‚baiting over' the peace [getting peace via baiting]')

Bosetti: Naja ich will ihn ja nicht hetzen aber du wirst mir darin zustimmen, dass er sich ruhig mal ein bisschen beeilen könnte.
('Well, I don't want to rush [the peace] but you'll be with me when I say that it'd be welcome to hurry up a little bit.')

[Bosetti, 2024 (*my translation*)]

This example exhibits, on the speaker's (the commentator) side, the unusual combination of the expressions *peace* and *to incite*, which seem contradictory since the violent and extreme nature of an act suggested by *incite* does not really fit the concept of *peace*. Exactly this strategy of attributing a violent and patronizing notion to wishes or ideas of people who would consider themselves rather on the left side of the political spectrum is used frequently by a specific segment of the population in order to verbalize their criticism. So, this user comment

seems to suggest people like satirist Sarah Bosetti aim at 'peace at any cost'[7]. Not only does the interpreter Bosetti (rationally, cooperatively) recognize the intended meaning and the message behind this comment very well; she also is aware of the ambiguity of the word *hetzen* that is used by the speaker very deliberately with one specific intended meaning. In her response, following her own ultimate aim of this exchange, Bosetti then presents her interpretation of *hetzen* as *to rush* for it to be added to the COMMON GROUND of the conversation but, moreover, formulates her response in an (at least) equally witty way in order to imply an additional message by it, herself. She responds upholding the impression of being cooperative but tones down the recognized hateful notion insinuated by the *incite*-interpretation of the word. Furthermore, she uses an unambiguous synonym (*beeilen (hurry up)*) to make very clear what her understanding of the word is **and** provocatively suggests that there can't be any alternative to agreeing with her on the rather uncontroversial statement that having peace sooner rather than later would be preferable. The latter is implicated in the phrase *du wirst mir zustimmen (you'll be with me)*.

The way an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER formulates their response is equally as deliberate as their decision to use the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETATION. It is in their ultimate interest to construct a response that, not only, presents the different possible interpretation as information to be added to the COMMON GROUND by the original speaker as well as an audience. Everyone should be clear about the basis underlying the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's response as well as, possibly also its connection to the original utterance. Establishing the connection to the original utterance also helps upholding a form of cooperative behavior and, furthermore, strengthens the plausibility for even denying a previous understanding of the intended interpretation in the first place. Scholz in (5), for example, uses the repetition of the original speaker's literally used word *könnte* (*could*) to establish the connection while Bosetti in (6) uses repetition in combination with a synonym to represent her other interpretation of the ambiguous *hetzen* (*incite*) in order to make abundantly clear what her response is based on.

7 In this particular case, the concept of *peace at any cost* bears a special tone of cynicism since the exchange in (6) refers to Russia's war on Ukraine – a situation in which *peace at any cost* would mean Ukraine basically surrendering their sovereignty as a nation as well as their land to Putin and Russia.

3.4 SUMMARY

My proposal of successful communication with an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER has, at its core, a two-step process: a first step of intention-recognition and rational recognition of the common immediate aim of the conversation; successful and cooperative in the way Grice's ideas are interpreted here.

After a deliberate decision is made to exploit the uncooperative interpretation, step two involves the then UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER backtracking their interpretation of the speaker's utterance to its literal meaning and, from there, accessing another possible world in which a counterpart speaker intended the other possible meaning of the same utterance. While this other interpretation is not part of the COMMON GROUND, yet, between speaker and UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER, it is licensed via the BACKGROUND by the multiple possible interpretations of the speaker's literal utterance. As a live possibility it is therefore accessible from the literal meaning of the utterance. Such connections will be described in detail in the following chapter 4 in form of a taxonomy of the sources of UIM's like, for example, ambiguity, anaphora resolution or highly conventionalized implicatures.

Remaining cooperative with respect to the counterpart speaker in the other possible world, the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER exploits what *could have been meant* in order to steer the conversation toward their own ultimate aim instead of the speaker's. The use of a live possibility accessible from the literal basis behind *what is said* provides grounds for plausible deniability for the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER with respect to their uncooperative behavior as well as, in some cases, the previous understanding of the speaker's intended meaning. By then reacting to the speaker's utterance with a coherent response, they are making very clear not to opt out of the conversation and to be upholding the general CP while also, again, using Grice's principles, in their own response, to introduce their other possible interpretation to be added to the CG of the conversation.

4

TAXONOMY OF UIM SOURCES

In the case of a couple arguing, irreconcilably, about spending money, they cooperate on using a common language, on carrying on a conversation, but not on where it is to take them.

— Ludwig, *What Is Minimally Cooperative Behavior?*

4.1 THE SOURCES OF UIM

One fundamental characteristic of UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER'S MEANING is that it shares an undeniable connection with the speaker's original utterance. With examples I consider to be an instance of my phenomenon there always has to be some traceable source associated with the literal words and their conventional meaning that provides a link to the UIM. From the examples I showed toward the end of chapter 2 that were explicitly NOT my phenomenon, it hopefully became clear that an UIM cannot be based on just any random interpretation. If the interpreter aims at retaining an impression of cooperation, their interpretation has to have some traceable connection to the speaker's utterance in order to be admissible. This is the main reason that UIMs in my data set are, for the most part, based on some form of ambiguity or polysemy; it provides a semantically relatable and comparably sturdy connection that can hardly be denied. Other phenomena involving a variety of meanings in a given context are also present in some of the examples I collected but to an admittedly lesser extent. In the following section I will describe, one by one, the possible sources an UIM can be based on, provide individual examples as well as explanations as to how the individual phenomenon is exploited by the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER. Note that the categories given here are not clear-cut beyond any doubts. There are fuzzy boundaries between them, examples might be possible to be sorted into two or more categories and there are examples that are hard to put into one of these categories at all. Naturally, there is a possibility for doubts, discussion and different interpretations with respect to which UIM examples appear as instances of which category.

4.1.1 *Ambiguity*

Ambiguity is a phenomenon present in almost all aspects of our everyday interaction. It goes so far that in areas where ambiguity is considered problematic (as, for example, in cross-examinations in court) it is tried to be avoided at all cost, resulting in mostly either

unnaturally long-winded or brokenly sounding exchanges because interlocutors feel an urge to explain every word in detail or use as little words as possible as to avoid saying anything that could be constructed in any other than the intended way. Its pervasiveness also causes blurry definitions of the very word *ambiguity* (or *ambiguous*) since it is, for instance, used significantly more loosely in everyday language than when it is treated as a technical term in Linguistics (and even within the field it is often defined differently). "In common parlance, the word 'ambiguity' is used loosely: often simple underspecificity will suffice for a charge of ambiguity. The U.S.'s policy towards the unification of China and Taiwan has been described as a policy of 'strategic ambiguity', one that allows the U.S. to be non-specific with respect to the status of Taiwan. 'Jane's sister will come to visit' is sometimes thought to be ambiguous when Jane has multiple sisters. A movie with a character that heads to surgery at the end, leaving it open whether he lives or dies, is said to have an ambiguous ending." (Sennet, 2023, Chpt.1) The way I use it here is as a technical term, clearly distinct from other phenomena of 'loose speech' like vagueness, underspecification, polysemy or indefinite descriptions.

4.1.1.1 *Lexical ambiguity*

> "Lexical ambiguity is a property of words (or lexemes) [...] the English word 'seal' is an ambiguous lexical item referring, among other things, to a particular kind of sea creature or a device for making sure an opening is fully closed. The sentence 'I've brought the seal' is ambiguous because of the presence of this lexical item."
>
> [Chapman and Routledge, 2009 p.3]

I explicitly distinguish *ambiguity* from *polysemy*, which is not always deemed necessary in other accounts. For the purposes of the exact analysis of my examples, however, I consider it important to draw such a distinction although there remain cases which are not beyond reasonable doubt classifiable as one or the other. There are also approaches that more closely distinguish between homonymy (two distinct senses) and polysemy (several related senses) but treat both as subclasses of ambiguity (e.g. Carston, 2021 – see next section on 'Polysemy'). I'll adopt here the largely accepted view also followed, for example, in Sennet, 2023 that ambiguity in words is a matter of two or more lexical entries that correspond to the same word and polysemy a single lexeme that has multiple meanings.

Cruse, 1982 defines lexical ambiguity as follows: "To count as paradigmatic lexical ambiguity (i.e. ambiguity within a constant syntactic frame), two readings of a word, must, it seems, (a) satisfy the direct criteria, (b) not be micro-senses from the same sense-cluster, and (c) not be connected by a sense-spectrum."

Indirect criteria here focus directly on the item in question, and concern its behavior in various sorts of context. There are four indirect criteria described by Cruse, 1982:

1. Distinct senses should behave independently, for example with respect to negation – general terms should not.
   The two possible interpretations represented with the disjunction OR in

   (1) *They reached the [river-bank]OR[money-bank]in time*

   hold under negation *They didn't reach the [river-bank]OR[money-bank] in time* while the general term in *It was a [boy-child]OR[girl-child] who opened the door* does not work with the disjunction under negation and would need to be changed to a conjunction *It wasn't a [boy] AND it wasn't a [girl] who opened the door* to still account for its two interpretations.

   This holds, for example, for the lexically ambiguous term *sentence* on which the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER'S MEANING (UIM) in (2) below is based. The utterance *Can I please NOT finish my sentence?* would be a very weird thing to say but the ambiguity would still hold.

   (2) Judge: why should you be released early?
   Defendant: it's bec...
   Judge: yes?
   Defendant: I think I have...
   Judge: Go on
   Defendant: Can I please finish my sentence?
   Judge: Sure! Parole denied.

   [LuigiExplains, 2022]

2. Sentences containing ambiguous words should be able to be used for two distinct statements which are referentially identical except for the sense of the ambiguous word and should yield different truth values.
   For example

   (3) *Charles has changed his position*

   can yield the two interpretations *Charles has changed his opinion concerning EEC membership* and *Charles has decided to sit somewhere else in the conference hall*, which can be judged by someone hearing only the *position*-sentence as either true or false, depending on the reading. Contrastingly, a general term like *horse* does not work like that:

There's a horse in the field
(i) *That's true – it's the black stallion*
(ii) **That's false – it's the black stallion*

The UIM example in (4) also shows this contrast when it comes to the key term *position*. Similarly to Cruse's example, here it is also the case that *My favorite body configuration* and *My favorite professional rank* are two distinct statements that yield different truth values depending on the reading of the question.

(4) In a morning show interview, US reality TV star Lauren Conrad drew questions out of a mystery sack and was asked about her favorite position.
Her answer: CEO.

[Toofab, 2021]

3. "A normal utterance utilises only one of the readings of an ambiguous word; the applicability of a general term, however, must be maximised, even if the result is anomalous."
?The children wore red dresses, and the boys, blue suits. is weird because the second reference includes boys in the context and so the first mention of children has to be maximized to boys, too. With ambiguous words, however, references to their two different interpretations are totally fine: *I prefer a bank to the side of a river for depositing my money*.

   In the following example (5), a reference to both interpretations of the ambiguous *calf* would also be acceptable in a sentence like, e.g.: *I found a vet who used to be a human doctor before, so, whether it's your calf or your own lower leg that's in pain, he'll fix it*.

   (5) Patient: My calf is in pain.
   Doctor: Sorry, I'm a doctor, not a veterinarian.

   [punhubonline, 2023]

4. "Certain grammatical processes require identity of sense between certain elements involved in the process. [. . .] The test is the so-called 'pun-test'. Two readings are isolated in biasing contexts and then placed in a structure that calls for identity between them. If the result is normal, the two readings can be regarded as contextual specifications of a single general meaning. A truly ambiguous word yields an unmistakable pun (although not necessarily a funny one):"
?John and his driving license expired last Thursday. – this situation combines the two readings of *expire*; thereby causing zeugma (a funny or ridiculous reading) and a pun. With the general term *humans* in *Humans can become pregnant at X years of age, and*

can father children at Y. coordinates different readings without zeugma, showing that it's not an ambiguous word.

Since most of the UIM-based answers in my collection are supposed to be funny, it is very fitting that they exploit lexically ambiguous expressions that, as they should, do also pass the 'pun-test':

(6) Attorney: Is your appearance here this morning pursuant to a deposition notice which I sent to your attorney?
Witness: No, this is how I dress when I go to work.

[justia.com, 2022]

Here, in (6), the UIM interpretation is due to the lexical ambiguity of the term *appearance* used in the attorney's utterance. Used in a structure that calls for identity between its two interpretations (as specified by Cruse above), it also yields a pun: *the witness as well as their extravagant clothing's appearance were a surprise in court today.*

The alternation of readings that is shown with words like *book* in *I memorised the main points of the book, then burnt it*,
words like *door* in *I've been thinking about the door; so has John. I want it painted green, and John wants the wheelchair to be able to get through*,
and words like *window* in *The window was broken so often that it had to be boarded up* as well as several numerals can be seen as 'micro-senses' within a 'cluster' that builds their meaning. This characteristic is shared by synonyms, hyponyms, and co-hyponyms. Lexically ambiguous words must not have 'micro-senses' from the same 'cluster' as Cruse, 1982 says.

And, last but not least, words such as *like* and *read* have so-called 'meaning-spectra' consisting of a respective continuum of meaning. The closer together those meanings are, the more likely it is that they can be coordinated without zeugma; and the other way around.
Mary spends her time reading

– *novels and D.I.Y. books*
– *D.I.Y. books and catalogues*
– *catalogues and trade lists*
– *trade lists and duty rosters*
– *duty rosters and time-tables*
– *time-tables and calendars*
– *calendars and clocks*
– *clocks and thermometers*

Lexically ambiguous words should not have such sense-spectra. Words like *read* and *like* would be characterized by Cruse as **semantically** ambiguous instead.

A homonymy-subcase not further discussed by Cruse, 1982 but which is the source of the UIM in example (7) is the 'type-token distinction'. The characteristics relevant for the distinction in (7) are described by Maciver, 1937 as follows: "I suggest that, when we say 'two words are the same word', we mean that two token-words are *both* of the same formal type *and* of the same semantic type. [...] Where we have tokens of the same formal type but not of the same semantic type, we have *homonyms*." (Maciver, 1937 p.62)

(7) Attorney: ALL your responses MUST be oral, OK? What school did you go to?
Witness: Oral.

[Boren, 2016]

With respect to the tests presented by Cruse above, the 'pun-test', for example clearly causes zeugma and shows that the homonymy is present with the type-token distinction of *oral*: *The witness' response was both, oral and 'oral'*. The UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER in (7) (the witness) can be assumed to understand that by the intended meaning here, the speaker was referring to the semantic type of *oral* that is here *spoken out loud*. Presumably, under the pressure of being a witness in court where every word carries potential importance and attorney's questions have to be answered as exactly as possible, the witness here interprets and uses the token of the formal type *oral* as their answer. The two instances of *oral* in the exchange above can be said to be of the same formal type but not of the same semantic type. The attorney's phrasing of the question *responses must be oral* in (7) is ambiguous and allows for an interpretation of both readings though the context clearly suggests the *spoken out loud*-interpretation.

In UIM examples, lexical ambiguities provide a robust connection between the speaker's utterance and the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER'S exploitation of the other possible meaning. A single word that, naturally, has two distinct senses might usually be disambiguated through context so that the interpreter should not have any trouble understanding the speaker's intended meaning. There is, though, also a lexically encoded other possibility which, in UIM cases, provides the accessibility of another set of possible worlds in which the other meaning was the one that was intended by a counterpart speaker.

4.1.1.2 *Syntactic/structural ambiguity*

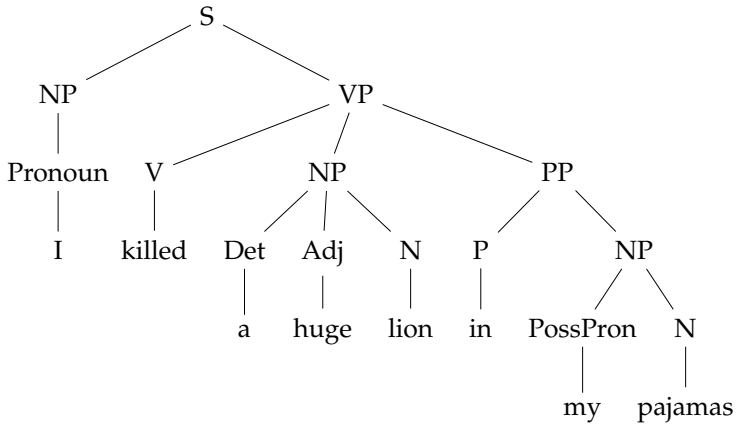
"Syntactic ambiguity occurs when there are many LFs [*Logical Forms*] that correspond to the same sentence – assuming we don't think of sentences as distinct if their LFs are distinct. This may be the result of scope, movement or binding, and the level at which the ambiguity is localized can involve full sentences or phrases." (Sennet, 2023)

Attardo et al., 1994 examined printed jokes, the following of which is not only an example of syntactic ambiguity, it might also be classified as an UIM:

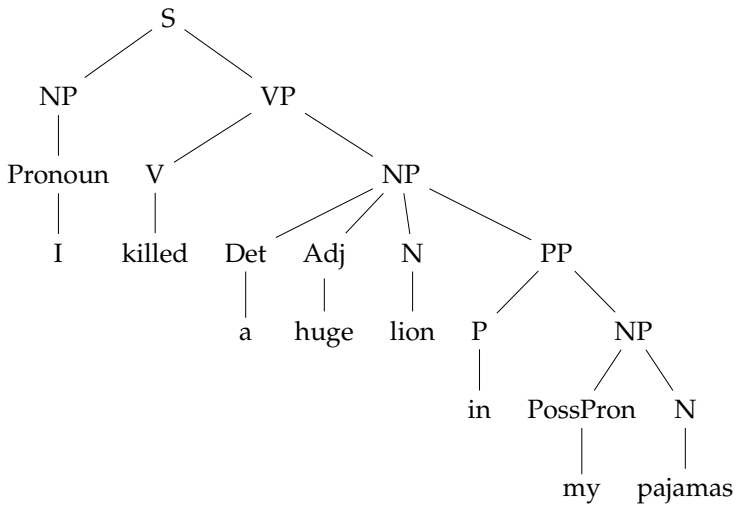
(8) The big game hunter was telling about his adventures to a group of school children [...] "One night I remember being wakened by a great roaring noise. I jumped up and grabbed my gun, which I always kept loaded at the foot of my cot. I rushed out and killed a huge lion in my pajamas." At the close of his presentation he asked if there were any questions. 'yes' said a little girl sitting on the front row, 'how did the lion get into your pajamas?'

[Pendleton, 1979 p.22]

"The ambiguity in this joke arises from the different syntactic interpretations of the italicized prepositional phrase (PP) in 'I rushed out and killed a huge lion *in my pajamas*.' 'In my pajamas' is meant (by the hunter) to be a modifier of 'I'; this Interpretation can be displayed in a syntactic tree:" (Attardo et al., 1994)



The little girl, on the other hand, takes *in my pajamas* to modify *lion*, graphically represented as:



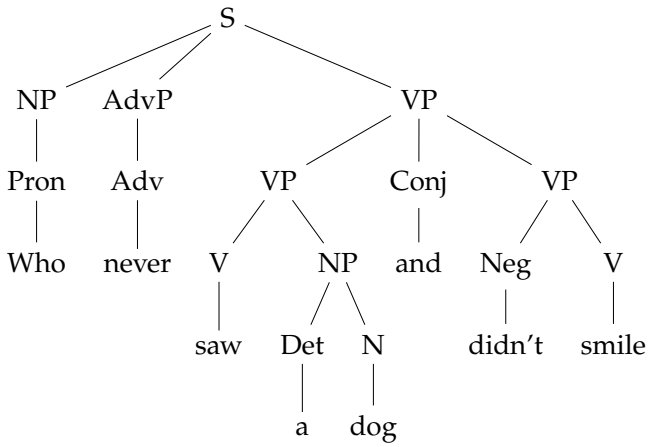
In a scripted joke, it is always difficult to determine whether or not the interpreter formulating their response (in (8) the little girl asking the question) understood the speaker's intended meaning and then chose to deliberately respond as if the other possible meaning were the one that was intended by the speaker. In a genuine situation, this interaction might also happen due to a true misunderstanding.

My examples for UIM I think the cases are much clearer when it comes to a deliberate exploitation as opposed to a true misunderstanding. For example, in (9), although there is a clear syntactic ambiguity, it is also quite obvious that the interpreter did, in fact, understand the speaker's intended meaning (10) in which it never happened that Nicole Campbell saw a dog without smiling. Nonetheless, they deliberately commented as if the speaker intended the other possible interpretation (11) in which Nicole Campbell never saw any dogs and, thus, never smiled:

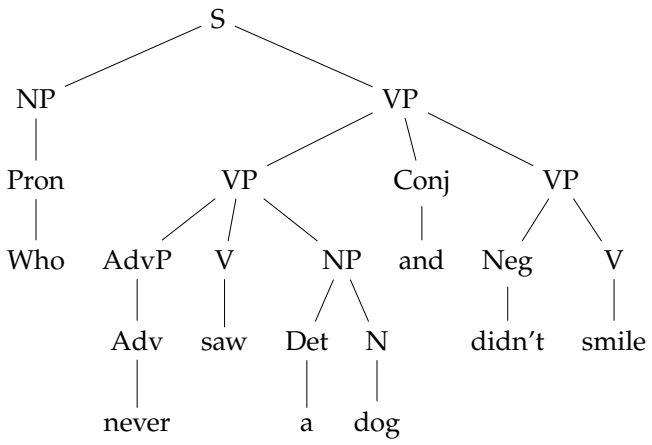
(9) Dog park bench sign inscription:
In loving memory of Nicole Campbell – Who never saw a dog and didn't smile.
Comment: If only she'd seen a dog. It might've given her reason to smile.

[Power [@JulianPowerVO], 2023]

(10)



(11)



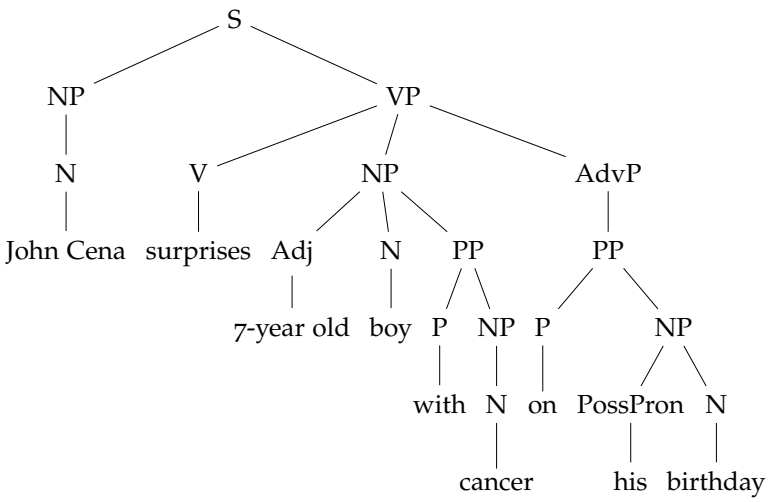
Similarly, the short, elliptical style of a newspaper headline is prone to syntactic ambiguities resulting from different PP-attachments as the one in (12) that is exploited by the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER in the comment:

(12) Headline: John Cena surprises 7-year-old boy with cancer on his birthday.
Comment: what a terrible gift

[@sigourneybeaver, 2020]

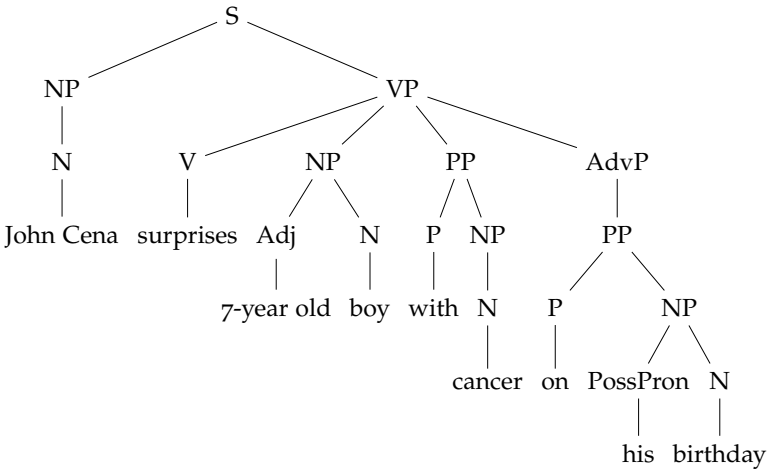
Here, the speaker's (author's) intended meaning was that there is a boy with cancer who was surprised by celebrity John Cena on his birthday:

(13)



Another interpretation that is made possible by the inherent syntactic ambiguity of the sentence is exploited by the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER and made reference to in their comment *What a terrible gift* – this interpretation refers to a boy that got cancer as a birthday surprise by John Cena:

(14)



The same construction is also the source of the UIM in (15) (I will refrain from drawing another two trees for this example in the interest of space):

(15) Mensch: Der Nachbar erzählte mir, Du verfolgst Leute auf dem Fahrrad ...
(Human: 'The neighbor tells me you chase people on a bike')

Hund: Der lügt! Ich habe gar kein Fahrrad!
(Dog: 'He's lying! I don't even have a bike!')

[Debeste, 2020 (*my translation*)]

Here, the interpreter (the dog) avoids an admission of guilt by exploiting the PP-attachment ambiguity of the human's utterance. While speaker's intended meaning is the dog chasing people who ride bikes, the uncooperative dog with their interpretation refer to the other possible meaning of the ambiguous phrase *chase people on a bike*, which puts the dog on a bike while chasing people.

One extremely productive type of structural ambiguity in English is found with constructions of the form Adjective + noun + noun head like, for example *big dog sitter* where, without further context, it remains unclear if we are talking about a big person sitting dogs or a person sitting big dogs. (25) discussed above is such a case, too, as well as the following examples of UIM deliberately choosing the less salient but also very much possible interpretations of the constructions *yellow snow warning* in (16) and *previous life experience* in (17), both times with the ultimate aim of making a joke.

(16) UK weather: Met Office issues 13-hour yellow snow warning
Comment: Don't eat it.

[No Context Brits [@NoContextBrits], 2023a]

(17) When filling out a job application, I saw they had a section for 'previous life experience', so I wrote down that I was a Pharaoh in 2300 B.C..

[@thirtysomethingprobs, 2023]

Different NP-attachments in sentence constructions like the ones seen above are extremely productive as UIMs because, similarly to lexical ambiguities, the respective other possible meaning exploited by the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER is inherent in the sentence structure and therefore, the other possible world in which this is the intended meaning of the counterpart speaker is easily accessible from the sentence's literal meaning. Any deliberate uncooperative behavior can quite plausibly be denied here because these constructions are so straightforwardly readable in both their ambiguous configurations.

4.1.1.3 *Scope ambiguity*

Scope ambiguities arise from sentences or phrases containing e.g. quantifiers that can take scope over different parts of the expression they're used in.

Scope ambiguities have been explained, for example, by Montague, 1973 (commonly abbreviated as PTQ) as a covert semantic operation (as opposed to, e.g. syntactic function):

examples are the sentences *John finds a unicorn* and *John seeks a unicorn*. "These are syntactically alike (subject-verb-object), but are semantically very different. From the first sentence follows that there exists at least one unicorn, whereas the second sentence is ambiguous between the so called *de dicto* (or *non-specific*, or *notional*) reading which does not imply the existence of unicorns, and the *de re* (or *specific*, or *objectual*) reading from which existence of unicorns follows." (Janssen and Zimmermann, 2021) Scope ambiguity is not only linked to intensionality, as Montague mentions using another example that came to be famous over time: "[...] ambiguity can arise even when there is no element of intensionality, simply because quantifying terms may be introduced in more than one order." (Montague, 1973 p.31) The classical example here is the sentence *a woman loves every man* that can be interpreted in (at least) two different ways, depending on the scope of the quantifier:

$$\forall u[woman' * (u) \wedge \exists v[man' * (v) \rightarrow love' * (u, v)]]$$
$$\text{OR}$$
$$\exists v[man' * (v) \rightarrow \forall u[woman' * (u) \wedge love' * (u, v)]]$$

According to Montague, 1973, "the scope ambiguity is dealt with by providing for the sentence two different derivations. On the reading that *every* has wide scope, the sentence is produced *from every man* and *loves a woman*. On the reading that only one woman is involved, the sentence is obtained from *Every man loves* him_1. The him_1 is an artifact, a placeholder, or, one might say, a syntactic variable. [...]. For the sentence under discussion, the effect of the application of the quantifying-in rule to *a woman* and *Every man loves* him_1 is that the desired sentence is produced and that the quantifier corresponding with *a woman* gets wide scope" (Janssen and Zimmermann, 2021).

Sentences like Montague, 1973's example involve two quantifying expressions – in the above case *a* and *every*. As Scontras et al., 2017 points out using an example very similar to Montague's: "English is a language with scope ambiguities in doubly-quantified sentences like *A shark ate every pirate*; this sentence can either describe a scenario with a single shark eating all of the pirates, or a scenario with many sharks – a potentially-different one eating each pirate. [...] Viewing quantifiers like *a* and *every* as logical operators, the ambiguities correspond to the relative scope of these operators within the logical form (LF) of the sentence (whence the name 'scope ambiguities').

(18) A shark attacked every pirate.
a. SURFACE SCOPE ($\exists > \forall$):
There was a single shark that attacked multiple pirates.
b. INVERSE SCOPE ($\forall > \exists$):
For each pirate, there was a (different) shark that attacked him."

[Scontras et al., 2017]

Doubly-quantified sentences and their productive scope ambiguity are also a great source for UIM as can be seen in (19).

(19) News Headline: A toddler has shot a person every week in the US for two years straight.
Comment: Why hasn't anyone stopped him?

[@bazlyons, 2022]

In this example there are also two quantifiers (*a* and *every*), one of them used twice with different objects. Following Scontras et al., 2017's distinction, one interpretation takes INVERSE SCOPE:

$$\forall x[person(x) \rightarrow \exists y[toddler(y) \wedge shot(y,x)]]$$

(*For all people that were shot, there was a (different) toddler who shot them.*)

The other interpretation takes SURFACE SCOPE

$$\exists x[toddler(x) \wedge \forall y[person(y) \rightarrow shot(x,y)]]$$

(*There exists a toddler such that this same toddler shot another person every week for two years*)

The UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER in (19) exploits this scope ambiguity in such a way that they, as basis for their comment, use the surface-scope interpretation instead of what they understood before as being the speaker's intended inverse-scope meaning.

4.1.1.4 *Referential ambiguity*

Referential ambiguity is difficult to distinguish from scope ambiguity; there certainly exists an amount of overlap between the two concepts. The basic principle, according to Fodor and Sag, 1982 is "To put it roughly, we could say that someone who utters (1) [(1) *A student in the syntax class cheated on the final exam*] might be intending to assert merely that the set of students in the syntax class who cheated on the final exam is not empty; or he might be intending to identify, assert of some particular student, whom he does not that this student cheated" (Fodor and Sag, 1982 p.356). Fodor and Sag, 1982 present an account that treats the ambiguity of a sentence including an indefinite description, like (1), as showing a lexical ambiguity between a referential understanding and a quantifier interpretation, instead of a

quantifier-interpretation-only theory which treats them as quantifiers with scope-ambiguities. They support their theory with the following set of observations in which sentences containing indefinites exhibit features that can only be sufficiently explained when a referential interpretation is assumed, too, "e.g. for the purely 'instrumental' role of the descriptive content; for the appearance of unusually wide scope readings relative to other quantifiers, higher predicates, and island boundaries; for equivalent the fact that the island-escaping readings are always to maximally wide scope quantifiers; and for the appearance of violations of the identity conditions on variables in deleted constituents."

- "The content of the noun phrase, or of the remainder of the sentence, can be relevant. For example, the indefinites in sentences (4) and (5) are more likely to be understood referentially than the descriptively vaguer *someone* in (6).
  (4) A student that Betty used to know in Arkansas cheated on the exam.
  (5) A friend of mine cheated on the exam.
  (6) Someone cheated on the exam. [...]

- Another indication of this correlation between descriptive richness and referential understanding is the loss of narrow scope quantifier interpretations for indefinites with detailed descriptive content. So, the indefinites in (9) and (10) are not as readily construed as being within the scope of the negation and universal quantifier, respectively, as the indefinites in (11) and (12), because they are more naturally construed as referential.
  (9) Sandy didn't see a squirrel that was chasing its tail around the oak tree.
  (10) Everyone hates a particularly obnoxious student in the syntax class who shouts at the instructor and hogs the discussion.
  (11) Sandy didn't see a squirrel.
  (12) Everyone hates a student in the syntax class. [...]

- Topicalization and Left Dislocation, as in (13), strongly favor the referential understanding.
  (13) A Frenchman that I met in Tokyo, I went and had dinner with (him) in New York last week. [...]

- The referential understanding is strongly, perhaps uniquely, favored by the use of the colloquial non-demonstrative this, as in (16) (see Prince, 1981).
  (16) This girl in the syntax class cheated on the exam. (uttered with no such girl in the immediate neighborhood) [...]

- *There*-insertion constructions, such as (17) and (18), are characteristically used to assert the non-emptiness of a set.

(17) There are black swans.
(18) There was someone smoking behind the woodshed.
A *there*-insertion construction would therefore be expected to be more compatible with the quantifier understanding of an indefinite than with the referential understanding. [...]

- Any relative clause modifying an indefinite adds to its descriptive content and therefore tends to favor a referential understanding, but the effect is even more pronounced for non-restrictive relatives than for restrictive relatives. The indefinite in (23), for example, can only naturally be understood referentially.
(22) A student in the syntax class who has a Ph.D. in astrophysics cheated on the exam. (restrictive).
(23) A student in the syntax class, who has a Ph.D. in astrophysics, cheated on the exam. (non-restrictive). [...]

- The modifiers *certain* and *particular*, as in (27) and (28), favor a referential understanding of an indefinite.
(27) I accused a certain student of cheating.
(28) A (one) particular claim in this paper is false.
The stronger claim is sometimes made that *certain* and *particular* force maximally wide scope interpretations of a quantifier with respect to higher predicates, negation, and so forth. [...]

- The numerals, though they apparently do permit a referential understanding, tend to favor a quantificational understanding more strongly than the indefinite article does: (31) and (32) incline more strongly than (1) and (33) do towards a non-referential understanding of the subject. (31) One student in the syntax class cheated on the exam.
(32) Seven students in the syntax class cheated on the exam.
(1) A student in the syntax class cheated on the exam.
(33) Some (i.e.[sm]) students in the syntax class cheated on the exam.
We are not quite sure why this should be so, but we suspect that explicit mention of the number of individuals may, by Gricean principles, implicate that their number is more significant than their identity"

[Fodor and Sag, 1982 pp.358-363]

Their system adapts Kaplan, 1989's formal treatment of demonstratives from his unpublished manuscript 'Demonstratives', in which a sentence is true or false with respect to a specified world and time (and assignment to variables) in a certain context, for example when it is uttered in that context. This takes into account the speaker meaning instead of just judging a sentence as true or false with respect to a world and time without taking the context into account. "The

metalanguage statement $\models_{cftw} \phi$ says that sentence ϕ is true at time t and world w, under the variable assignment function f, when taken in context c. Similarly, $\|\alpha\|_{cftw}$ is used to designate the denotation of an expression α with respect to time t and world w, under the variable assignment function f, when taken in context c" (Fodor and Sag, 1982 p.385).

They assume a singular indefinite interpretation noun phrase on its referential interpretation to translate as an expression of the form $(\mathbf{a}_r\alpha : \phi)$. **a** is then a variable that occurs freely in ϕ. "The denotation of an expression of the form $(\mathbf{a}_r\alpha : \phi)$ will be the unique individual i such that $i = c_{IR}$[1] and $\models_{cf_i^a c_\tau c_w} \phi$, if there is such; otherwise †" (Fodor and Sag, 1982 p.388).

"The phrase *a man*, on its non-referential interpretation, will translate as $\mathbf{a}_q x : \text{man}(x)$ [2], and this will be an operator that binds the variable x in the translation of the remainder of the sentence. *A man will run* will be assigned the translations in (88), where **F** is the future tense operator.

(88)
(i) $\mathbf{F}[\text{run}((\mathbf{a}_r x : \text{man}(x))]$
(ii) $(\mathbf{a}_q x : \text{man}(x))[\mathbf{F}[\text{run}(x)]]$
(iii) $\mathbf{F}[(\mathbf{a}_q x : \text{man}(x))[\text{run}(x)]]$

The referential interpretation of the indefinite is represented by (88) (i), in which the indefinite is translated as a term. The wide scope quantificational reading of the indefinite is represented in (88) (ii), and the narrow scope quantificational reading in (88) (iii)."

[Fodor and Sag, 1982 p.389]

This characterizes the referential/attributive distinction as a binary lexical ambiguity, where the definite description is interpreted either as a referring term or as a quantified expression with the advantage of permitting a completely general treatment of the consequences of descriptive inaccuracy that is applicable to both definites and indefinites (Fodor and Sag, 1982).

This type of ambiguity can be seen exploited by an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER in (20):

(20) FBI Agent: I'm Agent Oscar Ruiz with the FBI. I'd like to ask you a few questions about a Dwight Manfredi.
Bode: *Any* Dwight Manfredi, or did you have a particular one in mind?

[Ferland, 2023]

1 The individual that the speaker intends to refer to at the time of utterance.
2 Fodor and Sag, 1982 use a different notation writing $\mathbf{a}_q x$ instead of $\exists x$ for the sake of formal parallelism.

Here, the FBI Agent clearly has a particular individual in mind he wants to ask Bode about. Bode notices the ambiguous nature of the singular indefinite *a Dwight Manfredi* that the FBI agent used in his utterance and formulates his return question in a way that lays out both possible interpretations. He thereby comments on the agent's utterance on a meta-level, prompting him to be more specific before any relevant information can be solicited of Bode. Formally, using Fodor and Sag, 1982's notation, the two possible interpretations Bode refers to in his answer can be stated as ask about($\mathbf{a}_r x$: Dwight Manfredi(x)), meaning the referential interpretation in which the indefinite in Fodor and Sag, 1982's system is formulated as a term. The term specifies one particular individual named Dwight Manfredi that the FBI agent wants to ask a few questions about. The second possible interpretation would be noted as ($\mathbf{a}_q x$: Dwight Manfredi(x))[ask about(x)], formulating the indefinite noun phrase in terms of the existential quantifier taking wide scope. Here, there exists a multitude of individuals, at least one of which (but not necessarily exactly one) is named Dwight Manfredi and the agent would like to ask a few questions about him.

The referential/attributive ambiguity can similarly be exploited as an UIM when a possessive modifier like *your* is used as a definite description as in (21):

(21) Customer: Does your dog bite?
Hotel doorman: No.
Customer proceeds trying to pet the dog who immediately bites him
Customer: I thought you said your dog didn't bite?
Hotel doorman: This is not my dog.

[PinkPantherClips, 2011][3]

With the intended meaning of *your dog* the speaker specifies one particular individual – the particular dog present on site – as the referent. It is, again, formulated as a term: bite(($\mathbf{your}_r x$: dog(x))). The attributive possible interpretation, on the other hand, would be noted as ($\mathbf{your}_q x$: dog(x))[bite(x)], formulating the noun phrase in terms of the existential quantifier taking wide scope. This leads to two different possible interpretations: the speaker's (customer's) intended meaning *Does this individual dog - that is also **your** dog - bite?* and the doorman's UIM answer *There exist many dog individuals, one of which is my dog and does not bite*. The hotel doorman being the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER exploits the fact that he perfectly well understands the customer's intended referential meaning but that the same utterance can also be possibly interpreted in an attributive way.

3 Thanks to Ruben van de Vijver for pointing me toward this example.

4.1.2 *Grice on ambiguity*

At least in published writing, Grice did not say much specifically about ambiguity and polysemy other than that under assumption of the CP, a cooperative speaker is expected to avoid it (qua the MAXIM OF MANNER[4]). Just like with the other maxims, this one is – more often than not – flouted in everyday use of language. It is one of our colloquial exchanges' most exciting features that there is a great deal that is expressed via deliberately using ambiguity, something that Grice, of course, acknowledged in his description and examples of his theory of communication (Grice, 1975). As he stresses himself, though, his cases of ambiguities are all floutings of a maxim and therefore deliberate actions by a speaker who intends their utterance to carry ambiguous meaning(s) and who intends to communicate something very specific by putting it that way.

"We must remember that we are concerned only with ambiguity that is deliberate, and that the speaker intends or expects to be recognized by his hearer. The problem the hearer has to solve is why a speaker should, when still playing the conversational game, go out of his way to choose an ambiguous utterance." (Grice, 1975 p.56) He distinguished two types of cases:
(a) examples in which there is no striking difference in that neither interpretation is notably more sophisticated, less standard, more recondite or more far-fetched than the other.
In the example *I sought to tell my Love, Love that never told can be.*
"My Love may refer to either a state of emotion or an object of emotion, and love that never told can be may mean either 'Love that cannot be told' or 'love that if told cannot continue to exist.' " (Grice, 1975 p.56)
(b) Examples in which one interpretation is notably less straightforward than another. Here, Grice invokes the example of the British General who captured the town of Sind and sent back the message *Peccavi*. "The ambiguity involved ('I have Sind'/'I have sinned') is phonemic, not morphemic, and the expression actually used is unambiguous, but since it is in a language foreign to speaker and hearer, translation is called for, and the ambiguity resides in the standard translation into native English." (Grice, 1975 p.56])

This strategy of deliberately flouting the manner maxim is particularly widely used, not only in poetry as Grice mentioned above, but also in politics. Here, it is very strategically applied in order to avoid expressing a clear opinion or stand toward a certain matter – the main

4 "Under the category of MANNER [...] include the supermaxim - 'Be perspicuous' - and various maxims such as:
1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
4. Be orderly."

[Grice, 1975 p.56]

feature being that it is very easily deniable. "It is a political necessity to engage in strategic ambiguity so that different constituent groups may apply different interpretations to the symbol. [...] Ambiguity can be used to allow specific interpretations of policies which might do more harm than good to be denied, should they arise" (Eisenberg, 1984). Such an instance of *strategic ambiguity* is also what is exploited by the finance minister in Grice, 1971's following example:

> "A certain Finance Minister, when visited by the inspectors, said to them 'If you inspect my books, I shall not continue to be your finance minister'. They retired in confusion, and only eighteen months later was it discovered that the Finance Minister had spoken nothing other than the literal truth. This anecdote, it seems, exploits a modal ambiguity in the future tense, between
> (a) the future indicated or factual, and
> (b) the future intentional.
> This ambiguity extends beyond the first person form of the tense; there is a difference between 'There will$_F$ be light' (future factual) and 'There will$_I$ be light' (future intentional); God might have uttered the second sentence while engaged in the Creation."
>
> [Grice, 1971 p.11]

As should have become clear, the deliberate uses of ambiguities in Grice's examples are very different from the phenomenon I characterize as UIM. The deliberate exploitation in my examples originates from the interpreter, not the speaker. In most examples, the ambiguities (or polysemies) used in the speaker's original utterance are not used there deliberately in order to communicate something by them. Even if they are used deliberately (for example in the formulation of a legal text that should be applicable to various situations) there is usually one **intended** meaning per specific situation that should have been recognized and reacted to by the specific interpreter in that situation.

An actual example of UIM that resembles the inverted case of the finance minister in Grice, 1971 above is (22), in which the modal ambiguity of German *sollen* between a deontic obligation interpretation and an epistemic reportative interpretation is exploited by the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER in order to make a joke.[5]

5 For more on the ambiguity in German modals and their use as *evidentials* see, e.g. Kratzer, 1981 or Palmer, 1990.

(22) *Im Bereich Borsigplatz in Dortmund soll*
In.DAT area.SG Borsig.square in Dortmund said.to.be/shall
Kokain konsumiert werden.
cocaine consumed AUX.PASS
('In the area of Dortmund's Borsig square cocaine is said to be/is supposed to be consumed')

Ist das ein Befehl
Be.3SG that a order.SG

('Is this an order?')

[Eimermacher, 2022 (*my translation*)]

The important difference here is that the deontic meaning used in the reaction of the comment *ist das ein Befehl (is this an order?)* was neither deliberately used by the speaker to communicate something, nor was it in some way accepted by the speaker as one of the desired interpretations in this case. The ambiguity here is not used as an implicature like in Grice, 1971's example, it happens to be part of the literal meaning of the speaker's utterance and can, on that grounds, be used as source of the UIM by the interpreter. As I explained in the previous chapter, that does not render the exchange uncooperative in Grice, 1975's sense. The UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER remains cooperative with respect to the common immediate aim of the conversation – they did, after all, understand the speaker's intended meaning.

They further uphold cooperation in adhering to the counterpart-speaker's aims in another possible world. The set of possible worlds with the UIM at its center is accessible via a connection between the UIM and the utterance's literal basis that is provided by the ambiguity of *soll* in (22).

4.1.3 *Polysemy*

As briefly described above, polysemy, for me, is to be distinguished from ambiguity. Contrary to a word with several lexical entries as in ambiguity, with regard to polysemy, Nunberg specifies that "a form that is intuitively 'one word' has several normal uses. For example, we may use *newspaper* to refer either to a publisher or a publication, or *chicken* to refer either to a kind of meat or a bird on the roof, or *game* to refer either to a kind of activity or a set of rules" (Nunberg, 1979 p.145).

Nunberg, 1979's account for polysemy is suitable for my purposes here because it is influenced, among others, by Grice and Searle and relies on pragmatic concepts like rationality, intentions and common knowledge instead of merely word meaning:

> "A pragmatic account of polysemy will explain to us how a name or general term can be used to refer to something in the absence of linguistic convention for doing so. [...] That is, we will presume that we have a way of getting from a name to its designatum, or from demonstrative to a physically present demonstratum, and proceed to ask how we get from that thing to something else. So it will be distinct from a theory of linguistic meaning, of how we get from words to things; it will be concerned exclusively with speakers and things, and will have nothing to say about words at all."
>
> [Nunberg, 1979 p.154]

His observation that certain multiple meaning expressions do not actually have a variety of senses but are rather used in a referring construction that has to be worked out by an interpreter is similar to Grice, 1989's treatment of *or*: "[...] we assume that words like *newspaper* and *window* have only one conventional use, with other normal uses generated pragmatically" (Nunberg, 1979 p.153). One of the arguments he brings forward is that you can substitute these words by demonstrative terms and still get a multiple meaning utterance without the possibility to assign any assumed ambiguity to: "Ostensive utterances like 'That was bought by Hearst last week.' (pointing at a copy of a newspaper and thereby referring to its publishing company) cannot involve any 'ambiguities'; demonstrative terms have no lexical content at all, and there is nothing else in them that we could ascribe any ambiguity to. [...] if we begin with the independent pragmatic account of extended reference, we will be able to explain polysemy without having to introduce any linguistic conventions at all. That is, once we can show how it is possible to point at a newspaper to identify a newspaper company, we will have no trouble showing how it is possible to describe a newspaper to the effect." (Nunberg, 1979 p.150)

According to Nunberg's pragmatic account, a way to describe polysemy is to describe how one can get from a name to its designatum, or from demonstrative to a physically present demonstratum, and then proceed to ask how we get from that thing to something else. So, it's not an account of lexical meaning but rather one of ostensive reference. "we will say that I have succeeded in referring when I point at a newspaper and say, 'Hearst bought that,' where my hearer could be expected to know of the intended referent nothing more than that it is 'whoever publishes that newspaper'." (Nunberg, 1979 p.155)

The vast variety of references that can be generated using polysemous utterances can be explained in Nunberg's account by a referring function that is is selected by an interpreter when faced with an utterance that uses one of the relations between a demonstratum and an

intended referent: "Let me call the *referring function (RF)* that function that the hearer (correctly) selects from among an indefinitely large number of functions that take the demonstratum as its arguments. Let us assume that the *referring function* is derived from among a finite number of what we may think of as 'conceptually basic functions' – 'type of,' 'source of,' 'possessor of,' and so on – which are defined over 'natural' ranges and domains. These in turn can be combined to form a potentially infinite number of composite functions such as 'source of type of,' which together with the basic functions exhaust the possible relations that may hold between and demonstratum and an intended referent" (Nunberg, 1979 p.157).

Nunberg describes the way of working this out following Grice, 1975's implicature computation process: "Now obviously, the function from car to designer is 'better' than the function from car to mechanic; the designer can be more readily identified as 'the person who designed that car' than the mechanic can be identified as 'the person who repaired that car.' So if the hearer assumes that the speaker is being rational and cooperative, he might reason as follows: 'The speaker could intend to refer either to the mechanic or the designer, and knows that I know this, and so on. If he intends to refer to the designer, identification would be relatively simple; if he intends to refer to the mechanic, it would be more difficult. Assuming that there is no independent reason for preferring one or the other referent, I must assume that he intends that I should select that referring function which makes identification easiest; otherwise he would be asking me to make a more difficult calculation in the absence of any reason for rejecting a simpler one' " (Nunberg, 1979 p.159).

The variety of relations between possible intended referents and a given demonstratum in polysemous utterances is the connection that is exploited by UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS. While, following pragmatic principles, the speaker's intended referring function should rather straightforwardly be recognized by a competent interpreter, the other possible referring functions can be traced down from the literal basis of the utterance. As can be observed in the following two examples, the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER invokes the connection that can be drawn between the speaker's literal utterance and another possible referring function in order to place themselves at the center of a different set of worlds in which a counterpart speaker intended to refer to another one of the possible relations that hold between the demonstratum and said referent.

(23) Sign: Please keep dogs away from landscaping.
Comment: A dog should be able to pursue whatever career it wants.

[utterJoint, n.d.]

In the UIM example (23), the polysemous *landscaping* can refer either to a physical object (e.g. *a lawn*) as intended by the sign or to the abstract entity of a career path, as indicated by the interpreter in the comment. When we follow Nunberg, 1979's definition "[...] when a demonstratum stands uniquely in several different relations to several members of a range of reference, and there is no reason for assuming that any one of these members is a more likely candidate for reference than another, we will assume that the intended reference is that member which is most easily identified in terms of its relation to the demonstratum." it is fairly intuitive that in (23), the intended meaning is also the one most easily identified in terms of its relations to the demonstratum. When asked about thoughts on specific concepts, it is easier to assume that these concepts already exist and there is a basis for an opinion. Accordingly, it is a lot easier to relate dogs to the physical entity of landscaping than to the abstract concept of a job in landscaping. During their first interpretational step, the interpreter can be assumed to follow this line of reasoning. For their second step as UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS, afterward, they diverge from the easiest identifiable relation while upholding the connection to the original utterance in using another **possible** relation as basis for their response.

Carston, 2021 differentiates more closely than Nunberg between polysemy and other lexical phenomena (monosemy and homonymy) and within the domain of polysemy (between regular and irregular cases, and among the kinds of relations that may hold within a family of senses: narrowing, broadening, metaphorical, metonymic). As for the initial distinction, very generally, monosemy is the phenomenon of a word having a single sense and polysemy having multiple senses. "Homonymy is the phenomenon of there being two (or more) distinct expressions with the same phonological realization but distinct unrelated meanings, for example, the form /bat/ with the animal sense and the same form /bat/ with the hitting instrument sense, or /coach/ for the people-carrying vehicle and for the person who tutors others. Polysemy, on the other hand, is the case of a single word (or linguistic expression) which has multiple related senses as in the cases of 'line', 'run', 'execution', and 'laser'." (Carston, 2021 p.110)

An UIM example involving this kind of polysemy is (24):

(24) *Context: During a recital, an opera singer foundered through a performance before the 30th President of the U.S. Calvin Coolidge.*
Someone asked him what he thought of the singer's execution.
Coolidge: I'm all for it.

[Lamb, 2022]

Here, the interpreter shifts the context from the speaker's intended meaning of the polysemous word *execution*, that is performance, to

the related meaning that indicates putting someone to death in order to humorously indicate his (negative) opinion about the singing in question.

Carston, 2021 groups polysemy (differentiated from homonymy) as a subcategory of ambiguity – this approach is supported by the argument that there may be individual differences in particular cases: "Perhaps for one person, the use of the form /mouth/ to denote the part of a river where it enters the sea is unrelated to its use to denote the facial feature of humans/animals (hence it is a case of homonymy), while for many people those senses are clearly related (so it is polysemy)." (Carston, 2021 p.111) So, as Carston, 2021 observes, polysemy and lexical ambiguity/homonymy are not that straightforwardly distinguishable. There seem to be in-between cases as well as individual differences in speakers.

This is the reason she discusses a variety of different cases: "while some broad generalisations about polysemy can be made, it is important to recognise that it is not a uniform phenomenon. It may be regular or irregular, and there are several different kinds of relations that may hold between related senses, including (but perhaps not exhausted by) metonymy (e.g., 'school' the institution, 'school' the building, and 'school' the teachers and/or pupils), narrowing (e.g., 'transmission' the act/instrument/result of transmitting and 'transmission' the gearbox), broadening (e.g., 'hoover' a particular brand of vacuum cleaner and 'hoover' for vacuum cleaners in general), and metaphor (e.g., 'chicken' the animal and 'chicken' the cowardly person)." (Carston, 2021 p.111)

The UIM case of (25) incorporates an interplay of the polysemic metaphor *burning* used in a related sense that describes a question as urgent together with a structural ambiguity:

(25) Headline: Daniel Craig answers the Internet's burning James Bond questions.
Comment:
- what temperature does James Bond ignite at
- how to extinguish James Bond
- what colour flame does James Bond produce
- can you scrape burnt James Bond off into the sink and still eat him

[Howitt [@gshowitt], 2021]

While the most common and very likely also the speaker's intended meaning is that there are questions about James Bond that the internet deems urgent, the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER uses the polysemous related senses of the word *burn*, together with the structural ambiguity of the original utterance in order to access a set of possible worlds in which a counterpart speaker could have been intended to mean

by the same utterance that there are questions about the flammable characteristics of James Bond. Also different from Nunberg, 1979's approach, Carston, 2021 argues for an in-between (semantics and pragmatics) account of polysemy while Nunberg aimed for a strictly pragmatic approach. According to Carston, 2021 "Some of the senses of a polysemous word are pragmatic (inferred in context), some are semantic (conventionalised, mentally stored, directly retrieved) and most of these latter are pragmatic in their origin."[6]

Carston, 2021 describes 'narrowing' as one instance of how the senses of polysemous words can be related. The level of conventionalization here determines whether or not the polysemy is more semantically or pragmatically derived: "[...] the use of 'drink' in the narrowed sense of 'drink alcohol' seems to be fully conventionalised, such that 'drink' (as both verb and noun) is semantically polysemous" (Carston, 2021 p.126). This conventionalization is very productive, also in everyday use, as shown by the following UIM example exploiting a *narrowing*-relation of the polysemy in (26):

(26) Edith: ... weil ich ja gar nicht trinke ...
('... since I don't drink at all...')

John: Du trinkst **gar nicht**? Wie bekommst du denn dann genug Flüssigkeit?
('You don't drink **at all**? Then how are you getting enough hydration?')

[personal conversation – 16.10.2022 (*my translation)*]

The UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER (John) accesses a set of possible worlds in which *drink* is intended to be used as a broad term referring to hydration in general instead of the speaker's intended narrow meaning *drink alcohol*. The highly conventionalized narrow use of *drink* supports the supposition that the interpreter first recognized the intended meaning before deliberately exploiting another interpretation that is licensed by the polysemous uses of the word employed by the speaker.

Horn, 1984 was the first to call such a type of polysemy in which one meaning entails the other an *autohyponym*. He, furthermore, suggests a treatment of these meanings similar to Grice, 1978's treatment of the different senses of *or*. The conventionalized, sense(s) of autohyponyms, like the *drink alcohol*-use of *drink* above, should be regarded as retrieved via a conversational implicature (Horn, 1984 p.119).

6 See, for example, Devitt, 2021 for a strict semantic approach to polysemy.

Another of such conventionalized, in this case broadened, polysemies underlies the following UIM example which is a conversation following the sending of a picture showing a table full of food:

(27) Reichlich ist es in der Tat. Und vor allem: der Tisch ist vollständig vegan.
('It's indeed plenty. And most importantly: this table is entirely vegan')

Reply: Hatte ich bei Holz und Metall durchaus angenommen.
('I did, in fact, expect that from wood and metal')

[personal conversation – Feb. 2024 (*my translation*)]

(27) shows a polysemous (autohyponym) relation between the meaning of *table* that refers to the physical object and its conventionalized use referring to the contents **on** said table. The UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER deliberately exploits this autohyponym-relation and bases their response on the broader use of *table* as a physical object instead of the speaker's intended meaning that clearly refers to the table's contents.

4.1.4 *Less common source phenomena*

4.1.4.1 *Vagueness*

Vaguess is a concept discussed in Philosophy from very early on. Russell, 1923 gave a good example:

> "Let us consider the various ways in which common words are vague, and let us begin with such a word as 'red'. It is perfectly obvious, since colours form a continuum, that there are shades of colour concerning which we shall be in doubt whether to call them red or not, not because we are ignorant of the meaning of the word 'red', but because it is a word the extent of whose application is essentially doubtful."

[Russell, 1923 p.85]

He also, despite his inclination to precise and clear (preferably logical) language, presents the advantages of vague language:

> "It would be a great mistake to suppose that vague knowledge must be false. On the contrary, a vague belief has a much better chance of being true than a precise one, because there are more possible facts that would verify it."

[Russell, 1923 p.91]

"Vagueness is contextually variable in truth conditions" (Kennedy, 2007). That means it can be true or false depending on the created context. Furthermore, in vagueness there almost always exist 'borderline cases' which means that "for any context, in addition to the sets of objects that a predicate like 'is expensive' is clearly true of and clearly false of, there is typically a third set of objects for which it is difficult or impossible to make these judgments" (Kennedy, 2007).

It is in general well illustrated by *Sorites paradox*: if you have a heap of sand there usually is little argument about it being a heap of sand. If there are for example two single grains of sand on the floor it would be highly controversial, if not wrong, to describe them as a 'heap of sand'. Mathematically, it can be said that if one grain of sand does not make a heap then n grains of sand do not make a heap. But then: n+1 grains do also not make a heap, irrespective of the choice of n. So in the end, no n grains of salt can make a heap and the paradox is: how can there be a heap of sand if there is no amount that constitutes a starting point of 'a heap of sand'? (loosely following Kamp, 2013) The boundaries of vague predicates like *heap* are fuzzy – with *heap*, the vagueness can be described with respect to the amount of countable individual things that comprise a whole but there can also be other kinds of vagueness like the development of a fertilized egg into a human – at what stage of the development can you call it a *human being*? Or the time reference *regularly* – how many installments within a given time frame count as *regularly*?

Another good example of vagueness are vague quantifiers like *many*. In Partee's example in (28) it is extremely difficult to interpret how many *many men* or *many women* exactly are. There exists a wide range of possible meanings for this sentence. Depending on a constructed context, *many* could be a dozen, a hundred or a billion.

(28) Many men date many women.

[Partee, 1989 p.2]

As seems intuitive from how vagueness in natural language 'feels' and has been observed by, among others, Carter, 2022 the nature of vagueness can be described in terms of *indeterminacy* and *tolerance*: with respect to, for example, a gradable adjective like *expensive*, "if one imagines a series of one hundred bottles of wine, where for $1 \leq n \leq 100$, the nth bottle in the series costs n dollars. [...] In response to the question 'Is bottle #50 expensive?', what a competent speaker knows about her language may fail to require that she answer affirmatively, and, likewise, fail to require that she answer negatively. Furthermore, there appears to be no additional (nontrivial) information which she could acquire about the series of bottles which would change her situation." (Carter, 2022 p.339) This indeterminacy is a core characteristic of vagueness.

There is, however, also a certain grade of tolerance in natural language for acceptance of vague classifications: "For every n: $1 \leq n \leq 100$, the corresponding instance of the schema in (1) appears hard to reject:
(1) If bottle #n is expensive, then bottle #$n - 1$ is expensive.
The appeal of instances of (1) is attributable to the fact that 'expensive' is seemingly tolerant to minimal variation in price (Wright 1975: 333). That is, it seems that any bottle which differs only marginally in price from an expensive bottle will be expensive itself." (Carter, 2022 pp.339-340)

Most importantly, permissibility of vague expressions is highly dependent on the context of use: "the permissibility of uttering a vague sentence can vary depending on the discourse context [...] the permissibility of classifying bottle #n as not expensive varies depending on the context resulting from the speaker's first utterance (i.e. whether #n – 1 was classified as expensive or as not expensive). Second, they suggest that features of the context are sensitive to the use of vague expression. [...] classifying bottle #n as expensive changes the discourse context so that for any $n' \geq n–k$, classifying bottle #n' as not expensive is impermissible (where k is positive and, presumably, vague itself) and for any $n''\geq n$, classifying bottle #n'' as expensive is required." (Carter, 2022 p.343)

Vagueness is oftentimes used intentionally in the language of the law in order for legislation to be possibly applied to every thinkable case, even if legislators responsible for the formulation of the respective law or regulation did not yet think of it. This can also lead to difficulties in interpreting legal texts since, naturally, the boundaries of application of certain laws and regulations are fuzzy due to vague predicates.

UIM examples can be based on the interpretation of vague predicates or phrases. One of the most famous cases probably is the 1993 case *Smith v. The United States* (United States, 1993), during which the court and defense argued about whether or not trading a gun for drugs is supposed to be considered as *using a firearm during and in relation to ...[a] drug trafficking crime*. The case involves a deliberately vague use of the word *use* in a legal text for a wide range of application. While the court, in the end, found the defendant guilty of having *used a firearm* in the incriminating sense (a very wide interpretation of *use*), the defense argued in favor of a narrower interpretation of the word *use*. The narrow interpretation would have been in favor of the defendant who did not plan to use the gun in the way a gun is standardly used (e.g. to shoot) but the wide interpretation reflects the assumed intention behind the formulation of this particular text of law.

One example of how a variety of possible interpretations based on a vague term can be exploited by an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER can be seen in (29) (repetition of chapter 2.1.1 ex. (2)) below:

(29) *im unmittelbaren Umfeld* (*within direct periphery*) from the German Covid security-act [describing the perimeter for mask mandate around shops]
intended to mean any area surrounding the shops in which the social distancing could not be fulfilled (e.g. parking lot, narrow paths or entrance area)
other possible interpretation: just the small radius in front of the shop due to the formulation *unmittelbar* (*direct*)

[ovg.nrw.de, 2021 (*my translation*)]

In (29), the vague predicate *unmittelbar* can, it its characteristics, be compared to *regularly* mentioned above since there are various possibilities with fuzzy boundaries as to how wide a perimeter around a shop would have to be to count as *unmittelbar*. The UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER in (29) can be assumed to understand the speaker's intended meaning from taking into account the context of the utterance as well as our BACKGROUND knowledge about why the mask mandate could be relevant in front of a shop. Taking into account the knowledge about how viruses spread and how wide the perimeter is in which a great number of people are in close proximity, it is a straightforward interpretation to include places like parking lots or paths to the shop into the designation of *unmittelbar*. Due to the use of this vague term, however, it is also possible for the interpreter to access a narrower interpretation that ignores the common-sense knowledge of where masks would make sense in the given context and focuses only on what could also possibly have been intended by counterpart speaker from what was said in the literal formulation. This UIM example is based on an existing legal dispute as a result of which the mask mandate regulations had to be loosened with respect to the perimeter around shops. It was acknowledged, as a result of the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETATION, that the regulation was phrased too vaguely to be applied without doubts in any given case.

Examples involving vagueness do not always have to occur in a legal context, though. (30) shows a joke that exploits the vagueness of *regularly*:

(30) I promised my trainer that I'd set a gym schedule I would commit to regularly. So, now every time there's a lunar eclipse, I work out.

[Someecards.com, 2025]

The humorous notion in this example is a result of the joke protagonist's UIM interpretation of the vague term *regularly*. In combination with sporting activities like going to the gym, the most salient interpretation of *regularly* would involve a weekly rhythm, for example. The UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER (the protagonist speaking in this

joke) deliberately uses a re-occurring event that would also be possible to be described by the term *regularly* but which re-occurs in a comically wide time-span (two to five times a year) compared to the usual attendance of people at a gym.

4.1.4.2 *Anaphora resolution*

In the case of anaphora, the meaning of some referring expression depends on the interpretation of another linguistic expression; in the case of *ana*phora the referring expression follows the expression its meaning depends on – it refers backwards. If the referring expression precedes the expression its meaning depends on, the phenomenon is called a *cat*aphora. "The simplest sorts of anaphoric pronouns are those that 'pick up' a reference from a previous referring expression whether in the same sentence or another. Consider for example:
(3) *John left. He said he was ill.*
(11) *John left his wallet on the table.*
on the readings of these sentences on which 'he' and 'his' co-refer with 'John'. In such cases, the pronouns are anaphoric, and the expression 'John' is called *the antecedent* of the anaphoric expression. The semantics of such anaphoric pronouns is very simple: the referent of the anaphoric pronoun is the referent of its antecedent." (King and Lewis, 2021)

As argued by, e.g. Dalrymple, Shieber, and Pereira, 1991, anaphoric reference in elliptic constructions can be subject to so-called *strict/sloppy-ambiguities* "The most common examples of sloppy identity make use of verb phrase ellipsis (VPE), as in (103) *Susan loves her cat. Jane does too.* (cf. Stone & Hardt 1999:(3b))
The verb phrase which is elided is loves her cat, and we understand does too to mean '*Jane loves her cat too*'. Where we get a strict vs. sloppy identity ambiguity is who is picked out by *her* in this elided phrase. On a strict reading, the elided *her* refers to the same entity as the first *her*, namely Susan: Jane loves Susan's cat. On a sloppy reading, the elided *her* refers not to Susan, but to Jane, the pronoun's now-closest antecedent: Jane loves Jane's cat." (Snider, 2017 p.49)

This ambiguous reference is among the structures that are subject to exploitation by an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER. See, (31), for example:

(31) Edith: [...] man kriegt auch nur Zugang zu den Fotos der eigenen Kinder ... und die sind dann auch meistens ziemlich hässlich [...]
('[...] and you just get access to pictures of your own kids and they tend to be pretty ugly, too [...]')
John: du meinst die **Fotos** oder?
('you mean the **pictures**, right?')

[personal conversation – Aug. 2022 (*my translation*)]

In (31), anaphoric *they* can possibly refer to either *the pictures* or the children. The intended and contextually way more salient reading here is the strict one, referring to *the pictures*. The sloppy reading referring to *the children* is also one that is possibly available in such an elliptic construction. This is the one the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER (John) in this example exploits. John's question in (31) implies the possibility for the sloppy identity reading, thereby indicating his interpretation of both possible readings available for this elliptic construction.

In the specific sub-case of propositional anaphora which is examined in detail by Snider, 2017 a word refers back to such an entity denoted by, for example, a declarative sentence. In these cases, as in other occurrences of anaphora, too, as shown above, ambiguities with respect to the antecedent's reference can occur.

(32) Senator Brown: President Trump said that he's working with you on a replacement plan for the ACA which is nearly finished and will be revealed after your confirmation, is that true?
Price: It's true that he said that, yes.
(Senate Finance Committee hearing, January 24, 2017)

[Snider, 2017]

"He does this by responding to one way to construe the Senator's question, where the *that* in Senator Brown's *is that true?* question tag refers not to the proposition 'President Trump is working with Price on a replacement plan. . . ', but instead to the proposition 'President Trump said. . . ' This question, so construed, is not the sort of thing a Senator is likely to ask at a confirmation hearing, and it's highly unlikely that Price actually interpreted the question that way. Nevertheless, he pretended to, and his response, while perhaps elusive, 'followed the rules of the game' " (Snider, 2017). Snider's description of what happened in the exchange in (32) is very much on point when it comes to how I characterize the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's strategy of taking another possible interpretation as the one that was intended and give a coherent response to the question. Thereby, the interpreter makes sure, as Snider formulated it *to follow the rules of the game*, in the sense of not opting out and maintaining an impression of cooperative behavior while they follow their own ultimate aim of the conversation, which, in (32) is to avoid answering the originally intended question.

Another instance of how anaphora resolution can be exploited due to its inherent possibility of several salient references is the variety of uses of the proform *it*. As explained by Snider, 2017, usually, *it* used as a pronoun, to refer to a non-human individual, as in (33):

(33) Felicia loves Central Park. *It's* her favorite place in the world.

[Snider, 2017 p.25]

It is not limited to this use, though: it can also be used to refer to events (as in (34)) or propositions.

(34) John kicked$_i$ Sam on Monday, and it$_i$ hurt.

[Asher, 1993 p.35]

Exploitation of these different uses of *it* are particularly distinct in the comedic use attributed to the actor Leslie Nielsen in his movies (e.g. 'Airplane' or ' 'Naked Gun'). The pattern can be seen in (35):

(35) Rumack: You'd better tell the Captain we've got to land as soon as we can. This woman has to be gotten to a hospital.
Elaine Dickinson: A hospital? What is it?
Rumack: It's a big building with patients, but that's not important right now.

[Zucker, Jim, and Jerry, 1980]

Here, the interpreter systematically responds to the anaphoric *it* as referring to non-human individuals while the **intended** meaning usually is proposition. In (35), for instance, the speaker's intended meaning would be a reference of *it* to a proposition that can be paraphrased as the answer to *what happened?*. Instead, the character Rumack responds on the basis of an interpretation of *it* as referring to the non-human individual of the antecedent *hospital*. This scripted occurrence of an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER is used to create a humorous effect caused by the blatant discrepancy between the intended and the uncooperative interpretation that is supposed to be understood by the audience. This instance of UIM is not a rare occurrence in non-scripted natural exchanges either as can be seen in (36):

(36) *Context: Tick-remedy for dogs – putting butter on the tick to suffocate it so that it falls off.*
Billy Boyd: [...] would it work on my dog?
Dominic Monaghan: ... you'd try and suffocate your dog???

[TheFriendshipOnion, 2021]

In this example, *it* can anaphorically refer to either the proposition *the tick remedy* or to the proposition *to suffocate*, so the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER (Dominic Monaghan) can easily exploit this underspecified reference. The fact that the context as well as human logical understanding clearly selects only the tick-remedy-meaning as valid to be intended by the speaker is unproblematic and supports the classification as an UIM; it is, in the end, important for the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER to have conscious knowledge about both, the intended as well as the other possible interpretation in order to be able to exploit the utterance in terms of the latter.

4.1.4.3 *Underspecification/Undetermination*

An interpreter whose aim is nothing more than to understand the speaker's intentions would probably not invest the higher processing costs of investigating other meaning alternatives and just take the one the context clearly suggests. It is the benefit behind exploiting other meaning options that drives an uncooperative interpreter to reverse-engineer *what is said* back to its literal basis and to explore other possible intentions an alternative speaker could have conveyed. "According to Bach, 1984, in utterance interpretation we use 'jumping to conclusions', or 'default reasoning'. In other words, speakers know when context-dependent inference from the content of the sentence is required and when it is not. When it is not required, they progress, unconsciously, to the first available and unchallenged alternative. This step is cancellable when it becomes obvious to the addressee that the resulting meaning is not what the speaker had intended. What is important in this view is the proposed distinction between (conscious) inference and the unconscious act of 'taking a step', as Bach, 1984 (p.40) calls it, towards the enriched, default interpretation. Such a move to the default meaning is not preceded by a conscious act of deliberation as to whether this meaning was indeed intended by the speaker." (Jaszczolt, 2022)

Bach, 1994 specifies his idea of enriched interpretation: this version of the explicit-implicit distinction goes further than what Grice, 1975 suggests in that he distinguishes the **implicit** from the **implied** because in his view "the distinction between what is said and what is implicated is not exhaustive. Charting the middle ground between the two will require attending to specific examples, noting their distinctive features, and articulating the relevant concepts. That is what I aim to do here" (Bach, 1994 p.1).

In Bach's account, there are two ways of not being fully explicit (independent of using indexical expressions or ambiguity, speaking figuratively or indirectly): completion and expansion. "When a sentence is in this way semantically underdeterminate, understanding an utterance of it requires a process of completion to produce a full proposition. The second way occurs when the utterance does express a complete proposition (possibly as the result of completion) but some other proposition, yielded by what I call the process of expansion, is being communicated by the speaker" (Bach, 1994 p.2).

Consider the following two statements:

(1) Steel isn't strong enough.

(2) Willie almost robbed a bank.

The relevant difference between (1) and (2), according to Bach, is that whereas an understanding of an utterance of (1) requires the **insertion** of additional conceptual material, (2) requires the articulation

of structural relations among **existing** material. "[...] An utterance of (1) must be taken to mean that steel isn't strong enough in some contextually identifiable respect, e.g. for building a 500-story building or to resist bending by Superman. [...] With (2) some contextually identifiable contrast is intended by the use of almost." (Bach, 1994 p.3) He does also provide examples showing that both processes can occur within a single utterance:

> "(18) Everybody is coming.
> which might be completed to yield
> (18CM) Everybody is coming [to my party].
> and then expanded to yield
> (18EX) Everybody in my class is coming [to my party]."
>
> [Bach, 1994 p.13]

In cases of expansion "The proposition being communicated is a conceptually enriched or elaborated version of the one explicitly expressed by the utterance itself (I leave aside the case where what is expanded is the completion of a semantically underdeterminate utterance)" (Bach, 1994 p.8). "So expansion involves not logical strengthening but what might be called 'lexical' strengthening, in that what is being communicated could have been made fully explicit by the insertion of additional lexical material." (Bach, 1994 p.9) Bach, however, emphasizes that he'd rather like to think of this process as conceptual strengthening because there is no need for the interpreter to identify the exact words but rather the conceptual idea of what those words would contribute if used. He shows the process of conceptual strengthening using the example, of a mother uttering *You're not going to die* to her crying son upset about a cut finger:

> (1) You're not going to die.
> "[...] she is likely to mean that he is not going to die from that cut, not that he is immortal. [...] the mother is using each of her words literally but is omitting an additional phrase ['...from that cut.'] that could have made what she meant fully explicit. [...] This example illustrates a common but not widely recognized kind of nonliterality, whereby a sentence is used nonliterally without any of its constituents being so used."
>
> [Bach, 1994 p.9]

The result of completion or expansion is what Bach calls a CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICITURE. He distinguishes this process deliberately and carefully from Grice, 1975's CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE: while Grice's IMPLICATURE, according to Bach, communicates *additional* content by virtue of saying and communicating something in a specific

way, his IMPLICITURES are supposed to **say** one thing and **communicate** something else instead.

In more detail: "An implicatum is completely separate from what is said and is inferred from it (more precisely, from the saying of it). What is said is one proposition and what is communicated in addition to that is a conceptually independent proposition, a proposition with perhaps no constituents in common with what is said." (Bach, 1994 p.13) "In contrast, implicitures are built up from the explicit content of the utterance by conceptual strengthening or what Wilson, 1986 call 'enrichment', which yields what would have been made fully explicit if the appropriate lexical material had been included in the utterance." (Bach, 1994 p.14) He illustrates this difference along his example sentence (3):

> "(3) Mary has a boyfriend.
> A likely impliciture is that Mary has exactly one boyfriend, and possible implicatures, depending on the circumstances, are that the hearer shouldn't ask Mary out, that Mary is not a lesbian, that Mary is getting a divorce, or that Mary will get a divorce."
>
> [Bach, 1994 p.14]

Based upon his ideas of IMPLICITURE, Bach suggests two ways to improve on Grice's taxonomic scheme while, as he says, retaining the criterion of close syntactic correlation. Instead of distinguishing *saying* and *making as if to say*, as Grice does, Bach distinguishes (in indicative cases) *explicitly stating* and saying in Austin's locutionary sense. Above that, he then also distinguishes *nonliterality* (including sentence nonliterality) from actual *implicature*.

A crucial part for the above distinction is Grice's conception of *what is said*. His intuitive understanding of the meaning of say is, as Bach describes it: "what is said must correspond to 'the elements of [the sentence], their order, and their syntactic character' (1969/1989, p.87) [...] So it would seem that for Grice anything communicated in an utterance that closely corresponds to its form counts as what is said and that anything else counts as being implicated" (Bach, 1994 p.16).

An interesting and important observation Bach makes is that "a speaker is not the final authority in what he said" because it can be that what a speaker literally said and what he intended to convey are two different things that might end up being confused by a potential interpreter "What is said, being closely tied to the (or a) meaning of the uttered sentence provides (allowing for indexicality and ambiguity) the hearer with the linguistic basis for inferring what, if anything, the speaker means in addition or instead. Also, it allows for the case in which the speaker does not say what he intends to say, as in the misuse of a word or a slip of the tongue. For this reason, the speaker is

not the final authority on what he said" (Bach, 1994 p.17). The crucial point here is that it is not enough to distinguish *what is said* from what is implicated but that there are subtler distinctions between what is explicit and what is implicit the contents of which, however, are still part of *what is said*. The concept of implicitures Bach introduces here can be loosely connected with what Searle means by the principle that literal meaning can only be interpreted against a set of background capacities only that for Searle, the BACKGROUND is not a part of *what is said*.

The speaker "not being the final authority on *what is said*" is an interesting perspective when talking about the interpreter's exploitation of the literal basis of the utterance made by a speaker. If conceptual strengthening has to be expected from an interpreter in order to fully grasp what exactly the speaker intended to say, different possible interpreters in different situations might strengthen the same expression in different ways. For example, similar to Bach, 1994's example (18) above (*Everyone is coming*) in (37) everyone is intended to be strengthened to *Everyone who was at my concert* but was interpreted in a literal, unstrengthened sense:

(37) Miley Cyrus: LOVED meeting everyone in London today!
Comment: You met everyone in London today? That may be the most impressive thing I've ever heard.

[Bishop [@timbishop4000], 2018]

Similarly, the question in (38) is intended to be strengthened to something along the lines of *Do men still open car doors* ***for women*** but is also taken by its unstrengthened, literal sense questioning the general occurrence of men opening car doors:

(38) Woman asking: Do men still open car doors?
Answer: How do you think we get inside?

[strawbzzi, 2023]

In both cases, (37) as well as (38), the connection between the UIM and the speaker's original utterance is the literal basis of *what is said*. It licenses the accessibility of another possible set of worlds centered by the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER and a counterpart speaker because the unstrenthened version of the utterance is the literal content of *what is said* and, thus, hard to deny for the original speaker.

4.1.4.4 *Implicatures*

The possibility of interactions similar to UIM have been observed with implicatures but, to my knowledge, not analyzed in greater detail. For example, Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet, 2000 described that "[...] a hearer can deliberately 'misunderstand' what has been meant by refusing to draw an obvious implicature: 'But you didn't say that you thought she would not come, only that you didn't think she would come' " (Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet, 2000 p.242). That they put 'misunderstand' in quotation marks, to me, is an indication that the interpreter deliberately only *pretends* not to understand and the phrase 'refusing to draw...' hints at the very conscious and deliberate character of such interpretations.

There is a good reason for the circumstance that UIM based on implicatures do not occur very frequently and if they do, GENERALIZED CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES[7] or CONVENTIONAL IMPLICATURES seem to be a more productive source than PARTICULARIZED CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES. Crucially, these sources for UIM are not to be confused with situations in which an implicature is intended and the literal meaning is used as UIM; this way around it is very common, for example in what is colloquially called a 'dad-joke'[8] like the one in (39). The source of the UIM in these cases is not an implicature but the literal meaning of *what is said*.

(39) Vampire: Can I come in?
Woman: I don't know, *can* you?
cursing quietly, the vampire backed away, foiled yet again by the english teacher's pedantry

[*Classical Damn auf Instagram* 2023]

The UIM strategy, as explained in the beginning of this chapter, relies heavily on upholding a form of cooperation toward the conversational aims of the speaker. This plausible deniability regarding uncooperative behavior relies on the interpreter being able to argue for their UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETATION as being admissible as a credible epistemic possibility with respect to the speaker's literal utterance. Put differently, in order to still appear cooperative, the interpretation that is used as an UIM has to appear at least *somewhat* rational. Of course, rationality is a rather vague and subjective matter but this is also the main reason why UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS mostly use ambiguities or other grammatically relatable phenomena in the literal

7 These are implicatures that do not need a particular occasion to implicate something by putting it a certain way – they are generally implicated by uttering certain expressions."Sometimes one can say that the use of a certain form of words in an utterance would normally (in the ABSENCE of special circumstances) carry such-and-such an implicature or type of implicature." (Grice, 1975 p.56) For this reason, as Grice says himself, they are easily confused with CONVENTIONAL IMPLICATURES.

8 *Definition of DAD JOKE* 2025.

meaning of the utterance as sources for their interpretation; because 'just interpreting something different than intended' gets less and less straightforward to defend as a rational action the more a speaker's meaning is a matter of reasoning about implicit meaning(s). If UIM occurs based on implicatures, it is, at least as far as I can tell from my example set, almost exclusively with highly conventionalized phrases or CONVENTIONAL IMPLICATURES. This is further supported by the treatment of different uses of polysemous words and phrases by Horn, 1984, Nunberg, 1979 and Carston, 2021 discussed above. While Carston, 2021 uses the terms 'pragmatically inferred' and 'conventionalized', Nunberg, 1979 (p.159) and Horn, 1984 (e.g. p.116) straightforwardly apply Grice's concept of computing CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES to the retrieval of different related uses of, often conventionalized, words and phrases. (40) is an example of a situation in which the speaker (Emily) in fact **intended** the literal meaning of *what is said* but the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER (Lorelai) used the highly conventionalized structure *two . . . short of a. . .* which is often used as a metaphor for calling someone crazy.

(40) Emily: Of course I could only get ten of these, so I'm two chairs short of a set.
Lorelai *ironically*: You're telling me.

[Girls, 2001]

The UIM interprets *what is said* as if it was used as a flouting of Grice, 1975's MAXIM OF QUALITY ('be genuine'). Grice uses the example of *you're the cream in my coffee* for a metaphoric expression flouting this maxim: "[. . .] the contradictory of what the speaker has made as it *(sic.)* to say will, strictly speaking, be a truism; so it cannot be THAT that such a speaker is trying to get across. The most likely supposition is that the speaker is attributing to his audience some feature or features in respect of which the audience resembles (more or less fancifully) the mentioned substance" (Grice, 1975 p.53). Parallel to that, in example (40), the speaker is taken to indicate the supposition that the user is attributing to the audience the feature of the expression of a set being incomplete as resembling the feature of a person's brain being incomplete. The UIM is helped here by the fact that the same structure can be used involving different concepts of sets (*a few sandwiches short of a picnic* or *a few cards short of a full deck* etc.[9]) – the idiomatic use is usually taken to be understood independently of what items and set are being described, respectively.

9 For more versions see Slang, 2025.

A similarly conventionalized metaphoric use of the expression *getting cold feet* to indicate being afraid or worried about something is exploited by the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER in (41). Here also, the literal meaning was intended and the conventionalized metaphorical use of the expression is taken as UIM:

(41) When David came home, Brigitte realized how cold it had become in the house and said *I have got cold feet* and even before being able to continue and say, *I better get some socks on*, he looked at her half laughing half pretending to be concerned and said *And what do you have to worry about today, my dear?*

[Nerlich and Clarke, 2001]

Another possibility to use highly conventionalized expressions as basis for UIM is to exploit the unusual use of GENERALIZED CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES as suggested in the comment in (42).

(42) Headline: Mind-blowing theory about people who have 'never broken a bone'.
Comment: Does it have to be my own bone?

[Doling, 2025]

Usually, a phrase like *. . . people who 'never have broken a bone'* strongly implicates that it is their own bones that they did never break before. Surely, this is also suggested by the context and the BACKGROUND knowledge but the example resembles Grice, 1975's as he called them 'fairly uncontroversial examples' for this variety of implicature. He used *X is meeting a woman this evening* to show that it generally, without special circumstances, implicates the woman to be someone else than X's wife and *I broke a finger yesterday* that it implicates in the same way the finger to be the speaker's own.

4.2 SUMMARY

The taxonomy of sources for the phenomenon of UIM presented in this chapter is an essential part of the analysis as to how it is possible for the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS to appear cooperative while, in fact, following their own personal ultimate aim. For every example I collected, there is a traceable connection that can be identified between the speaker's original utterance and the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETATION that goes beyond, for example, the rhetorical connection via the response with an 'expected speech act' that is the basis of Asher and Lascarides, 2013's RHETORICAL COOPERATIVITY. The interpreter backtracks the speaker's utterance to its literal meaning in order to then access another set of possible worlds and exploit what also, plausibly, *could have been* meant by a counterpart speaker. In order for this to be successful, there has to be some form of measurement as to what constitutes a rational connection between the utterance's literal meaning and the one the interpretation UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER bases his response on. The most sturdy of such connections arguably are the ones that are semantically anchored – for example the different ambiguous or polysemous meanings of a given expression. As a result, those are also the richest sources of the UIM phenomenon. Other, a little less uncontroversial sources rely heavily on highly conventionalized meanings and their less intuitive but undeniably possible interpretational counterparts; for example conceptual strengthening or conversational implicatures and their literal bases as well as different possible referents of anaphoric expressions.

5 MEANING AND COMMUNICATION

The best way to understand the meaning of a sentence is to see it as a potential utterance. [...] The sentence is to its use as the tool is to its use. [...] you can have a sentence that you never use to say anything, but to understand the sentence is to understand what it could be used to say.

— Searle, *Grice on Meaning: 50 Years Later*

5.1 SAYING AND MEANING

As became evident through the analysis in the previous chapter of how to communicate with an interpreter who deliberately exploits the boundaries of *what is said* while evoking deniability about any mischievous intentions, *the meaning of a sentence* is not always as intuitively clear as we might wish or assume it to be. The important distinction between what a word or sentence can literally mean and what is and can possibly be expressed by a speaker when uttering it lies at the center of the phenomenon under investigation here. "Philosophers such as Bertrand Russell, who saw logic as the appropriate apparatus for explaining meaning, dismissed the differences displayed by natural language as examples of its inherent imperfection. Everyday language was just too messy and imprecise to form an appropriate topic for philosophical inquiry" (Chapman, 2008 p.3). The *Philosophy of ordinary language* born in Oxford with, among others, Grice (as well as Philosophers like Strawson and Austin) analyzes precisely this 'messy and imprecise' type of language that makes up our everyday conversations. So, these theories are an essential asset in the endeavor of explaining seemingly irrational communicational behavior and to determine whether or not we can label these exchanges *successful communication*.

5.1.1 *Grice on meaning*

Grice, 1957 introduces the crucial principle that is "uttering x with the intended effect E" – to distinguish the kind of meaning that is objective logical consequence (natural) from the kind of meaning of individuals using natural language to convey information (non-natural).

It is important to note that the notion of non-natural meaning is always dependent on intentionality, even on the basic level of SENTENCE MEANING taken on its own. Even when it is independent from the intentions of a specific utterer, it then refers to conventional use. He generally distinguishes natural meaning from non-natural meaning

(meaning$_{NN}$). Natural meaning is considered to be an undeniable fact in the objective world while non-natural meaning requires (primary) intention and can vary from context to context. As Grice distinguishes it more eloquently in his *Retrospective Epilogue* (Grice, 1989): "The idea behind both uses of 'mean' is that of consequence [...] In 'natural' meaning, consequences are states of affairs; in 'non-natural' meaning, consequences are conceptions or complexes which involve conceptions" (Grice, 1989 p.350).

Grice shows this with two respective sets of examples like the ones in (1) which have constant meaning independent of use and (2) whose meaning is influenced by the utterer's intention when they are used:

(1) Those spots mean (meant) measles:

"*x meant that p and x means that p entail p.*

I cannot argue from 'Those spots meant measles' to any conclusion to the effect that somebody or other meant by those spots so-and-so."

[Grice, 1957 p.377]

and in contrast:

(2) Those three rings on the bell (of the bus) mean that 'the bus is full.'

"*here x means that p and x meant that p do not entail p.*

I can argue from the first sentence to the conclusion that somebody (viz., the conductor) meant, or at any rate should have meant, by the rings that the bus is full [...] When the expressions 'means', 'means something', 'means that' are used in the kind of way in which they are used in the first set of sentences, I shall speak of the sense, or senses, in which they are used, as the natural sense, or senses, of the expressions in question. When the expressions are used in the kind of way in which they are used in the second set of sentences, I shall speak of the sense, or senses, in which they are used, as the non-natural sense, or senses, of the expressions in question. I shall use the abbreviation 'means$_{NN}$' to distinguish the non-natural sense or senses."

[Grice, 1957 pp.378-79]

Grice proposes a precise definition of the non-natural meaning of an utterance as follows:

> "Shortly, perhaps, we may say that 'A meant$_{NN}$ something by x' is roughly equivalent to 'A uttered x with the intention of inducing a belief by means of the recognition of this intention.' "

[Grice, 1957 p.384]

Inducing a belief in a hearer by means of the recognition of this intention is specified further on as 'uttering x intending (with the aid of the recognition of this intention) to induce an effect' in the audience. This effect, though, only is part of the meaning$_{NN}$ regarding the utterer's primary intention. "That is, if (say) I intend to get a man to do something by giving him some information, it cannot be regarded as relevant to the meaning$_{NN}$ of my utterance to describe what I intend him to do." (Grice, 1957 p.386) The effect that is to be induced cannot be just any intended consequence to be considered a meaning$_{NN}$. For the intended effect to constitute meaning$_{NN}$ of an utterance, the audience's recognition of the intention has to involve some kind of reasoning – which, according to Grice, is the reason we can refuse to believe or be compelled to believe something. "This points to the fact that for x to have meaning$_{NN}$ the intended effect must be something which in some sense is within the control of the audience, or that in some sense of 'reason' the recognition of the intention behind x is for the audience a reason and not merely a cause." (Grice, 1957 p.385)

To further specify the characteristics of the intended effect the recognition of an intention is supposed to have on a hearer, Grice, 1968 provides two updates on that notion in a paper following Grice, 1957. With this he reacts to criticism regarding the "inducing of a belief" in the hearer which was seen as too strong as an effect. Grice seemed to agree and changed it to "the hearer should think the utterer believes something":

> "(1) I wish to represent the M-intended effect of imperative-type utterances as being that the hearer should intend to do something (with, of course, the ulterior intention on the part of the utterer that the hearer should go on to do the act in question).
> (2) I wish to regard the M-intended effect common to indicative-type utterances as being, not that the hearer should believe something (though there will frequently be an ulterior intention to that effect), but that the hearer should think that the utterer believes something."
>
> [Grice, 1968 p.230]

So, ultimately, Grice distinguishes a literal meaning of an utterance from the one that is used by a speaker with certain intentions in a certain situation for a certain purpose (respective, to a certain effect 'E'). "[...] what words mean is a matter of what people mean by them." (Grice, 1989 p.340) The SENTENCE MEANING (or WORD MEANING), according to Grice, is a kind of non-natural meaning inspected from a perspective prior to its intentional use. "Starting with the assumption that the notion of an utterer's occasion-meaning can be explicated, in

a certain way, in terms of an utterer's intentions, I argue in support of the thesis that timeless meaning and applied timeless meaning can be explicated in terms of the notion of utterer's occasion-meaning (together with other notions), and so ultimately in terms of the notion of intention." (Grice, 1969 p.150) UTTERER'S OCCASION-MEANING is a form of speaker meaning and TIMELESS- or APPLIED TIMELESS MEANING are the notions of word- or sentence meaning without or within a certain context, respectively, but not yet specified by the use of a **specific** speaker in a specific situation. This (timeless) sentence meaning is to be associated with all possible M-intentions that could standardly be assigned to the utterance. "Sentence Meaning then will be explicable either in terms of psychological attitudes which are standardly M-intended to produce in hearers by sentence utterers or to attitudes taken up by hearers toward the activities of sentence utterers." (Grice, 1989 p.350) This is because, on his account, SPEAKER MEANING is prior to SENTENCE MEANING. The same goes for the meaning of single words as he describes in *Meaning Revisited*, a chapter of Grice, 1989: "The general suggestion would therefore be that to say what a word means in a language is to say what is in general optimal for speakers of that language to do with that word or what use they are to make of it; what particular intentions on particular occasions it is proper for them to have, or optimal for them to have." (Grice, 1989 p.299)

An example is given in his definition of TIMELESS MEANING:

> "x (utterance-type) means '. . . ' "
>
> [Specification of timeless meaning for an utterance-type which is either (1a) complete or (1b) incomplete]
> Ex. (1b): "It would be true to say that the word "grass" means (loosely speaking) "lawn-material", and also true to say that the word "grass" means "marijuana"."
>
> [Grice, 1969 p.149]

Neale, 1992 says that: "Sentence meaning for Grice is a species of complete utterance-type meaning, the relevant analysandum for which is [X means 'p'], where X is an utterance type and p is a specification of X's meaning" (Neale, 1992 p.553). A speaker's meaning can, according to Grice, be characterized with the same kind of optimality condition used to explain word meaning above; but now in terms of its use in communication: "The pattern of analysis which I would now suggest as the primary interpretant for speaker's meaning would be that S is in that state with respect to whatever he wishes to communicate or impart (p) which is optimal for somebody communicating p." (Grice, 1989 p.301) This optimal state is, as Grice points out, in principle unrealizable so that he does not strictly speaking mean that p (in the sense that strictly speaking the only things one can, for example, know

are necessary truths but nevertheless people are using the phrase *I know* in a non-strict way that describes an approximation to the ideal cases). "However, he is in a situation which is such that it is legitimate, or perhaps even mandatory, for us to deem him to satisfy this unfulfillable condition" (Grice, 1989 p.302). The deeming of a speaker to fulfill this impossible condition describes the presumptions of a sort of rational cooperation Grice assumes as the basis for communication. For more clarity on the different characteristics of meaning developed throughout Grice's work – taking into consideration the changes over time as well as the interdependence between some of the notions – it should be possible, I hope, to present the notions of meaning roughly in the following way (parts of the table in 5.1 are influenced by a structure presented by Neale, 1992):

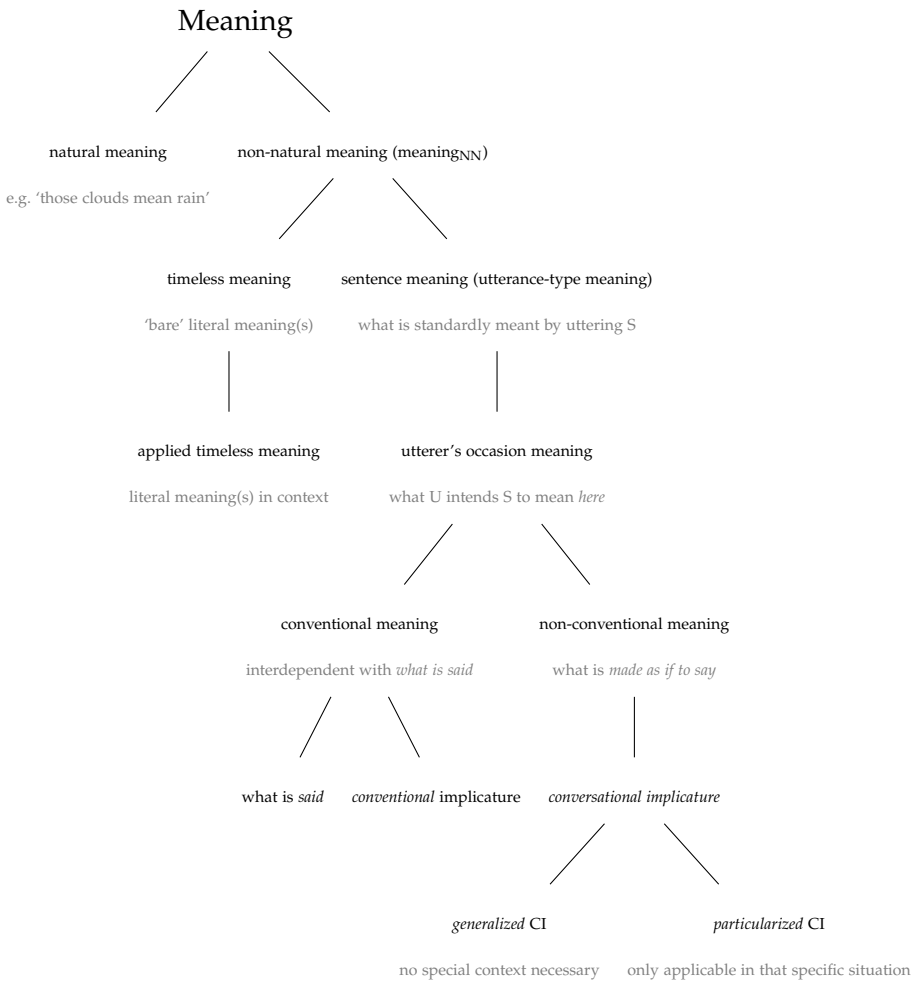


Figure 5.1: Meaning in Grice's theory

The, arguably, most prominent distinction Grice makes when it comes to kinds of meaning is the one between *what is said* and what is (conversationally) implicated. "I wish to make within the total signification of a remark: a distinction between what the speaker has *said* (in a certain favoured, and maybe in some degree artificial, sense of 'said'), what he has 'implicated' (e.g. implied, indicated, suggested, etc.), taking account the fact that what he has implicated may be either *conventionally implicated* (implicated by virtue of the meaning of some word or phrase which he has used) or *non-conventionally implicated* (in which case the specification of the implicature falls outside the specification of the conventional meaning of the words used)." (Grice, 1968 p.225)

The 'favored' use Grice imposes on *say* refers to the general understanding that SENTENCE MEANING is explicable via SPEAKER MEANING; so *what is said* is an instance of an UTTERER'S OCCASION MEANING that is additionally relativized by the conventional meaning of the words used (which, while contributing to *what is said* is explicitly not a **part** of it). Moreover, Grice later specifies that *what is said* means what it does in virtue of "the particular meanings of the elements of *S*, their order, and their syntactic character" (Grice, 1989 p.87). So, while it might appear trivial, it matters that there are grammatical grounds in whatever system the speaker uses to assume that what they meant by their utterance is one occurrence of what that sentence *can* mean in that given system.

Bach, 2010 (p.6) makes the crucial observation that there is a difference between the act of uttering a sentence and the act the utterance of a sentence is intended to fulfill: "What is said in the locutionary sense is not, in general, the content of the illocutionary act the speaker is performing. Of course, the phrase 'what is said' is often used to mean what the speaker states or asserts, but stating and asserting are illocutionary acts. What is said in the locutionary sense is independent of the content of whatever illocutionary act the speaker is performing. It is something that is the same whether or not the speaker means what he says, or even means anything at all, whether or not he fully understands the meaning of his words, whether he is being sincere or insincere, whether or not he is speaking literally or nonliterally, and whether or not he is speaking directly or indirectly."

Wharton, 2002 gives a characterization of *what is said*, which is intended to be as close as possible to what Grice intended it to mean.

"Thus, what is said is to be distinguished not only from what is implied – or conversationally implicated – but also from conventional non-truth conditional meaning. So in (1) below, the contrast introduced by the word 'but' between 'Xanthe is seven' and 'she's very tall' does not form part of the truth-conditional content of the utterance, and hence is not part of what is said:
(1) Xanthe is seven, but she's very tall" (Wharton, 2002 p.212).

This is an important distinction for Grice since his general aim was "to characterize sentence meaning as depending on a convention among speakers to use certain words with certain intentions. To appeal directly to truth-conditions would have been inconsistent with such a view. In Grice's picture, truth conditions are a derivative notion" (Wharton, 2002 p.213).

> "In fact, the intuition that *U* might indeed mean – utterance-type occasion meaning – by his words exactly what S means – applied timeless meaning – is an intuition I regard as certainly indeed worth holding on to. It illustrates neatly the fact that while knowledge of applied timeless meaning is a necessary condition for deriving what is said in an utterance of that sentence, it is not sufficient."
>
> [Wharton, 2002 p.241]

Grice's distinctions between his favored sense of *say* and *what is said* might appear to be close to what Searle, 1975 describes as one of the starting points for developing his *Speech Act Theory* (SAT) when he says that meaning is not only a matter of intention but also convention and that this has to be expressed by a theory of meaning communication. Wharton, 2002 suggests, though, that "[...] in fact, it might thus line up better with John Austin's original version of the locutionary/illocutionary distinction than Searle's version of it as a distinction between descriptive content and illocutionary force"(Wharton, 2002 p.242).

During the following sections, it will briefly be shown how Austin and Searle understood meaning and its communication in interpersonal exchanges as well as how and to what extent conventions play a role in it for the different accounts.

5.1.2 *Austin's performatives*

Austin, 1962 introduces the notion of PERFORMATIVES and how they are to be distinguished from statements in order to show that an utterance can be meaningful and its communication can yield an enormous social power even though it is not classifiable in terms of true and false. He attacks the (at that time) standard view in philosophy that every utterance is to be treated as either true or false and that any utterance not classifiable like that is nonsense. "I want to discuss a kind of utterance which looks like a statement and grammatically, I suppose, would be classed as a statement, which is not nonsensical, and yet is not true or false [...] Furthermore, if a person makes an utterance of this sort we should say that he is *doing* something rather than merely *saying* something." (Austin, 1990 p.106)

> "We should say rather that, in saying what I do, I actually perform that action. When I say 'I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth' I do not describe the christening ceremony, I actually perform the christening [...] Now these kinds of utterance are the ones that we call *performative* utterances."
>
> [Austin, 1990 p.106]

One very important notion is "[...] although these utterances do not themselves report facts and are not themselves true or false, saying these things does very often imply that certain things are true and not false, in some sense at least of that rather woolly word 'imply' " (Austin, 1990 p.107). Performatives are not true or false but they can 'fail to work' differently: "The various ways in which a performative utterance may be unsatisfactory we call, for the sake of a name, the infelicities; and an infelicity arises – that is to say, the utterance is unhappy if certain rules, transparently simple rules, are broken. [...] The first rule is, then, that the convention invoked must exist and be accepted. And the second rule, also a very obvious one, is that the circumstances in which we purport to invoke this procedure must be appropriate for its invocation. If this is not observed, then the act that we purport to perform would not come off – it will be, one might say, a misfire." (Austin, 1990 p.107)

"But there is another and a rather different way in which this kind of utterance may go wrong. [...] if you use one of these formulae when you do not have the requisite thoughts or feelings or intentions then there is an abuse of the procedure, there is insincerity. [...] e.g., If I say 'I congratulate you' when I'm not pleased or when I don't believe that credit was yours, then there is insincerity" (Austin, 1990 p.108).

Infelicity can also arise out of miscommunication "One further way in which things may go wrong is, for example, through what in general may be called misunderstanding. You may not hear what I say, or you may understand me to refer to something different from what I intended to refer to, and so on." (Austin, 1990 p.109) Concerning the distinction between statements and performatives, Austin observes that "All the examples I have given hitherto do in fact have the same grammatical form; they all of them begin with the verb in the first person singular present indicative active – not just any kind of verb of course, but still they all are in fact of that form." (Austin, 1990 p.109) One other standard form he lists is the verb in a passive voice, so "any utterance which is performative could be reduced or expanded or analysed into these two standard forms beginning 'I ...' so and so or beginning 'You (or he) hereby ...' so and so." (Austin, 1990 p.120) The performatives represented by the standard forms he calls EXPLICIT PERFORMATIVES, which explicitly state what kind of action is performed by them: "By means of these explicit performative verbs

and some other devices, then, we make explicit what precise act it is that we are performing when we issue our utterance. [...] to say 'I warn you that ...' or 'I order you to ...' or 'I promise that ...' is not to state that you are doing something, but makes it plain that you are – it does constitute your verbal performance, a performance of a particular kind." (Austin, 1990 p.121)

The difficulty in the distinction between statements and performative utterances lies, as Austin says, at their 'traditional treatment' distinguishing statements as being true or false while performatives are felicitous or infelicitous. "In fact some troubles that have arisen in the study of statements recently can be shown to be simply troubles of infelicity. For example, it has been pointed out that there is something very odd about saying something like this: 'The cat is on the mat but I don't believe it is' [...] but it is not self-contradictory." (Austin, 1990 p.122)

Not only can statements be infelicitous in the same way as performatives, they can also – unlike they are standardly treated – not be used to state just anything. "Suppose for example you say to me 'I'm feeling pretty moldy this morning.' Well, I say to you 'You're not'; and you say 'What the devil do you mean, I'm not' [...] I told you I'm feeling pretty moldy. You're just not in a position to say, to state that I'm not. [...] This brings out that you can't just make statements about other people's feelings (though you can make guesses if you like); and there are very many things which, having no knowledge of, not being in a position to pronounce about, you just can't state." (Austin, 1990 p.123)

"What we need to do for the case of stating, and by the same token describing and reporting, is to take them a bit off their pedestal, to realize that they are speech acts no less than all these other speech acts that we have been mentioning and talking about as performative. And also [...] we do require to assess at least a great many performative utterances in a general dimension of correspondence with fact." (Austin, 1990 p.123)

This realization – that criteria like infelicity and that explicit performatives are acts instead of statements seem to not be sufficient to distinguish the two acts – lead Austin to also incorporate the notion of the force of an utterance into his theory: "What we need besides the old doctrine about meanings is a new doctrine about all the possible forces of utterances, towards the discovery of which our proposed list of explicit performative verbs would be a very great help; and then, going on from there, an investigation of the various terms of appraisal that we use in discussing speech-acts of this, that, or the other precise kind – orders, warnings, and the like." (Austin, 1990 p.124) The key insight here is that statements are also speech acts, just like any others and should be treated as such. The main difference between them and other speech acts can only be determined by the different force of the

respective utterance since all previous criteria of classification failed to make clear distinctions.

Austin was the first to introduce SPEECH ACTS as a technical term and as a means to describe that and how it is possible to perform an act that possibly changes our reality by only using speech. His work together with Searle's further development of the *Speech Act Theory* SAT provide a theoretical basis in order to understand illocutionary force behind our literal utterances and the additional value it contributes to communication. It shows that, for the determination of a communication's successful execution, the mere truth or falsity of the uttered expression is not enough (and sometimes even utterly irrelevant) as a factor of evaluation.

5.1.3 *Searle's speech acts*

Searle, 1965 discusses what Austin called ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS (e.g. *state, assert, describe, warn, promise...*) following the basic assumption that communication involves intentional production of sounds or marks following certain sets of rules. He wants to test his hypothesis that "the semantics of a language can be regarded as a series of systems of constitutive rules and that illocutionary acts are acts performed in accordance with these sets of constitutive rules" (Searle, 1965 p.4) by trying to state these rules for one example of an illocutionary act. To explain what set of rules Searle is talking about here, he distinguishes two sorts:

(3) REGULATIVE RULES regulate pre-existing forms of activity/behavior (like rules of etiquette regulate interpersonal relationships). They generally have the form 'Do X' or 'If Y do X'

(4) CONSTITUTIVE RULES constitute and also regulate activities (e.g. the rules of football do not merely regulate the game, they create the very possibility of that activity) The existence of the activity is logically dependent on the rules.
They can have the same form as regulative rules BUT can also have the form 'X counts as Y' – these are crucial for the analysis of illocutionary acts.

It is also very important to distinguish between what is part of the illocutionary force and what is part of the propositional content of an illocutionary act. The common content that is expressed by different illocutionary acts is called the proposition. It is, for example, the common feature of all three sentences of *Will John leave the room?*, *John will leave the room.* as well as *John, leave the room!* something expressible by the clause *that John will leave the room*, although each of them uttered on a given occasion would perform a different illocutionary act (Searle, 1965 p.5).

> "That is, for a large class of sentences used to perform illocutionary acts, we can say for the purpose of our analysis that the sentence has two (not necessarily separate) parts, the proposition indicating element and the function indicating device. [...] The function indicating device shows how the proposition is to be taken, or, to put it in another way, what illocutionary force the utterance is to have, that is, what illocutionary act the speaker is performing in the utterance of the sentence."
>
> [Searle, 1965 p.6]

The crucial main difference, however, between 'just uttering sounds or making marks' and performing a SPEECH ACT is that the sounds/marks of a SPEECH ACT have meaning and are uttered to mean something by them. Searle adopts in general the definition of meaning from Grice because "it shows the relationship between the notion of meaning and the notion of intention". He does name one major objection: Grice's account "fails to account for the extent to which meaning is a matter of rules or conventions [...] does not show the connection between one's meaning something by what one says and what that which one says actually means in that language.' (Searle, 1965 p.8).

To strengthen this point, he provides the following counter-example: an American Soldier in WWII is captured by Italian troops. He would like to communicate to the Italians that he is a German officer but doesn't know enough German or Italian to do just SAY so, so he attempts to put on a show by reciting a German poem *Kennst du das Land wo die Zitronen blühen?* In Grice's terms: he intends to produce an effect in them *'that they should believe that I am a German officer'*. The effect is intended to be produced my means of their recognition of his intention (they should think I intend to tell them I am a German officer). According to Searle, though, it does not follow from Grice's account that he means *I am a German officer* by uttering *Kennst du das Land...* – "it seems plainly false because what the words uttered mean is *Knowest thou the land where the lemon trees bloom?*

[...] The reason we're unable to do this is that what we can mean is a function of what we are saying. Meaning is more than a matter of intention, it is also a matter of convention." (Searle, 1965 p.8) Grice, in a later paper reacts specifically to this example and says that "we should be disinclined to say that the American **meant** that he was a German officer, and ready to say only that he **meant them to think** that he was a German officer" (Grice, 1969 my emphasis).

Searle proposes with his analysis of illocutionary acts a reformulation of Grice's account that captures both, the intentional and the conventional aspects as well as the relationship between them. He describes this combination of the two aspects as follows: "In the per-

formance of an illocutionary act the speaker intends to produce a certain effect by means of getting the hearer to recognize his intention to produce that effect, and furthermore, if he is using words literally, he intends this recognition to be achieved in virtue of the fact that the rules for using the expressions he utters associate the expressions with the production of that effect." (Searle, 1965 p.9)

After laying the groundwork he now moves to his attempt to give an analysis of the illocutionary act of (sincere) promising, first by asking what conditions are necessary and sufficient stating these conditions as a set of propositions. After that he introduces rules for the use of the function indicating device, which "are to be found corresponding to conditions (2)-(7)" (Searle, 1965).

"Given that a speaker S utters as sentence T in the presence of a hearer H, then, in the utterance of T, S sincerely (and non-defectively) promises that p to H if and only if:

1. *Normal Input and Output Conditions obtain.*
   'serious linguistic communication' e.g. speaker and hearer both know the language, are conscious of what they're doing, not acting, playing a role, joking etc.

2. *S expresses that p in the utterance of T*
   Isolates the propositional content from the rest of the speech act

3. *In expressing that p, S predicates a future act A of S.*
   'I cannot promise to have done something, and I cannot promise that someone else will do something. (Although I can promise to see that he will do it.)'

4. *(H would prefer S's doing A to his not doing A, and S believes H would prefer his doing A to his not doing A.*
   '[. . .] the thing promised must be something the hearer wants done, or considers to be in his interest, or would prefer being done to not being done, etc.; and the speaker must be aware of or believe or know, etc. that this is the case.'

5. *It is not obvious to both S and H that S will do A in the normal course of events*
   'It is out of order for me to promise to do something that it is obvious I am going to do anyhow.'

6. *S intends to do A.*
   The speaker intends to do the act promised and believes that it is possible for him to do the act (or refrain from doing it)

7. *S intends that the utterance of T will place him under an obligation to do A.*
   Having the intention of being put under obligation by this utterance is a necessary condition of making a promise and distinguishes promises from other kinds of speech acts.

Rule 1 P is to be uttered only in the context of a sentence (or larger stretch of discourse) the utterance of which predicates some future act A of the speaker S.

Rule 2 P is to be uttered only if the hearer H would prefer S's doing A to his not doing A, and S believes H would prefer S's doing A to his not doing A.

Rule 3 P is to be uttered only if it is not obvious to both S and H that S will do A in the normal course of events.

Rule 4 P is to be uttered only if S intends to do A.

Rule 5 The utterance of P counts as the undertaking of an obligation to do A."

[Searle, 1965 pp.10-15]

To further develop his account after presenting his ideas on illocutionary acts in *What is a Speech Act?* (Searle, 1965), Searle, 1975 discusses *Indirect Speech Acts* (ISA): "[. . .] cases in which one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by way of performing another." (Searle, 1975 p.60)

The general hypothesis he defends here is that "In indirect speech acts the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and nonlinguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer" (Searle, 1975 p.61).

He presents an approach to explain these phenomena by virtue of his SAT, thereby also taking into account conversational principles and background information. "To be more specific, the apparatus necessary to explain the indirect part of indirect speech acts includes a theory of speech acts, certain general principles of cooperative conversation [some of which have been discussed by Grice (this volume)], and mutually shared factual background information of the speaker and the hearer, together with an ability on the part of the hearer to make inferences." (Searle, 1975 p.61)

The underlying question throughout Searle, 1975 is *How does the hearer know that another illocutionary act is (indirectly) directed at them and does not take the utterance meaning just what the literal, obvious, illocutionary act would suggest?* He starts his way toward an answer with an example:

(5) (1) Student X: Let's go to the movies tonight.
(2) Student Y: I have to study for an exam.

[Searle, 1975 p.61]

The puzzle here is that someone uttering (2) in (5) in that context would be taken to constitute Y's rejection of X's proposal to go to

the movies. But the literal meaning of (2) is not a rejection but rather simply a statement about another situation.

> "Let us say that the PRIMARY illocutionary act performed in Y's utterance is the rejection of the proposal made by X, and that Y does that by way of performing a SECONDARY illocutionary act of making a statement to the effect that he has to prepare for an exam. [...] We may, therefore, further say that the secondary illocutionary act is literal; the primary illocutionary act is not literal."
>
> [Searle, 1975 p.62]

Searle argues that the area of directives is the most useful to look at because requirements of politeness makes direct imperatives or performatives (like *Leave the room!*) awkward so that people here especially tend to look for indirect means to express their illocutionary points. (Searle, 1975 p.64) He points out that there are six groups of sentences that could standardly be used to make indirect directives (e.g. requests or orders):

Group 1 are 'ability'-sentences such as *Can you reach the salt?*

Group 2 contain a speaker's wishes such as *I would like you to go now.*

Group 3 concern the hearer to do sth., such as *Would you kindly get off my foot?*

Group 4 are 'desire'-sentences such as *Would you mind not making so much noise?*

Group 5 contain reasons for doing something such as *It wouldn't hurt if you left now.*

Group 6 is a large class consisting of sentences embedding one of these elements inside another. e.g. *I hope you won't mind if I ask you if you if you could leave us alone*.

[Searle, 1975 p.66]

On the basis of these directive sentences, Searle shows how SAT can provide an explanation for sentences, which have one illocutionary force as part of their meaning that can be used to perform an act with a different illocutionary force. "A comparison of the list of felicity conditions on the directive class of illocutionary acts and our list of types of sentences used to perform indirect directives show that Groups 1-6 of types can be reduced to three types:

- those having to do with felicity conditions on the performance of a directive illocutionary act (Group 1-3),

- those having to do with reasons for doing the act (Group 4 and 5), and
- those embedding one element inside another one. (Group 6)"

[Searle, 1975 p.71]

He goes back to the fundamental question: "At the dinner table, X says to Y, *Can you pass the salt?* by way of asking Y to pass the salt. Now, how does Y know that X's requesting him to pass the salt instead of just asking a question about his abilities to pass the salt?" (Searle, 1975 p.73) Indirect speech acts, as explained above, consist of two illocutionary points: one underlying one and one ulterior one. The underlying illocutionary point is contained in the meaning of the sentence and the ulterior illocutionary point has to be worked out similarly to a conversational implicature according to two features: "The first is established by the principles of conversation operating on the information of the hearer and the speaker, and the second is derived from the theory of speech acts together with background information. [...] The chief motivation – though not the only motivation – for using these indirect forms is politeness." (Searle, 1975 p.74)

The following ten steps are necessary for the hearer to derive the conclusion of a request from the utterance of a question:

STEP 1: *Y has asked me a question as to whether I have the ability to pass the salt (fact about the conversation).*

STEP 2: *I assume that he is cooperating in the conversation and that therefore his utterance has some aim or point (principles of conversational cooperation).*

STEP 3: *The conversational setting is not such as to indicate a theoretical interest in my salt-passing ability (factual background information).*

STEP 4: *Furthermore, he probably already knows that the answer to the question is yes (factual background information). (This step facilitates the move to Step 5, but is not essential.)*

STEP 5: *Therefore, his utterance is probably not just a question. It probably has some ulterior illocutionary point (inference from Steps 1, 2, 3, and 4). What can it be?*

STEP 6: *A preparatory condition for any directive illocutionary act is the ability of H to perform the act predicated in the propositional content condition (theory of speech acts).*

STEP 7: *Therefore, X has asked me a question the affirmative answer to which would entail that the preparatory condition for requesting me to pass the salt is satisfied (inference from Steps 1 and 6).*

STEP 8: *We are now at dinner and people normally use salt at dinner; they pass it back and forth, try to get others to pass it back and forth, etc. (background information).*

STEP 9: *He has therefore alluded to the satisfaction of a preparatory condition for a request whose obedience conditions it is quite likely he wants me to bring about (inference from Steps 7 and 8).*

STEP 10: *Therefore, in the absence of any other plausible illocutionary point, he is probably requesting me to pass him the salt (inference from Steps 5 and 9).*

[Searle, 1975 pp.73-74]

The general approach suggested is shown alongside examples of directives but it will also work for other types of indirection: "A study of the examples of sentences used to perform indirect commissives (especially offers and promises) shows very much the same patterns that we found in the study of directives." (Searle, 1975 p.80).

Altogether, Searle shows that his account of a SPEECH ACT, together with rules of conversations and background information can explain the puzzling phenomenon as to how a hearer is able to recognize a primary illocutionary act expressed through the literal meaning of the uttered sentence in certain situations. His account, especially the ten steps a hearer takes to derive the primary illocutionary act, parallels Grice, 1975's ideas on how CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES are computed (which is natural since Searle incorporates conversational cooperation). The main differences are the fundamental incorporation of background information as well as the psychological states that are included in the different kinds of illocutionary forces within every SPEECH ACT.

Searle, 1979 aims at classifying the illocutionary acts and thereby showing how many kinds there are, how they are realized in the syntax of a natural language and parallel to that, he assesses to which respects he thinks of Austin's original classification as adequate or inadequate. He identifies and lists (at least) twelve significant dimensions of variation in which illocutionary acts differ one from another but limits them as "These three dimensions – illocutionary point, direction of fit, and sincerity condition – seem to me the most important, and I will build most of my taxonomy around them [...]" (Searle, 1979 p.5):

Differences in the point (or purpose) of the (type of) act
These differences correspond to the essential conditions in my analysis of illocutionary acts in chapter 3 of *Speech Acts* (Searle, 1979). "The point or purpose of a type of illocution I shall call its illocutionary point, Illocutionary point is part of but not the same as illocutionary force. [...] But the illocutionary forces are clearly different. In general,

one can say that the notion of illocutionary force is the resultant of several elements of which illocutionary point is only one, though, I believe, the most important one." (Searle, 1979 p.3) "Ultimately, I believe, essential conditions form the best basis for a taxonomy, as I shall attempt to show." (Searle, 1979 p.2)

Differences in the direction of fit between words and the world.
Some illocutions have as part of their illocutionary point to get the words (more strictly, their propositional content) to match the world, others to get the world to match the words. [...] Direction of fit is always a consequence of illocutionary point.

Differences in expressed psychological state
In general, in the performance of any illocutionary act with a propositional content, the speaker expresses some attitude, state, etc., to that propositional content. etc. [...] The psychological state expressed in the performance of the illocutionary act is the sincerity condition of the act. (Searle, 1979 pp.2-7)

Austin originally presented five categories of illocutionary acts:

- Verdictives (e.g. *acquit, hold, calculate, estimate...*),
- Exercitives (e.g. *order, command, declare...*),
- Commissives (e.g. *promise, vow, guarantee...*),
- Expositives (e.g. *affirm, deny, illustrate, accept...*) and
- Behabitives (e.g., *apologize, thank, commiserate, welcome...*).

The most important criticism Searle brings is that "they are not classifications of illocutionary acts but of English illocutionary verbs" (Searle, 1979 p.9) and that Austin seems to wrongly think that all non-synonymous verbs have to mark different illocutionary acts. His suggestion instead is to "take illocutionary point, and its corollaries, direction of fit and expressed sincerity conditions, as the basis for constructing a classification. In such a classification, other features – the role of authority, discourse relations, etc. – will fall into their appropriate places" (Searle, 1979 p.12). Searle then presents his own five basic categories of illocutionary acts (*Assertives*, *Directives*, *Commissives*, *Expressives* and *Declarations*), and individually describes their characteristics, their relation to Austin's classes as well as their syntactical structures:

Assertives commit the speaker (in varying degrees) to something's being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition. The direction of fit is words to the world; the psychological state expressed is *Belief (that p)*.
Symbolized as: $\vdash\downarrow$ B(p)
"This class will contain most of Austin's *expositives* and many of his *verdictives* as well for the, by now I hope obvious, reason

that they all have the same illocutionary point and differ only in other features of illocutionary force." (Searle, 1979 p.13)
Syntactic structure of such sentences as *I state that it is raining*: I verb (that) + S.

Directives attempts (of varying degrees, and hence, more precisely, they are determinates of the determinable which includes attempting) by the speaker to get the hearer to do something.
The direction of fit is world-to-words and the sincerity condition is *want* (or *wish* or *desire*). The propositional content is always that the hearer H does some future action A.
Symbolized as: $\vdash\uparrow$ W (H does A) (e.g. *ask, order, command, beg, invite...*)
Questions are a subclass of *directives*, since they are attempts by S to get H to answer. "I think also that it is clear that dare, defy and challenge which Austin lists as *behabitives* are in this class. Many of Austin's *exercitives* are also in this class." (Searle, 1979 p.14)
Syntactic structure of such sentences as *I order you to leave*: I verb you + you Fut Vol Verb (NP) (Adv).

Commissives commit the speaker (again in varying degrees) to some future course of action.
The direction of fit is world-to-word and the sincerity condition is Intention. The propositional content is always that the speaker S does some future action A.
Using 'C' for the members of this class generally, we have the following symbolism: C $\uparrow$ I (S does A) (e.g. *promise, ...*)
"I will simply appropriate it (meaning Austin's definition of this class) as it stands with the cavil that several of the verbs he lists as *commissive* verbs do not belong in this class at all, such as 'shall', 'intend', 'favor', and others." (Searle, 1979 p.14)
Syntactic structure of such sentences as *I promise to pay you the money*: I verb (you) + I Fut Vol Verb (NP) (Adv).

Expressives express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content.
Notice that in *expressives* there is no direction of fit. The truth of the proposition expressed in an *expressive* is presupposed.
Symbolized as: E Ø (P) (S/H + property) (e.g. *thank, congratulate, condole, welcome...*)
Syntactic structure of such sentences as *I apologize for stepping on your toe*: I verb you + I/you VP => gerundive nom.

Declarations successful performance of one of its members brings about the correspondence between the propositional content and reality, successful performance guarantees that the propositional content corresponds to the world: if I successfully perform the act of

marrying you, then you are married. *Declarations* are almost always connected to extralinguistic institutions and speaker and hearer have to occupy special places within these institutions.
The direction of fit is both words-to-world and world-to words because of the peculiar character of *declarations* and there is no sincerity condition.
Symbolized as: D ↕ Ø (p)
Syntactic structure of such sentences as *I now pronounce you man and wife*: I verb NP1 + NP1 be pred

> *Subclass of Assertive declarations*
> "Some institutions require assertive claims to be issued with the force of *declarations* in order that the argument over the truth of the claim can come to an end somewhere and the next institutional steps which wait on the settling of the factual issue can proceed: the prisoner is released or sent to jail, the side is retired, a touchdown is scored" (Searle, 1979 p.19) Unlike the other declarations, they share with *assertives* a sincerity condition.
> Symbolized as: $D_a \downarrow \updownarrow$ B(p)

"*Declarations* bring about some alteration in the status or condition of the referred to object or objects solely in virtue of the fact that the declaration has been successfully performed [...] In the history of the discussion of these topics since Austin's first introduction of his distinction between *performatives* and *constatives*, this feature of declarations has not been properly understood. [...] What I am calling *declarations* were included in the class of *performatives*." (Searle, 1979 p.17)

[Searle, 1979 chpts. 4&5]

Searle here makes a few absolutely crucial points for his analysis. First, the insight that diverges his theory from Austin's: that not all illocutionary verbs always evoke individual illocutionary points – sometimes they are, for example, just used to intensify another illocutionary point (e.g. *insist* or *suggest*), which is the "[...] reason, among others, that we must carefully distinguish a taxonomy of illocutionary acts from one of illocutionary verbs" (Searle, 1979 p.28). Then, with his taxonomy of illocutionary acts, especially with the subclass of *declarations*, Searle shows how it is possible for human societies to have such complex social concepts as marriage or a legal system.

5.2 BACKGROUND, COMMON GROUND AND POSSIBLE WORLDS

5.2.1 *Searle's background*

Searle, 2010 introduced how settling on a specific interpretation of a speech act in communication is usually done under precisification by the BACKGROUND. With respect to the environment of the constitutive rules which form the system that is the law, he describes how people continue to try to 'cheat' within what they think is the literal interpretation of certain legal formulations. As an example Searle, 2010 explains how early rules within the income tax law differentiated corporation tax from individual tax in that corporations were taxed at a much lower rate than individuals. So, lawyers though to treat their clients as corporations. This way, the actor Cary Grant's income was just a small amount of money coming from 'Cary Grant incorporated'. The money was then technically *made* by the corporation, which had to pay much less in taxes than the individual person Cary Grant.

This, according to Searle, is a case of exploiting the BACKGROUND: declaring something a corporation which is acting in place of the accompanying individual is exploiting the literal meaning of the law by shifting the background understanding. The only way to remedy such actions is to adjust and make the law more precise, which becomes the constant struggle within this regulatory system. The income tax case is a very good non-linguistic example of what is going on in cases of UIM: lawyers shifting the understanding of what constitutes a corporation to pay less income tax perfectly well understand how the literal meaning of this law is *meant* – how it was intended to be interpreted. They just see potential to exploit it by virtue of deliberately shifting the background understanding of the term 'corporation' to favor their goal. UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS just as well understand the speaker's intended meaning of a given utterance. They just see potential to exploit the background that is supposed to help settle on one (intended) interpretation with respect to the literal meaning of the uttered expression.

Searle's concept of the BACKGROUND (together with the notion of a NETWORK of intentional states) was developed throughout various books and papers between 1978 and 1996. The basic idea is that every intention to do anything can only be formed against a set of biological and cultural resources that have to be available. Searle defines the background as "the set of nonintentional or preintentional capacities that enable intentional states to function" (Searle, 1996 p.129). It is important that the BACKGROUND is not to be understood as a set of representations. It functions causally, but not determining. "the Background is rather the set of practices, skills, habits, and stances that enable Intentional contents to work in the various ways that they do, and it is in that sense that the Background functions causally by

providing a set of enabling conditions for the operation of Intentional states." (Searle, 1983 p.158)

> "To think of the Background naively, think of Wittgenstein's example of the picture of the man walking uphill. It could be interpreted as a man sliding backward downhill. Nothing internal to the picture, even construed as a pictorial representation of a man in that position, forces the interpretation we find natural."
>
> [Searle, 1992 p.177]

The creation (apart from special cases) and maintenance of institutional facts[1] is normally not a conscious process, evolves rather naturally and, after it has been taken for granted by humans growing up in a society having those social facts they are assumed to be part of the BACKGROUND.

The way the BACKGROUND works with respect to an institutional reality is such that "the background can be causally sensitive to the specific forms of the constitutive rules of the institutions without actually containing any beliefs or desires or representations of those rules" (Searle, 1996 p.141). We do, for example, accept a degree of normativity created in and for human institutions: "We accept that there is something wrong with the person who when the baseball is pitched at him simply eats it [...]" (Searle, 1996 p.146). While some parts of the BACKGROUND are fixed, such as that humans need to breathe oxygen, some parts underlie development. For example, once a person learns to drive a car, they have to put in a great deal of effort to learn and practice the physical processes as well as the institutional rules necessary to steer such a vehicle responsibly through traffic. Here, " 'Practice makes perfect' not because practice results in a perfect memorization of the rules, but because repeated practice enables the body to take over and the rules to recede into the Background" (Searle, 1983 p.150).

When it comes to its importance for language use, the basic understanding behind the BACKGROUND in Searle's picture is that it is needed in order for us to understand literal meanings.

1 Institutional facts are contrasted with 'brute facts' (facts like that there is snow and ice on the top of Mt. Everest) in that they require human institutions for their existence: "In order that this piece of paper should be a five dollar bill, for example, there has to be the human institution of money." (Searle, 1996 p.2).

> "The simplest argument [...] is that the literal meaning of any sentence can only determine its truth conditions or other conditions of satisfaction against a background of capacities, dispositions, know-how. etc., which are not themselves part of the semantic content of the sentence."
>
> [Searle, 1996 p.130]

As prime example for its validity Searle uses the verb *cut* in *Sally cut the cake* and *Bill cut the grass*: the verb used has a constant meaning, is not lexically ambiguous (because in all cases it involves the same sense of some form of physical separation) and it is also not used metaphorically. Nonetheless, in each instance of its use in the two (and more of such) utterances it determines different truth conditions "because what counts as cutting [...] will vary with the context" (Searle, 1996 p.130).

Searle's example of lawyers exploiting the BACKGROUND as well as his central idea of all literal meaning being interpreted against said BACKGROUND is fitting for the phenomenon at the center of my investigation. But the general concept of the BACKGROUND is to be viewed as broader with a more all-encompassing range of application than other, similar concepts. When it comes to the more specific application of talking about what certain participants in a conversation know, believe and can also be mutually assumed or expected to know or believe, Grice, in his *William James lectures*, was probably the first to assign 'common ground status' to propositions and to talk about BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE (appearance in published text in Grice, 1975 and Grice, 1989[2]). Bach, 1979 talks about MUTUAL BELIEFS, Schiffer, 1974 calls it MUTUAL KNOWLEDGE, Lewis, 2002 mentions COMMON KNOWLEDGE in signaling games and, also explicitly building on Grice's ideas, Stalnaker, 1999 (as well as Stalnaker, 2002 - Stalnaker, 2014) introduces the concept of COMMON GROUND (CG) alongside the notions of SHARED BELIEFS and SHARED BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

Searle, 1983, like Stalnaker, also talks about PRESUPPOSITIONS and PRESUPPOSED BELIEFS in relation to the BACKGROUND but he simultaneously specifies that those concepts are not enough to grasp what the BACKGROUND does in its involvement in our understanding: "On the conception presented here, it does not come to an end with the grasp of semantic content in isolation or even with semantic content together with a set of presupposed beliefs, but rather the semantic content only functions against a Background that consists of cultural and biological know-how, and it is this Background know-how which enables us to understand literal meanings." (Searle, 1983 p.148)

2 Although the broader concepts already existed some time before these lectures. C. S. Peirce, according to Pietarinen, 2004, mentioned 'common familiar knowledge' and 'common acknowledged information' as early as 1908.

5.2.2 *Common ground in terms of possible worlds*

When it comes to the investigation of what, within the narrow sphere of a specific conversation between specific people at that exact time, can mutually be expected to be presupposed knowledge (with respect to that conversation), the concept that is probably best theoretically developed is Stalnaker's COMMON GROUND (CG).

As a basis for the COMMON GROUND, Stalnaker (1970, 1973, 1999, 2002) builds on the idea of SPEAKER MEANING: "when speakers mean things, they act with the expectation that their intentions to communicate are mutually recognized" (Stalnaker, 2002).

> "In the simple picture, the common ground is just common or mutual belief, and what a speaker presupposes is what she believes to be common or mutual belief. The common beliefs of the parties to a conversation are the beliefs they share, and that they recognize that they share: a proposition ϕ is common belief of a group of believers if and only if all in the group believe that ϕ, all believe that all believe it, all believe that all believe that all believe it, etc."
>
> [Stalnaker, 2002 p.704]

Stalnaker explicitly attributes the COMMON GROUND term per se to Grice: "I believe that the expression 'common ground', as a term for the presumed background information shared by participants in a conversation has its origin in Paul Grice's William James lectures. He did not define or explain the term in the published text, but described certain propositions as having 'common ground status'. See Grice, 1989 pp.65 and 274." (Stalnaker, 2002 p.701, footnote 1)

Similar to Grice's distinction of *what is said* from what a speaker *means* by saying it, Stalnaker distinguishes carefully the notion of speaker presupposition and the speaker's beliefs about the actual common beliefs. "*Saying* is explained in terms of speaker *meaning*, on the Gricean picture, but inevitably has the potential to diverges *(sic.)* from speaker meaning. The same pattern gives rise to a divergence between a notion of speaker presupposition and the notion of the speaker's beliefs about the actual common beliefs." (Stalnaker, 2002 pp.704-5). The possibility of there being a difference between what speakers believe and what they presuppose to be **common** beliefs can be linked to what is called *presupposition accommodation*[3]. "Accommodation is an essential feature of any communicative practice. If common ground is (at least close to) common belief, then it will adjust and change in the face of manifest events that take place, including events that are themselves speech acts." (Stalnaker, 2008 p.59) One version of accommodation is such that a speaker presupposes information that

3 A term originally from Lewis, 1979b.

was not yet COMMON GROUND between speaker and hearer. The hearer can then accommodate to update the CG with this information. For example, if I say *My sister's car broke down yesterday so I had to give her a ride to school.* I presuppose (among other things) that I have a sister. If this information was not part of the CG, yet, it can now be updated via presupposition accommodation. The proposition *I have a sister* is taken to be CG because I took it to be CG in my utterance. The connection to Grice, 1975's CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES here is that the information about me having a sister is conveyed without me literally saying *I have a sister*[4]. This kind of accommodation can arise out of noticing that the current context is defective. But interlocutors do not have to, mandatorily, notice that a context is defective; they can all happily go on thinking the context is non-defective while it is, in fact, defective. In a non-defective context, all beliefs that each participant of the conversation has are correct. If an interlocutor notices that a belief they thought they had correctly seems to be false, according to what the other participant of the conversation presupposes, they might correct this by presupposition accommodation, as described above (Stalnaker, 2002).

For a logical representation of common belief, Stalnaker, 2002 uses a (as he says idealized) formal semantic framework[5] in which "belief is identified with truth in all doxastic alternatives (all possible worlds that are compatible with the subject's beliefs), and the doxastic alternatives to any given possible world are represented by a binary accessibility relation on the possible worlds in the model" (Stalnaker, 2002 p.706).

> COMMON GROUND (CG)
> "It is common ground that ϕ in a group if all members *accept* (for the purpose of the conversation) that ϕ, and all *believe* that all accept that ϕ, and all *believe* that all *believe* that all accept that ϕ, etc."
>
> [Stalnaker, 2002 p.716]

An important point for Stalnaker is that the COMMON GROUND that makes out the context of a conversation may diverge from the actual common beliefs of the interlocutors. This is why Stalnaker, 2002 defines the COMMON GROUND in terms of the broader notion of *acceptance* rather than in terms of beliefs. "To accept a proposition is to treat it as true for some reason. One ignores, at least temporarily,

4 Presuppositions are, of course, fundamentally different inferences from implicatures in that, for example, presuppositions are not cancelable like implicatures are and project through negation, which implicatures typically don't do. Just to mention two of the tests for distinguishing different kinds of inferences from each other. See, e.g. Sadock, 1978 for a critical overview of Grice's tests for implicatures and Beaver, Geurts, and Denlinger, 2024 for an overview of the vast literature on presupposition.

5 Following Hintikka, 1977 and Kripke, 1977.

and perhaps in a limited context, the possibility that it is false. Belief is the most basic acceptance concept: the simplest reason to treat a proposition as true is that one believes that it *is* true." (Stalnaker, 2002 p.716) As a conversation proceeds, the CG of this conversation consists of the beliefs of the participants that are relevant to this conversation. These are, as Stalnaker stresses, not only the beliefs of each participant of the subject matter of the conversation but also the beliefs with regard to the ongoing conversation itself. The CG will change as the conversation goes forward. Not necessarily because one or both of the participants would change their beliefs about the subject matter of the conversation. They can stay stubborn about that; nonetheless, their beliefs about the conversation itself will change when something is said. Their beliefs will then include the information that something has been said. "In a conversation, the beliefs of the participants that are relevant to it will include both beliefs about the subject matter of the conversation, and also beliefs about the ongoing conversation itself. [...] when something is said, he will come to believe that something has been said." (Stalnaker, 2002 p.708)

Information can, as Stalnaker, 2014 says, only be drawn on by speakers and interpreters if it is available. This leads to the circumstance that the information itself that certain information is available has to be part of the information.

> "If communication is to be successful, the contextual information on which the content of a speech act depends must be information that is *available* to the addressee. [...] the account of context we need [...] must distinguish a body of information that is available, or presumed to be available, as a resource for communication. The development of this point is part of what led to the second notion of context, context as a body of available information: the common ground."
>
> [Stalnaker, 2014 p.24]

Stalnaker, 2014 uses Lewis' (e.g. Lewis, 1995) idea of *centered* possible worlds to represent cognitive states modeling belief states. Lewis, 1995 basic idea is that our actual world is one possible way a world can be and "Other worlds are other, that is *un*actualised, possibilities. If there are many worlds, and every way that a world could possibly be, whenever there is some world at which such-and-such is the case, then it might be that such-and-such is the case" (Lewis, 1995 p.5). But it will be an assumption of Stalnaker's model that the centered worlds that are epistemic or doxastic alternatives will have different centers only if they are also different worlds. "We are to use sets of centered possible worlds, which are pairs consisting of a possible world and a designated time and person within that world. The world component

of a centered world represents an objective possible situation that is compatible with the subject's conception of the way the objective world is. The person at the center represents the (objectively identified) person that the subject thinks she might be, in a world of that kind. The (objectively identified) time of the center represents a time that, for all the subject believes, might be the time she is in the belief state, in that possible world." (Stalnaker, 2014 p.112)

According to Stalnaker, 2014's model, for example, if $\langle c, x\rangle$ and $\langle c', y\rangle$ are centered worlds, then $\langle c, x\rangle R\langle c', y\rangle$ holds just in case it is compatible with the beliefs of the individual at the center c at the time of that center in world x that she is the person at the center c', that the world is world y, and that the time is the time of c'.

So, y is compatible with what A knows in x if and only if for some C, $\langle A, x\rangle R\langle C, y\rangle$. And also, A and B have conflicting beliefs if the set of worlds compatible with A's beliefs is disjoint from the set compatible with B's. (Stalnaker, 2014 p.119)

> "for any individual concept f, we can define a relativized epistemic accessibility relation between (uncentered) possible worlds in terms of the epistemic accessibility relation between centered worlds as follows:
>
> For any worlds x and y, $xR_f y$ iff$\langle f(x), x\rangle R\langle f(y), y\rangle$.
>
> Provided that f is an I-concept, relative to world x, the set $\{y{:}x\mathrm{R}_f y\}$ will be the set of (uncentered) possible worlds compatible with what the individual who is the value of f for world x knows in world x.
> Now for any two individual concepts, f and g, we can define a binary relation R_{fg} as the transitive closure of R_f and R_g, and this relation will determine a common knowledge set, relative to a world x, provided that both f and g are I-concepts, relative to all possible worlds that are R_{fg} related to x.
> That is, the set $\{y{:}x\mathrm{R}_{fg}y\}$ will be the set of worlds compatible with the common knowledge, in world x, of the two individuals who are the values of f and g for world itx (relative to those ways of identifying each other) if and only if for all worlds y in this set, and for all worlds z and individuals B, if $\langle f(y), y\rangle R\langle B, z\rangle$, then $B = f(z)$ and if $\langle g(y), y\rangle R\langle B, z\rangle$, then $B = g(z)$."
>
> [Stalnaker, 2014 p.122]

Cases of utterances involving indexical pronouns are good examples for illustrating this complex definition. "Knowledge, the relativization of the common ground to the ways the individuals have of identifying each other means that it is possible for there to be two distinct

contexts involving the same individuals, differing only in their ways individuating each other." (Stalnaker, 2014 p.123). Stalnaker, 2014 uses Mark Richard's *phone booth story* (Richard, 1983) in which a person in a phone booth is talking to another person and also watching someone outside the booth waving at them. They mutually are unaware of the fact that they are talking on the phone and looking at each other. Now when the person inside the phone booth asks *The person waving at me thinks I am in danger but you don't think so, do you?!* and the person outside replies on the phone *No I don't think you're in danger*. Both of their statements are sincere and true although the terms *the person waving at me* and *you* refer to the same person so the statements appear to be contradictory at first glance.

Now, this example modeled in terms of possible worlds has three worlds: w_α, which is the actual world containing persons A and B, w_β, which is the world, person A in the phone booth takes it to be and w_γ, which is the world as person B takes it to be. "B (in world α) centers themselves (in γ) at B1. (That is, $\langle B, \alpha \rangle R \langle B1, \gamma \rangle$) B1 is talking to A1 in world γ, and is waving at A2. A1 is not in danger, but A2 **is** in danger. [...] We might distinguish two different I-concepts for A (relative to world α): both take world β to A (that is what makes them I-concepts for A in x), but one takes world γ to A1 and the other takes world γ to A2. [...]
Relative to the first I-concept, the clause 'that I am in danger' refers to a proposition that is true in γ, while relative to the second I-concept, it refers to a proposition that is false in world γ." (Stalnaker, 2014 p.124)

The person outside the phone booth believes that the person inside is in danger so the inside person's belief attribution with respect to the waving person is true. The person that they are talking to on the phone does not believe the person inside the booth is in danger, so their belief attribution with respect to the person on the phone is also true.

So, in Stalnaker, 2008's sense of the COMMON GROUND in terms of possible worlds, "A belief state will be represented by a pair consisting of a centered world (representing the believer and time and world in which the believer is in the belief state) and a set of centered worlds (representing the ways the world might be, according to that believer, the time that, for all he believes, it might be, and the person that, for all he believes, he might be)."

"An individual belief state is a pair consisting of a centered world (the base world) and a set of centered worlds (the belief set). The common ground can also be represented by a base world and a common belief set, but with a sequence of individuals (all those in the relevant group) at the centers instead of a single individual. The sequences of individuals at the centers of the common belief worlds will represent where the members of the group mutually

locate themselves and each other in the possible worlds compatible with their common beliefs." (Stalnaker, 2008 p.74)

In terms of UIM, the original speaker and the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER locate themselves at the centers of two different sets of worlds; the speaker locates themselves as well as the interpreter at the center of the set of worlds in which the speaker's intended meaning is COMMON GROUND and the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER locates themselves as well as a counterpart speaker at the center of another set of possible worlds in which the other possible interpretation of what the original speaker said is COMMON GROUND as the counterpart speaker's intended meaning.

5.2.3 *Common ground and the conversational record*

Having established that, at least when you follow Stalnaker, 2002, the COMMON GROUND (CG) is based on what is **accepted** to be mutually presupposed by all participants in a conversation, there remains the question of how to label the contents that are communicated but not (yet) accepted as part of the CG. Conversational moves in general can be organized following Lewis, 1979b's idea of conventionalized language games, according to a CONVERSATIONAL RECORD. Structuring and organizing the discourse along the lines of a CONVERSATIONAL RECORD of public SPEECH ACTS that allows for, colloquially said, *keeping score in a language game* is a key concept in, among others, Asher and Lascarides, 2003's SDRT framework for discourse analysis.

As Camp, 2018 (p.58) summarizes: "the record or score is highly structured. Most obviously, it specifies the claims, questions, promises and instructions issued by each interlocutor. But these are not merely listed in temporal sequence: they are embedded within a more complex discourse structure, which guides and constrains interpretation." Camp, 2018's description further includes the Question Under Discussion (QUD) together with sub-questions (Roberts, 2012) as well as with various discourse referents and accessible possibilities (Heim, 1990) in this discourse structure. These are ranked in salience, which play a crucial role in phenomena like resolution of ellipsis and anaphora, presupposition projection, and prosodic focus (Roberts, 2015). Utterances in a discourse are linked to one another (and to the QUD) by rhetorical relations like, for example, explanation, elaboration, and contrast (Hobbs, 1985, Kehler, 2002, Asher and Lascarides, 2003).

In her work on insinuations and deniability, Camp, 2018, for instance, needs to distinguish carefully what content of an utterance is part of the public record and commits the speaker to it – therefore is not or only very hardly deniable – from what might still be CG but does not enter the CONVERSATIONAL RECORD. Insinuations in Camp, 2018's account, are often to be characterized as the latter: their 'off-record status' makes them deniable though they can still alter the COMMON

GROUND. Based on this framework, I see merit in distinguishing the public CONVERSATIONAL RECORD that commits speakers to specific content from the CG of accepted sets of mutual beliefs that are shared privately between participants in a conversation. "In a well-formed conversation, all elements of the conversational record are in the common ground; but contents can enter the common ground without going on the record. What a speaker actually says – their semantically encoded content – may differ both from what they assert and from what they otherwise mean. And they may mean, and successfully communicate, contents without entering them into either the record or the common ground." (Camp, 2018 p.63)

UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS explore the possibilities of the public record content that the speaker's utterance yields and that they are committed to. This information is also part of the CG between the interlocutors, as is the speaker's intended meaning of the utterance in the given situation. On that public basis, however, they exploit the private interpretation of what *could* have also been meant by that same utterance given the conventions that, as part of the BACKGROUND, factor into the beliefs that can be mutually assumed between interlocutors, too. While the other possible interpretation of *what is said* is not part of the CONVERSATIONAL RECORD, the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER'S response based on and reflecting this other possible interpretation thus makes it public and introduces it to be accepted as an update of the CG.

5.3 CONVENTIONS IN MEANING AND COMMUNICATION

(Language) conventions are a central concept in characterizing meaning as well as how it is communicated. Grice, very generally, for example, understands SENTENCE MEANING as the meaning an utterance is **conventionally** associated with, abstracted from its use by a particular speaker in a particular situation. "[...] For some things which can mean_{NN} something are not signs (e.g. words are not), and some are not conventional in any ordinary sense (e.g. certain gestures); while some things which mean naturally are not signs of what they mean [...]." (Grice, 1957 p.379) Later, he characterized *what is said* in terms of conventional meaning, too: "In the sense in which I am using the word *say*, I intend what someone has said to be closely related to the conventional meaning of the words (the sentence) he has uttered." (Grice, 1975 p.44)

The first systematic account of conventions in linguistics was introduced by Lewis, 2002 (first edition from 1969) in terms of signaling games. Lewis defines conventions (linguistic and non-linguistic ones) as regularities on behavior that have to be coordinated recurrently to be established within a community. It is called a GAME since the situations described by Lewis are actions involving at least two individuals

(PLAYERS) with mutual interest in coordinating their actions to reach the highest benefit from their respective action in comparison to any other action that they might also have performed – this benefit (or PAYOFF) is highest regarding conventions when all players' actions are coordinated. Since it's a game involving multiple players, purely egoistical actions usually do not yield the greatest payoff – every decision and the way the game proceeds depend on other players' decisions, too. Each player's choice of action depending on the greatest payoff is their STRATEGY in the game so games are usually referred to as STRATEGIC interactions. When all strategies are coordinated such that they yield optimal payoff for each of the players, an EQUILIBRIUM is reached.

When it comes to those conventions that govern linguistic meaning there are usually two players: a speaker and an interpreter, coordinating on the meaning of SIGNALS. The speaker chooses an optimal signal in form of an utterance (or MESSAGE) and the interpreter chooses a respective reactive action based on their interpretation. These kinds of games are known as SIGNALING GAMES.

Lewis, 2002 in Sec. IV.1, p.122 – broken down here by Benz et al., 2010) uses the following example to illustrate a signaling game:

a scene from the American War of independence. The sexton of the Old North Church informs Paul Revere about the movements of the British regular troops, the redcoats. The only possibility to communicate with each other is by use of lanterns. A possible signaling strategy of the sexton may look as follows:

(6)
a. if the redcoats are observed staying home, hang no lantern in the belfry;
b. if the redcoats are observed setting out by land, hang one lantern in the belfry;
c. if the redcoats are observed setting out by sea, hang two lanterns in the belfry.

The common goal of Paul Revere and the sexton is to warn the countryside about the movements of the British regulars. To achieve this, Paul Revere has to interpret the sexton's signals correctly. The successful interpretation strategy looks as follows:

(7)
a. if no lantern is observed hanging in the belfry, go home;
b. if one lantern is observed hanging in the belfry, warn the countryside that the redcoats are coming by land;
c. if two lanterns are observed hanging in the belfry, warn the countryside that the redcoats are coming by sea.

The strategies described in (6) and (7) can be represented as follows:

	stay	land	sea
S	0	1	2

speaker's selection strategy

	0	1	2
H	stay	land	sea

hearer's interpretation strategy

The top row lists the possible information states of the agent: the set of states $\mathcal{M} = \{stay, land, sea\}$ for the sexton, and the set $\mathcal{F} = \{0, 1, 2\}$ with the number of lanterns for Paul Revere. The pair $\langle \mathcal{S}, \mathcal{H} \rangle$ is clearly a signaling convention. It is arbitrary, as there are other strategy pairs which would be equally successful, both have an interest in following it, and they are both interested in the other one following it. (Benz et al., 2010 p.4)

Meaning$_{NN}$ as described by Grice, 1957 is, according to Lewis, a consequence of conventional signaling. He does, however, also point out that not every time a speaker means$_{NN}$ something they also – knowingly or not – automatically have to follow prevailing conventions. You can mean $_{NN}$ something and be deceiving, or wrongly think something is a prevailing convention that is, in fact, not. You can also mean $_{NN}$ something without intending or expecting anybody to think you're intending to adhere to any convention or with adhering to *language* conventions but not signaling conventions.

It is important to also mention that the conventions in Lewis' framework are treated and structured differently than the conventions referred to (if they even do so) by language philosophers such as Grice and Searle, for instance. The highly normative character of conventions in signaling games is not directly transferable to general language conventions, for example – a point also made by Lewis, 2002 above. "Although Lewis' theory has affinities with Grice, his focus was quite different. Lewis was giving an account of conventional meaning, while Grice was interested in analyzing information transmission outside the bounds of conventional meaning." (Benz et al., 2010 p.180). The conventions presented by Lewis above resemble more what Searle, 1965 calls a *constitutive rule*, which usually takes the form "X counts as Y". Searle, 1965 compares the semantics of a language with "a series of systems of constitutive rules" that govern their device's use.

Based on that he made a central point of criticism toward Grice, 1957's theory of meaning, referring to exactly that point made by Benz et al., 2010, above, emphasizing the importance of conventions (on top of intentions) in the determination of meaning as he showed with his 'American Soldier'-example explained in Section 5.1.3 above. "what we can mean is a function of what we are saying. Meaning is more than a matter of intention, it is also a matter of convention" (Searle, 1965 p.8). While I don't think Grice disregarded conventions in *meaning* to the extent suggested by Searle, it is clear that conventions play the crucial role in *communicating*. Not only are conventions central in Searle, 1965's SAT but also already in Austin's work on Speech Acts: "We must notice that the illocutionary act is a conventional act: an act

done as conforming to a convention." (Austin, 1962 p.105) In Searle, 1965, he proposes an addition of conventional characteristics to Grice, 1957's account of meaning invoking his speech acts to achieve that: "In the performance of an illocutionary act the speaker intends to produce a certain effect by means of getting the hearer to recognize his intention to produce that effect, and furthermore, if he is using words literally, he intends this recognition to be achieved in virtue of the fact that the rules for using the expressions he utters associate the expressions with the production of that effect." (Searle, 1965 p.9)

Grice was not as convinced as Searle that meaning always has to be a matter of convention. In Grice, 1968 he specifies that *conventionally meaning something* is actually independent of *saying* something – it might be that *what is conventionally meant* happens to be included in *what is said* but that does **not** mean that the speaker did literally **say** it:

> "So I shall be committed to the view that *applied timeless meaning* and *occasion-meaning* may coincide, that is to say, it may be true both (i) that when *U* uttered *X* the meaning of *X* included "$*p$" and (ii) that part of what *U* meant when he uttered *X* was that $*p$, and yet be false that *U* has said, among other things, that $*p$. I would like to use the expression 'conventionally meant that' in such a way that the fulfillment of the two conditions just mentioned, while insufficient for the truth of 'U said that $*$p' will be sufficient (and necessary) for the truth of 'U conventionally meant that $*$p'."
>
> [Grice, 1968 p.228]

While conventions do play a role in Grice's work on communication (e.g. as part of fixing *what is said* as well as in CONVENTIONAL IMPLICATURES), he emphasizes that it is indeed one characteristic, but certainly not the **only** one for defining meaning: "I do not think that meaning is essentially connected with convention. What is is essentially connected with is some way of fixing what sentences mean: convention is indeed one of these ways, but it is not the only one." (Grice, 1989 p.298)

Grice, 1989, in describing what he calls a CONVENTIONAL IMPLICATURE in *Logic and Conversation* (Grice, 1975) invokes the notion of *Speech Acts* together with two distinct criteria of conveying meaning in order to explain the implicit meaning conveyed via conventionalized words or expressions: "One may be called the presence or absence of *formality* (whether or not the relevant signification is part of the conventional meaning of the signifying expression); the other may be called the presence or absence of *dictive* content, or *dictiveness* (whether or not the relevant signification is part of what the signifying expression *says*); and it seems that formality and informality may each be combined with dictiveness or again with nondictiveness. So the two distinctions seem to be logically independent of one another." (Grice, 1989 p.361)

He uses an example of a person using the phrase *on the other hand* as a connective between the two sentences *My brother-in-law lives on a peak in Darien* and *his great aunt was a nurse in World War I* and the notion of confusion arising from the resulting sentence. Grice, 1989 says that the speaker here contrasts the performance of what he calls LOWER-ORDER SPEECH ACTS that are statements about the brother-in-law and the great aunt, individually, with the performance of a HIGHER-ORDER SPEECH ACT that is commenting on the lower-order speech acts. This example is, according to Grice, a case of a condition which is part of what the words **conventionally** mean without being part of what the words **say** – FORMALITY without DICTIVENESS.

Grice, 1989's description of characteristics underlying this form of meaning transfer, as mentioned above, roughly describes his idea of a CONVENTIONAL IMPLICATURE (CI), which, in Grice, 1975, he just mentions very briefly before focusing more on the *conversational* variety of implicatures. "Again, if there is an inner range of characteristics which belong to the dictive content of a signifying expression as forming part of what such an expression says, it is foreseeable that there will be an outer range of cases involving characteristics which, though not part of what a signifying expression says, do form part of what such an expression conveys in some gentler and less forthright manner – part, for example, of what it hints or suggests." (Grice, 1989 p.363)

The most elaborate and furthest developed account on CONVENTIONAL IMPLICATURES (CIs) there is to date probably comes from Potts, 2005. In the book that developed out of his dissertation, he describes in detail the notion of CI, re-defines and tackles it from a more formal and less pragmatic angle. "The original definition of conventional implicature dates to Grice 1975, the cornerstone of the most influential approach to pragmatics at present. This origin seems to have led many researchers to assume that there is something importantly pragmatic about this class of meanings. But this is not so. [...] In the theory I advocate, conventional implicatures arise by a combination of two narrowly semantic aspects of the grammar: lexical meanings and novel ways of combining them with other meanings in the grammar." (Potts, 2005 p.1)

> "The heart of the proposal turns out to be a composition rule that has two parts, describable as follows:
> (i) apply a conventional implicature functor to an at-issue ('regular content') argument to form a conventionally-implicated proposition; and
> (ii) output the at-issue argument unmodified, as a meaning that is independent of the proposition in (i).
> This rule, called CI application in the text, is a restricted kind of functional application plus an identity function."
>
> [Potts, 2005 p.1]

Potts, 2005 remarks that he does not refer to the standard examples of *but*, *even* or *therefore*, mainly because his approach is supposed to be more formal than pragmatic. "[...] 'conventional implicature' is usually just a label. It lacks bite; only when supported by a logical system can it be said to make predictions."

He extracts from Grice, 1975's passage on CIs the following general properties of such implicatures:

> "(2.10)
> a. CIs are part of the conventional meaning of words.
> b. CIs are commitments, and thus give rise to entailments.
> c. These commitments are made by the speaker of the utterance "by virtue of the meaning of" the words he chooses.
> d. CIs are logically and compositionally independent of "what is said (in the favored sense)", i.e., independent of the at-issue entailments[6] "
>
> [Potts, 2005 p.11]

Potts introduces two groups of constructions that are mainly used to support his account on CIs: *supplemental (appositive) expressions*, including supplemental clauses and supplemental adverbs, and *expressives*. "Supplements (appositives, parentheticals) are the finest advertisement for the CI hypothesis known to me. Though Grice seems not to have had them in mind when defining CIs, the clauses of (2.10) pick out the highlighted constructions in (2.13) unambiguously. (2.13)
a. Ames was, as the press reported, a successful spy. (as-parenthetical)
b. Ames, who stole from the FBI, is now behind bars. (supplementary relative)
c. Ames, the former spy, is now behind bars. (nominal appositive)"
(Potts, 2005 pp.13-14)

About expressives, specifically, Potts says: "The characterization of CIs as comments upon a semantic core is nowhere more fitting than with expressives. Such expressions are vital to naturally occurring discourses: searching *damn* or *friggin* on the Internet turns up tens of thousands of relevant hits [...]" (Potts, 2005 p.16)

> "We bought a new electric clothes dryer [...] Nowhere did it say that the damn thing didn't come with an electric plug!
> The expressive is inside an indirect quotation, and yet its content is independent of whatever meaning is the argument to the higher predicate [...] neither the frustration nor the speaker's emotive contribution is included in the instructions for the clothes dryer (the meaning of it)."

6 What Potts calls *at-issue entailments.* throughout his account can be, as he says, equated with the philosophical notion of *what is said*.

[Potts, 2005 p.17]

An important refinement for Potts' logic for CIs is that "[...] CI meanings don't apply to other CI meanings. [...] CI are comments upon the at-issue dimension. They are not comments upon themselves [...]" (Potts, 2005 p.60).

As an example, he considers adverbs like *amazingly*, which can have a CI-based semantics, taking at-issue propositions into CI propositions. Suppose they could also take CI propositions into same. The following unacceptability of sentence a. in the following is an indication that the CI-content of the object *Lance, a four-time Tour winner* cannot be modified by the CI-meaning of *amazingly*:
a. *They replied to amazingly Lance, a four-time Tour winner.
b. They replied to Lance, amazingly a four-time Tour winner. (Potts, 2005 p.60)

Potts, 2005 seems to be in line with Grice, 1989 in his description of the distinction between CONVENTIONAL IMPLICATURES (CIs) and *what is said*, here referred to as the *at-issue content*: he states that the differences between the two concepts only exist in the meaning language and that CI are comments upon the at-issue dimension; therefore, *what is said is* not dependent on the truth (or falsity) of any CI content and a CI is never relativized to the beliefs of an entity other than the speaker while *what is said* is. This parallels Grice, 1989's characterization of FORMALITY without DICTIVENESS – that what words **conventionally** mean can be used in an HIGHER ORDER SPEECH ACT to comment on LOWER-ORDER SPEECH ACTS without influencing their truth or falsity. "The truth or falsity and so the dictive content of his words is determined by the relation of his ground-floor speech-acts to the world; consequently, while a certain kind of misperformance of the higher-order speech-act may constitute a semantic offense, it will not touch the truth-value, and so not the dictive content, of the speaker's words." (Grice, 1989 p.362) It is still important to note that CIs are distinct from CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES in the way that they are still idiosyncratic properties of the grammar and not contextually variable.

The conventional meaning of the words used is necessary to determine *what is said*, according to Grice. Moreover, when he talks about the SENTENCE MEANING being what is *standardly meant by S* – the *standing readiness* speakers have to utter a sentence with a specific intention in a specific situation – conventions clearly play a role in determining what sentences (or words or phrases) are conventionally used to intend by them.

In cases of UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER'S MEANING (UIM), this becomes vital in the respect that UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS, in some cases, deliberately use what can literally be called the 'unconventional' interpretation of a sentence or word to base their reaction on. When backtracking from having understood the speaker's intended meaning

of the given utterance back to its literal meaning, they deliberately choose another possible meaning. They are ignoring what is *standardly intended by S* in the given situation in favor of what the same expression can also mean assuming different conventions that apply when it is used in a different context by a different speaker with different intentions. For example, in (8), the *standing readiness* that is a language convention is to use the phrase *suffer from* when talking about illnesses. While it does conventionally implicate the referents of said illness to to experience some physical or mental pain, its colloquial use is such that it 'simply' is how you refer to illnesses regarding people – no matter whether or not the intention behind it is, in fact, to express any attitude toward the pain going along with it. The UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER in (8) exploits this conventionalized use in such a way as to, deliberately, refer to and deny the CONVENTIONAL IMPLICATURE instead of the conventionalized use of the literal phrase *suffer from* ....

(8) Psychiatrist: Do any of your relatives suffer from mental illness?
Patient: No... they all seem to enjoy it!!!

[Liyamaar, 2014]

5.4 SUMMARY

Generally said, in (successful) communication the abstract thing that is transferred from one interlocutor to another is MEANING. As shown throughout this chapter, the term is not easily pinned down and has a variety of different facets. From literal, TIMELESS MEANING over UTTERER'S OCCASION MEANING to implicated meaning there is richness in what can be attributed to a certain word or string of words depending on when, how, by whom (or if at all) it is used. Language conventions play a huge part in defining what is, usually, agreed upon and can safely be assumed to be meant by a certain expression in a given situation. As examples of UIM show, however, these assumptions and conventions can also deliberately be exploited due to the circumstance that any type of meaning is explicable via intentions, which are private mental states that are difficult to 'prove'. This freedom in meaning communication is used by UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS. The following chapter discusses the concepts RATIONALITY and COOPERATION and their part in communication of meaning.

6 RATIONALITY AND COOPERATION

To cheat someone in a business deal
is neither unreasonable nor irrational; it is merely
somewhat repulsive [...].

— Grice, Aspects of Reason

6.1 RATIONALITY

6.1.1 *Grice on rational communication*

Grice's work is often separated into two theories – his theory of meaning and his theory of conversation – and some scholars accept one but not the other. I follow Neale, 1992 in the conviction that it is fruitful, if not even necessary, to acknowledge and refer to their links to one another: "It is at least arguable that the Theory of Conversation is a component of the Theory of Meaning. And even if this interpretation is resisted, it is undeniable that the theories are mutually informative and supportive, and that they are of more philosophical, linguistic, and historical interest if the temptation is resisted to discuss them in isolation from one another." (Neale, 1992 p.512) Grice introduces the idea that human communication is based on mutual expectation of rational behavior: "As one of my avowed aims is to see talking as a special case or variety of purposive, indeed rational, behavior [...]" (Grice, 1975 p.47). To that end he proposes the concept of CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE to systematically account for such meaning expressed via utterances that cannot simply be accounted for in terms of devices of formal logic but that are nevertheless recognizably valid in conversation. He establishes presumptions interlocutors have concerning rational behavior. The basis is the COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE:

(1) *The Cooperative Principle (CP)*
"Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged."

[Grice, 1975 p.45]

An implicature can be worked out relying on this idea of mutually expected cooperation combined with a set of presumptions on what Grice calls rational behavior of exchange participants – somewhat ironically echoing Kant he calls them maxims, which each are subcategorized under one of four broader categories:

- *Quantity*
  Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange) and
  Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

- *Quality*
  Do not say what you believe to be false and
  Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence

- *Relation*
  Be relevant

- *Manner*
  Avoid obscurity of expression,
  Avoid ambiguity,
  Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity) and
  Be orderly

[Grice, 1975 pp.45-46]

He emphasizes, using everyday examples of fixing a car or making a cake together, that these maxims are, unlike Kant's that are much more normative in character, just the way people are normally mutually expected to behave when following a shared goal (e.g. handing the other person sugar when it's needed to complete the cake and not salt or a good book instead). It does not mean that it would be in any way forbidden within Grice's framework to act differently (e.g. to hand the other one a book instead of sugar) – quite to the contrary. All this is supposed to show is that there usually is a common basis on what would be the expected, rational behavior at a given point within a communication and, as a result, why people would even start to compute beyond *what is said*. *What is said* is defined by Grice as "closely related to the conventional meaning of the words (the sentence) he has uttered" (Grice, 1975 p.44) with the addition that; for a full identification; one also has to know about the identity of the speaker, the time of the utterance and what Grice, 1968 introduced as the *utterance-type's occasion meaning* (what the utterance means on this specific occasion).

In the retrospective epilogue of *Studies in the way with words* (Grice, 1989), he describes the phrase *what is said* as referring to "[. . .] a class of ways of talking or locutions, in which case it will mean much the same as 'ways in which ordinary people ordinarily talk' " (Grice, 1989 p.380). Neale, 1992 described it fittingly as "On Grice's account, *what is said* is to be found in the area where sentence meaning and utterer's meaning overlap" (Neale, 1992 p.554). Attaching to *what is said* there are, according to Grice, conventional as well as non-conventional possibilities to convey more information. For the first class he says

that "in some cases the conventional meaning of the words used will determine what is implicated, besides helping to determine what is said" (Grice, 1975 p.44). For those CONVENTIONAL IMPLICATURES he provided one example: *He is an Englishman; he is therefore, brave.* The conventional meaning of the word *therefore* implicitly carries the meaning of consequence at the level of what is meant but not at the level of what is said since "I do not want to say that my utterance of this sentence would be, *strictly speaking*, false should the consequence in question fail to hold" (Grice, 1975 p.45). Neale, 1992 adds the example of the connective *but* that behaves in a similar way "[...] by uttering [*She is poor but she is honest*] U is performing two speech acts: U is saying that she is poor and she is honest; additionally, U is indicating or suggesting that someone (perhaps U) has a certain attitude toward what is said" (Neale, 1992 p.522).

Neal's identification of CONVENTIONAL IMPLICATURES as expressing an attitude toward *what is said* has also been taken up by Chris Potts as discussed in more detail in the previous chapter (5.3): "[...] CI are comments upon the at-issue dimension. They are not comments upon themselves" (Potts, 2005 p.60). He shows this using examples involving expressive attributive adjectives that commonly "take their immediate clause's denotation as their semantic arguments. The most likely reading of [*I have to mow the fucking lawn*] involves this kind of composition. The speaker probably bears no ill-will towards lawns, or his lawn. Rather, the proposition that he must mow the lawn is what he seeks to disparage" (Potts, 2005 p.60).

More central to Grice's theory of communication, though, is the class of non-conventional implicatures; particularly its subclass of CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES.

A CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE is being worked out by the hearer who, assuming that the COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE is being followed, tries to compute what the speaker intended to have meant by their contribution beyond what they literally said with it. A speaker not adhering to maxims in order to conversationally implicate something can occur in three different ways. The first possibility is that **no** maxim is violated (or it is unclear). Here, the speaker implicates that which he must be assumed to believe in order to preserve the assumption that he is observing a maxim.

(2) A is standing by an obviously immobilized car and is approached by B; the following exchange takes place:
A: I am out of petrol.
B: There is a garage round the corner.
(*Gloss: B would be infringing the maxim "Be relevant" unless he thinks, or thinks it possible, that the garage is open, and has petrol to sell; so he implicates that the garage is, or at least may be open, etc.*)

[Grice, 1975 p.51]

Very productive examples for this kind are quantity- or scalar implicatures:

(3) Some of the boys went to the party.

[Levinson, 1983 p.133]

In (3) the utterer conversationally implicates the denial of the stronger element on the scale, is this case *all*. By virtue of what the utterer must be assumed to believe in order to preserve the assumption that they are obeying the maxims and the CP they are here implicating that not all boys went to the party. This implicature can be canceled without contradiction by saying *Some of the boys went to the party, in fact all of them went*.

The second possibility is that one maxim has to be violated because it **clashes** with another maxim – for example, when a speaker appears to violate the maxim of quantity, like in the example below, they might actually do so only to not having to violate the maxim of quality because they don't have enough of the required information:

(4) A: Where does C live?
B: Somewhere in the South of France.

[Grice, 1975 p.51]

The third possibility is a deliberate **flouting** of a maxim with the purpose of exploiting it to invoke a CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE. Grice, 1975 (p.52) says "In these examples, though some maxim is violated at the level of what is said, the hearer is entitled to assume that that maxim, or at least the overall Cooperative Principle, is observed at the level of what is implicated."

(5) A is writing a testimonial about a pupil who is a candidate for a philosophy job, and his letter reads as follows: "Dear Sir, Mr. X's command of English is excellent, and his attendance at tutorials has been regular. Yours, etc."

[Grice, 1975 p.52]

Here, the CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE arises from a flouting of the MAXIM OF QUANTITY where the hearer, in order to assume that the CP is still being obeyed, has to compute that there is information about the pupil that A is reluctant to write (because it is not flattering, perhaps) and so A writes less than would be expected.

Grice makes one additional distinction between such CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES that are generalized; they can be computed without any particular context (e.g. "X is meeting a woman this evening would normally implicate that the person to be met was someone other than X' s wife, mother, sister, or perhaps even close pla-

tonic friend" (Grice, 1975 p.56) and those that are particularized; they require a specific context (e.g. like in example (2)). CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES have the characteristic features of being non-conventional, having to be worked out, being cancelable (so, in (2) B could add *There is a garage around the corner but I don't know if it is open*. to cancel the implicature), being nondetachable (another wording should hold the same implicature) and also that their truth is not carried by what is said but by how it is said:

"Since the truth of a conversational implicatum is not required by the truth of what is said (what is said may be true – what is implicated may be false), the implicature is not carried by what is said, but only by the saying of what is said, or by 'putting it that way.' " (Grice, 1975 p.58)

In Grice, 1975's general framework, it is just rational to presume that your interlocutor follows the CP. Therefore, the interpretation of implicated content from *what is said* is a cooperative act in that it presumes rationality. The rational way of thinking that underlies understanding of content that goes beyond what is literally said can be paraphrased in the following pattern Grice, 1975 gives for implicature computation:

> "He has said that p; there is no reason to suppose.that he is not observing the maxims, or at least the CP; he could not be doing this unless he thought that q; he knows (and knows that I know that he knows) that I can see that the supposition that he thinks that q IS required; he has done nothing to stop me thinking that q; he intends me to think, or is at least willing to allow me to think, that q; and so he has implicated that q."
>
> [Grice, 1975 p.50]

It is not to be seen as the exact psychological process happening in a person's brain when understanding an implicature (as Grice was oftentimes accused of supposing). This process is an abstraction of the kind of rational thinking that prompts interlocutors, mostly subconsciously, to arrive at the speaker's intended meaning that can (but does not have to) go beyond what they literally said.

6.1.2 *Rational speech act model (RSA)*

The *Rational Speech Act*-model (RSA) was introduced by Frank and Goodman, 2012 as a way to predict listeners' reasoning about the speaker's intended meaning by way of Bayesian inference assuming Grice's principles such as rationality, speaker meaning and mutual knowledge as a basis for computing the probability of meaning(s) in a given context. "The heart of our model is the idea that a rational

listener will attempt to make inferences about the speaker's intended referent r_s, given the word w they uttered, the lexicon of their language L, and the context C." (Frank and Goodman, 2014 p.84)

"This inference can be described using Bayes' rule:

$$P(r_s|w, L, C) = \frac{P(w|r_s, L, C)P(r_s)}{\sum_{r' \in C} P(w|r', L, C)P(r')}$$

In other words, the posterior probability of some referent is proportional to the product of two terms: the likelihood $P(w|r_s, C)$ that some word is used to describe a referent, and the prior probability $P(r)$ that this referent will be the subject of discourse." (Frank and Goodman, 2014 p.84)

LIKELIHOOD is defined via an assumption that speakers choose words to be informative in context. Being informative in an RSA model is the listener's assumption that speakers choose their words mindful to how a naive listener might understand them, so as to best transfer the information they want to communicate.

"This information-theoretic definition of what it means to be 'informative' leads to:

$$P(w|r_s, L, C) = \frac{|w|_L^{-1}}{\sum_{w' \in W} |w|_L^{-1}}$$

where $|w|_L$ refers to the number of objects in a particular context to which w can truthfully be applied, given the known meaning of w in L. In other words, 'be informative' translates to 'say words that apply to your referent and few others', which seems to approximate the general Gricean intuition."[1] (Frank and Goodman, 2014 p.84)

In an RSA model, the players are pictured as a LITERAL LISTENER, a PRAGMATIC SPEAKER and a PRAGMATIC LISTENER. A naive, literal listener L_0 interprets an utterance according to its meaning; mapping states of the world to truth values. This listener is a theoretical concept the pragmatic speaker is expected to have in mind when choosing the most informative utterance. "The speaker is modeled as a rational (Bayesian) actor. He chooses an action (e.g., an utterance) according to its utility. The speaker simulates taking an action, evaluates its utility, and chooses actions based on their utility. Rationality of choice is often defined as choice of an action that maximizes the agent's (expected) utility" (Scontras, Tessler, and Franke, 2016). The PRAGMATIC LISTENER L_1 computes the probability of a state s given some utterance u made in expectancy of a PRAGMATIC SPEAKER by reasoning about the probability of the speaker to choose u to communicate about s, as well as the probability of s itself.

1 'The general Gricean intuition' here probably refers to adherence the CP, I assume. Neither being informative, nor Frank and Goodman, 2014's 'translation', in my eyes, approximate Grice's general intuition of interlocutors mutually expecting a basic form of rationality in conversation.

What Frank and Goodman, 2012 introduced is a model of word learning through informativeness in simple reference games. They test it via experiments in which language users had to either pick a speaker's intended referent from a set of objects referred to by an unknown word, or by a specific word possibly applicable to use for multiple objects or predict what word out of a set of possibly applicable words would be used by a speaker to refer to a specific object. Frank and Goodman, 2014 extend the model to make predictions about what novel words should mean, given that they are uttered by an informative speaker.

RSA has since been adapted to model a variety of linguistic and sociolinguistic phenomena. Just to list a few; Goodman and Stuhlmüller, 2013 further developed a *Rational Speech Act* model of scalar implicatures and their interaction with speaker knowledge, Lassiter and Goodman, 2017 used concepts from game-theoretic pragmatics and tools from Bayesian modeling to predict context-sensitive vague interpretations, Kao et al., 2014 extend the RSA framework by features from relevance theory as well as Grice's concept of conversational goals to model the nonliteral interpretation in hyperbolic uses of number words. Burnett, 2017 and Burnett, 2019 introduce social meaning games (SMG) to describe the strategic use of linguistic variation in the construction of identity as a kind of signaling game using tools from RSA and a Bayesian-style approach to interpretation.

Dénigot, 2022 introduced a RSA-based formal model of 'dogwhistles' – a feature of communication in which an, oftentimes controversial message is indicated to a certain specific ingroup in such a way as to make it inaudible to other listeners (introduced in more detail here in chapter 2.2.2). In this model, he introduces the concept of an uncooperative listener, an elaborate version of the so-called CAGEY LISTENER, who interprets both messages, the 'naive' meaning as well as the dogwhistle as well as the different personae and speaker's preferences that are underlying.

The *Rational Speech Act* model (Frank and Goodman, 2012) puts the focus on a mutual assumption of rationality, utilizing Bayesian inference to predict the most likely interpretation of a given utterance or, respectively, the most likely best way to effectively transfer information to a given hearer. What I present here is a **very** narrowed down overview of the vast field that is game theory in Pragmatics. There is more detailed and also much more technically focused work out there for anyone interested (see, e.g. Franke, 2009, Jäger, 2012, Benz, Jäger, and Rooij, 2006, Benz, Jäger, and Van Rooij, 2006).

In the RSA model it is assumed that a PRAGMATIC LISTENER infers a speaker's meaning by assuming that the speaker is rational and wants to be informative. From the opposite perspective, it is assumed that a speaker is indeed acting rationally and informatively by taking into

consideration a somewhat 'naive' LITERAL LISTENER and how it would be best managed to get the intended meaning across to them.

The PRAGMATIC LISTENER, on the other side of the communication game, is thought of as reverse-engineering the PRAGMATIC SPEAKER's most likely intended meaning on the basis of reasoning about their likely communicative choices among different meanings that are possible for the speaker to have wanted to communicate.

Informativity and costs that are assigned to individual utterances within RSA (and other game-theoretic) models are supposed to formalize the idea behind Grice's maxims of QUANTITY and MANNER: if two sentences would be equally as informative, the longer sentence is more costly than the shorter one. And also, if two sentences are equally as long, the more informative one is to be preferred.

While this formalization works on a logical level and paints a clear, abstract picture of how speaker and listener in communication might reason about their interlocutor's intentions, a formal model like RSA, in the end, will have to face the same criticism when it comes to its 'real-life application' as Grice's implicature computation process did: there is no way or chance that this is the process that is actually happening in a human's brain while producing or interpreting speech. Of course, just as Grice never claimed or thought of his descriptions to be an actual psychological representation scholars using RSA and game theory also would not, to my knowledge, assume as much for their models. The computation of probabilities just gives the impression of mimicking processing in the brain (especially when it is supported by experiments with human participants behaving like humans naturally do).

In RSA models, the way speaker and listener are characterized does not seem to leave any considerable room for behavior that is outside the given norms. The PRAGMATIC SPEAKER and the PRAGMATIC LISTENER, for example, are described as preferring less costly utterances over costly ones or as calculating the most likely intended of the possibly communicated meanings. Of course, this is an idealized model and, again, similarly as in Grice's work, the default situation is one in which interlocutors cooperatively act according to what is rational and, incidentally, also helpful. Nonetheless, the rather strict corset that is needed to convert pragmatic communication into calculable formulas leaves little freedom for the individual real interlocutors to behave differently or for their unusual behavior to still be able to be included in such a model[2]. While I am convinced that the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's process would be possible to be accurately modeled by a system like RSA, at least within the confines of this thesis, I just see no specific merit in attempting to do so. It might, however, be a promising task for future research endeavors.

2 That is not to say that I would deem it impossible; of course models can always be altered and fitted to account for different situations.

6.2 (UN)COOPERATION

6.2.1 *Grice on cooperation*

The dictionary definition of cooperation is "a willingness and ability to work with others"(*Definition of UNCOOPERATIVE* 2022), which represents the colloquial use of the word. Grice, 1975 made an effort to find non-linguistic examples to illustrate his elaborations on communication as a cooperative endeavor, as seen above. So it, intuitively, makes a sense to link his use of the word *cooperation* to this colloquial meaning of the concept. A notable observation pointing in a different direction (importantly made by, among others, Dynel, 2013 and Davies, 2000) is that, in his publications, he puts much greater emphasis on concepts of rationality and logic of linguistic exchanges than on cooperation as understood in a folk sense. He explains this himself when he says: "As one of my avowed aims is to see talking as a special case or variety of purposive, indeed rational, behavior [...]" (Grice, 1975 p.47) and later specifies "[...] it is the rationality or irrationality of conversational conduct which I have been concerned to track down rather than any more general characterization of conversational adequacy" (Grice, 1989 p.369).

I see it as important to set apart Grice, 1975's technical term underlying the COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE from a form of social cooperation that is, colloquially, identified as being helpful, nice and/or particularly efficient. The way I interpret Grice's technical sense of cooperation, it is not at all necessary to act according to what an interlocutor might like or approve; cooperation according to how I attribute it to Grice is basic rationality toward intention-recognition. The quote from *Aspects of Reason* prefacing this chapter provides a hint toward Grice's understanding that rationality is independent from kindness or helpfulness: "To cheat someone in a business deal is neither unreasonable nor irrational; it is merely somewhat repulsive [...]." (Grice, 2008)

As Dynel puts it: "the Gricean notion of cooperation is equivalent to the speaker's rationality, which necessitates intentionality (Davies, 2000, Davies, 2007; Dynel, 2009, Dynel, 2010)" (Dynel, 2013 p.64). On the assumption that the CP holds, the hearer computes literal meanings and implicatures, by making rational inferences, based on recognition of the speaker's communicative intentions.

In fact, Grice specifies this kind of computing a speaker-intended communicated message when he argues for his meaning$_{NN}$ and its form of UPTAKE: "[...] it seems to me that my analysis already invokes an analyzed version of an intention toward some form of 'uptake' (or a passable substitute therefor), when I claim that in meaning$_{NN}$ a hearer is intended to recognize himself as intended to be the subject of a particular form of acceptance, and to take on such an acceptance for that reason." (Grice, 1989 p.352) Rational intention-recognition,

thus, is the form of UPTAKE Grice, as I interpret his ideas, sees as being at the center of communication – helpfulness or general agreement between speaker and hearer beyond accepting each other as being interlocutors is not necessarily a part of it.

It is also a common source of misunderstanding to view the maxims as rules toward a maximum of cooperation that is then expressed in the CP. Quite on the contrary, Grice explicitly states that just **because** the CP always is assumed, the maxims can be flouted and violated as long as the exchange is somewhat rational: "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" (Grice, 1975 p.48). So, the general idea is that rational agents in a conversation assume a minimal amount of reason from one another which allows them to recognize the interlocutor's intention(s) even if their utterance's meaning is implicit. Davies, 2000 summarizes that "Grice's interests were in the system of language; that it is an example of human rational action, and thus can be accounted for through some variety of logic (although, not traditional formal logic, perhaps). His aim was to find the logic of conversation which could account for the gap between saying and meaning, saying and implicating, conventional and non-conventional meaning. The logic that he sought was seen as a manifestation of rational action." (Davies, 2000 p.23)

This is made particularly clear in his additional specifications and reactions to comments in his work in the collection *Studies in the way of words* (Grice, 1989):

> "So we may expect principles of conversational rationality to abstract from the special character of conversational interest. [...] whether a particular enterprise aims at a specifically conversational result or outcome and so perhaps is a specifically conversational enterprise or whether its central character is more generously conceived as having no special connection with communication, the same principles will determine the rationality of its conduct."
>
> [Grice, 1989 p.369]

So, while Grice attributes the same form of rationality to both, the understanding of communicated meaning as well as the interests people have in terms of the outcome of the whole communicative endeavor, the important part for my analysis of UIM and for my understanding of Grice's ideas is that he does, in fact, make that difference.

6.2.2 *(Un)cooperation in game theory*

In the urge of formalizing Pragmatics, the mathematical model of game theory is a handy tool that can and has been developed to account for a wide range of possible application. Wittgenstein, 2009 was one of the first describing language as a game (*Sprachspiel*). Lewis, 2002's *signaling games* brought conventions into play and modeled (non-linguistic) signals in terms of actions that are coordinated between players in order to reach an optimal payoff.

Game theory models situations of strategic interaction between several agents. It is, originally, a branch of mathematics that has been used as a tool in a variety of academic disciplines: standardly in economics, but also, for example, in political science, biology or philosophy. (see Jaeger, 2008) As the name suggests, the framework of game theory treats any kind of interactive situation in terms of a game of at least two players who act strategically. "In the simplest case, each player has one decision to make, and all players make their decision simultaneously, without knowledge about the actions of the other players. A typical example would be the Rock, Paper, Scissors game." (Jaeger, 2008 p.408) There are also games in which the players have a partial knowledge about the state of the game – such as in, for example, a poker game. The applicability of game theory, though, goes further than just treating every situation as a game; it rather is an abstract representation of processes that involve decision-making among multiple players. This then, naturally, can be applied in a much wider context within our everyday lives than in actual games. Generally, a game theoretic account uses mathematical methods to predict (as far as this is possible) the behavior of agents in strategic situations in which their preferences (expressed as UTILITIES) have to be enforced or coordinated – either to 'win the game' or to arrive at the best possible outcome for all participants, depending on the kind of game: "*Zero-sum* games and *games of pure coordination* are two ends on a scale ranging from pure conflict to its opposite. In between are cases where interests partially overlap and partially conflict" (Benz, Jäger, and Van Rooij, 2006 p.11). In strategic games, the notion of a NASH EQUILIBRIUM specifies the idealized behavior of agents in the situation that is modeled by the game. Intuitively, for a given NASH EQUILIBRIUM, each player's Nash choice is a rational and optimal response to the other agents' choices of action. But it is not necessary for NASH EQUILIBRIUM that any player actually believes that any other player is rational (Franke, 2009) (the notion of rational reason processes is incorporated more rigidly in, e.g. accounts like the RSA). Game theory also distinguishes between cooperative and non-cooperative games: "In a cooperative game, players are free to make binding agreements in preplay communications. Especially, this means that players can form coalitions. In non-cooperative games no

binding agreements are possible and each player plays for himself." (Benz, Jäger, and Van Rooij, 2006 p.9)

The predictions that can be made, in the standard game-theoretic framework, are normative and resemble a recipe on how to best behave as a rational player (under the assumption that all others are also rational players). "A perfectly rational player is an agent who strives to maximize his expected utility (given a certain, perhaps partial, knowledge about the situation and the other players) and who is logically omniscient" (Jaeger, 2008 p.408). There is, however, also a more descriptive use of game theory in which the decision-making behavior of agents is observed in the real world and described by means of mathematical tools. Many of the more descriptively-oriented models employ some version of Grice, 1975's theory of communication as a basis for their accounts on strategic communication; as does Parikh, 1990 (see also Parikh, 1992; 2000; 2006 or 2019). Parikh's *games of partial information* are, at their core, similar to Lewis, 2002's signaling games but can be characterized, as their name suggests, by the fact that the two players in these games do not have the full information about each other's situation and the exact information that is supposed to be conveyed. "A game is a structure where all agents have common knowledge of this structure. I generalize this notion of a game to what I call a strategic interaction where agents no longer have common knowledge of the structure." (Parikh, 2000 p.188 Footnote 2)

An important difference of games of partial information in relation to signaling games is, according to Parikh, 2006, that in the latter kind, an action by a receiver but the interpretive act is part of the game's solution process and stays implicit. In partial information games, on the other hand, the interpretive act is made explicit. There is also, of course, further action (e.g. a rejection or acceptance of a message) but the main point here is that the interpretive act that Parikh compares to Austin, 1962's act of understanding, is fully visible in this kind of games. (Parikh, 2006 p.107)

Parikh, 1990, 1992, 2000, 2006, and 2019 does include examples of communication games involving ambiguous expressions and takes Grice, 1975's assumption of rationality as basis. Parikh's games generally stay within the realm of cooperative interactions: speaker and hearer share a broad preference to coordinate their actions toward a shared goal.

The whole communication game broken down consists of, first, a SETTING GAME placing interlocutors in a situation of interaction. Then, in a CONTENT SELECTION GAME, the speaker selects an utterance which is then formed and uttered in a GENERATION GAME. An interpreter, upon hearing or reading the speaker's utterance, engages in an INTERPRETATION GAME which then, in turn, puts the interpreter in the role of a speaker choosing a response in anotherCONTENT SELECTION GAME and so on. (Parikh, 2019)

In Parikh, 2000's model, an ambiguous sentence like (ϕ) that is uttered by $\mathcal{A}$ in discourse situation $\boldsymbol{d}$ is interpreted by $\mathcal{B}$ in a game of strategic inference.

ϕ Every ten minutes a man gets mugged in New York.

[Parikh, 2000 p.192]

Apart from other ambiguities and underspecifications Parikh acknowledges for this sentence, he is focusing on the quantifier ambiguity yielding ($\boldsymbol{p}$) and ($\boldsymbol{p'}$) as two possible interpretations:

$\boldsymbol{p}$: Every ten minutes someone or other gets mugged in New York.

$\boldsymbol{p'}$: Some particular man gets mugged every ten minutes in New York.

There are a few assumptions underlying Parikh's strategic inference model:

(6) **"Background Assumptions**

1. $\mathcal{A}$,$\mathcal{B}$ are rational.
2. $\mathcal{L}$ is a shared language.
3. $\boldsymbol{m}$ is a function from $\mathcal{L}$ to the power set of the collection of propositions. I call it the meaning function of $\mathcal{L}$ or just the meaning of$\mathcal{L}$.
4. The above assumptions are common knowledge between $\mathcal{A}$ and $\mathcal{B}$.

Circumstantial Assumptions

1. $\mathcal{A}$ intends to convey $\boldsymbol{p}$.
2. $\mathcal{A}$ utters ϕ.
3. $\mathcal{B}$ intends to interpret ϕ.
4. $\mathcal{B}$ receives and interprets ϕ.
5. $\boldsymbol{m}(\phi)$= $\boldsymbol{p}$, $\boldsymbol{p'}$.
6. $\boldsymbol{p'}$ is relatively unlikely.
7. Expressing $\boldsymbol{p}$, $\boldsymbol{p'}$ unambiguously takes greater effort than expressing them ambiguously.
8. All of the above except (1) and (3) are common knowledge."

[Parikh, 2000 p.194]

In a cooperative game involving ambiguity, according to Parikh, 2000, the interlocutors have to compare an ambiguous utterance against an unambiguous one – so for the example sentence (ϕ) they have to take into account p as well as p' to find out that p' would be more costly to produce and interpret and yields less payoff (in Parikh's example, successful communication yields a payoff of 10, unsuccessful communication -10 and the additional effort of producing and interpreting the less efficient alternatives costs -3).

Parikh, principally, seems to rely on Grice's idea of cooperation but also in Parikh, 2000 explains in the following footnote that four basic assumptions[3], all of which (despite intentions) are common knowledge between interlocutors in his account, replace Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP) allowing communication to take place without requiring Gricean cooperation: "These four assumptions (speaker and addressee intention and utterance and reception/interpretation) replace Grice's principle of cooperation. That is, if agents act in the right way, communication can occur, but if they don't, communication can't occur. There is nothing that forces them to cooperate, as Grice required" (Parikh, 2000 p.194 Footnote 13). This seems like quite a strong statement and I am not entirely sure as to what would be Parikh's assessment of 'acting the right way'. I am assuming that, for instance, the uncooperative interpreters in the UIM examples do not 'act in the right way' because they do not seem to interpret, for example an ambiguous utterance following the meaning that is the one intended by the speaker and also the contextually most salient (less costly) one. So, according to how I understand Parikh's substitution of the CP, communication involving UIM would not be possible to occur. This poses a problem because it **does** occur and does, as I have shown, not even seem to be unsuccessful. Of course, this is taking Parikh very literal and he might have more things to say to the data discussed in this thesis. He seems to see a need to replace the CP since there is not always the sort of cooperation he attributes to Grice's idea of the CP. His substitutions, however, – speaker intentions and utterance understanding – can be said to mirror quite accurately what I think Grice originally envisioned his CP to be grounded on. There is no 'requirement of forced cooperation' that has to be substituted. If speaker and interpreter adhere to the CP, they recognize intentions and understand speaker meaning through a presumption of rationality. The differences in how the term 'cooperation' is used between Grice and game theoretic frameworks is discussed in more detail in the following subsection 6.2.3.

Most importantly, as support for the UIM analysis using an implementation of Grice's tools, Parikh does talk about the CP in situations in which there is conflict between speaker and interpreter. Importantly

3 Which are basically 'Circumstantial Assumptions' 1-4 listed in(6) if I understood it correctly.

for me, he also refers to the notoriously overlooked difference Grice makes between a common immediate and ultimate aims (Grice, 1975). "As Grice lacked the model of a Communication Game with its distinction between various games, he could not say that the immediate aims or 'conversational interests' are the goals the agents have in the Setting Game." (Parikh, 2019 p.61) My issues do indeed lie more within his characterization of when the CP applies and when it doesn't. Parikh, 2019 suggests that "The correct level at which the Cooperative Principle applies is the intermediate level of 'conversational interests' or 'immediate aims'. It does not apply at the level of ultimate aims and it does not apply at the level of the Generation and Interpretation Games. At this intermediate level of the Setting and Content Selection Games, however, there can be cooperation or conflict or both." (Parikh, 2019 p.62) Like Parikh, I support Grice's suggestion that there can be deviation at the level of ultimate aims in a transaction. Doubts can be raised, though, regarding to Parikh's claim that the CP does not (or not fully) apply at the level of utterance generation and interpretation. The confusion of Grice's ideas might reside in Parikh's substitution of Grice's maxims with the interlocutor's goals in terms of what he calls 'standards' and 'adequacy': "In the Gricean scheme it is the maxims that provide a 'standard' against which literal meaning is measured. If it fails, an implicature is triggered to restore adequacy. In my account it is the goals of the agents as they emerge in the Setting Game that provide the standard against which locutionary meaning is measured. When such goals are not met, illocutionary meanings are triggered to restore adequacy." (Parikh, 2019 p.290) Neither do the maxims provide any standard of measurement for literal meaning (they apply at the level of *what is said*, which is already a disambiguated and contextualized speaker's meaning that is not necessarily equal to the literal meaning of the sentence) nor do implicatures 'restore adequacy'. Grice, 1989 (p.369) was very explicit in saying that "it is the rationality or irrationality of conversational conduct which I have been concerned to track down rather than any more general characterization of conversational adequacy." Implicatures are computed in order to uphold the mutual assumption of rationality in communication; in my eyes, it does not make sense to discard the maxims in favor of a set of agent's goals that trigger implicature computation if they are not met.

I also would not follow Parikh in saying that "the Cooperative Principle does not apply universally to all conversations" (Parikh, 2019 p.62). Even in communicative situations where the interlocutors' goals are completely opposed, there remains some basic form of cooperation to the effect that both parties agree on communicating and, in most cases, they even agree on a mode of communication: the language (a point also made by, e.g. Ludwig, 2020 p.27: "What the parties cooperate on, though, is not what they are in conflict about. In the case of a couple arguing, irreconcilably, about spending

money, they cooperate on using a common language, on carrying on a conversation, but not on where it is to take them. They share and intend to share a plan about having a conversation and speaking the same language. They do not share or intend to share a plan about where it takes them.").

6.2.3 *General miscues about Grice's concepts*

It is noticeable that many research areas that are concerned with communication, discourse or interaction in general (such as, for example, discourse analysis, humor theory, game theory, research in communication and cognition, etc.), which are not settled within the Philosophy of Language seem to see a need to replace, reformulate and/or abandon Grice's original concepts in one way or the other because they do not seem to fit into what their individual models are supposed to do; for various reasons. I would like to put forward the suggestion that, for the most part, the apparent need for profound reformulations of Grice's basic ideas is a result of a failure of the deeper understanding of certain concepts like, for example, (mutual) cooperation which is understood differently in numerous scientific (and also colloquial) contexts than it is supposed to be for the specific use with respect to Grice's COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE (CP).

This confusion of Grice's technical term and a folk definition of cooperation is a prominent issue in the literature. Just as, for example Davies, 2007, Davies, 2000 and Dynel, 2013 pointed out for the area of discourse analysis, several other areas that are standardly working with Grice's theory do not seem free of this kind of misconceptions either. In the following, I collected a few quotes and definitions from game-theoretic, communication theory, humor research and other areas thtoughout the literature to illustrate the issue[4]:

6.2.3.1 *Examples from game theory*

> "In a cooperative game, players are free to make binding agreements in preplay communications. Especially, this means that players can form *coalitions*. In *non-cooperative* games no binding agreements are possible and each player plays for himself."
>
> [Benz, Jäger, and Rooij, 2006 p.9]

This definition already mentioned above is from a text titled *An Introduction to Game Theory for Linguists* and already makes quite clear

4 I am far from suggesting that everybody who sees a need for extending Grice misunderstands his theory. But different understanding and definitions of what characterizes the term *cooperation* that exist through different fields can lead to confusion when they are mixed with or applied to Grice's original use of the term.

that a game-theoretic understanding of what is considered cooperative and non-cooperative in games is quite different and much more connected to the folk meaning of cooperation than what I think underlies Grice's CP. Equating coalition-forming with cooperation in games comes closer to the dictionary definition of cooperation: working together. While it is also true that most cooperative conversations do **also** show some form of working together, this is not to be considered a knock-down argument against Grice in situations where that's not the case.

> "If one followed Grice literally, it would seem that speakers always choose the cheapest sentence (unless they want to implicate something via the maxim of Manner). But the foregoing shows why we often do not utter the cheapest sentences as such; we do so only relative to the contents we have chosen to convey. *This* is why language in ordinary human interactions and in literature is far more complex and colorful than we would expect based on straightforward cost-minimizing of the kind Grice envisaged."
>
> [Parikh, 2019 p.61]

I do not think it is the case that Grice attributed any kind of cost-minimizing to speakers. This would, again, take his maxims to be rules toward efficient communication, which they are not meant to be. Grice acknowledges that they might be understood that way but clarifies: "I have stated my maxims as if this purpose were a maximally effective exchange of information; this specification is, of course, too narrow [...]" (Grice, 1975 p.47). The CP is just an observation as to how people usually behave, not a rule. The claim that speakers would use the cheapest sentence but for flouting the manner maxim seems to ignore cases of politeness, style or flouting of other maxims like Quantity which may all lead to usage of more costly sentences. "Obviously, if the Cooperative Principle is to operate, I must intend my partner to understand what I am saying despite the obscurity I import into my utterance." (Grice, 1975 p.55)

The following quote illustrates the, in my eyes misleading, assumption that the CP is satisfied as soon as one or more ultimate goal(s) are shared.

> "If the goals are not already common knowledge, the agents invoke the Cooperative Principle to assume that their goals are shared. For example, $\mathcal{A}$ and $\mathcal{B}$ may be discussing where to eat, in which case their (implicit) goal would be to eat out together. This goal is common knowledge so the Cooperative Principle is already satisfied."
>
> [Parikh, 2019 p.237]

The CP is generally assumed as soon as interlocutors choose to engage in communication; without at least a very basic common immediate aim like, the exchange of information there is no communication taking place. If $\mathcal{A}$ and $\mathcal{B}$ are discussing and they have understood and accepted that they are in a discussion with one another, they are already observing the CP. Whether or not they are eating out together might be a further, ultimate aim that is adjusted and can be shared throughout the exchange but it is not a necessary condition in order to fulfill the CP that this is common knowledge (or even shared).

It might even be the case that $\mathcal{A}$ and $\mathcal{B}$ are discussing where to eat while $\mathcal{B}$ is under the impression that they are eating out with their colleagues while $\mathcal{A}$ is going out with a friend and they're generally discussing the best options. This discussion could go on quite a while before it becomes common knowledge what $\mathcal{B}$'s goal is. At this point, $\mathcal{A}$ might be confused or mad due to their different ultimate aims but that does not mean that they did not, before, adhere to the CP while exchanging information.

The following displays, again, the common blend of a folk understanding of cooperation and Grice's technical term, this time by Asher & Lascarides:

> "In cooperative conversation, people normally believe what they say and help other agents achieve the goals they reveal through their utterances."
>
> [Asher and Lascarides, 2013 p.4]

I think the wording is important here: in communication carried out successfully so that a speaker's intended meaning is understood by an interpreter it is such that interlocutors achieved that by mutually assuming the CP. It is quite common in successful, cooperative communication that a speaker says something blatantly false to implicate a certain meaning by that. That is not uncooperative with respect to the CP; it is only possible through mutual assumption of the CP. Adhering to the MAXIM OF QUALITY is not to be equated with a speaker expressing that they personally believe the content of what they said but just that they intended to *communicate* such a belief. Grice emphasized: "it is not a natural use of language to describe one who has said that p as having, for example, 'implied', 'indicated', or 'suggested' that he believes that p; the natural thing to say is that he has expressed (or at least purported to express) the belief that p" (Grice, 1978 p.765).

Furthermore, the second part of Asher and Lascarides, 2013's quote literally expresses what I deem a confusion of Grice's idea of the CP with the dictionary form of cooperation of being *helpful*. The sort of cooperation that would lead an interpreter to act or react in compliance with the recognized ultimate aim is not part of understanding through intention-recognition.

In fact, as early as in *Meaning* (1957), Grice explicitly sets apart meaning_{NN} from any further effect(s) a speaker might want to achieve as result from their utterance: "That is, if (say) I intend to get a man to do something by giving him some information, it cannot be regarded as relevant to the meaning_{NN} of my utterance to describe what I intend him to do." (Grice, 1957 p.386) So, the goals (that might be) revealed through utterances are independent of any implicated meaning that is recognized through assumption of the CP. Helping to achieve those goals is then even more independent of what the CP is supposed to do.

Only a few years after publication of *Logic and Conversation* (Grice, 1975), there already were attempts to help explain what Grice **really** meant by his notion of cooperation. Leech and Thomas, 1988, for example, already pointed out that cooperation as seen in the CP has nothing to do with being helpful or nice: "many commentators have assumed that Grice's Cooperative Principle is built on some a priori notion of human benevolence and cooperativeness: that Grice is therefore making some kind of ethical claim about human behaviour. But nothing is further from the truth. The CP is simply a device to explain how people arrive at meanings." (Leech and Thomas, 1988 p.8)

Asher and Lascarides, 2013's defeasible rule of STRONG COOPERATIVITY is an example of how narrow Grice's concept of cooperation can be taken:

> "Strong Cooperativity makes precise what we mean by cooperativity at the level of intentions: once an agent in a conversation learns of someone's conversational goals he either adopts them and attempts to realise them, or he says why he can't. But conversations can have purposes that deviate from strong cooperativity: people talk to bargain, to bluff, to mislead, to show off or promote themselves, to put others down."
>
> [Asher and Lascarides, 2013 pp.5-6]

Here, Asher and Lascarides, 2013 confuse the concept of folk uncooperation, which is simply 'not nice' (like misleading, bluffing or putting others down) with Grice's technical term of cooperation that in my eyes should be understood as rationally cooperative toward the exchange of information. Their idea of STRONG COOPERATIVITY does not seem to allow implicatures to be computed in an environment where a speaker's ultimate goal is to put the interlocutor down. (for more on how cooperativity is viewed by Asher & Lascarides, see 7.2) If we take one of Grice's own examples and let us, for the sake of this argument, assume it was directly uttered toward the singer who Grice calls 'Miss X' in the original: *You produced a series of sounds that corresponded closely with the score of 'Home sweet home'*. Now, colloquially,

this is not a particularly nice or helpful remark and might well be used to put Miss X down and/or to instead promote the own singing qualities of the speaker. It does, however, very easily allow for the implicature *Miss X is not a very good singer* to be computed. So, even though the exchange between the speaker and Miss X would be regarded by Asher and Lascarides, 2013 as not a cooperative one and their intentions and conversational goals are not mutually adopted, the CP is observed and the implicature is computed anyway. This shows what Grice's observation was supposed to describe: even if the content is considered to be mean, an interpreter would hear *You produced a series of sounds that corresponded closely with the score of 'Home sweet home'*, assume the speaker to be conversationally cooperative (as in: intending to communicate some meaningful content) and compute that this obscure formulation is supposed to implicate a rather derogatory content. The defamation, in the end, is an ultimate goal that does not directly influence rational cooperation to compute the implicature.

One last good example of a general misconception; that game theory is better equipped than Grice to handle certain conversational situations simply because it can handle what they describe as uncooperative situations as opposed to Grice's theory:

> "However classical game theory is not typically cooperative; it deals rather with situations of at least partial conflict, where not all agents prefer the same possible outcomes."
>
> [Franke, De Jager, and Van Rooij, 2012 p.2]

> "Suppose two people are arguing about the conflict between Israel and Palestine; one, claiming that the blame lies with Palastine, says:
> (1) most Israelis voted for peace
> In this particular case, Ariel (2004) holds that the inference that not all Israelis voted for peace seems to be one the speaker *does not want* the hearer to make (indeed, she would prefer that he does not make this inference, as it weakens her argument), and that it therefore is not a conversational implicature of this utterance.
> Still we believe that it seems intuitively just as reasonable an inference as a standard cooperative scalar implicature that the speaker wants to convey and foreground; but if it is arguably not an inference derivable from on Gricean cooperativity, where does this inference come from?"
>
> [Franke, De Jager, and Van Rooij, 2012 p.3][5]

5 As mentioned in Franke, De Jager, and Van Rooij, 2012, their example in (1) is from a bumper sticker discussed in Ariel, 2004 and should not be taken to indicate any reference to political opinions of the respective authors or myself.

It is true that Grice mentioned (some) non-intended inferences as not to be considered implicatures. Since they don't specify their source, I am guessing Franke et. al to have taken their very general assumption to that effect from, for example, Neale, 1992's reference to a very early account of implicatures in which they were not even called by this technical term which Grice did not introduce before *Logic and Conversation* (1975): in *The Causal Theory of Perception* (1961) he said indeed "I (the speaker) could certainly be said to have implied that Jones is hopeless (provided that this is what I intended to get across) and my saying that (at any rate my saying *just* that and no more) is also certainly a vehicle of implication" Grice and White, 1961 p.130).

Even here, Grice also already excludes such cases from what he later calls GENERALIZED CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES (GCI): "This case of implication is unlike the others in that the utterance of the sentence 'Jones has beautiful hand writing etc.' does not *standardly* involve the implication here attributed to it; it requires a special context (that it should be uttered at Collections) to *attach* the implication to its utterance." (Grice and White, 1961 p.130)

So, there's an indication even in the very early development of Grice's theory that the strict delimitation of implicatures as only counting as such if they were intended by a speaker does not apply in the same extent to GCI in which the sentence itself, by means of conventionalization, can carry standardly understood implicatures: "Sometimes one can say that the use of a certain form of words in an utterance would normally (in the ABSENCE of special circumstances) carry such and such implicature" (Grice, 1975 p.56). Horn scales (Horn, 2005; Horn, 1989) including 'most' used in (1) are probably the most described kinds of these conventionalized implicatures (Levinson, 2001 is among the most prominent accounts analyzing scalar implicatures in terms of GENERALIZED CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES. He does, however, argue for a default-system-based approach that has been contested by experimental evidence from, e.g. Breheny, Katsos, and Williams, 2006 who argue for GCIs to be more dependent on the conversational context). Even if, in the particular situation of (1) the speaker might not have wanted to implicate 'not all', that alone is no reason to assume that it is not an implicature; it might just not have been a particularized one. I think, rationality in the sense of Grice's CP is exactly the reason the inference can be drawn no matter the speaker's ultimate communicative aim otherwise.

6.2.3.2 *Examples from communication studies and social psychology*

Nerlich and Clarke, 2001 use Grice, 1975's maxim flouting in order to explain what happens in instances that they call *falling into semantic traps* - when a speaker unknowingly or carelessly uses ambiguous or polysemous expressions and they are exploited by an interpreter.

> "[...] falling into semantic traps is based on an unintentional flouting of conversational principles (i.e. avoid ambiguity!) on the side of the speaker and the unashamed and, in a sense, uncooperative exploitation of the unintentional conversational effect on the side of the hearer."
>
> [Nerlich and Clarke, 2001 p.17]

The crucial misconception I would like to point out here, is that Grice made it very clear that, specifically, **flouting** of maxims is a very intentional act done deliberately by a speaker in order to implicate a certain meaning. Speaker meaning in Grice's terms is a matter of the speaker's intention. So, an "unintentional flouting of conversational principles" as suggested by Nerlich and Clarke, 2001 can, in Grice's theory, not be the source of their *semantic traps*. The necessary condition of conversational implicatures to be intended by the speaker has also been pointed out by Neale, 1992 in his detailed summary of Grice's work: "A hearer may think that, by saying that p, U has conversationally implicated that q [...] But if U did not intend the implication in question it will not count as as a conversational implicature".

> "Grice's (1989) theory of conversational implicature posits that listeners make assumptions about the good faith cooperation of speakers."
>
> [Rogers and Norton, 2011 p.139]

Cooperation, as I think it should be understood in Grice, is more about expectations of rational behavior than it is about 'good faith'. Grice, 1975 observed that his maxims are something that people just naturally tend to follow, it does not have to involve any good faith. In his discussion of the CP and the maxims, he specifies that: "[...] one of my avowed aims is to see talking as a special case or variety of purposive, indeed rational behaviour" (Grice, 1975 p.47).

Burgoon et al., 1996, in the next quote, seem to equal some 'pragmatic completeness' in form of well-formed and coherent utterances with satisfaction of the CP:

> "The distinction might be seen as one between semantic completeness – the degree to which all pertinent information is revealed by the sender – and syntactic or pragmatic

> completeness – the degree to which a message is a well-formed utterance that meets the perceived conversational requirements for a response and thus satisfies the cooperative principle."
>
> [Burgoon et al., 1996 p.53]

The CP, however, can also (and sometimes even **especially**) be observed by an interpreter faced with incomplete utterances or responses that seem not to be rational at that point. The 'conversational requirements' for speaker's responses as far as Grice, 1975 can be interpreted are nothing more than that they are supposed to be coherent and to express some intended meaning that is meant to be recognized by a hearer. Burgoon et al., 1996 are treating the CP and the maxims like requirements that have to be met for a message to be 'pragmatically complete', which is almost the opposite of what Grice intended.

The following quote by Bowers, Elliott, and Desmond, 1977 reduces the CP to the MAXIM OF RELEVANCE, which is a misrepresentation of Grice, 1975's ideas in itself, already[6].

> "It should be noted that our analysis depends heavily on Grice's (1975, p.45) 'cooperative principle', a principle asserting that communicators make a tacit agreement to say only relevant things. This principle implies that, in our system, demanders must be assumed to demand only what is relevant to them and respondents must be assumed to respond with only what is relevant to the demands placed upon them."
>
> [Bowers, Elliott, and Desmond, 1977 p.235]

Furthermore, the use of *must be assumed* seems to suggest, again, the rule-character often falsely assigned to Grice, 1975's maxims. It is correct that the CP is a principle about presumptions of mutual rational behavior. First of all, though, rationality is not (only) about relevance (a point I elaborate on in chapter 7.4) and, secondly, the CP is not about what can and cannot be **demanded** of each other during a conversation. Grice, 1975 developed a theory of how intended meanings can be communicated successfully despite speakers not following the 'rules' in a conversation. The beauty of the CP is that its mutual expectation leaves so much room for interlocutors to be creative in their language and still be understood.

6 It might have been ok had they referred to Wilson, 2002's *Relevance Theory* but this is not what they did.

6.2.3.3 *Examples from humor research and discourse analysis*

A great number of humor research accounts seem to be using some version of discourse analysis so I combine the two areas in this section.

The first quote by Norrick, 2003 admittedly only displays a very subtle but still important misunderstanding of Grice, 1975's basic idea of communication:

> "Grice (1975) distinguished literal meaning from speaker intention. Recipients first process the literal meaning of an utterance, assuming the speaker was adhering to the Cooperative Principle (CP) and its associated maxims, then they check this interpretation against the context."
>
> [Norrick, 2003 p.1349]

It is important to be very specific here: Grice does **not** – especially not in his 1975 paper – suggest a distinction between literal meaning and intention. On the contrary, he explicates literal sentence meaning in terms of speaker's intentions as I explained in 5. The distinction he makes in Grice, 1975 is such that what is implicated is not (necessarily) part of *what is said*; the conventional force of the utterance."A conversational implicatum will be a condition that is not included in the original specification of the expression' s conventional force." (Grice, 1975) While this, in some cases, might make a difference for truth conditions, Norrick, 2003's suggestion that literal meaning is free from speaker's intentions is not something Grice proposes.

I also do not think it is quite correct to say that interpreters fist process the literal meaning of an utterance and then check the context. Interpreters process *what is said*; which is already uttered IN a context and is better comparable to the UTTERER'S OCCASION MEANING. The speaker intentionally expresses *what is said* it in a particular way and the interpreter is assumed to then (largely automatically) compute the speaker's intended meaning that would be necessary to be supposed under the assumption that the CP is observed.

For a detailed view on Attardo et al., 1994's theory on humor and his use of Grice, 1975's theory see chapter 7.3.

Treating Grice, 1975's maxims as strict rules that 'hurt' the conversation if they are broken is a pattern of misconception repeatedly found in accounts of discourse analysis.

> "Grice (1975) outlined four maxims: people are expected to say as much as necessary and no more, to say that which is true, to be relevant, and to be clear and unambiguous. When speakers violate these principles, the conversation is turned on its head. In most cases such violations are noticeable. Speakers can ramble on and on with unnecessary language, make untruthful or unverified statements,

> be irrelevant, or be unclear [...] It is when they are not challenged in these ways that discourse can go awry."
>
> [Shuy, 2015 p.828)]

Shuy, 2015 does correctly observe that violations or floutings of maxims are noticeable. The point he seems to be missing is, though, that in cases of intentional floutings or violations of maxims neither "conversations are turned on their head" nor does "discourse go awry". There is a valuable and practical point to them being noticeable. It was Grice, 1975's main point by introducing the CP and the maxims to explain how communication works **by virtue** of people using violations of maxims in order to communicate implicated meaning. In fact, it would make our everyday exchanges quite exhausting if communication would "go awry" every time someone said *I have to work* when asked if they'd like to go to the movies or if someone used a metaphor. There is no need to challenge obvious maxim violations by speakers if they are used intentionally to communicate implicit meaning.

> "Conversation consists of 'turn-taking' that is guided by rules that govern its evolution and the kinds of things that are appropriate and inappropriate to say and do and when (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). These rules take various forms as 'principles of pragmatics', cooperativeness, and politeness maxims, and expectations such as respond when spoken to; say what is relevant to the conversation, informative, and you believe to be true; and make others feel good rather than bad [...].
>
> [Hayes, 2007 p.789] p.828)]

The above is another example of mixing up and confusing cooperation in Grice, 1975's terms with politeness, 'making others feel good' and the 'rules' of conversations. Hayes, 2007 here does not explicitly attribute the use of 'cooperativeness' to Grice. But mentioning it in the same breath as *saying what is relevant, informative, and you believe to be true* certainly exhibits at least some confusion about Grice, 1975's conversational maxims, his notion of cooperation and that there is a clear line to be drawn to, e.g., politeness and turn-taking rules.

6.3 SUMMARY

This chapter explored the notion of COOPERATION and how different it can be interpreted, depending on the context the concept is used in. Not only is the folk-definition of the term a distinct from what I am convinced Grice, 1975 had in mind when he introduced the COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE. Between different scientific fields and research areas, there are differences in understanding which characteristics are supposed to be attributed to cooperation - a circumstance apparent in the use of various versions of the word, even. *cooperation* is applied in another way as *cooperativity* or *cooperativeness*, depending on the framework they are used in. These differences that are mirrored in the terminology would be perfectly adequate if they were used stringently. As was showed throughout this chapter, however, terms and definitions keep getting confounded in the literature. Characteristics like helpfulness, politeness or efficiency end up (unjustifiably) attributed to Grice, 1975's COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE and are then oftentimes used as arguments for its dismissal. Rationality as the underlying feature of cooperative communication is rarely acknowledged when the CP is used in different accounts and frameworks. The realization of the circumstance that interlocutors do not always seem to be as nice and helpful to each other as allegedly suggested by Grice's theory lead to incomplete use of his concepts in order to develop arguments against something he never intended to propose.

7 UIM IN LIGHT OF OTHER ACCOUNTS

Collaboration in achieving exchange of information
or the institution of decisions may coexist
with a high degree of reserve, hostility [. . .]
and with a high degree of diversity in the motivations
underlying quite meager common objectives.

— Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*

After critically discussing the theoretical groundwork underlying successful communication in the sense I attribute to Grice and how it can be achieved when an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER is involved, I now turn to more specific discussion of individual other accounts. One of the most deeply-rooted questions when it comes to comparing my UIM account to other theories is why – at all – choose an intention-based account like Grice's? Intentions are such a fuzzy concept, hard to write about, impossible to prove, overall a challenging basis for a scientific analysis. A very short answer I can give right-away: it is nothing more but also nothing less than my whole-hearted conviction that intentions lie at the heart of human communication. No alternative made sense to me so far.

In what follows, I will take a few prominent opinions, arguments as well as counter-examples against intention-based accounts into consideration and discuss what I think are their respective issues, misconceptions and how UIM might offer some additional support for intention-based accounts. After that, I turn to Asher and Lascarides, 2013's Segmented Discourse Representation Theory (SDRT), as well as theories in humor research and apply the insights I gained from my analysis of UIM examples about Grice's original concepts to their respective criticism and re-formulations of his theory of which I think that they are unwarranted. Lastly, I offer occurrences of UIM as counter-examples against some of the assumptions made in Relevance Theory (RT).

7.1 DEFENSE OF AN INTENTION-BASED ACCOUNT

7.1.1 *Minimalism*

It is generally not undisputed to assume that interlocutors' intentions are at the center of communication. Intention-based accounts like Grice's have been criticized widely as, for example, costly and complex in terms of the cognitive processes behind intention-recognition.

Lepore and Stone, 2016 (L&S), for example, brought forward an extensive account on minimalism that denies a speaker's intention has any role to play in the recognition of communicated meaning. It is elegantly dismissed by Bach, 2018 a few of whose arguments I will present here.[1] Bach generally says that "L&S overlook the key ingredient in the notion of speaker meaning, misinterpret Grice's theory of conversation and notion of conversational implicature, fail to single out the kind of coordination specific to communication from further aspects of conversational cooperation, and disregard various important distinctions in pragmatics and speech act theory." (Bach, 2018 p.3) He brings forward quite simple counterexamples, refuting the claim that communicative success is determined by semantic rules and disambiguation instead of intention, emphasizes that their supposed counter-examples of non-literal utterances made without communicative intentions are by no means evidence for the supposition that no other utterance is ever made **with** such intentions and shows how the coming about of conventionalized idioms is evidence that there has to have been a speaker at some point using a phrase for the first time with the intention for it to mean what then got conventionalized over time. One crucial thing missed by Lepore and Stone, 2016, according to Bach is "the difference between understanding a sentence, recognizing a speaker's communicative intention in uttering it (that's uptake), and responding in further ways to the utterance. The last might involve cooperation, but many communicatively successful utterances elicit indifference or even resistance." (Bach, 2018 p.10) Furthermore, a key misconception not only in the work of Lepore and Stone, 2016 is the treatment of Grice, 1975's idea of cooperation. Bach, 2018 observes that in calling the CP and the maxims 'interpreting principles' they seem to confuse that it is the **speaker** who does the implicating and in saying they are 'maxims of practical collaboration' they seem to ignore the difference between **communicational** cooperation and any further aims interlocutors might pursue (that might not be cooperative). Lepore and Stone, 2016, according to Bach, make two claims: linguistic communication that requires intention-recognition is just what is conventionally encoded and should language be used non-conventionally, speakers do not intent to convey anything specific but invite to imaginative engagement. "If these two complementary claims were correct, it would follow that no one ever attempts to communicate anything that isn't semantically encoded in what they utter, hence that in order to recognize a speaker's communicative intention (present only in fully literal speech), the addressee never has to do more than disambiguate the utterance, and that when imaginative interpretation is required, there is no communicative intention needing to be recognized."

1 The work presented in this section is based on and expands upon ideas from Schwarz, 2026.

7.1.2 *Split-utterances*

The most recent counterexamples that have been introduced are the cases of *split-utterances* (e.g. Gregoromichelaki et al., 2011; Mosegaard Hansen and Terkourafi, 2023) or interactions with (intention-less) chat bots (e.g.Mosegaard Hansen and Terkourafi, 2023). While this is a debate certainly not to be settled within the scope of this thesis, I would like to address a few of the points and apparent counterexamples brought forward in order to motivate the use of an intention-based account from my point of view.

First of all, it should be stressed that most accounts I know of that are critical of intention-based accounts do not, in fact, reject all basic ideas behind Grice's theory (as, for example Mosegaard Hansen and Terkourafi, 2023). Their argument mostly being that it cannot be the all-encompassing default they attribute it to be thought of by Grice, which is solely and always responsible for successful communication.

> "Of course, adults can, and often do, use reflections about the interlocutor's mental states; but this is not a necessary ingredient for meaningful interaction. Gricean mechanisms, that is, can be invoked but only as derivative or in cases of failure of the normal functioning of the primary mechanisms involved in the recovery of meaning, such as deception etc."
>
> [Gregoromichelaki et al., 2011 p.202]

> "It must be emphasized from the outset that we are in no way claiming that speakers do not have intentions, nor that they do not choose their words with the aim of reflecting those intentions [...] Nor do we wish to claim that hearers never take what they believe to be speakers' intentions into account when generating interpretations of utterances and discourses"
>
> [Mosegaard Hansen and Terkourafi, 2023 p.100]

One point Gregoromichelaki et al., 2011 seem to be trying to make is that Grice's idea of intention-recognition always has to involve the computation of full-fledged propositional content as the speaker's intended meaning by the interpreter and that it has to be recognized before a sentence is complete as they elaborate using examples like the following:

(1) Context: Friends of the Earth club meeting
A: So what is that? Is that er...booklet or something?
B: It's a book
C: Book

B: Just . . . talking about al you know alternative
D: On erm. . . renewable yeah
B: energy really I think. . . . . .
A: Yeah [BNC:D97]

[Gregoromichelaki et al., 2011]

> "on the Gricean assumption that pragmatic inference in dialogue operates on the basis of reasoning based on evidence of the interlocutor's intention, delivered by fixing the semantic propositional structure licensed by the grammar, the data in ((1)) cannot be easily explained, except as causing serious disruptions in normal processing.
>
> [. . .], on the assumption that communication necessarily involves recognising the propositional content intended by the speaker, there would be an expected cost for the original hearer in having to infer or guess this content before the original sentence is complete, and for the original speaker in having to modify their original intention, replacing it with that of another in order to understand what the new speaker is offering."

[Gregoromichelaki et al., 2011]

These arguments seem like they might have some ideas about Grice's understanding with respect to intentions confused. I do not believe, Grice intended to suggest that understanding via intention-recognition involves changing one's own intention or replacing it with the speaker's. It's about **recognition**, not adoption, of a speaker's communicated beliefs. The described costs of recognizing the interlocutor's different intended content in (1) would thus not be any different from recognizing the speaker's intended meaning of an answer to a fully-formulated question, for example.

It is also, as far as I understand Grice, not the case that it is full-fledged propositional content of an intention that has to be identified by the interpreter in order to understand an utterance. " It's a mistake to suppose that what is said must be determined first or to suppose that Grice supposed this." (Bach, 2006 p.7) Bach specifies this as follows: "The hearer does not infer that the speaker means a certain thing from the premise that the speaker intends to convey that very thing. Rather, he operates on the presumption that the speaker, like any speaker, intends to communicate something or other. The hearer takes into account this general fact, not the content of the specific intention, in order to identify that intention."(Bach, 2012 p.10)

So, to communicate successfully is to recognize the assumptions you are addressed to make as an interpreter about what a speaker would like you to think they intend. To recognize the conventional force of

an utterance, it does not have to be a complete proposition. Grice does not say, nor do I think he wanted to express that communication only works if complete propositional content is exchanged. While certainly most (if not all) of his examples can be **paraphrased** in some complete propositional content, there is no reason to suppose that this is necessary for an interpreter to understand what's conveyed.

Grice also provides examples of implicature interpretation in terms of mere suppositions: in the example about obscurity as an exploitation of his MAXIM OF MANNER, Grice describes the implicature computation process as follows: "Why has he selected that rigmarole [*Miss X produced a series of sounds that corresponded closely with the score of 'Home sweet home'*.] in place of the concise and nearly synonymous *sang*? Presumably, to indicate some striking difference between Miss X' s performance and those to which the word singing is usually applied. The most obvious supposition is that Miss X' s performance suffered from some hideous defect. The reviewer knows that this supposition is what is likely to spring to mind, so that is what he is implicating.)" (Grice, 1975 p.56) In this example, it is not the propositional content of, e.g. *Miss X's performance was bad.* that is recognized as the speaker's intended meaning – it's the supposition that the speaker intends the interpreter to think the speaker did not like the performance. This implicature works, even if the speaker were to be cut off at *Miss X produced a series of sounds*. Completion of sentences is not a necessary condition for intention-recognition.

(2) A: Are you left or
B: Right-handed.

[Gregoromichelaki et al., 2011]

(3) (A and B arguing:)
A: In fact what this shows is
B: that you are an idiot

[Gregoromichelaki et al., 2011]

In fact, I would argue that examples like (2) and (3) show that intention-recognition is key for such exchanges: per intention-recognition, the interpreter in both cases is licensed to assume that the speaker intends to complete their utterance according to how, standardly, speakers would complete such utterances. In (2), it would not be rational for the speaker to ask about something else than the right-handedness of the interpreter if they began their sentence like they did. In (3), it is rational to assume the speaker to bring forward some form of argument. In case of arguing interlocutors, it does not even matter what kind of propositional content was intended to follow – the interpreter already decided not to engage with the actual content of the speaker's utterance. It might be that the communication fails at

this point due to B refusing to engage in a meaningful way with A – but that is no evidence against mutual intentions being recognized.

The example of *split-utterances* is also used by Mosegaard Hansen and Terkourafi, 2023 as an argument against theories relying on intention-recognition: "[...] the not infrequent conversational phenomenon where two speakers jointly construct a single utterance as in ((4)) below, likewise constitutes a problem for theories that rely on individual speakers' intentions to determine what is *said* (and in this case also what is *meant*, given that the nature of the speech act is arguably modified by the act of co-construction):"

(4) Teacher: Now where is
Carolyn: Ernesto
Teacher: Ernesto.

[Mosegaard Hansen and Terkourafi, 2023]

(5) [Outside the bathroom at Sirl's house, where Michael is a guest]
Sirl: What time are you leaving this morning?
Michael: Oh, in about an hour I suppose. Are you in a hurry to leave?
S: No, no. Just asking.
(2.0)
M: Would you like to use the bathroom first?
S: Yeah, sure, if you don't mind.

[Mosegaard Hansen and Terkourafi, 2023]

"The forms of overt negotiation of different levels of meaning, including illocutionary force, [...] are deeply problematic for intention-based frameworks, as individual speakers' mental states do not seem to be the kind of things that can plausibly be subject to negotiation."

[Mosegaard Hansen and Terkourafi, 2023 p.102]

The above is an argument that might overgeneralize a little bit. Grice, 1975 specified *what it said* according to conventional meaning of the words used and disambiguation/reference fixing in the current context: "I intend what someone has said to be closely related to the conventional meaning of the words (the sentence) he has uttered."

This is no indication of an individual speaker's intention determining *what is said* as claimed by Mosegaard Hansen and Terkourafi, 2023. While sentence meaning can indeed be explicated in terms of speaker meaning, this does not mean that a sentence's meaning cannot at all be abstracted from single speaker's intentions in using that sentence to mean something **by** it.

Moreover, with respect to the argument of negotiating mental states, if there occurs a negotiation about what was said or meant, it is not a negotiation of individual speaker's mental states. What is in fact the case in (5) are negotiations about the successful or unsuccessful

transmission of expressed mental states in terms of what a speaker meant. What happens in (5) is that Michael expresses understanding of a meaning that was not intended by Sirl – just because Sirl rejects having expressed this intention by virtue of the question *What time are you leaving this morning?* does not in any way negotiate whether Sirl has this mental state or not. Grice explicitly talks about the speaker's actual intentions and beliefs being independent of communicating such beliefs: "On my account, it will not be true that when I say that *p*, I conversationally implicate that I believe that *p* [...]." (Grice, 1978 p.765) I agree with Mosegaard Hansen and Terkourafi, 2023 that mental states are private and, as such can hardly be negotiated to be *had* – their expression and communication by virtue of language, on the other hand, can absolutely be negotiated. That is why we can discuss on a meta-level what a speaker said, what they might have meant by it and whether or not we might think that their way of communicating it was adequate or not.

I'd like to address one other point of criticism that, I figure, gained even more ground with the recent developments in AI and Large Language Models (LLMs):

Mosegaard Hansen and Terkourafi, 2023 argue that the successful interaction with those systems (like Open AI's 'Chat GPT') should be an argument against intention-based accounts because computers, naturally, do not possess intentions.

> "Cappelen and Dever (2019:156-157), for instance, point out that 21st c. humans are fully capable of communicating with computerized 'speakers', such as algorithm-based chatbots or voice assistants like Amazon's Alexa or Apple's Siri, to which we cannot sensibly attribute any intentions"
>
> [Mosegaard Hansen and Terkourafi, 2023 p.101]

It is widely discussed as a marvel of very recent developments in AI that humans are capable of having conversations with computers (like chat bots, speech assistants, LLMs and the like) which resemble real communication between human individuals. I agree that these types of conversation have nothing to do with intentionality and/or the mutual recognition of communication intentions. The fact that this form of communication somehow works nonetheless, in my opinion, is due to the fact that these speech models are programmed and trained to emulate the most frequent human behavior in specific situations based on statistical analysis and external cues fed to them by the programmers[2]. Basically, what happens is that the model calculates – based on a vast amount of human-generated (so, intention-based) data it is trained

2 Further arguments for intentionality in the sense of true understanding being the decisive factor distinguishing real human communication from interactions with LLMs can be found in Bender and Koller, 2020.

on – the most likely next piece of speech. That chat bots' training is supposed to emulate human intentional communication as closely as possible for a non-intentional machine can, for example be observed in Andersson and McIntyre, 2025's investigations of *ChatGPT3*'s ability to recognize impoliteness. While the system is generally doing well, it exhibits significant difficulties with impoliteness that is 'hidden' in implicatures or showed false-positives in certain contexts where it was asked to de-tone impolite utterances: "[...] the bot experienced problems recognising the complexity associated with register variation. It identified some elements of language as impolite when, in fact, in the situational contexts in question, the language was perfectly appropriate." (Andersson and McIntyre, 2025 p.34) The ultimate result here is that communication with an AI works well because of its mirroring of conventions underlying our interactions and because of what Grice calls 'what is normally intended' by any given utterance ("an utterer is held to intend to convey what is normally conveyed (or normally intended to be conveyed)" (Grice, 1957 p.387)). Indeed, the AI does not **understand** in a sense comparable to human beings and it also does not reason about intentions but the statistical computation toward the speaker's most likely intended meaning of a given utterance (based on real human data) as well as the most likely response that would be considered helpful, relevant or correct by the human asking for it is probably the closest emulation an AI might ever be able to reach of how we **do**, in fact, use intentionality to communicate. So, while it is true that computers don't have intentions, the fact that humans train them in a way to most accurately emulate the reasoning of intentional beings in communication should, if all is considered, rather be an example in favor of intention-based accounts than against them.

I hope to have shown with the analysis of my examples of UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS that there is a fine-grained distinction between the intention that is the basis for explicating sentence meaning, the individual speaker's intention that is recognized in successful communication and the nature of cooperation toward understanding as opposed to some further, ultimate aim in Grice's theory.

7.2 UIM AND SDRT

Asher and Lascarides, 2003 combine dynamic semantics with Hobbs, 1979's ideas of coherence relations in discourse to create their idea of an ideal, logical representation of a discourse. Their approach is called SDRT (Segmented Discourse Representation Theory). They say that the information conveyed by connections between discourse phenomena (e.g. pronouns, presuppositions, temporal relations between events, word meanings, conversational implicatures and speech acts) cannot be adequately accounted for using merely DRT (Discourse Representation Theory), extended with world knowledge and Grice's maxims.

(Asher and Lascarides, 2003 p.3) They see an asset in extending the semantic relations of DRT with rhetorical coherence relations that do not emerge from semantic representations. Grice's theory of implicatures, for example, according to Asher and Lascarides, 2003 lacks a logic of how beliefs, goals and discourse content interact. Also, their claim is that reasoning about intentions becomes mainly obsolete when you have DRT and coherence relations linking discourse units together – phenomena like conversational implicature, in their model, can arise simply from the structure of the discourse that dynamically changes the interpreter's model of the speaker's cognitive state.[3]

Asher and Lascarides, 2013 focus on Grice's implicatures and combine a game-theoretic account with SDRT in order to achieve a formal model of how implicatures can be generated and computed in situations in which mutual cooperation cannot be assumed. In Asher and Lascarides, 2013, the generation and interpretation of implicatures is something that, according to their account, can occur without Grice's CP[4] being in full effect. For them, in situations where cooperativity does not seem to be in effect as Grice would have thought it to be, the implicatures generated in these situations vary in their *safety* of being assumed by an interpreter, given the context.

On their account, following Grice in principle, interlocutors coordinate on the conventions that govern linguistic meaning; what they call BASIC COOPERATIVITY. Their example below is an example of BASIC COOPERATIVITY on the mere level of the conventional meaning of someone else bought some suits for him. The answer displays an understanding of what was communicated but does not engage with the question and also neither implicates an answer, expresses why an answer cannot be provided nor opts out.

(6) a. R(eporter): On a different subject is there a reason that the Senator won't say whether or not someone else bought some suits for him?
b. S(heehan): Rachel, the Senator has reported every gift he has ever received.
c. R: That wasn't my question, Cullen.
d. S: The Senator has reported every gift he has ever received.
e. S: We are not going to respond to unnamed sources on a blog.

[Asher and Lascarides, 2013]

Interlocutors in cooperative situations also coordinate on intentions about conversational goals; what they call GRICEAN COOPERATIVITY. Both of these constraints, BASIC (as in (6)) and GRICEAN COOPERATIV-

3 The work presented in this section expands upon ideas from Schwarz, 2026.

4 "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged." (Grice, 1975 p.45)

ITY, together build what Asher & Lascarides refer to as the STRONG COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE, which is how they describe Grice, 1975's way of linking communication to principles of rational action and decision-making. They call it strong in the sense that "once an agent in a conversation learns of someone's conversational goals he either adopts them and attempts to realise them, or he says why he can't adopt them." (Asher and Lascarides, 2013 p.2)

According to them there is not much wiggle-room for being cooperative in Grice's theory. Their STRONG COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE is, as they admit themselves, decisively more rigid than Grice's original CP.

While they also admit for the STRONG COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE to be defeasible, it is still the case that in strong cooperation, the hearer should adopt the speaker's intentions and goals: "Strong Cooperativity, for example, doesn't say that the hearer's recognition of an M-intention or conversational goal always leads the hearer to adopt this intention; it says that in the absence of factors to the contrary the hearer will do so." (Asher and Lascarides, 2013 p.4)[5]

Though strongly cooperative communicative interactions might be the default case, there are also quite common situations in which an assumption of what Asher and Lascarides, 2013 regard full mutual cooperation cannot be made (at least not toward an ultimate aim). One of such environments Asher & Lascarides present is the case of cross-examinations in court. Here, it seems natural to assume for prosecutor and defendant to have different, if not opposing, conversational goals. Their mutual motivation to be as cooperative as possible toward fulfilling each other's goals can therefore not be assumed as naturally as Grice's CP allegedly requires.

Take the following, presented as Asher and Lascarides, 2013's main example of an exchange of that sort:

(7) a. P(rosecutor): Do you have any bank accounts in Swiss banks, Mr. Bronston?
b. B(ronston): No, sir.
c. P: Have you ever?
d. B: The company had an account there for about six months, in Zurich.

[Asher and Lascarides, 2013 p.2]

5 Regarding M-intentions and goals as having to be fully **adopted** for a cooperative exchange repeats, I think, a mistake Grice made himself (in Grice, 1957) and corrected in a later version of his definition: "I wish to regard the M-intended effect common to indicative-type utterances as being, not that the hearer should believe something (though there will frequently be an ulterior intention to that effect), but that the hearer should *think that the utterer believes* something." (Grice, 1989 p.230) Grice's correction takes the immediate effect away from direct influence on the hearer (which is problematic because it's outside of the speaker's influence) and leaves his well-established principle of intention-recognition for successful meaning understanding.

What is shown here is that the defendant (Bronston) *misdirects* the prosecutor to take his implicature in (7)d as a direct answer to his question. His answer is just so minimally cooperative that it can technically be considered an answer to the question. But Bronston uses an implicature in order to not publicly commit to any literal utterance. His strategy of using an implicature in that way is what Asher & Lascarides call MISDIRECTION and the level in which his answer can be considered cooperative is what they characterize as RHETORICAL COOPERATIVITY.

"A rhetorically cooperative move is a speech act one would expect from a speaker who fully cooperates with his interlocutor. Rhetorical cooperativity makes a speaker *appear* to be Gricean cooperative although he may not actually be so." (Asher and Lascarides, 2013 p.3)

So, according to them, in situations without a mutual assumption of full cooperation, communication does not fail (in Grice's account, implicatures like (7)d could simply not be computed, as they claim), an underlying level of (RHETORICAL) cooperativity is still in place and all that changes is the *safety* of those implicatures which can still be drawn; that is how reliably they can be inferred from what the speaker said.

Their main argument in Asher and Lascarides, 2013 is that Grice's theory of conversation is not able to correctly predict the implicatures arising in what they call 'strategic situations': communicative situations in which the individual goals of the interlocutors are not aligned or are in conflict. SDRT can account for such situations, as Asher and Lascarides, 2013 say, because it does not rely on reasoning about intentions. The logical structure of the discourse substitutes Grice's mutual cooperation. To arrive at an implicature, the interpreter does no longer need to adopt a speaker's intentions and goals. Instead they connect the speaker's utterance with the coherence relation linking it to the previous utterance in order to arrive at the implicature. In principle, combining a DRT semantics with pragmatic features like coherence relations into a comprehensive logic of discourse structure is a ground breaking asset to anyone looking for a straightforward logical representation of a discourse.

My argument is, though, that it is not a necessary tool for extending or substituting Grice's ideas in order to account for so-called 'non-cooperative situations'. As I argued before, Grice provided all necessary basic pieces to be able to account for such examples with the central idea of intentionality at its core. I have particular difficulties with Asher and Lascarides, 2013's approach of criticizing Grice's theory as inadequate to account for strategic 'non-cooperative situations': they do not address this point on the basis of his own ideas but on their own re-formulations of them and on a set of what they call 'defeasible generalisations' they put forward instead of Grice's maxims. One of these generalizations is so-called STRONG COOPERA-

TIVITY. STRONG COOPERATIVITY is a very rigid interpretation of Grice's CP. They are very aware of the controversial nature accompanying this interpretation "Our argument crucially relies on Strong Cooperativity and we suspect that many Griceans, e.g., Green (1995), will think it is too strongly worded." (Asher and Lascarides, 2013 p.7).

Nonetheless, they find it important to use exactly this interpretation as a basis for arguing that Grice's theory is ill-equipped to handle implicatures in 'non-cooperative situations'. "We then show that our Gricean theory has too few tools to model the implicatures that we and others (Solan & Tiersma 2005) claim are drawn from (1d) [...] [*their example (1) is repeated again below as (8)*]." (Asher and Lascarides, 2013 p.3) Generally, referring to single exchanges during which cooperation in the sense of Grice's CP cannot be mutually assumed as 'non-cooperative situations' can lead to the, I think incorrect understanding that the whole situation (e.g. the cross-examination of Bronston in (7)) is an uncooperative one. Although the individual ultimate aims Bronston and the prosecutor would like to achieve might be different, it does not make the situation as a whole non-cooperative. The same goes for other situations Asher & Lascarides label 'non-cooperative', like quarrels, bargaining and political debates. In all of these situations, the outcome participants, respectively, would like to achieve might be in conflict but that does not mean that they do not cooperate on the level the common immediate aim in order to exchange information.[6]

Let me now try and provide an analysis of how I understand Grice's tools in light of Asher and Lascarides, 2013's own two examples. I'll take them in turn. First, let's have a look at the situation in (8):

(8) a. P(rosecutor): Do you have any bank accounts in Swiss banks, Mr. Bronston?
b. B(ronston): No, sir.
c. P: Have you ever?
d. B: The company had an account there for about six months, in Zurich.

[Asher and Lascarides, 2013 p.2]

(8) is a cross-examination in court. This is, in fact, one of the few examples Grice, 1989 mentions that is not an instance of the classical exchange he bases his theory of conversation on. He lists cross-examinations together with what he calls 'over-the-garden-wall chatter' as a kind of exchange that is a 'degenerate derivative' of the talk-exchanges he would like to set his focus on. "[...] even the common objectives are spurious, apparent rather than real; the joint enterprise

6 A similar point has been made by Carston, 2013 with respect to Grice's idea of cooperation and communicative situations that are seen as 'non-cooperative' – as, for example, legal language.

is a simulation rather than an instance of even the most minimal conversational cooperation; but such exchanges honor the cooperative principle at least to the extent of aping its application." (Grice, 1989 p.370) What sounds harsh at first reading, in the end does show certain parallels to what Asher and Lascarides, 2013 describe when they say Bronston in (8)d is RHETORICALLY COOPERATIVE, which "makes a speaker *appear* to be Gricean cooperative although he may not actually be so."

As briefly described in chapter 2.1.1, it is fair to say that cross-examinations are instances of conversation that underlie very strict norms and rules, setting them apart from our usual free flowing sort of interaction. Not only are participants in those exchanges usually advised by a third party (e.g. their attorney) in what and how to say it. It is also an attribute of these interactions that there are outside-constraints on many features of speech which, in 'normal' conversation, would be characterized by Grice's maxims (e.g. a cross-examined person is strongly advised not to say more than *yes* or *no* unless it's necessary; they're advised not to use metaphors, irony, ellipses, ambiguities or other kinds of indirect speech that could potentially be misconstrued by a prosecutor). All these characteristics make cross-examinations a rather unnatural exchange rightfully described by Grice as a 'secondary-range of cases' that exhibits more of the nature of a play than natural conversation.

Regardless, I think if one keeps in mind the constraints placed on such exchanges, what Grice described as 'aping the application of the CP' can be a starting point of analyzing (8) in his terms without having to take into account other than Grice's original tools. The overall situation and all its constraints on what a speaker can or should say is COMMON GROUND among all participants. So, the prosecutor in (8) can assume Bronston to be cooperative toward the immediate common aim of the conversation, which is information exchange in a cross-examination situation. This also includes recognizing the special circumstances of this situation. Computing the implicature would then involve the prosecutor reasoning about Bronston's intention to give an informative answer. This is constrained by the nature of the discourse (the nature of the discourse being such that telling the truth would lead to a conviction). The prosecutor knows (and knows that Bronston knows he knows) that Bronston cannot be truthful without incriminating himself. He also knows that he cannot SAY *no* if this would be a lie and therefore recognizes Bronston's intention to **indicate** *no* without **saying** it in order not to commit perjury and be sentenced for that.

The implicature arises from a clash of the MAXIM OF QUALITY (*say only what you believe to be true*) with the MAXIM OF RELATION (*be relevant*) and the constraints on these maxims invoked by the norms of the discourse. Whether or not the **company** had an account there seems

to be irrelevant. It only becomes relevant under the supposition that the speaker would have been cooperative and said something more relevant like *yes* or *no* if that would not infringe the MAXIM OF QUALITY. Since *yes* would follow the MAXIM OF QUALITY but lead to conviction and *no* would violate the MAXIM OF QUALITY and would therefore lead to a conviction for perjury if discovered, the only possible interpretation for the prosecutor here is that Bronston wants to implicate *no* by literally saying *The company had an account there*. The factors constraining Bronston's answers are known to all participants of the exchange and I would not think it to be irrational in Grice's sense for the prosecutor to reason that way and to arrive at the intended implicature.

In the example case of (9), the crucial point is whether or not the interlocutors consider themselves participants of a conversation. Even in an argument, as long as Justin recognizes himself as addressee of what Janet is saying and she is not obviously opting out, the CP should hold and implicatures be computed.

(9) a. **Justin:** Have you been seeing Valentino this past week?
b. **Janet:** Valentino has mononucleosis.

[Asher and Lascarides, 2013 p.2]

Intention-**recognition** does not equal intention-**adoption**. Asher and Lascarides, 2013 claim that Justin assumes Janet will not adopt his intention to know an answer and, therefore, cannot be predicted to compute her implicature as an answer to his question in Grice's terms. But either Justin is opting out of the conversation in the first place because he thinks he cannot believe a word Janet says anyway OR he still thinks of himself as an interlocutor. If someone engages in an instance of communication, they can be assumed to be cooperative at least with respect to the common immediate aim of the conversation. As Grice puts it to "identify himself with the transitory conversational interests of the other" (Grice, 1975 p.48) – in this case that would be the rational exchange of information in a fight. For that, it does not matter if there are ultimate aims the interlocutor can be expected to have. That is, you suppose what is necessary in order for the CP to be upheld, including *Valentino has mononucleosis* implicating a possibly negative answer to the question. Whether or not this implicated answer is, in the end, satisfactory or believable is secondary for its successful computation.

In this view, the common immediate aim of the exchange in (8) is the exchange of information. The prosecutor wants to formulate his questions so that Bronston understands what is being asked of him and to what end and Bronston, respectively, intends his answers in such a way that the prosecutor understands the information he intends to convey by them. Whether or not the information Bronston conveys

is helpful toward the ultimate aim of the prosecutor – to get a verdict based on the truth – is secondary for implicature computation at that point. Grice describes what can be interpreted as this discrepancy as follows:

> "collaboration in achieving exchange of information or the institution of decisions may coexist with a high degree of reserve, hostility [...] and with a high degree of diversity in the motivations underlying quite meager common objectives."
>
> [Grice, 1989 p.369]

What I think is meant by what Grice says is phrased accurately by Bach:

> "It is important to stress that interlocutors are often not cooperative, even when they communicate successfully. People can insult, accuse, deceive, manipulate, harass, and bully one another, and these are not exactly cooperative things to do [...]"
>
> [Bach, 2018 p.12]

Asher and Lascarides, 2013's re-formulation of what they take to be Grice, 1975's ideas stands in their way of interpreting these examples: for intentions to be recognized by virtue of realizing that you are supposed to be recognizing the intention it is not necessary to 'adopt each other's goals and to realize them', as claimed by Asher and Lascarides, 2013. The conversation's ultimate purposes (or *aims*, in Grice, 1975's terms) can deviate without causing any clash in implicature-computation.

In fact, what Bronston is doing by his MISDIRECTION can be compared to what I describe as UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS. He does very well understand what is being asked of him by the prosecutor and he recognizes the common immediate aim. Realizing the diverging ultimate aims and constraints put upon the exchange by the nature of a cross-examination he chooses to construct his answer with reference to another but the prosecutor's intended meaning of the question. Differently to true instances of UIM, Bronston does not exploit the possibilities of interpretation in what the prosecutor said but rather the possibilities of meaning in the construction of his own utterance as an answer. The goal here is not to show wit in **interpretation** of an utterance but in **formulation** of one.

It does boil down to one important take-away: a divergence in ultimate aims of two interlocutors does not hinder successful and cooperative communication, hence, also the computation of implicatures. On the contrary, an awareness of conflicting conversational interests,

if they are part of the COMMON GROUND, might also create additional awareness of factors influencing reasoning about a speaker's intentions. Asher and Lascarides, 2013's narrow interpretation of Grice's theory, especially with respect to cooperation and the CP, does not give enough credit to the richness it can exhibit when all its aspects are taken into account and I think it is too short-sighted just so assume that lack of complete adoption of intentions suffices to rule out Grice's theory as appropriate for uncooperative behavior.

Generally, I do not think it was Grice's intent to get a classification of situations (and/or people for that matter) into what is cooperative or uncooperative. The thing he did was to observe interactions in everyday life and to try to explain how what is said transfers into different interpretations of what is meant merely by how it is put. He did not offer any rationale of when or when not implicatures can be computed (as is suggested by what Asher and Lascarides, 2013 are saying) but a description of HOW it works through application of rational thinking. So, to use their newly introduced 'defeasible rules' in order to argue that, if they fail, certain expected implicatures cannot be computed in certain situations under-explains much of what Grice originally said.

7.3 UIM AND THEORIES OF HUMOR

It appears to be widely accepted in humor research that, when it comes to the CP and Grice's maxims, they are violated by humor and therefore suspended or replaced in a humorous setting by some form of different mode of communication (or a HUMOR CP) that transports the meta-message to the audience that 'this is play'. The jokes and puns that are considered violating Grice's maxims and/or the CP are not considered to do so within this special mode of communication in order to function as successful communication. (Attardo, 1993, Attardo, 1994, Raskin, 1984) This seems to be supported by the fact that jokes do not always have to be interpreted as such – they can be retracted or just not be acknowledged as a joke in the first place: "In other words, by taking the joke seriously the hearer decides that all the inferences and implicatures that would normally have been suspended in the joke are active. The reasons for the hearer's behavior are probably idiosyncratic, as they can be based on personal feelings, familiarity with the joke, the teller, the situation, etc." (Attardo, 1993 pp.553-554)

Attardo, 1993's main point is that jokes always involve some form of violation of at least one of the maxims or of the CP itself. They, do, nonetheless, work as successful communication within their own set of rules or mode of communication. The information that is then successfully communicated within this mode can be conveyed via the

presuppositional basis of the joke, meta-messages or a suppression of the violation of maxims or the CP by the hearer.

In Grice's terms (as they are interpreted by Attardo), jokes and puns involve two moments in their processing: first, a perception of incongruity which causes the utterance to appear nonsensical. This can be considered, as Attardo, 1994 does, a violation of one or more of Grice's maxims on part of the speaker. The second processing moment is then the resolution of this violation by the interpreter in cooperatively assuming that it has to be a humorous situation in order for the maxim violation to make sense, rationally.

Using Raskin, 1984's *Non-bona-fide* (NBF) theory that there is a different mode of communication at play in jokes, Attardo, 1993 proposes an inferential process of understanding a joke that bears some rough resemblance to the inferential process an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER goes through before constructing their answer. Raskin, 1984's suggestion is that there is some 'ordinary' (*bona-fide)* mode of communication following Grice's principles where the speaker is supposed avoid lying, acting or joking etc. as well as a *non-bona-fide*-mode that suspends these tenets in favor of joking or acting modes of communication. "The hearer processes the text, is misled by the violation of the principle of cooperation, backtracks, and reinterprets the information provided in the text on the basis of the 'humor' maxims, switches to the non-bona-fide mode of humor, and reacts accordingly (i.e., laughing, smiling, etc.)" (Attardo, 1993 p.551)

The example he gives then for this humorous backtracking process could, in fact, also be analyzed in terms of UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER'S MEANING (UIM):

> "Professor: 'What is a bilabial stop?'
> Student: '*I don't know, but let me look this up for you.'
> In the context of classroom interaction a question such as the professor's is not interpreted as a bona-fide request of information, for which the student's response would be appropriate, but rather as a request for verification of the student's acquired knowledge. The student's response is thus pragmatically inadequate (and will earn him/her a failing grade)."
>
> [Attardo, 1993 p.551]

Regarding this example, Attardo, 1993, assumes that the student correctly understood the intended meaning of the professor as a request for verification of the student's knowledge. In Attardo, 1993's picture, the student first has to discard the literal *information request*-meaning of the utterance in favor of recognizing that the knowledge-verification is meant, despite the violation of the MAXIM OF QUALITY (the professor appears to be lying when pretending not to know the

answer). The student has to backtrack and switch to another mode of communication in which the violation is considered cooperative – as in pedagogical questioning or jokes.

The intention of the professor is in my eyes made very clear by the context of the conversation. The student does not have to switch the mode of communication because the professor seems to be lying and therefore acting irrational. It's not a lie, asking this question and the *information-request*-meaning is clarified by the context of the conversation. This should be part of the information that is already taken into account when understanding *what is said*. The student recognizes the speaker's (professor's) intended meaning and recognizes the common immediate aim of the conversation which, in this case, is the exchange of information for the purpose of knowledge verification. I think it is unnecessary to assume some instance of backtracking in this case in order to switch to a *pedagogical questioning*-mode for the student to recognize the intention and common immediate aim. Dynel, 2008 supports this. She says "[. . .] it is not so that the hearer perceives the speaker to be irrational, which would entail suspending the CP, and discontinues the process of implicature derivation, e.g. to infer the content of the joke. The world of the joke may indeed be different from the 'real world', hence violating common sense assumptions but the communicative process occurs unobstructed." (Dynel, 2008 p.171) Also, a thing that Attardo does not address further but which is important for understanding the interpreter's process in my account of UIM is that the student in the example above seems to be returning to the originally understood literal meaning to then construct their answer to the professor's question. In Raskin's model, I assume that would mean that the student would have to switches modes **again**, back to *bona-fide*-mode, for their response. The response, however, is a joke which should then, again, prompt the professor to switch modes in order to understand it. This back-and forth switching does not seem very practical.

Puns using ambiguous words or expressions, in Attardo et al., 1994's picture, work in a similar way by introducing a trigger causing a switch from one meaning to another:

"The presence of humorous ambiguity is brought about and resolved (i.e. revealed, or made explicit) by two functional elements in the text. The structuralist analyses of the pun have described the first of these aspects of the pun (i.e. the bringing-together of two senses), and have labelled it CONNECTEUR (Greimas 1966: 60-71)".(Attardo, 1994 pp.134-35)

Attardo usually calls this element that brings together the two senses of an ambiguity-pun the CONJUNCTOR.

> "The element that causes the passage from one sense, to one of the senses previously discarded by the disambiguation process, has been called *disjuncteur* (Greimas), 'script-

> switch trigger' (Raskin, 1984)[...] The function of this element is that of interrupting the disambiguation of the text up to the point of the occurrence of the disjunctor and to cause revision of the disambiguation with the inclusion of the second sense."
>
> [Attardo, 1994 p.135]

Attardo, 1994 describes the inferential process necessary for understanding a pun as follows (similar to the joke interpretation process above): "Then the hearer reaches the disjunctor, he/she realizes that the interpretation previously given to the text up to that point is either untenable or another previously unnoticed interpretation is also possible, and that the two are not compatible (i.e. they are incongruous). The hearer is forced to return to the beginning of the text (i.e. to backtrack) and parse it again in the light of the new contextual information provided by the occurrence of the disjunctor." (Attardo, 1994 p.140)

The example given by Attardo, 1994 for such a disambiguation process in a pun is another candidate to possibly fall into my class of pun or joke UIM based on lexical ambiguity:

> " (19) Q: Do you believe in clubs for young people?
> A: Only when kindness fails.
> (Pepicello and Weisberg 1983:79)"
>
> [Attardo, 1994 p.97]

As Attardo, 1994 explains, the connector bringing together the two senses of the pun is here *club* while the disjunctor (or SCRIPT-SWITCH-TRIGGER) that initiates the re-interpretation of the connector in terms of another sense is *kindness fails*. So, according to the process above, the hearer reaches *kindness fails* and realizes that another interpretation is also possible. So, they are forced then to backtrack and parse the utterance again in light of the other possible sense provided by the occurrence of the disjunctor.

For the interpretation of the pun as a whole, I do not disagree with the general process as described by Attardo, 1994. But whether it is necessary to introduce the terminology of connector and disjunctor, this I would question. Ambiguous terms like *club* activate their senses when understood and then the context selects the most likely one at first. If the context is changed – as, for example, by the introduction of the pun's punchline – the other sense can be brought forward again to the conscious awareness of the interpreter in order to understand the pun.

I do, however, object to the general assumption that "Obviously, deliberate ambiguity flies in the face of Grice's recommendation to avoid ambiguity." (Attardo, 1993 p.542) Deliberate ambiguity is exactly what

happens during flouting of the MAXIM OF RELATION. Grice, 1975 says "We must remember that we are concerned only with ambiguity that is deliberate, and that the speaker intends or expects to be recognized by his hearer." So, if a pun is deliberately ambiguous, uttered by a speaker in expectation that this deliberate ambiguity can be recognized by the interpreter I cannot see any way how this is 'flying in Grice's face'.

In terms of my examples of UIM, I would look at A's interpretation process (which is, as mentioned before, admittedly difficult to do in scripted puns) and assume that the backtracking process of interpreting another possible meaning of the ambiguous formulation is also happening after an initial interpretation of the speaker's intended meaning (here the *place for parties*-reading) but cannot be triggered by what Attardo, 1994 call the DISJUNCTOR because the answer containing said disjunctor has not been produced, yet. So, in the creation of this pun answer, the switch from one sense to another possible one (here the *beating*-reading) has to happen after understanding the initial question and without any further linguistic trigger than the mere use of a lexically ambiguous term. Recognizing and acknowledging the common immediate aim of the exchange as making a joke, I think, is sufficient as a 'trigger' that activates the other possible interpretation of the ambiguous expression.

The central part of Raskin, 1984 and Attardo, 1994's account is the underlying assumption that humor, principally, violates the CP and needs a way to suspend Grice's original maxims and CP for the interpreter to successfully parse the joke or pun. Much like the other examples from different fields that I discussed in 6.2.3, here the issues also are the miscues about what Grice originally intended his CP and the maxims to do. This is the reason for what, in my eyes, appears to be an overcomplicated account of humor: I do not think it is violating Grice's maxims and that it needs a separate treatment as a result.

Attardo, 1994 initiates his discussion of how he thinks humor violates Grice's maxims with one of Grice's own examples: his example of irony in Grice, 1975. Here occurs the first little misunderstanding of Grice, already. The example of irony he discusses is not described as a **violation** of a maxim but as **flouting** of the MAXIM OF QUALITY. This is a significant difference since flouting of a maxim is absolutely in line with the CP and what rational interlocutors are able to do to communicate certain meanings beyond *what is said*. Examples like irony are classified by Grice within 'Group C' which are exploitations: "a procedure by which a Maxim is flouted for the purpose of getting in a conversational implicature by means of something of the nature of a figure of speech." (Grice, 1975 p.52)

Support can be found in Grice's works for floutings rather than CP-questioning violations. As Dynel, 2008 observes, for example, even the violations in the most complex jokes are blatant and deliberate, thereby

making apparent the speaker's intention to make a joke. While confusing at first, they do still have to be classified as floutings of maxims. With the CP in place, an interpreter is able to recognize the intention behind the apparent violation as humorous. "Indeed, jokes may fail to fulfill maxims, temporarily misinforming or perplexing the hearer, for example by providing him/her with too little information or, in the case of garden-path humour (see Dynel forthcoming [7]), allowing for 'wrong' inferences (hinged on initially covert ambiguity) until the punch-line subverts them. However, all this occurs according to the speaker's plan, of which the hearer becomes fully aware, whether or not warned in advance that the verbalisation is of the humorous type. The hearer is led to the proper interpretation at the end of the jocular formulation. On no account can this nonfulfillment be a violation, which is inherently covert to the interpreter". (Dynel, 2008 p.175)

Raskin, 1984, as well as Attardo, 1994 at least to a certain degree seem to have fallen into the common trap of wanting to treat Grice's maxims as rules regulating optimal conversation whose violation is a problem. In Raskin, 1984's bona-fide mode, all maxims are required to be fulfilled similar to following a 'technical manual'. Similarly, Attardo, 1994 describes the CP as defining "prerequisites of BF [*bona fide*] communication – that is the speaker's commitment to truth, relevance, clarity and to providing the right quantity of information at any given time – when a speaker is being earnest in his/her effort to communicate, he/she will try to follow the CP". This assessment confuses Grice's maxims and the CP. The CP is not followed by committing oneself to adhering to the maxims. Instead, it rather is the other way around: in cases when the maxims are NOT followed and communication **seems** to be going against all that's rational, the CP is what leads the interpreter to see rationality in apparent violations. The speaker is assumed to be willing to communicate something rationally inferable by the interpreter – they are not bound by the (non-existent) laws of the CP to some form of 'ideal' communication.

This fallacy becomes more apparent when Attardo describes that "Raskin distinguishes, as does Grice, between a bona-fide type of communication, in which the speaker is committed to communicating in the most effective way, as clearly as possible, etc., in short follows the CP" (Attardo, 2020). Grice was careful to explain his account did not aim at of communicative efficiency, adequateness as such. As early as in Grice, 1975 he said: "I have stated my maxims as if this purpose were a maximally effective exchange of information; this specification is, of course, too narrow [...]." Later, in Grice, 1989, he elaborates: "it is the rationality or irrationality of conversational conduct which I have been concerned to track down rather than any more general characterization of conversational adequacy". So, claiming that Grice distinguished a bona-fide from a non-bona-fide type of communication

7 Dynel, 2009

and that following the CP would mean communicating in the most effective or clear way shows a lack of understanding when it comes to Grice's original ideas.

This is another argument also supported by Dynel, 2008 who says "rationality, which lies at the heart of Grice's CP model, is also inherent to intentionally produced humorous verbalisations, be it jokes or conversational humour such as witticisms, quips, teases, etc. The CP holds in any interaction between the speaker who rationally produces an utterance and the hearer who derives implicatures, presuming the interlocutor to be rational" (Dynel, 2008 p.180). It even seems that Raskin, 1984 and Attardo, 1994 agree with this, though some of their accounts' assumptions suggest otherwise. When they say, for example that interlocutors are "actively, consciously – and cooperatively – engaged in joke-telling non-bona fide communication mode" (Raskin and Attardo, 1994 p.37) it suggests rational communication that would uphold Grice, 1975's CP.

The underlying argument brought forward in this thesis that my interpretation of Grice's concepts suffice to explain what seem to be counterexamples is further supported when looking at theories like Raskin and Attardo, 1994's NBF model. As long as rational cooperation (understood according to how I think Grice intended it) is presupposed and intention-recognition happens, the interaction is successful. Whether or not a speaker flouts maxims, appears to be rude or adversarial during the process is irrelevant when it comes to the underlying assumption of the CP. Just because a joke might involve purposefully long-winded speech, ambiguities or irony, it does not mean that understanding by assuming that the CP is being followed cannot happen, especially if, in a very classical cooperative way "hearers perceive the intention of the speaker as an attempt to make them laugh" (Raskin and Attardo, 1994 p.37). And this is without presupposing some parallel mode of communication for every new situation. Dynel, 2008 supports this further by arguing that the introduction of a separate mode of communication or a special CP just for humor poses nothing but an unnecessary terminological complication since humor can be explained – as all other forms of human communication – using Grice's original model as it is. Similarly, in humorous or joke examples of UIM, there is no need for assuming the CP not to be followed because the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER has other ultimate communicational aims. Their strategy also seems to, at first glance, violate Grice's idea of cooperation. But his distinction between a common immediate and ultimate aims as I apply it to conversations already takes into account that interlocutors might exploit the intricacies of language and communication. But still, in most cases, they do so within what is cooperative toward the common immediate aim of the conversation. I argue that utterers of jokes and also UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS **need** rational cooperation in terms

of Grice, 1975's CP in order for their strategy to work, even if their ultimate aim then is uncooperative in the folk sense of the word.

Building on Raskin and Attardo, 1994's basic ideas of a theory of humor, Brône, 2008 as well as Veale, Feyaerts, and Brône, 2006 use cognitive linguistics and discourse psychology grounded analyses in terms of mental spaces and layering models in order to describe strategies that, in some aspects, bear resemblance to how I characterize UIM. Though they employ (a version of) Grice's basic terminology when talking about communication (e.g. *communicative intentions*, *goals* or *reasoning*) his theory is merely mentioned in passing and does not seem to be part of the underlying theoretical concept they adhere to.

The conversational strategy of TRUMPING described by Veale, Feyaerts, and Brône, 2006 "is a form of impromptu wit whose humor arises, at least in part, from our appreciation of an agent's verbal mastery in subverting the language of an adversary" (Veale, Feyaerts, and Brône, 2006 p.312). Similarly to what I observe for UIM, TRUMPING also exhibits a connection between the speaker's original utterance and the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETATION. In their account, this is called *parallelism*. Utterance parallelism can occur in many different ways but, crucially, it connects the original speaker's utterance with the interpreter's verbal response. By way of using such parallelism in *trumping*, the interpreter shows in their response that they did **not** just deliberately misunderstand their interlocutor as is often done in regular (non-trumping) puns. Instead, they use what Veale, Feyaerts, and Brône, 2006 call HYPER-UNDERSTANDING providing a witty as well as topic-shifting response. "By hyper-understanding we mean that H demonstrates an understanding of the subtleties of lexico-conceptual meaning that appears to be lost on the speaker S. It is this understanding-gap that gives H the conceptual room to out-maneuver S." (Veale, Feyaerts, and Brône, 2006 p.330)

Veale, Feyaerts, and Brône, 2006 use examples, some of which could, in fact, also pass as instances of UIM. Take the following example (10):

(10) "Wife (S): (*pointing to monkeys*) Your relatives, I suppose?
Husband (H): Yes, my in-laws."

[Veale, Feyaerts, and Brône, 2006 p.316]

According to their cognitive analysis, in this example the hearer deploys the strategy of HYPER-UNDERSTANDING to make explicit for the speaker the distinction that can be drawn for the term *relative* between blood relatives and relatives by marriage. "The hearer thus shows a greater understanding of the speaker's chosen concept than the speaker herself, and uses this more sophisticated understanding of the concept to both agree with the speaker and simultaneously subvert and even surmount the speaker's intention to insult him." (Veale, Feyaerts, and Brône, 2006 p.331)

Brône, 2008 takes the concept of HYPER-UNDERSTANDING as well as MISUNDERSTANDING to develop an analytical approach of layered viewpoint mental spaces by using data from a scripted comedic TV show. In his mental space analysis he says that both strategies boil down to a clash of different viewpoints. Specifically, for HYPER-UNDERSTANDING "[...] the second speaker pulls an initially backgrounded concept in the first speaker's utterance to the foreground because that element suits his own rather than the other's communicative goals (Brône, 2008 p.2056-57)". This is comparable to the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER'S formulation of their verbal response with the intention of offering the UIM to be added to the COMMON GROUND. Including MISUNDERSTANDING as a separate strategy, though, is something not compatible with the view I propose in this thesis. Misunderstanding, if it is not deliberate (and therefore, not **truly** misunderstanding), is an instance of communication that I delineate from my examples of UIM and exclude from what I characterize as SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION. The lack of initial intention-recognition in instances of misunderstanding might be a fitting vehicle for jokes and humorous exchange but if you take Grice, 1975's theory as a basis, such exchanges can only be considered instances of failed communication. For Brône, 2008's tight focus on scripted jokes and comedy it appears helpful to also take these occurrences into account. As examples for modeling UIM I only use a very small subset of scripted jokes and discourse and make sure to emphasize the observation of it from a meta-level as the reader or viewer who is supposed to recognize the intended as well as the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETATION in order for the humorous effect to occur. In the end, the strategy that causes a humorous effect in examples of what Brône, 2008 calls MISUNDERSTANDING is a contrast between a misunderstanding of a scripted character and what would be better characterized as HYPER-UNDERSTANDING on the side of the reader or hearer. Thus, for the strategy to work as intended, there cannot be a true case of MISUNDERSTANDING involved.

Although Veale, Feyaerts, and Brône, 2006 and Brône, 2008's accounts base their analyses on very different theoretical frameworks than what is done here, there is a still significant overlap in the general intuitions and conclusions with respect to the interpreter's strategy. Both their research foci remain exclusively on instances of (adversarial) humor with a large amount of scripted data while, as laid out in chapter 2, UIM can occur throughout a variety of situations and my examples are, for the most part, attested occurrences of real communication. Their general insights on the strategy of HYPER-UNDERSTANDING and PARALLELISM can be considered as overall supporting the basic ideas behind my own analysis.

7.4 UIM AND RELEVANCE THEORY (RT)

Wilson, 2002 give a comprehensive account of their *Relevance Theory* first developed in Wilson, 1986 and updated throughout the years. It is based broadly on Grice's central idea of communication as a cooperative process and picks out his principle of relevance as the most (or only) important one. "The central claim of relevance theory is that the expectations of relevance raised by an utterance are precise enough, and predictable enough, to guide the hearer towards the speaker's meaning." (Wilson, 2002 p.250)

As the name suggests, relevance is the most defining attribute of their account: "In relevance-theoretic terms, an input is relevant to an individual when its processing in a context of available assumptions yields a POSITIVE COGNITIVE EFFECT. A positive cognitive effect is a worthwhile difference to the individual's representation of the world – a true conclusion, for example. [...] The most important type of cognitive effect achieved by processing an input in a context is a CONTEXTUAL IMPLICATION, a conclusion deducible from the input and the context together, but from neither input nor context alone. [...] Other types of cognitive effect include the strengthening, revision or abandonment of available assumptions." (Wilson, 2002 p.251)

> "*Relevance of an input to an individual*
> a. Other things being equal, the greater the positive cognitive effects achieved by processing an input, the greater the relevance of the input to the individual at that time.
> b. Other things being equal, the greater the processing effort expended, the lower the relevance of the input to the individual at that time."
>
> [Wilson, 2002 pp.252-253]

They argue that evolution is the main reason for human beings to look for optimal relevance, also in communication: "As a result of constant selection pressure towards increasing efficiency, the human cognitive system has developed in such a way that our perceptual mechanisms tend automatically to pick out potentially relevant stimuli, our memory retrieval mechanisms tend automatically to activate potentially relevant assumptions, and our inferential mechanisms tend spontaneously to process them in the most productive way." (Wilson, 2002 p.254)

Similar to what Searle formulated (e.g. in Searle, 2007), Wilson, 2002 also assume two different forms of intention:

> " a. The informative intention: The intention to inform an audience of something.
> b. The communicative intention: The intention to inform the audience of one's informative intention"
>
> [Wilson, 2002 p.255]

Thus, contrary to Searle, 2007's meaning intention vs. communication intention which distinguishes between the intention to mean something and the intention to communicate it, in Wilson, 2002's distinction, both kinds of intention are directed toward an audience.

> "ostensive-inferential communication involves the use of an ostensive stimulus, designed to attract an audience's attention and focus it on the communicator's meaning.
> *Communicative Principle of Relevance*
> Every ostensive stimulus conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance"
>
> [Wilson, 2002 p.256]

So, the optimal relevance inherent to an ostensive stimulus also carries what Wilson & Sperber call a *presumption of relevance*. It includes a presumption of what the audience of an act of ostensive communication is entitled to expect in terms of effort and effect. What, in detail, is considered 'optimal relevance' is described as follows:

> "*Optimal relevance*: An ostensive stimulus is optimally relevant to an audience iff
> a. It is relevant enough to be worth the audience's processing effort;
> b. It is the most relevant one compatible with communicator's abilities and preferences."
>
> [Wilson, 2002 p.257]

If the effort seems to be worth it for an audience, the comprehension on Wilson, 2002's account goes as follows:

> "*Relevance-theoretic comprehension procedure*
> a. Follow a path of least effort in computing cognitive effects: Test interpretive hypotheses (disambiguations, reference resolutions, implicatures, etc.) in order of accessibility.
> b. Stop when your expectations of relevance are satisfied."
>
> [Wilson, 2002 pp.259-60]

On the part of the hearer, Wilson, 2002 note specifically that a hearer's goal is to construct a hypothesis about the speaker's meaning which satisfies the presumption of relevance conveyed by the utterance. Hearers treat the linguistically encoded word meaning (e.g. BANK1 in (11b)[8]) as no more than a clue to the speaker's meaning. "Guided by his expectations of relevance, and using contextual assumptions made accessible by the encyclopedic entry of the linguistically encoded concept (e.g. that forgetting to go to the bank where one keeps one's money may make one unable to repay money one owes), he starts deriving cognitive effects. When he has enough effects to satisfy his expectations of relevance, he stops." (Wilson, 2002 p.267)

> "*Sub-tasks in the overall comprehension process*
> a. Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about explicit content (in relevance-theoretic terms, explicatures) via decoding, disambiguation, reference resolution, and other pragmatic enrichment processes.
> b. Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about the intended contextual assumptions (in relevance-theoretic terms, implicated premises).
> c. Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about the intended contextual implications (in relevance-theoretic terms, implicated conclusions)."
>
> [Wilson, 2002 pp.259-60]

Wilson & Sperber's account on mental representation assumes what could, mimicking Chomsky's 'Universal Grammar', be called a 'universal inference program': "We are suggesting an alternative view on which, just as children do not have to learn their language but come with a substantial innate endowment, so they do not have to learn what ostensive-inferential communication is, but come with a substantial innate endowment. This approach allows for varying degrees of sophistication in the expectations of relevance with which an utterance is approached." (Wilson, 2002 p.280)

RT's stronger focus on interpretation rather than on production in comparison to other theories might be beneficial to gather insights for my own account. They base their account on Grice's concepts and seem to be facing a few of the same difficulties I encountered. Their general acknowledgment that the meanings a speaker can reasonably intend to convey is virtually unlimited is in line with my assumptions about how UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS can exploit that. There are a few issues I see with Wilson & Sperber's idea that a speaker always wants to produce the most relevant utterance and that a hearer can expect them to do so. They say "It is also reasonable for the hearer to stop

8 "(11) a. *Peter*: Did John pay back the money he owed you?
b. *Mary*: No. He forgot to go to the bank." (Wilson, 2002)

at the first interpretation that satisfies his expectations of relevance, because there should never be more than one. A speaker who wants her utterance to be as easy as possible to understand should formulate it (within the limits of her abilities and preferences) so that the first interpretation to satisfy the hearer's expectation of relevance is the one she intended to convey." (Wilson, 2002 p.260)

First of all, they argue that cooperation in Grice, 1975's sense is not necessary as such: "We have argued that, although much communication is co-operative in the sense that the communicator is willing to provide the required information, co-operation in this sense is not essential for communication, as it is for Grice" (Wilson, 2002 p.258). But the idea they formulate above is that the speaker aims at being understood and the hearer can rationally expect them to do so – this seems to me to be the same process as underlies Grice's COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE.

I do also see difficulties with the assumption that "there should never be more than one" satisfying interpretation for a hearer. There are plenty of cases where speakers in legal situations, interviews or in the formulation of jokes are intentionally ambiguous or vague so that their utterances can yield different, equally satisfying interpretations.

For instance, in the following (11), a doctor cross-examined about a patient's suicide avoids a potentially incriminating answer by saying something that could be interpreted as a *yes* as well as a *no* or an *I'm not sure*. Speakers do so intentionally and all interpretations would have to be qualified as satisfactory because it's the most relevant information the speaker can give at that point:

(11) Q. Doctor, to your knowledge, have you told me everything you consider important about your patient's death by suicide? A: I have told you all the information I can remember at this time.

[Psychiatry, 2008]

In examples of UIM, there exist cases, for example in the legal environment where intentional vagueness of a law or statute is exploited deliberatively by an UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER in order to avoid a (stricter) sentencing. In chapter 4, I used the 1993 case *Smith v. The United States* (United States, 1993) as an example for vagueness in legal texts. Court and defense argued about whether or not trading a gun for drugs is supposed to be considered as *using a firearm during and in relation to . . . [a] drug trafficking crime*. In the end, the defendant was found guilty of having *used a firearm* in the incriminating sense (a very wide interpretation of *use*). The defense argued in favor of a narrower interpretation of the word *use* which would have been in favor of the defendant who did not plan to use the gun in the way a gun is standardly used (e.g. to shoot). The wide interpretation, on

the other hand, better reflects the intention behind the formulation of this particular text of law. The vagueness of *use* is deliberate such as to make the law applicable to any imaginable case without changing its wording. That there had to be long deliberations about whether or not the law applies in the case at hand is shows that there is not always just **one** satisfying interpretation fulfilling the expectancy of relevance. Consider an UIM example from chapter 2 again:

(12) Attorney: Your Honor, at this time I would like to swat [opposing counsel] on the head with his client's deposition.
Court: You mean read it?
Attorney: No, Sir. I mean to swat him on the head with it. Pursuant to Rule 32, I may use the deposition 'for any purpose' and that's the purpose I want to use it for.
Court: Well, it does say that.
quiet pause.
Court: There being no objection, you may proceed.
Attorney: Thank you, Judge.
Thereafter, defendant's attorney swatted plaintiff's attorney on the head with the deposition.

[Black, 2008]

The interaction in (12) shows that there appear to be two different satisfying and relevant interpretations of the phrase *for any purpose* that seemed to have both been interpreted by the attorney. While the interpretation reflected by the court's question *you mean read it?* clearly is the most salient one, the interpreter (attorney) did also arrive at the other possible interpretation that they deemed relevant here. The interpretation of (at least two) relevant meanings in a given situation is closely connected to one additional point I would like to make: I think the assumption that interpreters stop at the first satisfactory relevant interpretation is too strong and can be refuted by the process of the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER.

Consider also Wilson & Sperber's thoughts about the interpretation of (13):

(13) a. Peter: What do you think of Martin's latest novel?
b. Mary: It puts me to sleep.

[Wilson, 2002 p.269]

They say that "In processing (13)b, Peter will be expecting to derive an answer to his question: that is, an evaluation of the book. In the circumstances, the first contextual assumption to occur to him is likely to be that a book which puts one to sleep is extremely boring and unengaging. Having used this assumption to derive an answer to his question [...] he should stop. [...] so in interpreting (13)b, it should

not occur to him to wonder whether the book literally puts Mary to sleep, almost puts her to sleep or merely bores her greatly" (Wilson, 2002 pp.269-270).

So, according to Wilson, 2002's theory, Peter should stop his interpretation and it should not occur to him to wonder about the literal (or any other) interpretation. But this is exactly what UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS deliberately do. They look for different possible interpretations to use to their advantage. In (14), for instance, the interpreter writing their comment must be assumed to have arrived at the intended interpretation but **also** at the interpretation the comment is based on:

(14) British conservative party's subway ad:
We plan to cut all homeless people in half by 2025.
Comment: widthways or lengthways, that is the question?

[@ArtwayRae, 2023]

The advertising is – uncontroversially, I think – intended to mean that the party plans to cut the overall number of homeless people in half by 2025. This is an interpretation people usually unconsciously arrive at by what Bach, 1984 calls 'conceptual strengthening' as in (16):

(15) We plan to cut [*the number of*] all homeless people in half by 2025.

So far, so much in line with Wilson, 2002's account. Now, though, UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS do not stop at the first relevant interpretation – they arrive at another possible interpretation, too, and use it as a basis for their response. In (14), they reverse-engineer their interpretation back to the literal meaning of the utterance and from there they access another possible world in which a counterpart speaker would have intended to strengthen the sentence as follows:

(16) We plan to cut all [*individual*] homeless people in half by 2025.

Overall, I think relevance certainly has to be be seen as part of the interpreter's process of intention-recognition. My UIM examples as well as other instances of communication that, at first glance, do not completely follow what would be considered cooperative show that Wilson, 2002's RT might contain some claims that are simply too strongly worded. The UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's second step shows that they do not stop interpreting after arriving at the first instance of a relevant interpretation.

7.5 SUMMARY

This chapter explored how my model of successful communication with UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS using a careful interpretation of Grice, 1975's intention-based account can help explain phenomena that are treated as counter-examples for his ideas. Accounts like Asher and Lascarides, 2013, Mosegaard Hansen and Terkourafi, 2023 or Eleni Gregoromichelaki, 2011 take specific counter-examples as grounds to re-formulate and partly reject Grice's ideas while Raskin and Attardo, 1994 or Wilson, 2002 develop theories that are based on intentionality and cooperation, too, but see a need to reduce and re-frame these concepts in their own ways. It was shown that most counter-examples (like *split-utterances* and *uncooperative situations*) are, after all, dependent on intention-recognition and can be analyzed using Grice's basic tools and that the developments and re-formulations of his basic concepts introduce flaws of their own and might not even be necessary to account for, e.g. humorous speech. The examples of UIM are an asset here since they offer instances of communication that do not seem straightforwardly cooperative in Grice, 1975's sense but can, as I have shown, be included as instances of successful, cooperative communication given what I think is its correct interpretation and framing. An addition of concepts that are, individually, also based on Grice's ideas, provides all that is necessary for a complete analysis of the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER'S second interpretational step. This treatment of what I take Grice to have intended by his concepts also helps defend intention-based accounts and provides solutions for alleged challenges that led to complete re-formulations.

8

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is irrational to bite off more than you can chew whether the object of your pursuit is hamburgers or the Truth.

— Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*

8.1 SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION REVISITED

The overarching question asked in this thesis is when communication can or cannot be labeled *successful*. Success in terms of communication is interpreted very differently throughout the literature and is not – at least from what I know – measurable in terms of any clear-cut characteristics. There exist certain folk descriptions of (un)successful communication in terms of phrases like *No, you don't understand . . .*, *I think there's been a miscommunication*, *I know what you wanted to say* or *I get the jist*. Although these are, of course, no scientific classifications, note that these phrases all have in common an unspecific but identifiable notion of understanding or knowing of an interlocutor's intention. Whether it is explicit, like in *you don't understand* or subtle like in *there's been a miscommunication*, success or failure of communicating, intuitively always seems to be measured against the yardstick of what an interpreter thinks is or should have been the message a speaker would have wanted them to understand. As Bach, 2005 puts it:

> "Focusing on the normal case of successful communication, where the listener gets the speaker's communicative intention right, can make it seem as though an utterance has content in its own right, independently of that intention. But this is illusory, as is evident whenever communication fails. In that case, in which the speaker means one thing and his audience thinks he means something else, there is what the speaker means and what his listener takes him to mean, but there is no independent utterance content."
>
> [Bach, 2005 p.24]

Overall, from the examples presented in this thesis and the approach on the interpreter's strategy behind such behavior I think it is possible to specify three main characteristics by which successful communication in the wider sense can be identified. Intention-recognition, as seems to be agreed upon throughout, is the fundamental basis of successful communication in the way Grice's basic ideas are implemented

in this thesis. So, this has to be considered absolutely necessary for success in communication. Though it mostly is the case, communication does not always **have** to consist of a back-and-forth of utterances (or other types of reaction); hearing and understanding an exclamation like *You are a fool!* or reading and understanding a sign would have to be classified as successful communication even without the addressee showing any kind of reaction following their intention-recognition. If there is an exchange of at least two verbal utterances (or other reactions), further characteristics determining the success of the whole communication have to be taken into account. The successful exchanges with UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS presented here exhibit further characteristics like upholding cooperation by responding with a coherent reaction as well as, in doing so, introducing to the COMMON GROUND all interpretations 'at play' in the exchange. These, I think, can be seen as further conditions that help delimiting the threshold between what counts as successful communication.

The first, necessary, characteristic is the most important one because without intention-recognition, some form of talk might still take place in special cases but doubts could be raised as to whether it would even be deserving of the term *communication*, let alone *successful*. Similarly, Stalnaker, 2014 observes that communication does not work successfully unless the persons intended to be the addressee (care to) recognize themselves to be supposed to recognize the intended message. "When I said to O'Leary, 'You are a fool', the content of my speech act depended on the fact that O'Leary was my addressee [...]. But if O'Leary does not realize that I am talking to him, then communication will not be successful." (Stalnaker, 2014 p.24) Simply put: if you're not paying attention or don't consider yourself as 'being talked to', communication cannot be successful in the first place. In cases when people take turns in uttering monologues but neither understand what their interlocutor intended to convey nor make any effort to do so, it seems to me like this might be an instance of *talking in front of each other* as opposed to *communicating **with** each other*. At the end of chapter 2 I discussed cases like that. For example, during political debates or heated arguments it can happen that each candidate just wants to address their individual talking points for an audience and therefore neglects paying attention to what the other candidate is even saying.

In terms of a scientific definition of understanding, the central theory is, of course, Grice, 1975's idea of the recognition of speaker intentions to evaluate whether or not the act of communicating a certain message has been achieved. The 'thing' that is communicated between human beings is some form of meaning. In Grice's terms, non-natural meaning can (though roughly) be explicated in terms of communication: "We might just as well say, *X has meaning*$_{NN}$ *if it*

is used in communication, which, though true, is not helpful" (Grice, 1957 p.380). While he admits that this does not suffice as a definition, it means that Grice sees meaning of words and sentences as arising from how and with which intention(s) they can be standardly as well as situationally used in communication. At the heart of this lies the idea of an existence of "a battery of psychological concepts with the function to provide an explanatory bridge between the appearance of a creature on a certain kind of physical situation and its engaging in certain kinds of behavior" (Grice, 1989 p.284).

The meaning of even, for example a frown underlies intentionality to the regard that, in order for it to be recognized as standing for something (displeasure), it has to be intended as means of communication and, following from that, it has to be **thought of as being intended** as means of communication by a potential addressee of that frown.

> "[...] in general a deliberate frown may have the same effect (as regards inducing belief in my displeasure) as a spontaneous frown, it can be expected to have the same effect only provided the audience takes it as intended to convey displeasure."
>
> [Grice, 1957 p.383]

The consequence here is that not only has the sign to be intended as means of communication; the intended effect has to be recognized as a **reason** to use that sign in that way – unlike a cough that is caused by (and in that way naturally *means*) a cold. As Bach, 2005 (p.19) puts it: "Communicative success requires uttering a sentence which, given the mutually salient information that comprises the extralinguistic cognitive context of utterance, makes the speaker's communicative intention evident and enables his audience to recognize it."

Grice, 1975's basis for what Bach describes above is, in my eyes, reflected in how he characterizes his analyzed version of an intention toward some form of UPTAKE: "in meaning$_{NN}$ a hearer is intended to recognize himself as intended to be the subject of a particular form of acceptance, and to take on such an acceptance for that reason" (Grice, 1989 p.352).

Dynel uses more a more explicitly worded description of how she interprets Grice's concepts in terms of successful communication: "communicative success consists in the hearer's recovery of the speaker's intentions, which need not occur at the level of the recipient's awareness." (Dynel, 2008 p.163) A similar characterization is made by Recanati, 1986: "To communicate, in this framework, is to make manifest to the audience one's communicative intention, and communication succeeds when the hearer recognizes the speaker's communicative intention." (Recanati, 1986 p.237)

When it comes to success in terms of SPEECH ACTS, Searle, differs from Grice in specifying success in communicating as independent

of meaningful utterances: "Yes, the speech act is defective if I intend to produce it without intending to produce understanding, and if no understanding takes place. All the same, I did mean what I said: The notion of speaker meaning is not coextensive with the notion of intended successful speech act. One can still have a meaningful utterance even though it is not intended to be a successful act of communication and is in fact not successful." (Searle, 2007 p.14)

So, according to Searle, Grice's explanation of meaning in terms of (intentional) communication is flawed because there are intentionally produced utterances that are not meant to communicate their (conventional or any) meaning (e.g. saying *il pleut* for speech practice) and you can also intentionally say something to someone and mean exactly what the sentence means but have no intention to communicate that meaning (e.g. if you are cursing someone in a language you know the person does not understand). Grice's concept of understanding in terms of intention-recognition, though, remains untouched by his objections:

> "Here is where the truth in Grice's account is manifest: if the speaker intends to communicate his representation to the hearer, the hearer will understand the utterance only if he recognizes the intention to represent, and further recognizes that he is intended to recognize it."
>
> [Searle, 2007 p.16]

The second characteristic I identify for success in communication is cooperation: that the CP is overall upheld and the interpreter does not opt out of the exchange. Cooperative as well as UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS are both at first cooperative toward the common immediate aim described by Grice, 1975. They show that they are not opting out by responding or reacting coherently to the speaker's previous utterance – what Grice, 1975 describes as "Our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did" and that the remarks are "dovetailed, mutually dependent" as in his description of "features that jointly distinguish cooperative transactions" (Grice, 1975 p.45 & 48). In what qualifies as a successful exchange, no matter how devious interpreters are and how mischievous their response might be they do still, overall, observe the CP and stay cooperative toward the common immediate aim. Even in cases of UIM they generally uphold a form of cooperation via adhering to the conversational aim(s) of a counterpart speaker in another possible world that is licensed by another possible interpretation of what the original speaker literally said.

See (1), for example:

(1) Mr. Bugliosi: Wipe that smile off your face.
Defendant Manson: Physically?

[People V, 1970]

The interpreter (Manson) can reasonably be expected to have understood the speaker's (Bugliosi's) intended meaning of the metaphorically used expression in the speaker's utterance and also the common immediate aim of this short exchange that is the giving and receiving of an order. Manson is clearly following a different ultimate aim than Bugliosi, that is not to obey to what was clearly an order but to ask a sarcastic and a little bit cheeky question in order to retain the appealing or charming impression he thinks to have on the jury. Maybe he simultaneously tries to infuriate Bugliosi so that he embarrasses himself, further helping Manson's ultimate aim. What is important here, from the CP-perspective, is that Manson upholds overall cooperation by asking a coherent follow-up question based on the other possible meaning intended by a counterpart speaker, which is a live possibility licensed by the literal meaning of Bugliosi's own utterance. Moreover, in his response he **himself**, again, adheres to the CP by expecting Bugliosi and a possible audience to work out, from his one-word-question, that he interpreted the utterance in a literal way and that he implicates by virtue of asking this question something along the lines of: *I refuse to obey the order I clearly understood you to have given.*

Third, whatever might be the individual ultimate aim(s) of the participants in a conversation, for a back-and-forth exchange to be overall *successful*, I think that all intended interpretations of the given utterance have to be, at least, presented for acceptance as update of the COMMON GROUND of this part of a conversation. This is why the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS' responses in most of my examples either explicitly or implicitly aim at introducing their other interpretation as a COMMON GROUND update. In cases of, for example jokes, that have no responding interpreter (but rather *silent readers or hearers*), it can be said that the communication fails initially if the joke – and therefore the intended as well as another possible interpretation – is not successfully recognized. Therefore, it has to be COMMON GROUND from reading or hearing a joke what the interpretations are in order for it to be identified as a joke and for this exchange to be successful.

> "Even the liar, if he really intends to communicate, has to believe that the information needed to interpret his lies will really be common ground."

[Stalnaker, 2002 p.716]

Following what is said in Stalnaker, 2002 and Stalnaker, 2014 below, I would like to put forward the idea that, in the end, for an exchange to be overall successful all interpretations used during the exchange have to at least be presented to be accepted to the COMMON GROUND to all participants.

> "[...] a conversation is presupposed to be a cooperative enterprise, and successful communication will depend on agreement about what the common ground is."
>
> [Stalnaker, 2014 p.47]

This is also reflected in the contrast between exchanges like, for instance, the political debates presented above and examples like in (1): in situations like debates and arguments it can happen that people are basically exchanging monologues which are uttered largely disconnected from the content of each other's remarks. Between those interlocutors, the intended meaning of their individual utterances is not always introduced to be accepted to the COMMON GROUND between them. This pattern in unsuccessful communication can also happen in heated arguments at the point that both sides just want to get their opinion out without even listening to what the other person is saying. Contrary to that, in (1), with his response, Manson intends to introduce his literal interpretation of Bugliosi's utterance to the COMMON GROUND.

8.2 CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

The most important take-away from the discussion of UIM examples throughout this thesis is that communication simply cannot be named successful without intention-recognition. It is only possible for UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS to exploit the literal basis of *what is said* to their advantage and simultaneously uphold cooperation because they **first** successfully arrived at the speaker's intended meaning. It is this necessary basis that makes such examples instances of successful communication with respect to how Grice's ideas are used here. UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS exhibit a thorough understanding of the communicative situation they are in as well as the conventions that apply; but also where the limits are. Based on this knowledge, they are able to exploit these limits as far as possible without crossing the line into behaving clearly uncooperatively.

Specifically, in order not to be assumed to opt out or to have misunderstood what the speaker intended to convey, UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS have to know exactly where the boundaries are of what could reasonably also be interpreted from the given utterance. The BACKGROUND of knowledge on how our world works, taken together with what still, rationally, counts as a conventional meaning of the

utterance and what can reliably be presumed to go beyond this threshold. When an interpretation is accessible via what is reasonable to be understood from the literal meaning of a given utterance it, in my view, also falls under the rationality that underlies Grice, 1975's understanding of cooperation. Recognizing and utilizing an interpretation that is not the speaker's intended meaning but also something reasonably possible given the literal words that have been uttered is, thus, not particularly nice or helpful but, in the technical sense, still rational and cooperative. As Grice said: "To cheat someone in a business deal is neither unreasonable nor irrational; it is merely somewhat repulsive." (Grice, 2008 p.23) If understood this way, Grice, 1975's theory is perfectly well equipped to be used as a basis for analyzing examples like UIM even though they do not fall under an intuitive folk understanding of cooperative communication. The key factors are an understanding of cooperation in terms of rationality instead of 'helpfulness' as well as the distinction of the common immediate aim from the ultimate aims of the participants in a conversation. By virtue of making their interpretation explicit in their response, UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS not only keep the communication going – instead of opting out – they also continue assuming the CP by expecting their interlocutor to infer implicated content from their response. The UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER's response is a means of making their alternative interpretation explicit and introducing it as something to be added to the COMMON GROUND of the conversation.

The parallels that can be drawn here to cognitive linguistics accounts involving HYPER-UNDERSTANDING and PARALLELISM (as briefly discussed in chapter 7.3) are one of a variety of starting points to expand on the research presented in this thesis. Examples of UIM provide a rich field of opportunities to explore connections to other, similar phenomena related theoretical approaches or points of impact for other accounts.

Similarities in intuitions when it comes to the interpreter's strategies that are noticeable between humor theoretical accounts like Veale, Feyaerts, and Brône, 2006 and Brône, 2008 could be a starting point to delve deeper into the differences and similarities between the respective examples and where, on that particular basis, a common ground could be found between cognitive analyses and Grice, 1975's ideas.

The successful communication characteristics I introduced in chapter 8 based on my analysis of UIM examples are, thus far, just hypothetical assumptions. It would be a fruitful endeavor to follow-up these claims with more concrete research as to how robust these characteristics are and if there are counter-examples to be found.

A field that is generally subject to the impact of UIM examples is the realm of legal language interpretation. The unique power that legislation has over the people subjected to it is cause for a variety of debates on how and by whom legislature is best interpreted to remain

as fair and objective as possible. When it comes to judges in court interpreting and then using legislature, a textualist approach is often contrasted with an intentionalist one:

"intentionalists are interested in the meaning a statute actually had to its authors, while textualists are interested in the meaning it would have to a competent reader" (Gold, 2006 p.33). Existing indifference about whose intentions (if any) should be attributed to a given statute or law (investigated, among others, by Matczak, 2017) can, as some examples of UIM show, result in exploitation of literal legislature formulations that can seldom be legally contested. Taking a look at the impact UIM examples could possibly have on legislature formulation but also on its execution by legal professionals presents a possible valuable addition to the research presented in this thesis.

As described in chapter 3.3.1, the availability of studies looking at levels of activation of ambiguous or polysemous meanings is to an overwhelming extent focused on how **hearers** process meanings upon confronted with different utterances. The example set collected for this thesis might also provide a database for more studies of ambiguous meaning activation from the **speaker's** perspective on their own utterances.

From the philosophical point of view, the brief discussion of deniability in connection with UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS in chapter 3.3.2.1 could be expanded on in light of the developing research in this area (e.g. Camp, 2018; Dinges and Zakkou, 2023; Peet, 2024). For example, questions as to whether or not UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETERS do actually **have** the deniability they think they do but also if there are degrees of plausibility or within the kind of deniability that might be at play and the nature of relation in terms of deniability with respect to the original speaker might be promising points of departure for further research in this area.

A

APPENDIX

This appendix contains the data set on which the approach in this thesis is based. It contains the complete list of examples, sorted according to the source of UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER'S MEANING (UIM) on which the UNCOOPERATIVE INTERPRETER bases their respective response. Each category first gives those examples that appear in the body of text of the thesis. It then continues with additional examples that influenced the development of thoughts, theories and characteristics of UIM presented above but did not make it into the text. As mentioned in chapter 4, above, the categories given here are not beyond any doubts. Their boundaries can be fuzzy, examples might be possible to be sorted into two or more categories or hard to definitely put into one of these categories at all. This appendix is supposed to give an overview of the example set used for describing the phenomenon discussed in this thesis as well as of the rough amount of examples that could be found for each category. For each example, there is also a short description of what, according to my assessment, constitutes the speaker's intended meaning and the UIM as well as the common immediate aim and the speaker's and interpreter's ultimate aims. Please note that neither the complete example set, nor the individual amounts listed per category are statistically representative. The examples were manually collected from different sources, manually sorted into categories and equipped with a description of meanings and aims. This set does not provide a representative intersection of all examples that could possibly be identified and human error as well as bias can, objectively, not be excluded.

A.1 LIST OF EXAMPLES

A.1.1 *Ambiguity-based*

(1) Reporter: [. . .] könnten Sie konkretisieren, welche Sicherheitsgarantien das sind?
('[. . .] could you specify which security guarantees those are?')

Olaf Scholz: Ja, könnte ich. [pause] Das war's.
('Yes, I could. [pause] That's it')

[Pressekonferenz G7-Gipfel, 2022 (*my translation*)]
(see also chpt. 1; 2; 3)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: provide a list of security guarantees!
UIM: Do you have the ability to provide a list of security guarantees?
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the content of the G7 summit meeting
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - get a list
I - not give any concrete security guarantees

(2) *Beteiligungsnachweis-e* *werden* *nicht benotet* *und*
Certificates.of.participation-PL AUX.PASS not graded and
sind *nicht an Bestehensgrenze-n* *geknüpft.*
be.PL not on passing.requirement-PL linked.
('Certificates of participation are not graded and are not linked to passing requirements')

[HHU, 2014 (*my translation*)]
(see also chpt. 2.1.1.1)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: certificates of participation [...] are not linked to **specific** requirements
UIM: certificates of participation do not require anything
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about rules and regulations
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - provide freedom to set requirements
I - get a cert. of participation without any work

(3) Senator Brown: President Trump said that he's working with you on a replacement plan for the ACA which is nearly finished and will be revealed after your confirmation, is that true?
Price: It's true that he said that, yes.
(Senate Finance Committee hearing, January 24, 2017)

[Snider, 2017]
(see also chpt. 4.1.4.2)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: is the content of the President's utterance true?
UIM: Is the occurence of the President's utterance true?
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the President's utterance
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - elicit information about revealing of an ACA plan timeline
I - not commit to any of such information or a timeline

(4) *Im Bereich Borsigplatz in Dortmund soll*
In.DAT area.SG Borsig.square in Dortmund said.to.be/shall
Kokain konsumiert werden.
cocaine consumed AUX.PASS
('In the area of Dortmund's Borsig square cocaine is said to be/is supposed to be consumed')

Ist das ein Befehl
Be.3SG that a order.SG

('Is this an order?')

[Eimermacher, 2022 (*my translation*)]
(see also chpt. 4.1.2)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: cocaine is said to be consumed
UIM: cocaine is supposed to be consumed!
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about processes around Dortmund's Borsig square
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - write a short and catchy headline
I - make a joke

(5) We will sell gasoline to anyone in a glass container

[O'Boyle, 2000 p.508]
(see also chpt. 2.1.2)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: gasoline will be sold to anyone, contained in a glass container
UIM: gasoline will be sold to anyone who is in a glass container
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the selling conditions of gasoline
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - provide customer information
I - make a joke

(6) scripted pun
Judge: why should you be released early?
Defendant: it's bec...
Judge: yes?
Defendant: I think I have...
Judge: Go on
Defendant: Can I please finish my sentence?
Judge: Sure! Parole denied.

[LuigiExplains, 2022]
(see also chpt. 4.1.1.1)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: can I speak on without getting interrupted?
UIM: Can I do the full time I was ordered to stay in prison?
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the defendent's early release request
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - get released early
I - make a joke / not grant early release

(7) Interviewer: ... viermal den Deutschen Fernsehpreis verlore-ÄH gewonnen.
('... four-time lose-EH winner of the German TV award')

Hill: verloren? Ja, wo isser denn hin?
('lost? So, where did it go?')

[Sat1, 2023 (*my translation*)]
(see also chpt. 2.1.4)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: Hill did not get the prize four times
UIM: Hill lost track of the location of the trophy for the prize
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about Hill's accomplishments
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - give an introduction of Hill to the audience
I - make a joke / brush over interviewer's slip of tongue

(8) *Die CDU hat exakt so viel Humor wie*
The CDU have.3SG exactly so much humor.NOM.SG as
gut-e politisch-e Idee-n
good(PL)-NOM/ACC political(PL)-NOM/ACC idea-PL
('the CDU [German Christian Democratic Party] has exactly as much humor as good political ideas')

Wieviel Humor hat denn eine gut-e
How.much humor have.3SG then a good(SG)-NOM
politisch-e Idee?
political(SG)-NOM idea(sg)

('how much humor does a good political idea have?')

[Outfluencer [@Rechtsamwald1], 2023(*my translation*)]
(see also chpt. 2.1.2)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: CDU neither has any humor nor good political ideas
UIM: CDU's sense of humor is comparable to that of a good political idea
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about political party's ideas
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - make a sarcastic, derogatory remark about CDU
I - make a joke

(9) Dog park bench sign inscription:
In loving memory of Nicole Campbell – Who never saw a dog and didn't smile.
Comment: If only she'd seen a dog. It might've given her reason to smile.

[Power [@JulianPowerVO], 2023]
(see also chpt. 4.1.1.2)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: Campbell smiled every time she saw a dog
UIM: Campbell did not have any reason to smile because she never saw a dog
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: characterize Nicole Campbell
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - provide a loving anecdote about Campbell
I - make a joke

(10) The first genome of a single human
Comment: So I guess all attempts to map the human genome so far were on married people?

[Roberts [@garicgymro], 2023]
(see also chpt. 2.1.2)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: the first genome of one human individual
UIM: the first genome of a human who is not in a committed relationship
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange news about genomes
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - provide an informative and short headline
I - make a joke

(11) Member of Parliament: Mr. Churchill, must you fall asleep while I'm speaking?
Churchill: No, it's purely voluntarily.

[boredpanda, 2019]
(see also chpt. 2.1.4)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: apologize for falling asleep while I'm speaking!
UIM: is there any (physical) constraint that gives you no other opportunity than to fall asleep while I'm speaking?
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about falling asleep
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - order C to apologize for being rude
I - make a joke/do not follow the order to apologize

(12) Attorney: Is your appearance here this morning pursuant to a deposition notice which I sent to your attorney?
Witness: No, this is how I dress when I go to work.

[justia.com, 2022]
(see also chpt. 4.1.1.1)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: are you present here because I sent a notice to your attorney?
UIM: did you dress the way you do because I sent a notice to your attorney?
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information in a cross-examination
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - elicit information about the reason of the witness' presence
I - make a joke

(13) Attorney: ALL your responses MUST be oral, OK? What school did you go to?
Witness: Oral

[Boren, 2016]
(see also chpt. 4.1.1.1)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: all your responses must be formulated by speaking out loud
UIM: all responses must be the word "oral"
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information in a cross-examination
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - elicit an oral response containing information about the witness' school
I - make a joke / be compliant with the attorney's orders

(14) sign in York Museum Gardens:
Please do not cycle in the Gardens. You may injure a young child or elderly person.
Comment: You can't cycle but you can injure people? Bit f**ed up...

[James Keegans [@Jimjam91], 2018]
(see also chpt. 2.1.3)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: it is prohibited to cycle in the Gardens due to the danger of injuring others
UIM: it is prohibited to cycle in the Gardens but not to injure others
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the Garden's rules
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - prevent people in the Gardens from getting injured
I - make a joke/flag the formulation

(15) Headline:
A toddler has shot a person every week in the US for two years straight.
Comment: Why hasn't anyone stopped him?

[@bazlyons, 2022]
(see also chpt. 4.1.1.3)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: different toddlers, on average, each shot a different person every week over a course of two years
UIM: one single toddler shot a several people each week over a course of two years
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about current events
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - write a crisp, informative headline
I - make a joke/flag the formulation

(16) Therapist: Your wife says you never buy her flowers. Is that true
Husband: To be honest, I never knew she sold flowers.

[WholesomeMemes [@WholesomeMeme], 2023]
(see also chpt. 2.1.2)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: is it true that you never buy flowers for your wife?
UIM: is it true that you never buy your wive's flowers
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information interpersonal behavior
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - elicit information about the truth of the wive's statement
I - don't comply with the request for validation of the statement

(17) sign on door: This door is alarmed.
Sticky note on sign: what startled it?

[No Context Brits [@NoContextBrits], 2023c]
(see also chpt. 2.1.2)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: the door is equipped with an alarm system
UIM: the door has been startled
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the security system in place at that door
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - inform people about the alarm system on that door
I - make a joke

(18) User: Bosetti hetzt den Frieden herbei.
('Bosetti is ‚baiting over' the peace [getting peace via baiting]')

Bosetti: Naja ich will ihn ja nicht hetzen aber du wirst mir darin zustimmen, dass er sich ruhig mal ein bisschen beeilen könnte.
('Well, I don't want to rush [the peace] but you'll be with me when I say that it'd be welcome to hurry up a little bit.')

[Bosetti, 2024 (*my translation*)]
(see also chpt. 3.3.4)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: Bosetti is trying to 'bait over' peace
UIM: Bosetti is rushing peace
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about Bosetti's satiric segment on peace
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - insult Bosetti and her alledged political stance
I - make a joke / weaken the insult and its effect

(19) Newspaper Headline: John Cena surprises 7-year-old boy with cancer on his birthday.
Comment: What a terrible gift

[@sigourneybeaver, 2020]
(see also chpt. 4.1.1.2)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: John Cena visited a boy with cancer on his birthday as a surprise
UIM: John Cena gifted cancer to a boy for his birthday
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange news about celebrity John Cena
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - write an informative headline about Cena's charity work
I - make a joke / flag the formulation

(20) Conversation following a picture of a table full of food:
Reichlich ist es in der Tat. Und vor allem: der Tisch ist vollständig vegan.
('It's indeed plenty. And most importantly: this table is entirely vegan')

Reply: Hatte ich bei Holz und Metall durchaus angenommen.
('I did, in fact, expect that from wood and metal')

[personal conversation – Feb. 2024 (*my translation*)]
(see also chpt. 4.1.3)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: all food presented on the table is vegan
UIM: the table itself is vegan
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about a picture of a table full of food
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - inform people about all the food being vegan
I - make a joke / flag the formulation

(21) Patient: My calf is in pain
Doctor: Sorry, I'm a doctor, not a veterinarian.

[punhubonline, 2023]
(see also chpt. 4.1.1.1)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: my lower leg is in pain
UIM: my baby cow is in pain
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the patient's ailments
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - get the doctor to treat his lower leg
I - make a joke / get out of treating this patient

(22) Rumack: You'd better tell the Captain we've got to land as soon as we can. This woman has to be gotten to a hospital.
Elaine Dickinson: A hospital? What is it?
Rumack: It's a big building with patients, but that's not important right now.

[Zucker, Jim, and Jerry, 1980]
(see also chpt. 4.1.4.2)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: what is the medical reason this woman has to be gotten to a hospital?
UIM: what is a hospital
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the current situation
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - elicit information about the patient's status
I - make a joke

(23) Konstantin von Notz (German green party): . . . wir haben auch was auf die Schiene gestellt. . .
('. . . we did also put quite a lot on track. . . ')

Fabian Köster (ZDF Heute Show): naja, auf die Schiene jetzt auch nicht so richtig, wenn man sich die Bahn mal anschaut.
('Well, not really ON TRACK, if you take a look at the state of the German railroad system. . . ')

[HeuteShow, 2024 (*my translation*)]
(see also chpt. 2.1.3)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: we successfully initiated a lot of projects
UIM: we took care of projects regarding railroad tracks
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about political accomplishments
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - get validation for the party's good work
I - make a joke / flag the formulation

(24) In a morning show interview, US reality TV star Lauren Conrad drew questions out of a mystery sack and was asked about her favorite position. Her answer: CEO

[Toofab, 2021]
(see also chpt. 4.1.1.1)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: favorite body configuration during intercourse
UIM: favorite professional rank
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: casually exchange information about personal preferences
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - elicit information about Conrad's favorite body configuration during intercourse
I - not give an answer revealing her favorite body configuration during intercourse

(25) FBI Agent: I'm Agent Oscar Ruiz with the FBI. I'd like to ask you a few questions about a Dwight Manfredi.
Bode: *Any* Dwight Manfredi, or did you have a particular one in mind?

[Ferland, 2023]
(see also chpt. 4.1.1.4)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: I'd like to ask questions about the specific individual that is called Dwight Manfredi
UIM: I'd like to ask questions about any (unspecific) person that happens to be called Dwight Manfredi
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about Dwight Manfredi
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - elicit information about Dwight Manfredi and Bode's relationship with him
I - make a joke / try to stall the conversation to think of an answer

(26) xxxlutz_de: Wir halten uns ab jetzt lieber raus
('We'd rather stay out of this from now on')

Deutsche Bahn: Während der Fahrt bitte nichts raushalten. Danke.
('Please refrain from holding anything outside during the ride. Thank you.')

[Bahn, 2025 (*my translation*)]
(see also chpt. 3.3.1)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: we'd rather stay out of this
UIM: we'd rather hold ourselves outside the train
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange joking remarks about involvement in a discussion
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - not continue contributing utterances to the conversation
I - make a joke

(27) UK weather: Met Office issues 13-hour yellow snow warning
Comment: Don't eat it.

[No Context Brits [@NoContextBrits], 2023a]
(see also chpt. 4.1.1.2)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING met office issues a 13-hour snow warning that is characterized by the category "yellow"
UIM: met office issues a 13-hour warning about yellow-colored snow
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the weather
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - issue warning about current weather
I - make a joke / flag the formulation

(28) When filling out a job application, I saw they had a section for "previous life experience", so I wrote down that I was a Pharaoh in 2300 B.C.

[@thirtysomethingprobs, 2023]
(see also chpt. 4.1.1.2)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: the (professional) experience you'd had so far during the course of your life
UIM: the (spiritual) experience you had about a previous life
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about life experience
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - request a list of previous held professional positions to determine the candidate's suitability for the job
I - make a joke / not seriously attempting to apply for the job

(29) Vampire: Can I come in?
Woman: I don't know, *can* you?
cursing quietly, the vampire backed away, foiled yet again by the english teacher's pedantry

[*Classical Damn auf Instagram* 2023]
(see also chpt. 4.1.4.4)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: am I allowed to come in?
UIM: am I physically able to enter?
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: discuss permission to enter the room
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - get the woman to allow the Vampire to enter
I - make a joke / refuse entrance to the vampire

(30) *Werde unser Kolleg-e! Wir suchen 70*
Become our(M) colleague(M)-SG! We search 70
Journalist-en und Digitalexpert-en.
journalist(M)-PL and digital.expert(M)-PL
('Become our colleague (m)! We are looking for 70 journalists (m) and digital experts (m).')

Ihr sucht 70 Männer??
you.2PL search 70 man.PL

('You are looking for 70 men??')

[Hanisch, 2018 (*my translation*)]
(see also chpt. 2.1.3)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: become our colleague (gen. masc.)
UIM: become our exclusively male colleague
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about a job
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - receive applications from people of all genders because they are all included in the generic masculine
I - flag the formulation / call out male-bias of the generic masculine

(31) Mensch: Der Nachbar erzählte mir, Du verfolgst Leute auf dem Fahrrad ...
(Human: 'The neighbor tells me you chase people on a bike')

Hund: Der lügt! Ich habe gar kein Fahrrad!
(Dog: 'He's lying! I don't even have a bike!')

[Debeste, 2020 (*my translation*)]
(see also chpt. 4.1.1.2)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: you chase people who ride bikes
UIM: you chase people while riding a bike
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information regarding the truth of the neighbors statement

ULTIMATE AIMS: S - tell the dog off for chasing people who ride bikes
I - make a joke / avoid being blamed for chasing people

(32) Mae: Can I ask what you're working on?
Sabine: Of course you can *ask*. But I don't have to tell you anything.

[Eggers, 2014 p.57]
(see also chpt. 2.2.3)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: tell me what you are working on!
UIM: am I allowed/able to ask what you are working on?
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information on Sabine's work
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - get information about the nature or content of Sabine's work
I - not give any information regarding her work

(33) Customer: Does your dog bite?
Hotel doorman: No.
Customer proceeds trying to pet the dog who immediately bites him
Customer: I thought you said your dog didn't bite?
Hotel doorman: This is not my dog.

[PinkPantherClips, 2011]
(see also chpt. 4.1.1.4)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: does this dog over there (I assume is yours) bite?
UIM: does your dog (that is not the one in the room) bite?
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about doorman's dog
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - get information that it is safe to pet the dog in the room
I - flag the question's formulation / get the customer to be bitten

(34) Interviewer: What do you think of Western civilization?
Gandhi: I think it would be a good idea.

[boredpanda, 2019]
(see also chpt. 2.1.3)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: what do you think about the concept known as "Western Civilization"?
UIM: what do you think about civilizing the West?
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about Gandhi's socio-political opinions
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - elicit information about Gandhi's opinion on Western civilization
I - make a critical remark about the status of the West and its civilized behavior

ADDITIONAL AMBIGUITY-BASED EXAMPLES:

(35) Patient: I broke my arm in three places.
Doctor: well, don't go to those places.

[@punhubonline, 2021]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: the bone in my arm is broken in three places
UIM: I had my arm broken while being at three different locations
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the patient's health status
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - get treatment for the broken arm
I - make a joke / give advice

(36) seller: This sofa will seat 5 people without any problems.
customer: I don't think I know 5 people without any problems.

[punhubonline, 2024]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: this sofa has space for 5 people to sit on it
UIM: this sofa only seats people that do not have problems
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information the sofa
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - advertise the sofa's space and sell it
I - make a joke / raise issues about the sofa's qualities

(37) Headline:
Alaskan-developed satellite technology helps fire managers in COVID-19 era.
Vadim Temkin: Why are you firing poor managers?

[Waigl, 2020]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: satellite technology helps the people who manage the fires
UIM: satellite technology helps putting managers out of their jobs
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange news about satellite technology
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - provide information about alaskan-developed satellite technology
I - make a joke / flag the formulation

(38) Man in Restaurant: I'll have two lamb chops, and make them lean, please. Waiter: To which side, sir?

[Clark, 1968 p. 191)]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: please fry my lamb chops in a way that the meat is lean
UIM: please make the lamb chops pieces lean to a side
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the food served
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - instruct the waiter as to the desired meat consistency
I - make a joke

(39) A lady went into a clothing store and asked,
"May I try on that dress in the window?"
"Well," replied the sales clerk doubtfully, "don't you think it would be better to use the dressing room?"

[Clark, 1968 p. 239)]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: May I try on the dress that can be referred to as 'the dress in the window'?
UIM: May I try on the dress and do so in the window?
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about trying on clothes
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - inquire about the dress that is in the window
I - flag the formulation / prevent humiliation

(40) *Der Chef schreibt in seiner Mail, dass allen Berater-n*
The boss write in his email that all consultant(M)-PL
und Mitarbeiter-n in Vertrieb etc. der Corona-Bonus
and employee(M)-PL in sales etc. the Covid.bonus
ausgezahlt wird und naja, ich geh dann wohl leer aus.
pay.PTCP will and well I go then surely empty out.
('The boss writes in his e-mail that all consultants (m) and employees (m) in sales etc. will get paid their Covid-bonus and, well, I guess that leaves me empty-handed.')

[@Dreamory, 2020]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: all employees in sales etc., no matter their gender, will get paid their Covid-bonus.
UIM: Only male employees will get paid their Covid-bonus
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the payment process of Covid-bonuses
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - include all employees no matter the gender in Covid-bonus payments
I - flag the formulation

(41) *Viele Bewohner des ländlichen Raum-s sag-en,*
Many resident(M.PL) of rural(GEN.SG) area-GEN.SG say-PL,
sie seien auf das Auto angewiesen.
they be on the car dependent
('Many residents (m) of rural areas say they are dependent on their car.')

Ich wusste nicht, dass nur Männer in ländlichen Region-en
I know.PST not that only man.PL in rural(PL) area-PL
wohnen ...
live ...

(´I didn't know that there were only men living in rural areas')

[@MarenBock, 2022 (*my translation*)]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: all residents of rural areas, no matter their gender, say they're dependent on their car
UIM: only male residents live in rural areas and say they're dependent on their car
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange news about car-use of residents in rural areas
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - provide information about car-use of residents in rural areas
I - flag the formulation

(42) Attorney: What gear were you in at the moment of the impact?
Witness: Gucci sweats and Reeboks.

[Sevilla, 1993]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: what was the configuration of your car's gearbox at the moment of the impact?
UIM: which clothes were you wearing at the moment of the impact?
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the details and circumstances relating to the accident
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - elicit information about the car's configuration and the driver's knowledge about the accident
I - make a joke / not give an informative answer

(43) Headline:
Scientists discover emperor penguin colony in Antarctica using satellite images
Comment: Yesterday it was cows using tools, today it's penguins using satellite imagery

[Roberts, 2026]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: scientists used satellite imagery to find penguins
UIM: scientists found penguins that were using satellite imagery
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about emperor penguins in antarctica
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - inform about the use of satellite imagery
I - make a joke

(44) Headline:
"SUV-Fahrer entfernt sich nach Kollision mit Lastenrad vom Unfallort"
('SUV-driver leaves accident site after collision with cargo bike')

Comment: Lastenräder sind vermutlich bei vielen SUV-Fahrern eher unbeliebt - als Fluchtfahrzeuge taugen sie dann aber wohl doch...
('Cargo-bikes are presumably rather unpopular among SUV-drivers - they seem to make suitable get-away vehicles, though')

[Heekeren, 2026 (*my translation*)]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: collision with a cargo-bike
UIM: leaving with a cargo-bike
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about current events
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - inform about collision of SUV and cargo-bike
I - make a joke / flag the formulation

A.1.2 *Polysemy-based*

(45) Edith: ... weil ich ja gar nicht trinke ...
('... since I don't drink at all...')

John: Du trinkst **gar nicht**? Wie bekommst du denn dann genug Flüssigkeit?
('You don't drink **at all**? Then how are you getting enough hydration?')

[personal conversation – 16.10.2022 (*my translation)*]
(see also chpt. 4.1.3)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: I don't drink any alcohol
UIM: I don't consume any liquids
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about liquids intake
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - inform interlocutors about not drinking alcohol
I - make a joke

(46) Street Sign: FINE FOR PARKING
Driver: I thought it was fine to park here.

[nnll33, 2024] (see also chpt. 3.3.1)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: there will be a payment-based punishment for parking in this spot
UIM: this spot is ok to park in
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about parking rules
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - prevent people from parking in this spot
I - make a joke / get out of paying a fine

(47) Daniel Craig answers the internet's burning James Bond questions.
Comment: - what temperature does James Bond ignite at
- how to extinguish James Bond
- what colour flame does James Bond produce
- can you scrape burnt James Bond off into the sink and still eat him

[Howitt [@gshowitt], 2021]
(see also chpt. 4.1.3)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: Daniel Craig answers the internet's most frequently asked questions about James Bond
UIM: Daniel Craig answers the internet's questions related to setting James Bond on fire
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about James Bond
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - get readers to access the article
I - make a joke

(48) sign: Please keep dogs away from landscaping.
comment: A dog should be able to pursue whatever career it wants.

[utterJoint, n.d.]
(see also chpt. 4.1.3)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: please prevent dogs from accessing lawns and flower beds
UIM: please prevent dogs from pursuing a career in landscaping
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about rules concerning dogs on the premises
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - avoid any trouble with dog's leavings
I - make a joke

(49) *Context: During a recital, an opera singer foundered through a performance before the 30th President of the U.S. Calvin Coolidge.*
Someone asked him what he thought of the singer's execution.
Coolidge: I'm all for it.

[Lamb, 2022]
(see also chpt. 4.1.3)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: give me your opinion on how the singer performed
UIM: give an opinion on whether or not the singer should be executed
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the singer
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - elicit an opinion about how the singer performed
I - make a joke / avoid uttering a negative opinion

(50) Lori Garver: . . . we need to understand asteroids better.
Neil deGrasse Tyson: Just to add to Lori's point: to understand an asteroid is not a psychological session 'tell me about you, asteroid' – it is physically.

[*Cosmic Queries – NASA v. Billionaires with Lori Garver* 2022]
(see also chpt. 3.3.3)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: we need to better explore the physical characteristics of asteroids
UIM: we need to better explore the emotional state of asteroids
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about asteroids
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - argue for exploration of asteroid characteristics
I - make a joke / add a clarifying remark

(51) Q: [. . .] and who on the staff did not want people to leave the Capitol?
Cipollone: On the staff?
Q: In the White House.
Cipollone: I don't . . . I can't think of anybody, you know, on that day, who didn't want people to get out of the Capitol [. . .]
Q: What about the president?
Cipollone: She [*the questioner*] said the staff. So I answered.

[GovInfo, 2022]
(see also chpt. 2.1.1)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: of all people present in the white house
UIM: of everyone officially declared 'staff' and not above
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about who did not want people to leave the Capitol
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - elicit a clear statment as to whether or not the President and his staff wanted people to leave the Capitol
I - not give a clear statement

ADDITIONAL POLYSEMY-BASED EXAMPLES:

(52) Kunde gibt mit einen 'Coupon' für ein homöopathisches Mittelchen
('Customer hands me a 'coupon' for a homeopathic remedy')
Apotheker: 35€ bitte.
('Pharmacist: 35€ please.')
Kunde: Häh? Ich dachte, das wäre umsonst?
('Customer: Huh? I thought this was free of charge / for nothing')
Apotheker: Das ist auch umsonst, aber eben nicht kostenlos!
('Pharmacist: It is for nothing! Just not free of charge.')

[DerApotheker [@ApothekerDer], 2025 (*my translation*)]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: the homeopathic remedy is free of charge
UIM: the homeopathic remedy is for nothing (without effect)
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the homeopathic remedy
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - get the remedy for free
I - give information about the ineffectiveness of this remedy / flag the formulation

(53) Trump: I want to see Biden in prison
Biden: why does Trump think I would visit him in prison?

[@funder, 2023]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: I want Biden to go to prison
UIM: I want Biden to visit me in prison
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about imprisonment
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - demand Biden to be incarcerated
I - make a joke / express the opinion that Trump should be in prison

(54) Me [first day as a detective]: was the robber armed?
Victim: No.
Me: ∗writing *probably a snake* in my notepad∗ Thank you.

[@squeaky.clean.humor, 2025]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: the robber did not carry any firearms
UIM: the robber did not have any arms
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the robber
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - answer the question truthfully
I - make a joke

(55) Professor nimmt Mikrofon.
(Professor takes microphone)

Prof: Verstehen Sie mich jetzt?
('Prof: Do you understand me now?')

Studi: Nein aber wir hören Sie jetzt besser.
('Student: No, but we can hear you better now')

[mmd, 2025 (*my translation*)]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: can you hear my voice better now?
UIM: cam you comprehend the content of my utterances better now?
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the classroom situation
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - get feedback as to whether the microphone works
I - make a joke / convey information that the students cannot follow the classes' content

(56) Her: Who's your favourite character in the Muppet Show?
Me: The vampire
Her: He doesn't count
Me: I can assure you that he does

[Andy Ryan [@ItsAndyRyan], 2019]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: he does not factor into this list of favorite characters
UIM: he is not concerned with numbers
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the vampire
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - exclude vampire from list of favorite characters
I - make a joke / strengthen the point as to why the vampire should be included

A.1.3 *Vagueness-based*

(57) *im unmittelbaren Umfeld* (*within direct periphery*) from the German Covid security-act [describing the perimeter for mask mandate around shops]
intended to mean any area surrounding the shops in which the social distancing could not be fulfilled (e.g. parking lot, narrow paths or entrance area)
other possible interpretation: just the small radius in front of the shop due to the formulation *unmittelbar* (*direct*)

[ovg.nrw.de, 2021 (*my translation*)]
(see also chpt. 2.1.1 & 4.1.4.1)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: any area surrounding the shops in which the social distancing could not be fulfilled

UIM: the small radius in front of the shop
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the perimeter of mask-mandates around shops
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - leave room for interpretation such as to have wider mask mandate perimeters if necessary
I - argue against a fine that was issued for not wearing a mask / flag the formulation

(58) Attorney: Your Honor, at this time I would like to swat [opposing counsel] on the head with his client's deposition.
Court: You mean read it?
Attorney: No, Sir. I mean to swat him on the head with it. Pursuant to Rule 32, I may use the deposition "for any purpose" and that's the purpose I want to use it for.
Court: Well, it does say that.
Quiet pause.
Court: There being no objection, you may proceed.
Attorney: Thank you, Judge.
Thereafter, Defendant's attorney swatted plaintiff's attorney on the head with the deposition.

[Black, 2008]
(see also chpt. 2.1.1 & 7.4)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: the deposition's content may be used for any purpose
UIM: the physical copy of the deposition may be used for any purpose
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about Rule 32
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - provide freedom of interpretation for attorneys to use statements from a deposition in any way that serving prosecution
I - make a joke / express discontent with the opposing counsel and/or the content of their client's deposition

(59) I promised my trainer that I'd set a gym schedule I would commit to regularly.
So, now every time there's a lunar eclipse, I work out.

[Someecards.com, 2025]
(see also chpt. 4.1.4.1)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: work out on a time schedule that is effective for physical activity
UIM: work out on any recurring basis
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange info. about work-out schedule
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - get customer to have effective physical exercise
I - avoid physical activity as diligently as possible

A.1.4 *Other sources*

(60) Emily: Of course I could only get ten of these, so I'm two chairs short of a set.
Lorelai *ironically*: You're telling me.

[Girls, 2001]
(see also chpt. 4.1.4.4)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: I am missing two more of the same chairs
UIM: I am crazy
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about recent chair purchases
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - express annoyance about the fact that there were two chairs too little
I - make a joke / convey the opinion that Emily is crazy

(61) Miley Cyrus: LOVED meeting everyone in London today!
Comment: You met everyone in London today? That may be the most impressive thing I've ever heard.

[Bishop [@timbishop4000], 2018]
(see also chpt. 4.1.4.3)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: loved meeting everyone who attended my concert in London today
UIM: loved meeting every person in London today
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about Miley Cyrus in London
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - express delight about people attending her concert in London
I - make a joke

(62) Woman asking: Do men still open car doors?
Answer: How do you think we get inside?

[strawbzzi, 2023]
(see also chpt. 4.1.4.3)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: do men still open car doors for women?
UIM: do men still generally open car doors?
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about opening car doors
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - express annoyance about men not behaving gentlemen-like anymore
I - make a joke / brush off the complaint about men

(63) Lawyer: Have you lived in this town all your life?
Witness: Not yet.

[justia.com, 2022]
(see also chpt. 2.1.1)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: have you lived in this town all your life until now?
UIM: have you lived in this town for the entirety of your life span?
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the witness' residence history
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - elicit information about the witness' living locations
I - make a joke / refuse to give information about their history of living locations

(64) sign: Toilet out of order. Please use floor below.
Comment: I'm not pissing on the floor...

[No Context Brits [@NoContextBrits], 2023b]
(see also chpt. 2.1.2)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: please use the toilets on the floor below
UIM: please use the floor below as a toilet
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about toilets' availability
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - inform about the non-available toilet as well as a possible alternative
I - make a joke

(65) Lawyer: And where was the location of the accident?
Witness: Approximately milepost 499
Lawyer: And where is milepost 499?
Witness: Probably between milepost 498 and 500.

[Boren, 2016]
(see also chpt. 2.1.4)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: where is the milepost's location with respect to distinct surrounding features?
UIM: where is the milepost's location with respect to other milepost?
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the milepost's location
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - elicit information relevant to the accident
I - make a joke / avoid giving a clearer answer

(66) Edith: [...] man kriegt auch nur Zugang zu den Fotos der eigenen Kinder ... und die sind dann auch meistens ziemlich hässlich [...]
('[...] and you just get access to pictures of your own kids and they tend to be pretty ugly, too [...]')

John: du meinst die **Fotos** oder?
('you mean the **pictures**, right?')

[personal conversation – Aug. 2022 (*my translation*)]
(see also chpt. 4.1.4.2)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: children's pictures tend to be ugly
UIM: the children tend to be ugly
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about pictures of children
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - share anecdote about children's school pictures
I - make a joke

(67) *Context: Tick-remedy for dogs - putting butter on the tick to suffocate it so that it falls off.*
Billy Boyd: [...] would it work on my dog?
Dominic Monaghan: ... you'd try and suffocate your dog???

[TheFriendshipOnion, 2021]
(see also chpt. 4.1.4.2)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: would it work to get rid of ticks on my dog?
UIM: would it work to get rid of my dog?
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about a tick-remedy
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - give advice on how to get rid of ticks on dogs
I - make a joke

(68) Headline:
Mind-blowing theory about people who have 'never broken a bone'
Comment: Does it have to be my own bone?

[Doling, 2025]
(see also chpt. 4.1.4.4)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: [...] people who have never had one of their bones broken
UIM: [...] people who have never broken anybody's bone
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about a theory about people who have never broken a bone
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - provide a headline that brings people to open the article
I - make a joke / flag the formulation

(69) Psychiatrist: Do any of your relatives suffer from mental illness?
Patient: No...they all seem to enjoy it!!!

[Liyamaar, 2014]
(see also chpt. 5.3)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: have any of your relatives been diagnosed with a mental illness?
UIM: do your mentally ill relatives suffer?
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about hereditary mental illnesses
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - elicit information about the patient's family's medical history
I - make a joke / give a positive answer

(70) When David came home, Brigitte realized how cold it had become in the house and said *I have got cold feet* and even before being able to continue and say, *l better get some socks on*, he looked at her half laughing half pretending to be concerned and said *And what do you have to worry about today, my dear?*

[Nerlich and Clarke, 2001]
(see also chpt. 4.1.4.4)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: my feet are cold
UIM: I am nervous/worried about something
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about feelings
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - request the heat to be turned on in the house
I - make a joke

(71) Headline:
New York Will Stop Requiring That Food Must Be Ordered With Alcohol.
Comment: City officials realized that the original policy was unfair to kids, who legally couldn't order alcohol

[drcopp, 2021]
(see also chpt. 2.1.2)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: it will no longer be a requirement to also buy food anytime alcohol is ordered
UIM: it will no longer be a requirement to also buy alcohol whenever food is ordered
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange news concerning New York's food service industry
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - provide news about New York's rules concerning food and alcohol
I - make a joke / flag the formulation

(72) Frank: Just to be clear, I take all the money if I can do between three and 400 push-ups?
Wall Street Guy: Er, 600 says, "No way, Gramps!"
Frank: Oh, nice. All right?
proceeds to perform four consecutive push-ups
Frank: Are you not entertained?
Wall Street Guy: Hey! Hey! Whoa! Whoa! You said you were gonna do between three and 400.
Frank: Right, I won the bet.
Wall Street Guy: You did four push-ups, bro.
Frank: Four is between three and 400, right?

[Outlaws, 2024]
(see also chpt. 2.1.4)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: between 300 and 400 push-ups
UIM: between three push-ups and 400 push-ups
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the bet
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - win the bet by setting impossible requirements
I - win the bet / flag the formulation

(73) Mr. Bugliosi: Wipe that smile off your face.
Defendant Manson: Physically?

[People V, 1970]
(see also chpt. 8.1)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: stop smiling
UIM: wipe that facial expression away like a stain
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange behavioral instructions
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - order the defendant to stop smiling
I - make a joke / flag the formulation

(74) British conservative party's subway ad:
We plan to cut all homeless people in half by 2025.
Twitter response: widthways or lengthways, that is the question?

[@ArtwayRae, 2023]
(see also chpt. 7.4)

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: we plan to cut the number of homeless people in half
UIM: we plan to cut the homeless people's bodies in half
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the conservative party's plans
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - advertise their political aims to get votes
I - make a joke / question the party's political motives

ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES WITH OTHER SOURCES:

(75) Edith on the topic of lead rope climbing: . . . and normally, holding the rope is John or someone I can trust so it's ok [and I am not that scared].
John: Me OR someone you trust? Well, thanks. . .

[personal conversation (*my translation*)]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: John or someone else I can trust, too
UIM: John or, in contrast, someone I can trust
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about rope climbing
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - include John in the people that can be trusted

(76) Interviewer: How many people work in the Vatican?
Pope John XXIII: About half.

[boredpanda, 2019]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: what is the total number of employees of the Vatican
UIM: what is the ratio of Vatican's employees actually doing any work
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the Vatican's employees
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - elicit a total number of employees
I - make a joke / refuse to give a concrete number

(77) Iris Spanger (SPD): . . . Der schreckliche Tod von Mannheim zeigt uns natürlich. . .
('The horrible death of Mannheim shows, of course...')

Tuba Bozkurt (Grüne): Mannheim ist tot?
('Mannheim is dead?!')

[*Fragestunde 49. Sitzung des Berliner Abgeordnetenhauses* 2024 (*my translation*)]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: the death that occurred in Mannheim
UIM:the death of the city of Mannheim
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about the situation in Mannheim
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - argue about ramification of the death occurring in Mannheim
I - make a joke / provoke the speaker

(78) Early morning classes are associated with impaired sleep and academic performance.
Comment: This is nonsense. My students sleep perfectly well during my early morning lectures.

[The Bookwise Owl [@BookwiseOwl], 2023]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: early morning classes result in students arriving to class tired
UIM: early morning classes result in students not sleeping in class
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about class' starting times
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - provide an informative headline
I - make a joke / flag the formulation

(79) [. . .] Was soll er seinen Gästen zu essen anbieten? Seine Frau ist noch in Südkorea, er hat nichts im Haus.
('[. . .] what is he supposed to serve his guests? His wife is still in South Korea, he doesn't have anything in the house.')

Comment: Sie wollten die Frau essen, krass
('They wanted to eat the wife, wild')

[Fritzsche [@larafritsche], 2022 (*my translation*)]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: his wife would have dealt with providing food for the guests
UIM: his wife would have been the food for the guests
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about hosting guests
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - insinuate that his wife is the one solely responsible for providing food
I - make a joke / flag the insinuation's content

(80) Headline:
Michael Cera just confirmed secret baby.
Comment: I knew it. I mean just look at him.

[Kristi Yamaguccimane [@wapplehouse], 2022]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: Michael Cera confirmed that he secretly had a baby
UIM: Michael Cera confirmed that he secretly is a baby
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information Michael Cera
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - provide news about Michael Cera's family planning
I - make a joke / flag the formulation

(81) Neil DeGrasse Tyson: If you take Einstein's General Theory of Relativity and apply it all the way down to the center of a black hole [...], it blows up. I mean, not literally ... it *mathematically* blows up.

[deGrasse Tyson, 2021]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: Einstein's General Theory of Relativity does not work mathematically at the center of a black hole
UIM: Einstein's General Theory of Relativity explodes at the center of a black hole
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about Einstein's General Theory of Relativity
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - explain mathematical issues occurring with the center of black holes
I - make a joke / flag the formulation

(82) Chandler: [...] I'm stuck here all day! And then you come in and spend two seconds with us and then expect to go off gallivanting with your friends? Well I don't think so mister!
Joey: Hey!! I need to relax! Okay? I was working all day!
Chandler: And you don't think taking care of our chick is work?!
Joey: That's not what I said. Okay, I just meant ...
Chandler: I know what you meant [...]

[*s03e21 - The One With a Chick and a Duck - Friends Transcripts - TvT* 2003]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: I was working and need to unwind
UIM: I was working all day and you did not
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: argue about work
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - find an excuse to go out with his friends
I - express displeasure with the insinuation

(83) Cop: Now, this smells suspiciously like marijuana.
Tyson: Come on, man. That's not even mine. This car ain't even mine. I told you that.
Cop: So you're saying you stole this vehicle?

[Semanoff, 2023]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: the marijuana you may find in this car cannot be mine because I borrowed the car from someone else
UIM: if the car is not yours, it must be stolen
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange info. about the car/ its contents
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - find a reason for arresting Tyson
I - try to get out of trouble with the cop

(84) *Veränderung-en stehen vor der Tür. Lass*
change-PL stand in.front.of the door(F).SG. Let
sie ruhig zu.
det(F.SG/PL) calm to.
('Changes are around the corner. Just let it/them be.')

Die Tür oder was?
The door(F).SG or what?

('Let it be behind the corner or what?')

[Bentelicious Art [@BenteliciousArt], 2023 (*my translation*[1])]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: let the change happen
UIM: leave the door closed
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about change
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - inform about change that is soon to happen
I - make a joke / flag the formulation

(85) A medieval french skeleton is rewriting the history of syphilis. Comment: Fuck this hustle-culture bullshit. When I'm a skeleton I'm not doing a goddamn thing.

[@prufrock451, 2023]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: the information drawn from a medieval french skeleton can be used to rewrite the history of syphilis
UIM: the skeleton actively rewrites the history of syphilis
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange news about the history of syphilis
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - get people to access the article
I - make a joke / flag the formulation

(86) Wirt: Darf's noch was sein?
('Anything else?')
John: Ja, noch ein Alt.
('Yes, another Alt')
Wirt: Fass?
('Keg?')
John: Ein Glas reicht.
('A glass'd be enough.')
...also ein Glas mit Bier drin bitte.
('...that is, a glass with beer in it please')

[personal conversation – 01.07.2025 (*my translation*)]

1 The German "sie" is homophonous for singular feminine and plural. So, in this example, using the idiomatic expression *stand in front of the door* to mean that sth. is imminent, it can equally as well refer to *the changes* in plural or *the door* in singular.

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: I don't need a keg full of beer
UIM: I just need a glass without contents
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about containers of beer
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - get a glass full of beer
I - make a joke / flag the formulation

(87) If you feed your children [...] frozen foods for dinner, you're a terrible parent. I don't care how 'busy' you are. Find the time to microwave them!
Comment: Why would I microwave my kids?

[Claringbold [@lordk.ig], 2025]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: find the time to, at least, microwave the food for your kids
UIM: find the time to, at least, microwave your kids
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about feeding kids
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - educate parents on how to best provide for children
I - make a joke / ridicule the obnoxious statement

(88) Gandalf: How long have you been eavesdropping?
Sam: Eavesdropping, sir? I don't follow you, begging your pardon. There ain't no eaves at Bag End, and that's a fact.

[Tolkien and Lee, 2000 p.77]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: how long have you been listening in?
UIM: how long have you had eaves to drop here?
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about Sam's doings
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - tell Sam off for listening in on the conversation
I - get out of any punishment for eavesdropping

(89) Therapist: I want you to write letters to everyone who hurt you, then throw them into the fire.
Me: Okay...but what do I do with the letters?

[@_bmccullen_, 2025]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: I want you to throw the written letters into the fire
UIM: I want you to throw the addressees of the letters into the fire
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: exchange information about healing strategies
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - give advice on how to deal with emotions
I - make a joke

(90) *Brandenburg. Leck an einer Pipeline für*
Brandenburg leakage/lick.IMP.SG on a pipeline for
Rohöl
crude-oil
('Brandenburg. Leakage in/lick on pipeline for crude oil')

Das mach-e ich ganz sicher nicht
That make-1SG I ADV safe not

('I surely won't do that')

[@der.baby, 2025(*my translation*)[2]]

SPEAKER'S INTENDED MEANING: leakage in pipeline
UIM: lick a pipeline!
COMMON IMMEDIATE AIM: inform about current events in Brandenburg
ULTIMATE AIMS: S - give information about pipeline leak
I - make a joke

2 The German words for leakage and the imperative singular mode of "to lick" are homophonous, thus leading to this ambiguity in interpretation.

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