That a speaker is cooperative does not imply that they will make true, relevant, informative, and clear contributions, i.e., that they will comply with all the Gricean maxims. Grice already acknowledged that maxims could be cooperatively violated [1]. Rather, the Gricean maxims seem to characterize *ideal* cooperativity, whereas *actual* cooperativity implies merely that speakers will 'try their best', e.g., that they will try to maximize the degree to which the ideal may be reached.

However, the presumption of actual cooperativity is too weak to explain most conversational implicatures of interest. It also leaves *Moore's paradox* [2] unexplained: uttering "It is raining but I don't believe it" will imply merely that the speaker is *trying her best* to say something truthful, relevant, etc., and this alone does not imply that which is commonly taken to explain the paradox: that the speaker believes that it is raining (while believing that she doesn't believe it).

The present paper details the following way out of this predicament: it is *actually* cooperative for a speaker to indicate whether she is being *ideally* cooperative or not. For instance, an actually cooperative speaker who is unsure about the truth, relevance, informativeness or clarity of her contribution, will indicate this to the addressee. In English, plausible candidates for doing so could be: raising an eyebrow, shrugging one's shoulders, or producing an utterance-final rising pitch, in addition to an open-ended set of more explicit cues (e.g., "not sure if this is relevant, but..."). In the paper, we refer to previous work on English intonational phonology in order to make more concrete how maxim violations may be marked by means of the utterance-final rising pitch.

Although having some knowledge about the ways in which maxim violations could be indicated may be advisable when doing pragmatics, it could be safe to assume that full compliance with the maxims, i.e., ideal cooperativity, is (or tends to be) the unmarked case. If so, then the essence of traditional explanations of conversational implicatures, along with the traditional explanation of Moore's paradox, can be maintained despite their reliance on an idealized notion of cooperativity.

The idea that maxim violations ought to be marked goes back to Grice, and is frequently hinted at throughout the pragmatics literature. However, it has a number of substantial philosophical and linguistic consequences that, to our awareness, have not yet been explicated, and that, furthermore, seem to go against a number of dogmata in the field. The present paper will highlight three.

First, to the extent that the marking of maxim violations (and, hence, of compliance with the maxims) is mediated by (linguistic) conventions, the cooperativeness of doing so implies that Gricean *conversational implicatures* are communicated, in effect, by *conventional* means. This suggests (or, we think: draws our attention to an undervalued feature of Grice's proposal) that the distinction between 'conversational' and 'conventional' content is primarily a distinction between modes of explanation, not necessarily between qualitatively different types of content.

Second, it confronts us with the common misconception that Grice's 'cancelability' of conversational implicatures, which he derives from their reliance on the maxims, would imply their defeasibility or 'weakness', in some sense in which semantic entailments, qua parts of speaker meaning, would be 'strong' (e.g., [3]). This misconception is fed by the idea that compliance with the maxims is merely a tentative, uncertain presumption. But if maxim violations must be indicated, then the latter idea is unfounded, and reliance on the maxims is not necessarily a source of uncertainty. This point builds on work previously presented at SPE, in which various other arguments were given against the commonly supposed weakness of conversational implicatures.

Third, the distinction between ideal and actual cooperativity suggest a division of labour between logical (qualitative, maxim-based, 'Gricean') approaches to pragmatics, and numerical (quantitative, probabilistic, utility-based) approaches, such as Relevance Theory [4] and the more recent game-theoretic wave (e.g., [5]). The former may seek to characterize ideal cooperativity, the latter actual cooperativity, and each has an important but, we hope to have made clear, distinct role to play. To motivate a numerical approach by, as is often done, criticizing the logical approach for not saying anything about the resolution of clashes between the maxims, i.e., about actual cooperativity, is to overlook the independent relevance of the ideal notion.

References

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