



MEANING

PAUL GRICE

Mercy Corredor & Frank Campagnano



AN OVERVIEW

- Natural sense: x means that p and x means that p entails p (The spots mean measles)
- Nonnatural meaning: x means that p and x means that p do not entail p
- Intention Based Semantics (IBS)
- How do word and sentence meaning arise?
 - Not only do words mean things, but speakers also mean things when they use words
- Sentence-meaning is explained in terms of speaker-meaning, and speaker-meaning is explained in terms of the beliefs of the speaker and his/her audience



NATURAL SENSE VS. NONNATURAL MEANING

- Natural Sense: “Those spots mean measles” & “The recent budget means that we shall have a hard year”
- For natural meaning we do not know what the spots/recent budget mean in the sense that we do not know their intentions. But rather, in these cases, $x \rightarrow p$ means that x entails p . There is nothing spooky about the natural sense.
- However, nonnatural meaning refers to spookier, more vague, entities. Even if x means_{nn} p , x does not have to entail p and therefore p can be false.



TAIL COATS: WHAT MEANING_{NN} IS NOT

- People have a tendency to put on tail coats to go to a dance
 - People also believe that someone going to a dance would be putting on a tail coat
 - However, just because a person is putting on a tail coat, it does not mean that they are going to a dance
 - Therefore, someone putting on a tail coat does not mean_{nn} anything despite an attitude produced in the audience- even if the audience believes that a man putting on a tail coat is going to a dance, the action is still meaningless
 - This refutes the causal theory of meaning
 - The beliefs that would cause an audience to have by hearing the words is not sufficient to give the meaning of those words
- Grice uses this example to answer C.L. Stevenson's notion that nonnatural meaning is the notion that meaning is derived from x having a tendency to produce in an audience some attitude and to be produced by that attitude insofar as the tendencies are dependant on "an elaborate process of conditioning attending the use of the sign in communication"



GRICE'S GOALS

- To provide necessary and sufficient conditions for “s means that p in uttering ‘s’”
- To avoid spooky entities (such as Frege’s third realm entities)
- To reduce nonnatural meaning to natural meaning



GRICE'S FIRST FAILED ATTEMPT AT DEVELOPING HIS THEORY OF INTENTION BASED SEMANTICS: HANDKERCHIEF

- If B's handkerchief is left at the scene of a murder in an attempt to induce the detective to believe B was the murderer, nothing can be said about what was meant_{nn} by the handkerchief being left there.
- "x meant_{nn} something" would be true if x was intended by its utterer to induce a belief in some "audience" and to say what this belief was would NOT be to say what x meant_{nn}



GRICE'S SECOND FAILED ATTEMPT AT DEVELOPING HIS THEORY OF INTENTION BASED SEMANTICS: MARIO, BOWSER, & PEACH

- 1. Someone takes a picture of Bowser and Peach getting friendly and shows it to Mario
- 2. Someone draws a picture of Bowser and Peach getting friendly and shows it to Mario
- In the first scenario, there is no meaning because the picture speaks for itself and the intention of the person showing the picture is irrelevant.
- In the second scenario, there is meaning but the fact that the drawer of the picture is incapable of knowing how the audience (Mario) will recognize his intentions, suggests that this approach would not be effective in establishing meaning through the use of intention. It is unclear as to whether or not the drawer intends for Mario to interpret the picture as a doodle or as an indication that Bowser and Princess Peach were actually getting friendly.



IBS AND INFORMATIVE CASES

- Grice believes that the meaning of sentences is derived from the utterances of sentences (i.e., what the speaker meant by the use of a sentences)
- “A uttered x with the intention of inducing a belief by means of the recognition of this intention”
- “A must intend to induce by x a belief in an audience, and he must also intend his utterance to be recognized as so intended. But these intentions are not independent; the recognition is intended by A to play its part in inducing the belief, and if it does not do so something will have gone wrong with the fulfillment of A’s intention. Moreover, A’s intending that the recognition should play this part implies, I think, that he assumes that there is some chance that it will in fact play this part, that he does not regard it as a foregone conclusion that the belief will be induced in the audience whether or not the intention behind the utterance is recognized”



IBS AND IMPERATIVE CASES

- A policeman who stops a car by standing in its way is using behavior to constitute a meaningful_{nn} utterance because his standing in the way intends the driver's recognition of his purpose to be effective in getting the driver to stop the car.
 - The policeman in this example expects the driver to understand that he intends for him to slow down.
- Whereas a policeman who stops a car by waving does not intend the recognition of his purpose to be effective of getting the driver to stop the car.



QUESTIONS

- If intention based semantics works and if linguistic phenomena can be reduced to mental states, what are some implications?
- Does intention based semantics do away with third realm vagueness and spookiness?
- Do you agree that linguistic intentions are (very) like nonlinguistic intentions?

