

Background for Grice

foundational semantics: the study of the significance of bearing *semantic properties* (i.e. properties like *being true*, *referring to X*, *being meaningful*, etc.)

intentionality: the property certain things have of *being about* or *representing* other things.
(NB: do not confuse this with *intensionality* with an "s"!)

The *problem of intentionality*: why, and how, do things have intentional properties?

Two main bearers of intentionality:

- (A) Mental States. (e.g. beliefs, desires, fears, hopes, etc.)
- (B) Linguistic entities. (words, sentences, utterances of sentences, etc.)

Two questions:

- How do these entities each get their intentional properties?
- How, if at all, are the intentional properties of these entities *related*?

Grice's work is important in part because it helps show how linguistic entities might get their intentional properties from mental intentional properties. So mental intentionality is in some ways "primary", and linguistic intentionality is "derivative".

In particular, Grice will supply an *analysis* (in the traditional sense) of linguistic meaning into the intentional properties of thought.

Analysis, Necessary and Sufficient Conditions

- A is a **necessary** condition for B: whenever B is the case A must be as well.
- A is a **sufficient** condition for B: whenever A is the case, B must be as well.

Examples:

- Having 120 credits is a necessary but *not* sufficient condition for graduating from Pitt (you need to do other things too).
- Being elected by unanimous vote in the presidential election is a sufficient but *not* necessary condition for becoming President of the United States (you could do it with far fewer votes).
- Being an unmarried male is a necessary and sufficient condition for being a bachelor.

Is *being red* necessary/sufficient for *being colored*?

Is *being over 4 ft tall* necessary/sufficient for *being over 5 ft tall*?

Is *being conscious* necessary/sufficient for *having a brain*?

Type/Token Distinction

How many words are written below?

blue, blue

In one sense there is only *one* word: the word "blue". This is what is called a word *type*. In another sense there are *two* words: two instances of the word type "blue". These are what are called word *tokens*. (It's important to keep these distinct between word *types* might have different semantic properties than word *tokens*.)

Grice's Project

Roughly: Grice is trying to give an illuminating analysis (necessary and sufficient conditions) of certain uses of "means" that will also illuminate the connections between the *intentionality* of language and the *intentionality* thought. But first we need to clarify what "means" means...

Distinction 1: Natural v. Non-Natural Meaning

Natural Meaning: a kind of meaning which indicates decisive evidence.

- E.g.
- (1) That smoke means that there is a fire over there.
 - (2) Those spots mean you're eventually going to get a rash.
 - (3) His cool demeanor must mean he passed the exam.

Reports of natural meaning are *factive*: If the report "X means (that) p" is true, then so is its complement "p".

Other factive constructions: "discovered that", "saw that", "realized that". What about these?

- "believes that"
- "knows that"
- "is afraid that"
- "learned that"

Non-Natural Meaning: a kind of meaning connected with communication and intentionality.

- E.g.
- (4) When I said "leave!" I meant "scram!"
 - (5) "Agua" means "water" in Spanish.
 - (6) Two lit lanterns mean "the British are coming by sea".

This kind of meaning is *not* factive.

Distinction 2: Sentence, Utterance, and Speaker Meaning

Sentence and word *types* have meaning:

"Jones veut de l'eau" means "Jones wants water"
"agua" means "water"

Utterances (the act of producing a sentence or word *token*)

An utterance of "I am hungry" by a speaker means that the speaker is hungry.
Raul's utterance of "Sally went to the bank" meant that Sally went to the river's edge.

[NB: an "utterance" for Grice figures more broadly as any communicative act (token), e.g. grunts, waves, etc.]

Speakers mean things:

What Mira meant by saying "that suitcase is too big" is that she couldn't carry it.
By grunting, Jones meant that he assented to the provisional contract.

The project:

Step 1: Analyze sentence(/word) meaning in terms of speaker meaning.

Step 2: Analyze utterance meaning in terms of speaker meaning.

Step 3: Analyze speaker meaning in terms of speaker intentions.

The project of reducing talk of meaning to speaker intentions (or other kinds of mental intentionality) is known as *intention-based semantics*.

Here's roughly how the first two analyses go.

A sentence (type) means that X just in case speakers 'standardly'
mean that X in utterances of those words.

An utterance of a sentence (i.e. a token) meant that X just in case the
speaker meant X by those words.