GRICE'S COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE:
GETTING THE MEANING ACROSS

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Abstract

Grice's Cooperative Principle is an assumed basic concept in pragmatics, yet its interpretation is often problematic. The use of the word 'cooperative' seems to lead to a confusion between Grice's technical notion and the general meaning associated with the lexeme *cooperation*, leading to what we term 'cooperation drift'. We argue that these misinterpretations stem, in part, from the relocation of the Cooperative Principle from philosophy to linguistics. In order to access a meaning that is more representative of Grice's view, it is necessary to see the writings on the Cooperative Principle and implicatures in the context of Grice's work as a whole. A close study of Grice's writings shows the concept of cooperation to be peripheral to his thought: the recurring issues are the distinction between sentence-meaning and speaker-meaning, the idea of systematicity in language, and the centrality of rationality to human action.

1. Introduction

This paper will be concerned with the way in which Grice's Cooperative Principle is represented in the literature, and the interpretations to which this can lead. Our contention is that there is a tendency for Grice's technical term to be confused with a folklinguistic notion of *cooperation*. *Cooperation* is a term often used in linguistic literature to characterise human behaviour in conversation. Sometimes it is used in the context of Grice's Cooperative Principle (henceforth CP) (Grice, 1975), but it is also used independently. We suggest that these terms both being used in the context of dialogue analysis can lead to problematic interpretations of the CP, some of which are presented and discussed in section 3. Our argument is that a knowledge of the philosophical background to the CP firstly demonstrates the relative unimportance of *cooperation* to the CP, and enables an interpretation more appropriate to Grice's intentions. Section 4 suggests why the transplant of the CP from philosophy to linguistics may not be as straightforward as it seems to be taken to be, and outlines the Gricean view of philosophy. A more detailed examination of Grice's work on philosophy and language is presented in section 5, where the importance of rationality is shown throughout his work. Finally in section 6, we conclude that if Grice's work is to be employed within Pragmatics, then *rationality* is the concept to that must be taken, rather than a misguided usage of *cooperation*.

2. Grice's Cooperative Principle

In order to examine the CP, we will first outline briefly the basic concepts behind the CP and Maxims. Previous work by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) had largely been concerned with the relationship between direct and indirect speech acts, and the concept that you could 'do' things with words: language is as much of an action as opening a door or closing a window. These proponents of the Use theory had moved away from the truth values approach, and the reliance on sense and reference as the source of meaning (e.g. Frege & Russell). There was also a growing interest in the meaning of utterances rather

than just sentences. It had been noted that at the discourse level there is no one-to-one mapping between linguistic form and utterance meaning. A particular intended meaning (which could be produced via a direct speech act) can in fact be conveyed by any number of indirect speech acts. Grice is concerned with this distinction between *saying* and *meaning*. How do speakers know how to generate these implicit meanings, and how can they assume that their addressees will reliably understand their intended meaning? His aim is to discover the mechanism behind this process.

(1)   A: Is there another pint of milk?
        B: I'm going to the supermarket in five minutes.

In the above example, a competent speaker of English would have little trouble inferring the meaning that there is no more milk at the moment, but that some will be bought from the supermarket shortly. Grice posits the CP and its attendant four maxims as a way of explaining this implication process:

The Cooperative Principle
"Make your contribution such as required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged"

Grice (1975:45)

The Maxims

Quantity	Make your contribution as informative as is required
	Do not make your contribution more informative than is required
Quality	Do not say what you believe to be false
	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)
	Be orderly

Grice (1975:45-46)

He suggests that there is an accepted way of speaking which we all accept as standard behaviour. When we produce, or hear, an utterance, we assume that it will generally be true, have the right amount of information, be relevant, and will be couched in understandable terms. If an utterance does not appear to conform to this model (e.g. B's utterance in (1) above), then we do not assume that the utterance is nonsense; rather, we assume that an appropriate meaning is there to be inferred. In Grice's terms, a maxim has been flouted, and an implicature generated. Without such an assumption, it would not be worth a co-interactant investing the effort needed to interpret an indirect speech act.

This is the standard basic explication of the CP, maxims and implicatures[1]. At this point, many descriptions immediately turn to detailed explanations of the many ways in which the operation of the CP can be tracked in language use: flouts, violations, infringing and opting out. However, in this mass of detail, Grice's underlying ideas are too often lost. Taylor & Cameron (1987:83) stand alone in making this point:

> "Few commentators pause to consider Grice's avowed motive for introducing the CP. Instead they rush on to consider the various maxims which are subordinate to it."

All the examples of flouts, violations and opting out are there to further illustrate the distinction between saying and meaning: an interest which has been evident in the Gricean program since Grice (1957), and to show that there is a pattern in the way we interact. There is a relationship between the conventional meaning of an utterance and any implicit meaning it might have, and it is calculable. What Grice (1975) does not say is that interaction is 'cooperative' in the sense which is found in the dictionary. In fact, as we have suggested in Davies (1997), it could be argued that the existence of this pattern of behaviour enables the speaker to make the task of the hearer more difficult. Speakers can convey their intentions by a limitless number of utterances, it is up to the hearer to calculate the utterer's intention. It would seem from this that the CP is not about making the task of the Hearer straightforward; potentially, it is quite the reverse. It allows the speaker to make their utterance harder, rather than easier, to interpret: we can omit information or present a non-literal utterance, and expect the Hearer to do the extra work necessary to interpret it.

We would suggest that there is a conflict between the way we interpret the CP's position in the Gricean program, and the way it is often represented in the linguistic literature. In the next section we will illustrate the problems we perceive in the literature, and in sections 4, 5 and 6 we will go on to discuss our view.

3. Grice's Cooperative Principle and 'cooperation'

Along with Speech Act Theory (e.g. Austin 1962 and Searle 1969), Grice's work on the CP initiated the current interest in pragmatics, and led to its development as a separate discipline within linguistics, and as such it is discussed by most textbooks in the area, and often cited in academic papers within pragmatics and associated disciplines. However, I will suggest that these discussions too often show an ambiguity of presentation, which can lead the uninformed reader towards an interpretation similar to the everyday notion of 'cooperation', rather than a more technical notion. There are also some descriptions of the term which are clearly problematic[2].

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[1] One can go into types of flout (by maxim), or consider other ways of breaking maxims (violation, infringing, opting out), but the basic tenet of the CP is demonstrated by example (1).

[2] We would not want to suggest at this point that all discussions of the CP are problematic, but it is in the nature of this paper that we will concentrate on those which we see as being infelicitous in some respect. Some, like Thomas (1995), are very careful to distinguish the CP from more general notions of cooperation. However, we would like to note that very few authors introduce the concept of rationality in relation to the CP, which we suggest in the latter half of this paper is its underlying motivation.

Levinson (1983:50) refers to an implicature relying on "some very general expectation of interactional cooperation" in the opening chapter of his textbook on Pragmatics. Now, while this is probably a fair, if cautious, reflection of the difficulty in pinning down the term, it does nothing to signal to the reader that there is a difference between an everyday usage of the term, and the Gricean usage. This is compounded by authors using both senses of the term in discussions of dialogue and discourse. Consider the following, taken from Fais (1994) and Stenström (1994):

> "One of the defining features of conversation is that it is cooperative in nature."
>
> Fais (1994:231-242)

> "…speakers cooperate… When studying transcripts of genuine conversation one is struck by the general atmosphere of cooperativeness and harmony."
>
> Stenström (1994: 1)

There is a potential ambiguity here, and authors are not always sufficiently careful in defining *their* use of a term. Or, they do not define it at all:

> "This does not mean, of course, that the listener always waits for the speaker to finish before taking over. Nor does it mean that speakers never disagree, object or contradict each other."
>
> Stenström (1994: 1)

Stenström takes time to say what *isn't* meant by this term, but never actually states throughout her discussion what *is* meant by it. Given this general lack of clarity in the term's usage, then it is perhaps not surprising that problematic interpretations abound. The most common of these is to ascribe to the CP qualities that are more appropriate to its non-technical sense: high levels of effort on the part of the speaker, perfect utterances, and avoidance of misunderstandings.

Sperber and Wilson (1986) use the mechanism of presupposition to give their analysis of the CP a 'common sense' justification. The assumption of the high degree of cooperation demanded by the CP is presented as common knowledge, and therefore unchallengeable:

> "It seems to us to be a matter of common experience that the degree of cooperation described by Grice is not automatically expected of communicators. People who don't give us all the information we wish they would, and don't answer our questions as well as they could are no doubt much to blame, but not for violating principles of communication."
>
> Sperber and Wilson (1986:162)

Clark and his co-workers (Clark & Wilkes-Gibbs 1986, Clark & Brennan 1991, Brennan & Clark 1996) also ascribe this level of perfection to the demands of the CP. They argue that compliance with the maxims of quantity and manner would demand that speakers would produce minimal non-ambiguous referring expressions, which is,

computationally speaking, an NP-hard task (Garey & Johnson 1979 in Dale & Reiter 1995), and psycholinguistic experiments have long shown that this is not what humans do (e.g. see discussion in Levelt 1989). Given a group of pictures of a white bird, a black bird and a white cup, if a subject is asked to name the cup, they will typically use the referring expression *the white cup*, even though an unmodified noun phrase would be sufficient to disambiguate it from the lexical set (Pechmann 1984 in Levelt 1989). Therefore, Clark and his co-workers suggest, the CP must demand a higher level of effort in the design of "proper utterances" than humans invest, which implies, like Sperber and Wilson, that the CP involves a high degree of cooperation.

The specificity of Clark *et al.*'s claim makes it easier to address than Sperber & Wilson's. The claim of the repetition of the word *white* violating Quantity and Manner is surely only tenable if the information is not salient in the context. In the example given above, the variable of colour may not be strictly necessary to the disambiguation of *the white cup* from the lexical set, but the distinction between *black* and *white* is highly salient to the set as a whole. Indeed, it may enable the Addressee to locate the object more quickly than the bald referring expression – to assume the reverse would appear unwarranted[3]. In a similar example given in Grice (1978), Grice suggests that such repetition would not be maximally efficient, but he does not suggest that it would violate the CP in any sense[4]. Sperber & Wilson's claim, on the other hand, seems to be making the assumption that the maxims are rules rather than principles to which speakers orient themselves. Taylor & Cameron (1987) suggest that the grammatical formulation of the maxims as orders can create this effect, but that the maxims are examples of principles not rules. Rules are either adhered to or broken, whereas the upholding of principles is a cline: they can be obviously upheld and obviously broken, but there is a large grey area in between. Not answering a question particularly effectively may not demonstrate a strong orientation to Quantity, but neither does it flout, violate or otherwise break that maxim. This applies equally to Clark *et al.*'s criticism: giving a little too much information may not show perfect execution, but it is scarcely a violation of the maxim.

The assumption of perfection leads to the assumption of miscommunication avoidance. In a paper about Human-Computer dialogue, Bernsen, Dybkjer & Dybkjer (1996) describe a dialogue system which is designed in order to avoid repair and clarification sequences as much as possible, because these are notoriously difficult to deal within the context of Natural Language Processing. They state:

> "A crucial point in what follows, however, is that system-dialogue breaks down when users ask questions of the system. A key, therefore, to the successful design of system-directed dialogue is to design the
> dialogue in such a way that users do not need to ask questions of the system. To do this requires optimizing the dialogue cooperativity of the system."
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> Bernsen *et al.* (1996:214)

Note the use of the phrase 'dialogue cooperativity' here. Cooperation is being marked as equivalent to being totally explicit. Again, we have the confusion between

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[3] This would be an interesting hypothesis to test experimentally.
[4] This example is discussed further in section 5.4.3

technical and non-technical uses of the term. A non-technical use of the term may imply this type of meaning (although this is far from certain). This is then related to the CP:

> "Although Grice's maxims have been conceived with a different purpose in mind, they can be seen as serving the same objective as do our principles, namely that of preventing interlocutor-initiated clarification and repair metacommunication."
>
> Bernsen *et al.* (1996:215)

> "We conclude that the CP and the maxims, as a necessary side effect of improving understanding and enhancing communication, serve the purpose of preventing the need for clarification and repair metacommunication."
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> Bernsen *et al.* (1996:225)

Here, now, the CP is directly linked with miscommunication-avoidance. The problem here seems to be that orienting to the CP is taken to be equivalent to being explicit, when Grice's insight is, in fact, concerned with precisely the converse situation. Grice is concerned with the distinction between saying and meaning: how hearers recognise the utterer's intention when speakers use *implicit* language. Bernsen *et al.'s* error seems to be the assumption that if failure to adhere to the maxims may lead to clarification/repair (which may or may not be true), then adhering to the maxims will necessarily avoid this outcome. This is flawed reasoning. Firstly, at a purely practical level, what may seem explicit and obviously clear to the speaker may not be so for the hearer: there seems to be too great an assumption of shared knowledge/common ground here. Secondly, Grice makes no claim that following the CP will improve or enhance conversation: at a basic level, the CP is simply a description of what does happen[5]. Finally, at a more theoretical level, it seems to have been forgotten that orienting towards the CP does not entail being explicit: flouts are exploitations of the CP, but they still come under its aegis.

However, Bernsen *et al.* are unashamedly putting a theoretical principle to practical use: they are quite upfront in stating that they are using those aspects of Grice's work which they perceive as useful. They would not claim to be operationalising the CP (as we have tried to do elsewhere, e.g. Davies 1997), or testing Grice's work in any particular way, and perhaps these factors should be borne in mind when considering this paper. However, what we are concerned with is representations of Grice's CP in the literature, and how all these problematic interpretations can have an additive effect on the overall perception of Grice's work. This paper, however well-intentioned, does affect this perception.

The final example we will use is not from an interdisciplinary work. It is taken from a dictionary of linguistic terms and concepts, aimed at an undergraduate audience.

> "Grice's principle assumes that people cooperate in the process of communication *in order to reduce misunderstanding*."
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> Finch (2000:159, our emphasis)

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[5] Although one could argue that Grice's interest in rationality (which is discussed later) could suggest that following the CP is 'better' in some sense than not following it.

Again, we have the usage of the term 'cooperation', without a clear indication of its technical usage. But what is more worrying is the motivation ascribed to the CP. As will be discussed later (see section 5), characterizing the driving force behind Grice's work is a complex task. However, it is very clear that reducing miscommunication is not a main interest. One of the overwhelming problems when trying to operationalise the CP is simply that even the possibility of miscommunication is hardly mentioned[6], whereas real dialogue is full of such problems. For the naïve reader, the obvious conclusion to draw from this description is that the CP is concerned with being helpful, avoiding miscommunication; generally speaking, it leads to the everyday meaning we find in the dictionary.

To demonstrate the conflict between this non-technical meaning, and the type of technical meaning for 'cooperation' which we would argue is suggested by Grice, it will be useful to consider an example:

(2)   *A is a member of staff in an English department; B is a new*
         member of staff who has been employed as a poet to teach
         creative writing. The conversation takes place at a departmental
         party.[7]
         A: What sort of poetry do you write?
         B: Name me six poets.   [said aggressively]

This exchange can scarcely be considered 'cooperative' in the non-technical sense: it is evidently unhelpful, and is certainly leading to clarification and repair (in an interpersonal sense). However, the implication is perfectly clear. There is a flout of the maxim of relevance here, and B's reply implicates that A's question is not worth answering because A knows nothing about poetry. So, B's utterance is not 'cooperative', but it fits the model for intepretation suggested by the CP.

In this section we have illustrated some of the problematic representations of the CP in the literature, and shown how these can lead to an amalgamation of the non-technical notion of 'cooperation' and the CP in the analysis of discourse. This is what might be termed 'cooperation drift'. Example (2) above demonstrates the distinction which should be maintained between these two terms: an utterance which orients to the CP may or may not be 'cooperative'. In the following sections we examine the CP in the context of Grice's other philosophical writings, in order to offer an interpretation more fitting than the non-technical notion of 'cooperation'.

4. Setting the scene: a background to Grice's work

From reading discussions of Grice in the linguistic literature, the non-specialist may not be aware that Grice, although not a prolific writer, has published a number of articles other than Grice (1975, 1978). Indeed, in the field of philosophy, Grice is much better known for his papers on the distinction between sentence-meaning and speaker-meaning than the later ones on conversational implicature. In general, the field of pragmatics has adopted that aspect of Grice's work which it sees as most appropriate to its own

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[6] A brief aside is made in reference to the possibility of misunderstanding an implicature in Grice (1978).
[7] Thank you to Sara Mills for this real example.

concerns[8]. This in itself is not surprising; however, we would suggest that reading Grice (1975, 1978) in isolation is not sufficient to see beyond the text to Grice's motivations. In this section we will attempt to do two things. Firstly, we will set out two good reasons why these papers in particular do not lend themselves to being read in isolation, and secondly, we will set out those aspects of Grice's work which we feel are important to a fair interpretation of his work.

4.1 The importance of the philosophical context

One of the first things to note about Grice's work may seem very obvious. He is a philosopher, not a linguist. Linguistics as a discipline is very good at adopting approaches from other academic areas which it sees as useful. For example, in my own area of discourse analysis I can cite Conversation Analysis from Sociology (e.g. Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974), the Collaborative Theory from Psychology (e.g. Clark 1996), Communities of Practice from Education/Management studies (e.g. Wenger 1998), and many others. This willingness to apply new approaches has been very fruitful, but there are always potential problems in negotiating the conventions of a new discipline. This is perhaps more of a problem in the field of philosophy, as its academic paradigm distinguishes it from the other disciplines mentioned above. Linguistics claims itself as a social science, with an empirical approach to data, and the testing of hypotheses. Sociology and Education also fall within this approach; Psychology considers itself a science, with the further rigorous experimentation and statistical work that that implies. Philosophy, however, is a more traditional Arts subject, and certainly the academics of Grice's generation had a rather different approach to the conventions of referencing and positioning their own work within the academic landscape from that which the modern social scientist would expect.

Our current convention is that work relevant to the discussion is cited in the text, and referenced at the end. The author will 'set the scene', briefly describing the opposing points of view. Depending on the nature of the work involved, there may be a detailed examination of an argument and/or example from another author. In short, the expectation is that the author will be very explicit about the academic dialogue that they are engaged in: it will be clear where the work has developed from, whose views are being opposed, and how the examples discussed fit into that academic discourse. This does not always happen in the philosophical literature, and certainly very rarely in Grice's work.

The expectation here is that the reader is familiar with the current debates, will have read all the relevant articles, and thus simply does not need to be told. They will recognise the implicit references to other authors, and the implicit criticisms made of their work. It is also assumed that the reader will be familiar with the author's earlier work, and thus, again, the current work does not need to be explicitly placed in context. The clues are there for the well-versed. For example, the title and first few paragraphs of Grice (1975) refer back to the discussions of logic which can be found in Grice (1961), and give the reader a key to the interpretation of the current work. Reading Grice (1975) in isolation simply will not give this insight. Equally, the emphasis on conventional meaning having to be prior to conversational implicatures in Grice (1978) makes more

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[8] Sperber & Wilson (1986, 1995) are a notable exception to this.

sense when read in the context of Grice's earlier work on sentence-meaning and speaker-meaning.

The second difficulty in trying to interpret Grice's work is the nature of the writing itself. Firstly, Grice did not publish a great deal. His book of collected papers, *Studies in the Way of Words* (Grice 1989a), contains about 17 papers written over a forty-year period, with about 10-11 of these relevant to meaning in general and implicatures in particular[9]. Considering the wide range of phenomena discussed, there is relatively little here on any given topic. Grice himself admits the paucity of material, and that developments in his thought since the William James lectures are largely unrecorded (Grice 1986). Thus we are reliant on other commentators (e.g. Grandy & Warner 1986, Grandy 1989, Warner 1989 and Stalnaker 1989) to provide further information via their own discussions with Grice. This is scarcely satisfactory, for any historian knows the preference for primary over secondary sources. Secondly, Grice himself is often quick to point out problems of specificity or places where he is not entirely satisfied with his account. In Grice (1975), for example, he freely admits that his characterization of the maxim of Relevance is lacking, and that the CP itself is only defined in very rough terms. This leaves the reader in a quandary. If Grice himself queries the accuracy of representation, then any interpretation made is immediately going to be problematic. Grandy (1989:514) specifically says of Grice (1975) that it was a "somewhat misleading piece", adding later in the same article a sideswipe at those who had written critiques of the CP in ignorance of some of the elaborations in Grice (1978): "[it] seems to have been less widely read." (Grandy 1989: 520).

Therefore, we would argue there are two very good reasons for a familiarity with Grice's other writings, commentaries on his work and the contemporary philosophical debates prior to providing an interpretation of the CP. Firstly, the conventions for philosophical writings at the time (particularly that of Grice) make it difficult to read one or two articles in isolation, as there is little or no 'scene-setting'. Secondly, Grice's general lack of specificity makes it very difficult to pin down his intentions. The researcher needs the other writings as corroborative evidence for a particular interpretation.

4.2 Grice's view of Philosophy

Even when Grice is recognised as a philosopher rather than a linguist, the tendency is to see him purely as a philosopher of language, rather than to consider what his concerns were in the wider spectrum of philosophy. In this section, we will briefly outline two aspects of Grice's philosophical views which are relevant to our interests.

Firstly, there is Grice's view of philosophy as a unified whole: underlying motivations would apply to all aspects of philosophy, not just one. It is in the nature of academic research that we concentrate on those papers which seem most obviously relevant to our concerns, and thus in pragmatics, references to Grice (1975) and Grice (1978) far exceed references to his other work. Therefore, it is easy for us to miss the systematic nature of Grice's work. He published in areas as diverse as philosophy of language, metaphysics and ethics, and Grandy & Warner (1986:1) comment that the interrelations in his work are too rarely recognised even in philosophy. This may well be,

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[9] This is not a complete collection of his work, but contains all his papers on the philosophy of language. See Grandy & Warner (1986) for a complete list of his Publications and 'Unpublications'.

as Grice suggests, because his 'unpublications' exceed his publications (Grice 1986), but it should be noted that he makes a point of recording his view of philosophy as an integrated whole:

> "It is my firm conviction that despite its real or apparent division into departments, philosophy is one subject, a single discipline."
>
> Grice (1986:64)

There are themes which run through Grice's work, which can be identified to a greater or lesser extent in multiple papers. Given his own avowed view of a synthesised philosophy, then it makes sense to search out evidence for his views across his work, and to consider their importance in his analysis of language.

Secondly, there is the question of Grice's methodological approach. Because of the differences in purpose of disciplines like philosophy and linguistics, it is easy to overlook some aspects of the work on implicatures. Generally speaking, linguistics is concerned with how language works. It is not so concerned with proving or disproving philosophical arguments or developing philosophical tools. Grice's (1989b) statement of intent with respect to the William James lectures is interesting in this respect:

> "My primary aim is … to determine how any … distinction between meaning and use is to be drawn, *and where lie the limits of its philosophical utility*."
>
> Grice (1989b:4, our emphasis)

Crimmins (2000:456) supports the view that the development of philosophical methodology was of primary importance to Grice, and there is much evidence for this throughout his work. The concept of implicature was first introduced in Grice (1961), for the purpose of investigating the concept of a sense datum within the context of the Causal Theory of Perception (Travis 1996). Implicatures have since been used to explain properties of indicative conditionals (William James lectures, published as Grice 1989c); the meaning of temporal *and*, and aspects of presupposition and the 'Truth value gap' (Grice 1981); and why certain sentences are difficult to classify in terms of the dichotomy of true and false (e.g. Grandy 1989). Implicatures themselves are also 'defined' in terms of the classic tools of cancellability and detachability, using the concepts of conventionality and non-conventionality[10].

These different concerns should not be ignored. It is very easy to disregard these other papers as 'not relevant' to understanding the motivation behind the CP, but in many respects they have as many insights into the concept of implicature as 'Logic and conversation'. Certainly, we would argue that awareness of the paradigm that Grice was working within would at least avoid the worst excesses of 'cooperation drift'.

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[10] Grice (1978:42-3) denies that the conditions given at the end of Grice (1975) are to be taken as 'necessary and sufficient' for the identification of implicatures. He suggests rather that the features could be used as a "more or less strong prima facie case in favor of the presence of a conversational implicature".

5. The Gricean Program

Having set out the importance of seeing the CP in context, we now move on to the detail of Grice's work on language. The aim here is to show the recurring themes in Grice's work, by close reference to his papers and also to commentaries on them.

The first point to make is that there are two broad aspects to the Gricean program. There is the work on implicatures, with which we are largely concerned here, but there is also the earlier work on sentence-meaning and speaker-meaning. We outline an early version of the latter, largely based in Grice (1957) in very simple terms in section 5.1 below. Our position is that although there are distinct foci to the two aspects of the Gricean program, they are also closely interrelated: to understand the motivation behind implicatures, a basic understanding of Grice's account of speaker-meaning, sentence-meaning and speaker-intention is also necessary.

The remainder of this section considers the importance of logic, the conventional/non-conventional distinction and rationality to Grice's work. The last of these is shown to have the most pervading influence, with echoes throughout all his papers, and other philosophers' commentaries on his work.

5.1 Sentence-meaning and speaker-meaning

In general terms, Grice can be grouped with Austin, Searle, and the later Wittgenstein as "theorists of communication-intention" (Miller 1998:223, Strawson 1971:172). The belief of this group is that intention/speaker-meaning is the central concept in communication, and that sentence-meaning can be explained (at least in part) in terms of it. This is in contrast to the 'truth-conditional theorists' (e.g. Frege) who believe that sentence-meaning via truth conditions is the gold standard, which has to be prior to any explication of speaker-meaning. An important aim of the Gricean Program is to manage a watertight definition of sentence-meaning in terms of speaker-intention. This, and the dialogue which it provokes, are the subject of Grice (1957, 1968, 1969, 1982).

Grice (1957) is concerned with the types of meaning which can be identified in language. The first distinction made is between *natural meaning* and *nonnatural meaning*:

(3)   (a)   Those spots meant measles.
        (b)   Those spots meant measles, and he had measles.
        (c)   *Those spots meant measles, but he hadn't got measles.
        (d)   Those spots didn't mean measles, and he didn't have measles.

<div align="right">Adapted from Grice (1957:377)</div>

In example (3a), the relationship between spots and measles is a natural one; one cannot state this relationship and then deny that it is true (3c). Both propositions *p* mean(spots,measles) and *q* have(x,measles) must have the same truth value for the sentence to make sense (3b & 3d). In semantic terms, *p meant that q* entails *q*.

(4)   (a)   Those three rings on the bell (of the bus) mean that the bus is full.
        (b)   Those three rings on the bell (of the bus) mean that the bus is full, and in fact, the bus is full.
        (c)   Those three rings on the bell (of the bus) mean that the bus is full, but in fact, the conductor has got it wrong and the bus isn't full.

<div align="right">Adapted from Grice (1957:377-8)</div>

In the examples above, the relationship between the ringing of the bell and the bus being full is a *nonnatural* one. Essentially, the meaning is conveyed because of a conventional[11] link between that signal and the intended meaning. There is no natural reason why three rings rather than one or two should convey this meaning, it is simply an accepted fact. Grice terms this as 'meaning$_{NN}$', and his contention is that much of language is concerned with this type of non-natural meaning. He uses the following formula to represent this:

"Sentence x meant$_{NN}$ something (on a particular occasion)."

This concept of meaning$_{NN}$ is then taken beyond the level of a particular instance of meaning, and is applied to first sentence-meaning and then speaker-meaning. This idea is explained in a simplified fashion in this quotation from Grice (1968):

> ""U meant (nonnaturally) something by uttering x", [which can be formulated as] "For some audience A, U intended his utterance of x to produce in A some effect (response) E, *by means of A's recognition of that intention*.""

<div align="right">Grice (1968:58, our emphasis)</div>

The important aspect to notice here is the emphasis which Grice places on the role of speaker-intention in the process of meaning-recognition. This is the first step towards his reductive theory of speaker and sentence meaning which is fleshed out more fully in Grice (1969). Here, two stages are proposed:

(1)   Speaker-meaning$_{NN}$ is explained in terms of utterer's intentions.
(2)   Sentence-meaning$_{NN}$ is explained in terms of speaker-meaning.

The first stage is the process that we outlined in example (4) above. The second stage uses (the now explained) concept of speaker-meaning to attain the goal of sentence-

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[11] Schiffer (1972) explains this in terms of *convention*, as explained by Lewis (1969). The earlier Grice (e.g. 1957) would also suggest an appeal to convention. However, in his later work, Grice explicitly denies convention as the explanatory force: "I do not think that meaning is essentially connected with convention. What it 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 1982:238). We will use the term convention in our explication for three reasons. Firstly, it is the most generally used term in such explanations (e.g Lycan 2000, Miller 1998); secondly, it was the term used by Grice when this work was published; and thirdly, the term Grice later introduces (*optimality*, which is discussed later) is never applied by himself to the distinction between conventional and non-conventional implicatures, and it is this area of his work with which we are most concerned.

meaning. So, the proposed analysis not only manages to account for the truth conditional theorists' gold standard of sentence-meaning in terms of utterer's intentions, but also it does so in a non-circular fashion. The definition of sentence-meaning in stage 2 makes no appeal to utterer's intentions, as these have already been explained in terms of speaker-meaning. Therefore, Grice has developed a *reductive* analysis of sentence-meaning in terms of utterer's intentions.

Let us take each of these stages in turn:

The first stage:

(1)　　　"Speaker A meant$_{NN}$ something by sentence x (on a particular
　　　　occasion)."

If we take the utterance:

(5)　　　"Terry is a good electrician."

Grice argues that there are three necessary and sufficient conditions for speaker-meaning:

1.　　　Speaker's intention that his utterance should induce the belief that 'Terry is a good electrician' in his Audience
2.　　　Speaker intends that the Audience should *recognise the intention* behind his utterance
3.　　　Audience's recognition of Speaker's intention plays a part in explaining why the Audience should form this belief

Various examples are used in Grice (1957) to demonstrate the importance of these two latter clauses, but the fundamental notions are firstly the importance of speaker intention, and secondly, the concept of language as an active protagonist in the communication of information. So, as a Hearer, I should recognise why you said something, and any change in my beliefs should come (at least in part) from what is said. Communication is thus characterised as an active process where a Speaker (or Communicator) attempts to convey their belief to the Hearer. A contrast is drawn between a person showing Mr. A a photograph of Mrs. A and Mr. B being 'over familiar' versus a person drawing a picture for Mr. A of the same event (Grice 1957). Drawing a picture shows an *intention* to convey the information, whereas a photograph could be seen by chance and cause a change of beliefs in Mr. A without input from another interlocutor. The distinction being made is that in the case of the drawing, it is necessary for the other interactant to create the drawing in order to affect Mr. A's beliefs. Whereas, in the case of the photograph, the interactant's role is not strictly necessary – the photograph could be viewed by Mr. A without another person's involvement. So, according to Grice, the important aspect of speaker-meaning can be derived from speaker-intention.

The second stage:

(2)   "Sentence x means$_{NN}$ (timeless) something (that so-and-so)."

For example:

(6)   The sentence "Terry is a good electrician" means$_{NN}$ (timeless) that
          Terry is a good electrician.

The speaker-meaning which has been identified via speaker-intention can only be said to be that sentence's sentence-meaning if tokens of that sentence "Terry is a good electrician" are conventionally associated with the speaker-meaning which has been identified. In other words, the utterance:

(7)   Blue is a fat cat

only means$_{NN}$ (timeless)

(8)   There is an X, such that X is a cat, such that X is known as Blue,
          such that X is fat

if there is a conventional relationship between utterances of the form (7) and sentence-meanings such as (8).

It is important to note here that we are concerned with conventional meaning$_{NN}$. The step from here to the CP is the attempt to account for non-fixed meanings, where there is no such regular relationship between sentence tokens and utterer's intention.

From the philosophical viewpoint, we have barely sketched the groundwork of this theory, and have not addressed its many criticisms. Unsurprisingly, there have been many, such as Ziff's (1967) and Searle's (1965) examples which point out its failure to deal with the difference between illocutionary and perlocutionary effects, and Platt's (1979) accusation of the circularity of compositional meaning. A useful discussion of these criticisms, and whether or not they can be refuted, can be found in Miller (1998), Lycan (2000) and Davies (1996), but we will not pursue them further here, as the aim of this section is to demonstrate the emphasis which Grice puts on the concept of 'intention', rather than to examine in detail whether his theory is, in the end, tenable.

5.2 Logic and conversation

Grice has been associated with the Oxford group known (mainly by their opponents) as 'Ordinary Language Philosophers', who thought "important features of natural language were not revealed, but hidden" by the traditional logical approach of such 'Ideal Language Philosophers' as Frege and Russell (Recanati 2000:704). However, it is very clear that the concept, and use of, logic is considered a basic philosophical tool by Grice. The relationship between conversation and logic is the starting point of Grice (1975), it is considered important enough to be in the titles of his two main implicature

papers (Grice 1975, 1978), yet the concept of logic is rarely mentioned in the same breath as the CP.

Grice (1975) starts with the long-accepted fact that formal devices representing the logical functions of *and* and *or*, and so forth, diverge in meaning from their natural language counterparts. He then sets out briefly the extremes of the two opposing positions in relation to this. The formalists take the position that the additional meanings which can be found in natural language are imperfections of that system, and:

> "The proper course is to conceive and begin to construct an ideal language, incorporating the formal devices, the sentences of which will be clear, determinate in truth value, and certifiably free from metaphysical implications; the foundations of science will now be philosophically secure, since the statements of the scientist will be expressible … within this ideal language."
>
> Grice (1975:42)

Whereas the non-formalist holds that as speakers can understand the words which don't have logical equivalence, then this shouldn't be considered a deficiency in the system: language has other functions rather than serving science.

Grice's position is that the formalists are failing to account for the *logic* of conversation – there are systems there, it is a question of identifying them:

> "Moreover, while it is no doubt true that the formal devices are especially amenable to systematic treatment by the logician, it remains the case that there are very many inferences and arguments, expressed in natural language and not in terms of these devices, that are nevertheless recognizably valid. … I have, moreover, no intention of entering the fray on behalf of either contestant. I wish, rather, to maintain that the common assumption of the contestants that the divergences do in fact exist is (broadly speaking) a common mistake, and that the mistake arises from an inadequate attention to the nature and importance of the conditions governing conversation."
>
> Grice (1975:43)

Therefore, the aim of Grice (1975) is to demonstrate the existence of a logic to the operation of conversations. It is not about conversations being cooperative – that might be an outcome of the logical structure, but it is certainly not its *raison d'être*[12]. The use of implicatures as an investigative tool in Grice (1961, 1981, 1989c) was not only to demonstrate the philosophical utility of implicatures, but also to demonstrate that structures which had evaded the grasp of formal logic could be accounted for in a systematic way. Thus the formalists' argument for the imperfections of natural language is undermined: if meanings can be predicted reliably from forms, then their philosophical worries are unfounded. Of course, it is arguable that this aim has yet to be achieved, if, indeed, it is possible. However, the point to be made here is that Grice has chosen his title

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[12] Although it is very unclear that cooperation is such a feature of conversation. See Davies (1997) for a discussion of this.

carefully, to reflect his wider interests. Grice (1975, 1978) are about logic, not cooperation. This is why the importance of logic recurs throughout his work on the philosophy of language, whereas cooperation *per se* is not mentioned elsewhere.

5.3 Conventional and conversational

Discussions of the CP also tend to move swiftly from the concept of conventional implicatures to those which are categorised as non-conventional or conversational implicatures: again this is a rush from the concept of implicatures to investigating the maxims. This too is missing an important part of the Gricean programme. The distinction between conventional and non-conventional has its basis in the speaker-meaning and sentence-meaning programme outlined above. Meaning$_{NN}$ is defined as a conventional meaning, thus words have conventional meanings. In terms of implicatures, conventional meaning is conceptually prior to an implicature. Thus it is essential for a sentence to have a conventional meaning before it can trigger an implicature. The importance of the distinction between conventional and non-conventional is demonstrated by Grice's not entirely successful endeavour to ascribe conventional meanings to stress and ironic tone:

(9)   *Jones* didn't pay the bill[13]   Grice (1978:123)

The use of stress on *Jones* would seem to implicate that Jones didn't pay the bill, yet it is hard to say what the prior conventional meaning of this stress should be, in order for it to be possible that an implication could be triggered. The same problem occurs with what might be termed 'ironic tone':

(10)   That was a small snack.

An utterance such as this could be meant sincerely or ironically, and in particular contexts it would only appear to be the manner of utterance that would distinguish these two speaker-intentions. Intuitively, we would want to say that the ironic meaning is what is implicated rather than what is said, yet what is the conventional meaning of this ironic tone, other than to produce irony?

Under the Gricean program, stress and irony must have a conventional meaning before they are allowed to trigger implicatures. The fact that Grice is trying so hard to maintain this distinction demonstrates how important he sees it to the overall program.

Conventional implicatures are triggered by the socially-fixed meanings of particular words. Therefore, they should fit neatly within the logical framework: they are entirely predictable. For example, the word *but* generally signals a contrastive relationship between the meaning of the clauses which it separates. Thus, *'a but b'* must conventionally imply that *a* and *b* are not normally compatible. In a sense, the sentence-meaning and the speaker-meaning should be equivalent.

For conversational/non-conventional implicatures, the extra meaning is not triggered by meaning$_{NN}$, hence the need for a logical explanation of the gap between the words and the speaker-intention. As Stalnaker (1989:527) says

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[13] Italics are used here to represent stress.

"conversational implicature is a kind of speaker meaning, a kind distinguished by the source of the expectations in terms of which speaker-meaning is defined."

The importance of the logical relationship is also seen in Grice's distinction between generalised and particularised implicatures. Again, he is trying to specify in a formal manner when the meanings of a particular phrase or sentence will vary from utterance to utterance, and when they won't. Essentially, he is characterizing another aspect of conventional and non-conventional meaning. As with the conventional/conversational distinction, this is largely ignored in interpretations of his work.

When it is described in these terms, it is straightforward to see the genealogy of the implicature. The contribution to pragmatics was for Grice to grasp the implicit/explicit distinction, but there are obvious triggers in his interest in speaker-meanings, intentions and the gap between these and the concept of meaning$_{NN}$.

One final point to note here is that we are suggesting that the identification of the gap between implicit/explicit is conceptually prior to the development of the CP and maxims. Grice freely admits that his explanatory structure is weak. There are problems with both the characterization of the CP itself and the maxims; both are too vague. Again, the suggestion is that the CP and maxims are not the most important aspect of the work on implicature. We return to the conventional meaning/speaker intention distinction, and the issue of how you can bridge that gap using some form of logic and inference.

5.4 The Gricean motivation

If cooperation is not the driving force behind the negotiation of the implicit/explicit gap, then three questions immediately arise. Firstly, what does Grice see as the underlying motivation, secondly, what evidence is there to support this and finally, what implications does this have for the Gricean analysis of conversation. The first two of these questions are straightforward, the final one, much less so.

5.4.1 Rationality in Grice (1975)

Prior to outlining the CP and maxims, Grice introduces the regularities in conversation that he is trying to account for. Both the concepts of cooperation and rationality are introduced here:

"Our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, *and would not be rational if they did*. They are, characteristically, *to some degree at least, cooperative efforts*"

Grice (1975:45, original emphasis)

However, apart from the specification of the CP itself, the term cooperation is barely used by Grice again in 'Logic and conversation', let alone anywhere else in his writings. However, the concept of rationality does recur:

"… one of my avowed aims is to see talking as a special case or variety of purposive, indeed rational behaviour."

<div align="right">Grice (1975:47)</div>

He demonstrates the rational underpinning of the maxims by using non-linguistic analogues. For example, to illustrate Relevance, he suggests that when assisting someone in a particular task, your physical actions should be appropriate to the point in the process:

"If I am mixing ingredients for a cake, I do not expect to be handed … an oven cloth (though this might be an appropriate contribution at a later stage)."

<div align="right">Grice (1975:47)</div>

This reliance on rationality can also be found in Grice (1981:185), where he also describes the maxims as "…desiderata that normally would be accepted by any rational discourser…".

The explanation of the implicature process is clearly based on the concept of rationality. He admits there could be alternative explanations, but he chooses to reject them in favour of rationality as a higher order principle:

"A dull but, no doubt at a certain level, adequate answer is that it is just a well-recognised empirical fact that people DO behave in these ways… . I am, however, enough of a rationalist to want to find a basis that underlies these facts, undeniable though they may be; 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."

<div align="right">Grice (1975:48, emphasis in original)</div>

Therefore, Grice is attempting to analyse implicatures in such a way that highlights their *rational* aspect. From such a standpoint, one could characterise implicatures in the following way:

Hearers assume that an utterance addressed to them is intended to be meaningful, therefore if the utterance doesn't have an appropriate conventional meaning, they will look for a more useful (and non-conventional) interpretation. As far as the Hearer is concerned, the Speaker providing an uninterpretable (meaningless) utterance would be pointless, and therefore irrational.

<div align="right">Adapted from Davies (1997:52)</div>

The priority that Grice gives to rationality over cooperation is clear. Not only are explicit arguments made in favour of rationality, but also one of the main mentions of cooperation is strongly hedged. We cooperate *to some degree at least* (see quotation above); no such hedges are made regarding the contribution of rationality.

One question remains. If rationality is so important to Grice, then why don't we have the 'Rationality Principle' rather than the CP? After all, the wording of the CP itself would be as amenable to a title of 'Rationality' to that of 'Cooperation', and it might have avoided the type of problems that have been discussed earlier in this paper.

The most obvious answer to this question is that Grice sees cooperation as the necessary outcome from the application of reason to the process of talk. In other words, cooperation is the realisation of rationality applied at the level of discourse. This would certainly fit with the importance ascribed to Rationality within Grice (1975), and as we will show in the next section, this is compatible with his philosophical views in general.

5.4.2 Rationality in the thought of Grice

As has been argued earlier (section 4.2), Grice had an integrated view of philosophy. Central to that view is the concept of rationality:

> "It might be held that the ultimate subject of all philosophy is ourselves, or at least our rational nature, and that the various subdivisions of philosophy are concerned with different aspects of this rational nature. But the characterization of this rational nature is not divisible into water-tight compartments; each aspect is intelligible only in relation to the others."
>
> Grice (1986:65)

The view portrayed here is a belief that rational action is at the core of all human behaviour: all types of action should have a rational explanation. It is therefore unsurprising that rationality is given such a high profile in the discussion of the CP. For Grice, even the process of philosophy is one of "rational enquiry" (Grice 1986: 87). Warner (1989) unequivocally states that the concept of rationality can be seen in all the areas of Grice's work in philosophy: metaphysics and ethics as well as language.

Given the centrality of rationality to Grice's thought, it is unsurprising that evidence of its importance can also be seen in the speaker-intention program. Grice (1982:235) argues that the process of the recognition of intentions and alterations in belief on the part of a hearer can be seen as rational behaviour. Grandy & Warner (1986) make the argument that as we *can* speaker-mean, then it is rational for us to do so; this position is supported in Grice's response to this argument (Grice 1986). Avramides (1996) also supports the link between intentions and rationality.

However, this does not entirely answer the question of motivation in itself. As a concept, rationality has many possible definitions. In the next section we will consider some of the possibilities, and relate this to the types of explanation suggested by Grice.

5.4.3 Defining rationality

It is generally accepted in philosophy that the concept of Rationality is a difficult one to define (e.g. see Markie 2000). The most common definition has as its basis an appeal to the contrast between rationalism and empiricism. Roughly speaking, empiricism holds that sense experience is the key to knowledge, whereas rationalism denies the role of sense experience, and promotes reason as the basis of knowledge. However, as Markie (2000:740) states, the "application of the term 'rationalist' can say very little about what two philosophers have in common". One of the reasons for this is

that although the distinction between rationalism and empiricism is generally accepted, what constitutes *reason* is not.

Grice would appear to accept the basic dichotomy between rationalism and empiricism. In Grice (1975:48) he rejects the 'dull' empirical explanation in favour of his preferred approach:

> "A dull but … adequate answer is that it is just a well-recognised empirical fact that people DO behave in these ways."

And this stance is reiterated in Grice (1986:80-1), where he dismisses the empirical approach as "relatively unexciting, and not unfamiliar", and chooses to "set [his] sights higher" on ulterior principles which are based on some "rational demand".

So, the role of reason is seen as important, but as Markie suggests, getting at that concept will be difficult. Grandy (1989:523-4, original emphasis) makes an argument for a Kantian interpretation:

> "[Grice's] attitude was probably linked to his general ethical views, … I suggest therefore, that he would have argued that the cooperative principle ought to be a governing principle for rational agents on Kantian grounds. Thus, for rational agents of the kind he envisioned, … they would follow the CP on moral *not* on practical or utilitarian grounds."

This view has some support, in that Grice's maxims are derived in name from the categories in Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (Sarangi & Slembrouk 1992:118), and Grice (1989d: 370) himself refers to the maxims as "moral commandments" in his discussion of implicatures in the epilogue to *Studies in the Way of Words*:

> "Somewhat like moral commandments, these maxims are prevented from being just a disconnected heap of conversational obligations by their dependence on a single supreme Conversational Principle, that of cooperativeness."
>
> <div align="right">Grice (1989d: 370)</div>

However, it is hard to find other explicit references to a moral motivation. Grice's appeal to the modal "SHOULD NOT abandon" (emphasis in original) when denying the adequacy of the empirical approach, could be interpreted as an appeal to morality. But this could equally be seen as a general appeal to the importance of rational behaviour. In his later work (e.g. Grice 1986, 1989), the terms favoured are 'value' and 'evaluating'. In their general overview of his work, Grandy & Warner (1986:20, original emphasis) show the link between rationality and evaluation:

> "On Grice's view, a person has 'evaluative principles' that cannot change. Not because they are programmed in; rather, they are principles a person cannot abandon *if he is to count as rational*."

We suggest that the CP would count as one of these evaluative principles.

Value is also argued for in Grice (1982). This paper is concerned with the speaker-intention program, but as has been argued throughout this part of our paper, Grice viewed philosophy as a whole, not as many separate areas which should be treated differently.

"…my own position, which I am not going to state or defend in any detail at the moment, is that the notion of value is absolutely crucial to the idea of rationality, or of a rational being. … I have strong suspicions that the most fruitful idea is the idea that a rational creature is a creature which evaluates, … . Value is in there from the beginning, and one cannot get it out."

Grice (1982:238)

Value is then connected to the rather loose ideas of 'what it is proper to do' and 'what it is optimal to do'.

"…what a word means in a language is to say what it is in general optimal for speakers of that language to do with that word; what particular intentions on particular occasions it is proper for them to have, or optimal for them to have."

Grice (1982: 239)

Optimality is introduced in this article as a rather inexplicit replacement for the role which *convention* holds in Grice's earlier work[14]. It is painted as an ideal rather than a reality by both Grice (1982), and Grandy & Warner's (1986) commentary. Optimality is a perfection that we aim for, but that we can rarely, if ever, achieve. The analogy made by the latter is of struggling to steer a boat through heavy seas: you know what course you are trying to maintain, but the unpredictability of the weather means that you are continually having to readjust your course.

What is not clear is whether these concepts - 'value', 'evaluating', 'optimal', 'proper'- in themselves represent an underlying moral motivation. Certainly, the terminology appeals to a sense of intrinsic 'goodness': they all have positive connotations related to notions of 'quality' and 'rightness'. One could also argue that there is also no particular alternative interpretation, especially given Grandy & Warner's comments (e.g quotation cited above). In practical terms, accepting this view would seem to be more a denial of the role of Utilitarianism: 'value' and 'evaluating' are to be judged in moral terms rather than efficiency *per se*. This suggestion of what it means to be rational in Gricean terms does, perhaps, help clarify the type of processes that could affect speaker decisions. But it does also introduce much unwelcome baggage. If we were not sure what precisely was meant by 'rationality', do we have any better grasp of what is meant by 'morality'? We would suggest that this is compounded by 'morality' being a contentious term, which not only means different things to different people, but also can draw a more emotional response. This leads us to a certain caution in adopting the term as

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[14] It is difficult to interpret the precise difference intended by Grice between the concepts of *convention* and *optimality*. Convention would appear to be a subtype of what counts as optimal behaviour. However, we will not address these issues here, as they do not seem to affect the substance of the argument that we are presenting. See note 7 for our justification for using the term *convention* rather than *optimality* in the remainder of this article.

Grice's main motivation. Perhaps the safest conclusion is to note the possible role of morality in Grice's notion of rationality, but not accept it as Grice's sole motivation.

So, to summarise, we have charted a course using Grice's papers from the general notion of rationality, to the concept of value in his later work, which we may or may not wish to connect to some idea of morality. However, in terms of moving from philosophical notions to the practicalities of language use, it is difficult to see what has been gained. If we accept that interactants evaluate the discourse context in order to know what linguistic action to perform next, then we need to know the relative value that they ascribe to competing aims. Current work in dialogue analysis would probably highlight such aspects as efficiency, interpersonal goals and transactional goals. Our discussion so far might suggest that Grice would downgrade the relative importance of efficiency, given his rejection of Utilitarianism (Grandy 1989:524), yet this is the only aspect which Grice explicitly comments on in either Grice (1975) or Grice (1978):

(11)   It is generally known that New York and Boston were blacked-out last night.

   A: Did John see *Cheers* last night?
   B: No, he was in a blacked-out city.

(Adapted from Grice (1978:114)

It is pointed out that in this example, speaker B provides only two pieces of information, from which the rest (the city which he was in) can be inferred. Grice (1978: 114) says of this "He could have provided [all] pieces of information … but the gain would have been insufficient to justify the additional conversational effort.". In Grice (1986: 83), he also suggests the 'Principle of Economy of Rational Effort' which states that a 'ratiocinative' procedure for arriving rationally at an outcome could be replaced by a non-ratiocinative procedure, providing that it was more economical in terms of time and effort, and that the outcome was generally the same. So, even though efficiency may not be a primary consideration (which is the basis of Utilitarianism) there is at least some evidence of an interest in its role in speaker decisions. So, other than saying speakers are rational, we are not much further forward.

These problems of a lack of specificity do not currently seem resolvable. Grice does not define precisely what he sees as value, so there is little there other than the suggestions we have made above. However, although we may not be able to pin this down absolutely, the interpretation offered here is far more specific, and clearly different from the type of general notion of cooperation which we saw in section 3. It is evident that the concept of human behaviour as rational action is behind much of Grice's thought, and that evaluation is the key to language choices. Such evaluation is necessary because there is evidently not a one-to-one correlation between what is said and what is meant, yet it is Grice's claim that there is an accountable system there. It is this logic that he is trying to describe: it is systematic and therefore rational.

6. Conclusion

In this paper we have presented what we see as an important deficit in the discussion and interpretation of Grice's Cooperative Principle. There seems to be a tendency to dwell too much on the term 'cooperation', rather than looking beyond the title of the principle to the motivation Grice gave to the mechanism he had identified. This seems to be largely because Grice (1975) is read in isolation, rather than in the context of his other writings on the philosophy of language. Knowledge of this material rapidly shows that cooperation is not a concept that recurs in Grice's thought, and as such is unlikely to be the pivotal force in his analysis of the workings of language.

We suggest that many of the problems in interpretation stem from the clash between Grice's use of the term 'cooperation' with a technical meaning, and the more general meaning of the word. It is particularly problematic in this context because dialogue is often (rightly or wrongly) termed as being cooperative. The use of these two terms in the same area of linguistics has muddied the waters, and it is perhaps unsurprising that some confusions have occurred. Generally, it seems to be that the CP is assumed to take on a meaning rather closer to that of the general meaning of 'cooperation' – thus leading to what we have termed 'cooperation drift'.

In the discussion of Grice's work which formed the remainder of this paper, our aim has been to demonstrate the distinction between the Gricean motivation behind the CP, and the type of 'cooperation drift' which we have identified in the literature. Firstly, we made the argument for the necessity of reading Grice's work in the philosophical context, rather than in isolation. Then, a consideration of this context showed a number of themes which recurred: logic, conventional/non-conventional and, most importantly, *rationality*.

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.

To offer this as an interpretation of Grice is to operate at a macro-level of pragmatics: it answers one question, but asks many others. Rationality may be the driving force that he identified, but it does not account for how we make particular choices at the utterance level. If rationality is about evaluation – which is the strongest available implication from Grice's papers - then to model this rational action, we need to know what competing needs the human brain is weighing up, and how each of those needs is valued. More current work in discourse analysis and pragmatics suggests some possible answers to these competing needs: politeness, efficiency, humour, group-identification, and so forth. Grice offers us none of these, and so we can only guess at the type of motivations he was hypothesizing.

In conclusion, the aim of this paper is not to claim that the CP is the answer to pragmatics. It is clear that Grice's work has major limitations: it is based on introspection rather than data, and takes no account of interpersonal factors. However, it is part of the foundations of the discipline, and as such it is part of what we all build on. Therefore, care should be taken in its interpretation.

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