

# An alternative view of the relationship between meaning and speaker-meaning

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Though Grice was clearly correct that there is a fundamental distinction between meaning and speaker-meaning, his view that we can analyze the former in terms of the latter faces serious problems. How might we view the relationship between meaning and speaker-meaning if we're convinced that there's something wrong with the Gricean program?

One possibility is that we reverse the Gricean order of explanation, and analyze speaker-meaning partly in terms of sentence meaning. This needn't involve the (false) view that every time you utter a sentence, you mean the proposition which the sentence means, relative to the context. We might think about it like this: the default is that when you utter a sentence which means  $p$ , you mean  $p$  by your utterance. However, there are various things the speaker can do which override this rule: the speaker might be telling a joke, or speaking metaphorically or sarcastically, and so on. Of course, we then owe an account of what it is for a speaker to tell a joke, speak metaphorically, etc.; and in giving such an account we can appeal to the intentions of the speaker as well as the meaning of the sentence in the context.

If no such overriding factors are present, the speaker means  $p$  by his utterance. The speaker needn't have any special intentions in order to mean  $p$  by the utterance, other than the intention to utter the relevant sentence. Typically in such cases the speaker will mean more than one thing by his utterance. Other than the meaning of the sentence in the context, the speaker might also mean various other propositions which are obvious consequences of the proposition expressed by the sentence, or perhaps obvious consequences of that proposition along with background assumptions in the relevant conversation. Speaker intentions might be relevant in this sort of case as well; but they'd play the role of determining, given that the speaker means the proposition which the sentence expresses, which further propositions the speaker means.