Reflections on Jennifer Saul's View of Successful Communication and Conversational Implicature

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Abstract

Saul (2002) criticizes a view on the relationship between speaker meaning and conversational implicatures according to which speaker meaning is exhaustively comprised of what is said and what is implicated. In the course of making her points, she develops a couple of new notions which she calls "utterer-implicature" and "audience-implicature". She then makes certain claims about the relationship between the intersection of those two notions and successful communication and also about the difference between conversational implicature and the intersection of utterer and audience implicatures. Finally, she tries to figure out the role and importance of conversational implicature in communication. Her claim on this issue is that conversational implicature plays a normative role in communication. In this paper, I will introduce her views on the above issues and critically engage some of them. I will show that her identification of successful communication with the intersection of utterer and audience implicatures is wrong. I will then show that her views on the difference between conversational implicature and the intersection of utterer and audience implicature run to several problems. Finally, appealing to what she says in Saul (2010) I try to make her claim about the normative character of conversational implicature more accurate.

Keywords

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Introduction

Pragmatics is a branch of philosophy of language that is concerned with what people communicate without literally saying them. Linguistic expressions like "I have to work" have definite literal meanings yet people can use such expressions to communicate different things in different contexts and occasions (Korta & Perry, 2020). One of the most important figures in pragmatics is H. P. Grice[1] who 'was the first to systematically study cases in which what a speaker means differs from what the sentence used by the speaker means." (Davis, 2019). He coined the technical term "implicature" and introduced the notions of conversational and conventional implicature (Davis, 2019). The notion of conversational implicature and its relationship to speaker meaning is at the heart of this essay.

In order to get a rough grasp of the notions of conversational and conventional implicature let's take a look at the following example from Davis (2019): Alan asks Barb: "Are you going to Paul's party?", and Barb answers: "I have to work". Here, what Barb has literally said is that she has to work, but what she meant to communicate was that she will not go to Paul's party. According to Grice, Barb has conversationally implicated that she will not go to Paul's party *by saying* that she has to work. One important feature of conversational implicatures, like the one in the above example, that distinguishes them from conventional implicatures is that "they depend on features of the conversational context, and are not determined by the conventional meaning of the sentences uttered"[2] (Davis, 2019). The reason why Barb's sentence had the conversational implicature that we saw is that it was uttered in response to Alan's question. It would have very different implications or no implications at all, had it been uttered in a different context[3].

Conventional implicatures, on the other hand, are determined by the conventional meanings of the words used. Consider the following variant of Grice's example in *Logic and Conversation*: "John is very old; therefore, he is weak". According to Grice the utterer of this sentence is thereby committed to the claim that John's weakness *follows from*, or *is a consequence of* his oldness. But this isn't something that is literally said! (Grice, 1989, pp. 25-26). This implication arises from the conventional meaning of the word "therefore" (Davis, 2019).

In Saul (2002), Jennifer Saul criticizes a view on the relationship between

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1. For a useful discussion of some of Grice's important ideas in philosophy of language see Neale (1992).
2. The italic is Davis'
3. We will see more on how conversational implicatures arise according to Grice and his three clause definition of conversational implicature in the following sections.

speaker meaning and conversational implicature. She calls this view "speaker meaning exhaustiveness" (Saul 2010). According to that view, speaker meaning is exhaustively constituted by what is said and what is implicated which is itself divided between what is conventionally implicated and what is conversationally implicated (Saul, 2002, pp. 228-230). According to Saul, Grice's three-clause definition of conversational implicature is in conflict with this view. The three-clause definition, she claims, allows for the existence of speaker meaning which is neither said nor conversationally or conventionally implicated. This part of speaker meaning she calls "utterer-implicature". She then introduces another notion, "audience-implicature", in order to discuss the importance of conversational implicature in Grice's theory. She then makes some remarks about the relationship between the intersection of utterer-implicature and audience implicature and successful communication and the difference between conversational implicature and the intersection of utterer and audience implicatures. Finally, she claims that conversational implicature is a very important notion that captures the normative characteristics of conversation.

In this essay, I will first introduce parts of Saul's criticism of the speaker meaning exhaustiveness and the notions of utterer-implicature and audience-implicature that she introduces in the course of formulating those criticisms. Next, I will propose some worries about what she has to say about successful communication and its relationship with utterer and audience implicatures and the consequences on these remarks of her. Finally, I will reflect on her suggestion that conversational implicature can account for the normativity of communication. Drawing on what she says in Saul (2010), I will try to make her claim in Saul (2002) about the normative nature of conversational implicature more accurate.

Saul on Implicature

Grice's Definitions of Conversational Implicature and Speaker Meaning

In the parts of Saul (2002) that I am concerned with in this essay, she argues against the thesis of speaker meaning exhaustiveness by providing examples depicting a situation in which speakers mean something but nothing is conversationally implicated because one of the conditions among Grice's three conditions for the existence of conversational implicatures is flouted. Also, nothing is conventionally implicated either. From this, she concludes that speaker meaning exhaustiveness is false.

We first have to introduce Grice's three clause definition of conversational implicatures and the version of his conditions for the existence of speaker

meaning that Saul uses in her paper. In *Logic and Conversation*, Grice says that an agent conversationally implicates q by saying p, provided that:

(1) He is to be presumed to be following the conversational maxims, or at least the Cooperative Principle;

(2) The supposition that he is aware that, or thinks that, q is required to make his saying or making as if to say p (or doing so in THOSE terms) consistent with this presumption; and

(3) The speaker thinks (and would expect the hearer to think that the speaker thinks) that it is within the competence of the hearer to work out, or grasp intuitively, that the supposition mentioned in (2) is required. (Grice 1989, pp. 30-31)

I call the above definition "CI". The Cooperative Principle and conversational maxims that are mentioned in condition (1) of (CI) are of crucial importance in Grice's theory. Accordingly, let me briefly explain what they are before moving forward with Saul's paper.

According to Grice, conversations are, at least to some degree, cooperative endeavors (Grice, 1989, p. 26). Participants in conversations see in them some purpose, or purposes, or at least some "mutually accepted direction" (Grice, 1989, p. 26). Accordingly, conversations are governed by some principles that outlaw certain moves by the participants that are disruptive to the purpose or direction of conversation (Grice, 1989, p. 26). One such rule which is general and overarching is called the Cooperative Principle by Grice and is formulated as follows: "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, 1989, p. 26).

He further goes on and puts forward four more specific maxims or rules that govern our conversations. These are the conversational maxims. Following these maxims is tantamount to being cooperative and satisfying the Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1989, p. 26). Here's a brief version of the maxims put forward in Davis (2019)[1]:

Maxim of Quality. Make your contribution true; so do not convey what you believe false or unjustified.

Maxim of Quantity. Be as informative as required.

Maxim of Relation. Be relevant.

Maxim of Manner. Be perspicuous; so avoid obscurity and ambiguity, and strive for brevity and order (Davis, 2019).

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1. The maxims are directly quoted from Davis (2019).

Conversational implicatures arise in Grice's theory when a speaker who is presumed by the hearer to be cooperative says something that is in violation of one or more of the above conversational maxims. In such a situation the hearer, who is presumed by the speaker to be able to do this task, will have to attribute a belief to the speaker that renders what the speaker says compatible with the Cooperative Principle (Davis, 2019). That belief would be the conversational implicature of what the speaker has said. This is exactly what the three clauses of (CI) mean.

In order to better see how Grice's theory works, let's look again at Davis' example that we saw in the Introduction. In that example, what Barb said ("I have to work"), in response to Alan's question ("Are you going to Paul's party?") might seem irrelevant at first glance. In other words, what Barb has said violates the Maxim of Relation (Davis, 2019). Now, given that Alan has presumed Barb to be cooperative, he has to attribute some belief or meaning to Barb so that what she said would be compatible with being cooperative. Since working is incompatible with going to the party, Alan easily infers that what Barb wanted to convey via saying "I have to work" was that she will not go to Paul's party. Alan thus has calculated the conversational implicature of what Barb said (Davis, 2019). I think we can now go back to Saul's paper.

In addition to (CI), Saul also provides the following characterization of Grice's notion of speaker meaning: "By uttering x, U meant that p if for some audience A:

(1) U uttered x intending A actively to believe the thought that p (or the thought that U believes that p)

(2) U uttered x intending A to recognize that U intends A actively to believe the thought that p

(3) U does not intend A to be deceived about U's intentions (1) and (2)." (Saul, 2002, pp. 231-232)

I call the above definition "SM". Saul notes that if we take a look at the above definitions, we see that it is not at all surprising that speaker meaning and conversational implicature may come apart. The existence of conversational implicature according to (CI) is mostly independent of the intentions and the states of the mind of the speaker. Clause (1) is concerned with the presumptions of the audience and clause (2) is also a demand on the audience; at least this is how Saul understands these conditions. On the other hand, speaker meaning according to (SM) is totally dependent on the intentions of the speaker (Saul, 2002, pp. 228-229). Accordingly, Saul's examples involve situations in which the states of the minds of the speakers and audience do not match with each other in the desired way and, as a result, speaker meaning is

neither said nor conversationally implicated.

Example 1: Near-Implicature

Saul's first example which she calls "near-implicature" goes as follows: suppose Saul wants to write a recommendation letter for one of her students, Smith, who isn't at all good at philosophy. Saul wants to conversationally implicate that Smith is a bad philosopher. Accordingly, the only things that she writes in the letter are about Smith's skills in typing. But unbeknown to Saul, Smith is, in fact, applying for a job as a typist and the information she has supplied are exactly the ones that her audience needs to hear. Accordingly, the audience is not required to suppose that Saul believes that smith is a bad philosopher in order to make sense of what she has said in the letter and this is to say that condition (2) in (CI) is flouted. In this situation, Saul means that Smith is a bad philosopher but fails to conversationally implicate it. Also, it is obvious that Saul has not conventionally implicated that Smith is a good typist! There is speaker meaning but no conversational or conventional implicatures; accordingly, the speaker meaning exhaustiveness claim is not consistent with Grice's (CI) (Saul, 2002, p. 230).

Example 2: Cooperation Interrupted

Saul's second example for the same conclusion involves a violation of condition (1) in (CI). The example goes as follows: Suppose Saul wants to write a letter of recommendation for Smith, the terrible philosopher, and wants to conversationally implicate that he is no good as a philosopher. What she writes in the paper is only about Smith's typing skills and so she expects the audience to pick up her implicature and believe that Smith is a bad philosopher. Unbeknown to her, the audience has received reports that Saul doesn't like writing recommendations and does so only because university regulations make her and most of her recommendation letters are careless and irrelevant. That is to say, they don't consider Saul to be respecting the cooperation principle i.e. Clause (1) of (CI) is not satisfied. As a result, they ignore her recommendation letter and fail to believe that Smith is a bad philosopher based on her letter. Saul has failed to conversationally implicate what she meant. She hasn't conventionally implicated what she meant either. Again, there is speaker meaning, Saul really meant by what she wrote that Smith is a bad philosopher, but no conversational or conventional implicatures. Another counter-example to speaker meaning exhaustiveness (Saul, 2002, pp. 234-235)!

Utterer-Implicatures

Saul takes the above examples to show that the division of speaker meaning to what is said and what is conversationally and conventionally implicated is not accurate and exhaustive of speaker meaning. In order to fix that taxonomy, she devises a new notion, which she calls "utterer-implicature". Utterer-implicatures are defined by Saul by replacing conditions (1) and (2) in (CI) with the following ones (Saul, 2002, p. 235):

> (1*) The speaker thinks that he is presumed to be following the conversational maxims, or at least the Cooperative Principle
>
> (2*) The speaker thinks that the supposition that he is aware that, or thinks that, q is required to make his saying or making as if to say p (or doing so in those terms) consistent with this presumption.

These two conditions plus condition (3) of (CI) constitute the definition for utterer implicature. I call the definition "UI". Thus, in both of the above examples, Saul has utterer-implicated that Smith is a bad philosopher while she has failed to conversationally implicate that proposition. Accordingly, Saul suggests that we replace the original taxonomy with the one that divides speaker meaning to what is said, what is conversationally and conventionally implicated, and what is utterer-implicated[1].

Audience-Implicature

Another notion introduced in Saul (2002) is that of audience-implicature. Saul defines it by replacing conditions (2) and (3) in (CI) with the following (Saul, 2002, p. 242):

> (2A): The audience believes that the supposition that [the speaker] is aware that, or thinks that, q is required to make his saying or making as if to say p (or doing so in those terms) consistent with this presumption
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> (3A): The audience takes the speaker to think that it is within the audience's competence to work out that the supposition mentioned in (2) is required.

These two conditions plus condition (1) of (CI) constitute the definition

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1. Saul (2002) contains another different counterexample to speaker meaning exhaustiveness that I did not mention and discuss in this paper. This counterexample amounts to a further fix to the original taxonomy. See pages 236-7 of Saul (2002)

audience implicature. I call the definition "AI".

Audience implicature is totally dependent on the thoughts of the audience so it may be the case that some proposition is audience implicated while it is neither said nor conversationally or conventionally implicated nor utterer-implicated. This notion is used by Saul in order to illustrate what she thinks is the nature of conversational implicatures and the roles they play in communication.

Saul's Normative Account of Conversational Implicatures

In the final pages of Saul (2002), she tries to show that the notions of utterer and audience implicature not only do not force conversational implicature out of the picture but also help us see the pivotal importance of that notion for a theory of communication.

According to her, "[a] claim which is both utterer implicated and audience implicated … will be one which is successfully communicated: the speaker tried to implicate it, and the audience took it to be implicated" (Saul, 2002, p. 243). So, she asks, given the above fact, does any role remain for conversational implicature to play?

One might be tempted to answer the above question in positive by proposing that any claim that is conversationally implicated is also utterer and audience implicated. But, as Saul explains, this is false. There are conversational implicatures that are not audience implicated (Saul, 2002, p. 243). Consider the following situation: Sally wants to write a recommendation letter for a student, Smith, who is as usual, a bad philosopher. The only things that she writes in the letter are the following: Smith is a skillful rock climber, he types very fast, and he has a vast knowledge of the UK railway system. The audience reads the letter so hastily that the only phrase in the letter that catches their eyes is "vast knowledge". Accordingly, they come to the belief that Smith has a vast knowledge of philosophy and offer him the job. The audience does not believe that understanding Sally to mean that Smith is a bad philosopher is necessary for considering her as respecting the Cooperative Principle. Accordingly, condition (2A) in (AI) is not satisfied. This means that the proposition that Smith is a bad philosopher is not audience implicated (Saul, 2002, p. 244).

On the other hand, note that the audience has taken Sally to be cooperative, i.e. condition (1) in (CI) is satisfied. It is required of them to form the belief that Smith is a bad philosopher if they want to make sense of Sally as a cooperative interlocutor, i.e. condition (2) of (CI) is satisfied. Sally thinks that they can calculate the required claim in (2) and also thinks that they think that she thinks so i.e. condition (3) of (CI) satisfied too. This is to say that Sally has

conversationally implicated that Smith is a bad philosopher. Accordingly, this is a case in which utterer implicature and conversational implicature are present while audience implicature is not (Saul, 2002, p. 244).

The above discussion makes the question about the importance of the notion of conversational implicature more serious. As we saw, Saul believes that any claim which is both utterer and audience implicated is successfully communicated. We also saw in the above example that conversational implicature does not necessarily amount to utter and audience implicature, viz. successful communication. So why should we care about conversational implicatures at all? Saul tries to answer this question in the remainder of the above example:

Here's how the story goes: Later on, the admission committee observes that Smith lacks any competence as a philosopher and complain to Sally for recommending him. How can she defend herself against this charge? Saul's answer is that the fact that Sally has conversationally implicated that Smith is a bad philosopher is what helps her answer the charges. While that claim has not been audience implicated, by conversationally implicating it, Sally has "made it available"[1] and thus has fulfilled her conversational responsibilities. That the audience has been careless in reading the letter and failed to pick up on the conversation is their own fault (Saul, 2002, pp. 244-245).

Saul takes the above example to show the normative role of conversational implicature in communication. Just as one *should* utter certain words with certain conventional meanings if she wants to successfully *say* a specific claim, there are cases in which the audience *should* only attribute those beliefs to the utterer that the utterer has made available via conversational implicature; otherwise, it is the speaker who is culpable for the interruption of the communication (Saul, 2002, pp. 244-245).

Reflections on Saul's Remarks

Against Saul on Successful Communication

Here, I want to criticize the points that Saul makes in the course of her arguing for the normativity of conversational implicature.

First, she explicitly asserts that any claim which is both utterer and audience implicated is successfully communicated. I think this is not true. In order to see this, consider the following case.

Suppose I go to a foreign country for a vacation. One of my friends tells me something about the teachings of the religion of that country. I find the

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1. Saul's term

teaching repugnant. One day, one of our guides who is an adherent of the religion asks me about my opinion of their religion. I decide to convey indirectly that I have no respect for their religion. Let's suppose that I already know that chickens are considered to be sacred by the adherents of the religion. So I answer the guide's question as follows: "I love eating chickens". By saying this, I intend to imply the claim that I have no respect for their religion. Given the conditions in (UI) I have utterer implicated that claim: I (the speaker) think that I have been presumed to be cooperative by my interlocutor; so condition (1*) in (UI) is satisfied. I (the speaker) think the supposition that I don't like and respect the religion is required for making my utterance of "I love eating chickens" compatible with the presumption that I am cooperative; so condition (2*) in (UI) is satisfied. I (the speaker) think and (expect the hearer to think that I think) that the hearer is able to grasp the supposition in (2*); so condition (3) of (CI) which is also part of the definition of utterer-implication is also satisfied

Now suppose the guide has hearing problems and mishears what I said. He hears me saying: "I like Charles Dickens". Now, suppose that Charles Dickens has been one of the fiercest critics and enemies of the religion. Upon mishearing my sentence, the guide comes to believe that I have no respect for their religion. Given the definition of audience-implicature in (AI) the claim that I don't like the religion of that country is audience-implicated: I have been presumed to be cooperative by the guide (the hearer), and this is why he is asking me questions; so condition (1) in (CI) which is also a defining condition for audience-implicature is satisfied. The hearer thinks that attributing to me the belief that I don't like their religion is necessary for making my utterance compatible with the presumption of cooperativeness; so condition (2A) in (AI) is satisfied. The audience thinks that I think that he is able to grasp what I wanted to implicate so condition (3A) in (AI) is also satisfied.

In the above example, the claim that I don't like that country's religion is both utterer and audience implicated. But is it also successfully communicated? I think not! The person to whom I was speaking comes to form the belief that I wanted him to form due to sheer chance. The claim would easily fail to be audience implicated hadn't he misheard "eating chickens" for "Charles Dickens". He could easily have misheard me as saying "I like white pigeons" and in that case, probably a different proposition would be audience-implicated. But I think one of the criteria for successful communication is that the audience comes to believe things, at least partly, as a result of grasping the utterer's intentions. No such thing happens in this situation even though the claim under discussion is both utterer and audience implicated.

Is Saul able to dodge this problem by a minor modification in the above claim? She can say that replacing the above claim with the following solves the

problem: a claim that is both utterer and audience implicated *and* the audience has calculated the audience implicature by grasping and interpreting the very utterance that the utterer wants him to grasp is successfully communicated. This modification probably helps Saul with the counter-example I provided. But I have succeeded to establish that her original claim is false.

Utterer & Audience Implicated but not Conversationally Implicated

The idea that claims can be both utterer and audience implicated but fail to be conversationally implicated is also problematic and can give rise to other problems for Saul's project as well. Recall what Saul's claim was. She believed that the co-presence of utterer and audience implicature is enough for successful communication (Saul, 2002, p. 243). She also believes that conversational implicature allows unsuccessful communication because there are claims that are conversationally implicated but are not audience implicated (Saul, 2002, p. 244). She also repeatedly asks why one might be interested in conversational implicature as a notion besides the intersection of utterer and audience implicature (Saul, 2002, pp. 243-244). This means that in her view, there are examples of successful communication in which a claim is both utterer and audience implicated but not conversationally implicated. But what is it for a claim to be utterer and audience implicated but not conversationally implicated? The definitions (CI), (UI), and (AI) can help us here. Recall that (CI) and (UI) had their condition (3) in common. Also, recall that (AI) and (CI) had their condition (1) in common. Accordingly, the only way for a claim to be both utterer and audience implicated but fail to be conversationally implicated is the abridgment of condition (2) in (CI). What does that condition say? Here's the condition (2):

(2) The supposition that [the utterer] is aware that, or thinks that, q is required to make his saying or making as if to say p (or doing so in THOSE terms) consistent with this presumption.

Thus, to say of a claim that it is both utterer and audience implicated but not conversationally implicated is to say that it's attribution to the utterer by the audience *is not required* for making the utterer cooperative! But if this is so, then what is the explanation for the fact that in such a case, the audience attributes exactly the same belief to the utterer that the utterer intended the audience to attribute? If what Saul says is correct, the audience could attribute a whole host of other beliefs to the utterer and still be able to consider the utterer to be cooperative. If this is correct, then in what sense is the claim under discussion successfully communicated? If what Saul says is correct then the following scenario has to be true: a speaker intends to convey some claim,

Q, by uttering some sentence, S. He uses words and sentences that he thinks enables the hearer to pick up on what he wants to convey. The hearer also considers the speaker to be cooperative and thinks that attributing Q to the speaker is the only way to understand his utterance of S as cooperative. Q is successfully communicated between them. Yet, Q is not required for understanding the speaker as cooperative! I find this scenario quite odd indeed. Saul does not provide us with an example similar to the above scenario that can illuminate what she meant and this is a defect in her paper.

The above discussion also enables us to see another important problem in Saul's work. As we saw in the above discussion, it follows from what Saul says that there are situations in which condition (2A) in (AI) is satisfied while condition (2) in (CI) is not. Here are the two conditions again:

(2) The supposition that [the utterer] is aware that, or thinks that, q is required to make his saying or making as if to say p (or doing so in THOSE terms) consistent with this presumption.

(2A) The audience believes that the supposition that [the speaker] is aware that, or thinks that, q is required to make his saying or making as if to say p (or doing so in those terms) consistent with this presumption.

Situations in which (2A) is satisfied while (2) is not are situations in which the audience thinks the supposition that the speaker has a certain belief is required for making what he says cooperative while *no such supposition is, in fact, required*. But if this is true then who is the agent who does the supposition in the condition (2) above?[1] This is a question Saul (2010) asks in a different context. In Saul (2010), she revisits the two examples that she provided in Saul (2002) against speaker meaning exhaustiveness; the examples that we saw above in section 2. There she considers two possibilities: (i) it is the audience who does the supposition in condition (2) of (CI), (ii) it is the "omniscient theorist" who does the supposition (Saul, 2010, p. 173). The reason why this is important for her is that if it is the omniscient theorist who has to do the supposition then her examples that we saw above against speaker meaning exhaustiveness fail and this is something she acknowledges. In Saul (2010), she embraces (i) and rejects (ii). But as we just saw, embracing (i) is incompatible with what she says about successful communication and the relationship between conversational implicature and the intersection of utterer and audience implicature in Saul (2002). She seems to be embracing a third option here in Saul (2002).

According to what we have seen from her in Saul (2002), she seems to think that the agent who is doing the supposition and presuming in condition

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1. Since condition (1) in (CI) also involves an agent who presumes the speaker to be cooperative, everything that follows about the agent who does the presumption in condition (2) is by the same token true of the agent in condition (1)

(2) of (CI) is an *ideal audience*. Her example, which we saw above, for showing the normative character of conversational implicature makes this clear. The example involves a sloppy audience who reads the letter of recommendation in a hasty manner and thereby misses what the speaker had made available via conversational implicature. In Saul's view then, an ideal, non-sloppy audience would be able to pick up the conversational implicature.

Thus far, I have shown that there is an inconsistency between what Saul says about (CI) in Saul (2002) and Saul (2010). This alone is an interesting result but I think the point can be pushed a little bit further. As I said, Saul (2010) believes that the omniscient theorist option would block her examples against the speaker meaning exhaustiveness thesis. Does the ideal audience option have the same effect? Let's see.

Let's look again at one of the examples she provides against the idea of speaker meaning exhaustiveness. Consider the second example we saw in section 2 above. That example involved an audience who falsely believed that the writer of the recommendation letter is not being cooperative and this false belief prevents the writer of the letter to conversationally implicate what she wanted to implicate. Now, as we just saw in her example about the normative character of conversational implicature, Saul believes that a sloppy audience is not an ideal audience, and the fact that a non-ideal audience fails to pick up the implicature of what a speaker says does not mean that the speaker has failed to implicate what he wanted to implicate.

But if sloppiness makes one a non-ideal audience why having false beliefs about the speaker cannot have the same effect? Now if the audience is non-ideal in the example Saul provides against speaker meaning exhaustiveness then that example fails to hit its target. This is so because the fact that a non-ideal audience has presumed a speaker to be non-cooperative should not mean that the speaker has, in fact, been non-cooperative. It follows that the idea that the audience has to be ideal can block a part of Saul's arguments against speaker meaning exhaustiveness which is one of the main agendas of Saul (2002)[1]. Recall that the idea that the audience has to be ideal for conversational implicature followed from what she said about the intersection of utterer and audience implicature and its relationship with conversational implicature.

Reflections on the Normativity of Conversational Implicature

Saul says that any agent who has conversationally implicated a claim has

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1. Saul's other example against speaker meaning exhaustiveness seems to be untouched by the idea of a non-ideal audience. This is so, because in that example, the speaker fails to conversationally implicate what she meant because of her own ignorance and not because of any defects or incompetence on the audience's part.

thereby made it available to the audience and so has fulfilled her communicative responsibilities. The only necessary conditions that she mentions in Saul (2002) for the existence of conversational implicatures are the ones in (CI). But according to Grice, there is another necessary condition for conversational implicature (Saul, 2010). It is necessary that the claim that the utterer wants to conversationally implicate to be calculable by the audience; that is to say they have to be able to deduce the conversational implicature of what the utterer says from the information they have at their disposal. Here's how Grice puts this point in *Logic and Conversation*: "The presence of a conversational implicature must be capable of being worked out; for even if it can, in fact, be intuitively grasped, unless the intuition is replaceable by an argument, the implicature (if present at all) will not count as a conversational implicature; it will be a conventional implicature." (Grice, 1989, p. 31). The information at the audience's disposal that is to be used for calculating the conversational implicature is the following: "(1) the conventional meaning of the words used, together with the identity of any references that may be involved; (2) the Cooperative Principle and its maxims; (3) the context, linguistic or otherwise, of the utterance; (4) other items of background knowledge; and (5) the fact (or supposed fact) that all relevant items falling under the previous headings are available to both participants and both participants know or assume this to be the case" (Grice, 1989, p. 31).

Saul (2010) calls the above necessary condition the "Calculability Criterion", (CC) hereafter, but Saul (2002) does not mention it at all. Reading Saul (2002) alone would give one the idea that (CI) is enough for establishing her point regarding the normativity of conversational implicatures and capturing the alleged normative character of conversational implicature. On the other hand, in her discussion of the normative character of conversational implicature in Saul (2010) she explicitly mentions (CC) as a necessary condition for conversational implicature besides (CI). This would give one the idea that (CC) has also a role to play in capturing the normative character of conversational implicature. Which claim is true? In this section of this essay, I want to show that if we accept the claim that conversational implicature is the notion that captures the normativity of communication, it cannot be captured by (CI) alone; (CI) has to be supplemented with (CC) in order for conversational implicature to become fit for the task that Saul wants to assign to it. I will try to establish this by showing that there are cases in which all the conditions in (CI) are satisfied but it cannot be said that the utterer has fulfilled his communicative responsibilities.

Suppose that I am a philosopher who is also very well-versed in poetry. I use poems all the time in order to convey philosophical points. Since all of my colleagues are also similar to me in this respect, I fail to note that not all

philosophers are like that. Suppose that I am invited to give a talk. I use a lot of poetry in my presentation as is my wont. The audience is not familiar with poetry so they fail to grasp any of my points. This is a situation in which the audience believes that I am cooperative, certain beliefs that I want to convey are required to be attributed to me in order for my audience to be able to consider me as cooperative, and I believe that my audience is able to pick up on my implication. In this case, the three conditions in (CI) are satisfied but I have failed to communicate my message. Unlike the Sally case above, I think it is me who is to blame for the failure of communication. I unjustifiably extrapolated my competence in poetry to all people and spoke in a way that was not comprehensible for my audience. So, Saul's claim in Saul (2002) that satisfaction of (CI) can capture the needed normativity of communication is at least imprecise.

The claim that conversational implicature is able to capture the normativity of communication becomes more plausible when we bring (CC) into the picture. Taking advantage of the (CC), one might say regarding the above example that it is true that the utterer is the culpable party but that is so because the claims he wanted to implicate were not calculable and so he failed to conversationally implicate them. Conversational implicature is still the notion that captures the normativity of communication.

We have thus far made good progress in elucidating the claim that conversational implicature is normative. Yet, I think more elucidation is needed. I should of course warn beforehand that what I am going to say is a very rough sketch that is proposed to draw attention to certain issues. They are surely underdeveloped and need to be made more precise in future works.

According to (CC), it has to be possible for the hearer to calculate the implicature of what a speaker says. But which notion of possibility is fit for this task? Is it metaphysical possibility or nomological possibility or yet other notion of possibility? I think the suitable notion is possibility according to the laws of the actual world and also the requirements imposed by the context of the exchange. What do I mean by requirements imposed by the context? I mean whether (CC) has been satisfied in a token exchange is highly dependent on factors such as the nature and subject of the exchange or the medium through which the exchange is taking place. For example, in a lecture on philosophy, the speaker need not be worried about whether the implicatures of what he says are calculable by people who have no knowledge of philosophy. He has fulfilled his conversational responsibilities if the implicatures of what he says are calculable by philosophy students and faculty in a reasonable amount of time that allows them to follow his lecture. On the other hand, if he is writing a book, he would still be perfectly fulfilling his conversational duties even if it took the audience more time than in a lecture to calculate the implications of what he says. This is so because the audience of a book usually

has more time than the audience of a lecture.

The moral is that context matters heavily in determining whether the implicatures of a token exchange are calculable. This of course has the consequence that whether the conversational implicatures of a token exchange are calculable is usually subject to a certain degree of indeterminacy. The audience might complain that the speaker has not made the implication fully available to them and the speaker might respond that the audience has not put enough effort into understanding what he wanted to convey to them.

Conclusion

In this paper, I introduced some of Jennifer Saul's views on topics such as speaker meaning and its relationship with conversational implicature, successful communication and its relationship with utterer and audience-implicatures, and the normative nature of conversational implicature. I also critically discussed Saul's view on some of those issues. As we saw, Saul's belief that a claim which is utterer and audience implicated is thereby successfully communicated was false in the way she had proposed it. Also, the idea that a claim can be utterer and audience implicated without being conversationally implicated led to very odd and counterintuitive conclusions. It also gave rise to some difficulties about how to interpret conditions (1) and (2) in (CI). Once we tried to solve those difficulties, we saw that our solution can undermine a part of Saul's case against the thesis of speaker meaning exhaustiveness.

Saul (2002) is a rich paper. Some of the issues she discusses in that paper are not introduced and discussed in my paper but they can be subjects for future research. One good example is her criticism of Wayne Davis's account of implicature in Davis (1998). On the other hand, Saul's claim that conversational implicature has a normative role in communication has come under attack by Davis (2007). Studying and assessing that debate would be a very interesting subject for future research.

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