

Maciej Witek

Accommodation and Convention*

Abstract: The paper develops a non-Gricean account of accommodation: a context-adjusting process guided by the assumption that the speaker’s utterance constitutes an appropriate conversational move. The paper is organized into three parts. The first one reconstructs the basic tenets of Lepore and Stone’s non-Gricean model of meaning-making, which results from integrating direct intentionalism and extended semantics. The second part discusses the phenomenon of accommodation as it occurs in conversational practice. The third part uses the tenets of the non-Gricean model of meaning-making to account for the discursive mechanisms underlying accommodation; the proposed account relies on a distinction between the rules of appropriateness, which form part of extended grammar, and the Maxim of Appropriateness, which functions as a discursive norm guiding our conversational practice.

In *Imagination and Convention* Ernie Lepore and Matthew Stone (2015) propose a non-Gricean model of the conversational practice of meaning-making, which combines two different though closely related theoretical perspectives: direct intentionalism and extended semantics.

According to direct intentionalism, the meaning of an utterance is determined not by the speaker’s *communicative intention* – i.e., her intention to get the hearer to respond to this utterance in a certain way by means of getting him to recognize this intention (Grice 1989: 219) – but by her *basic intention* of “performing an utterance of a specified linguistic structure [and] contributing its grammatically specified meaning to an ongoing conversation” (Lepore & Stone 2015: 208). The meaning-constituting intention of the speaker, then, does not commit her to producing a cooperative

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response on the part of the hearer. Rather, its fulfilment consists in updating the conversational record – an abstract data structure that represents the evolving state of the conversation – with the conventionally determined meaning of her utterance.

I use the term “extended semantics” to refer to a view that results from rejecting the Gricean model of *bare-bones semantics*. According to Grice (1989) and his followers (Bach and Harnish 1979; Bach 1994; Recanati 2004, 2010; Korta & Perry 2011; Wilson & Sperber 2012), the domain of conventional meanings is very narrow and should be identified with what can be determined by the rules of lexical and compositional semantics. Lepore and Stone claim, in contrast, that the scope of linguistic conventions that constitute the grammar of a given language – i.e., what every competent user of the language knows – is broader; namely, it comprises rules and norms that determine “wide range of interpretive constraints over and above semantics as traditionally assumed [by the proponents of the Gricean program]” (Lepore & Stone 2015: 87). What is more, the rules postulated by extended semantics play a key role in determining many allegedly pragmatic contents. As a result, some of the interpretive effects that are traditionally accounted for along the Gricean or neo-Gricean lines – i.e., as cases of conversational implicatures (Grice 1989) or free enrichments (Recanati 2004, 2010), respectively – can be re-described in terms of basic intentions and grammatically specified updates to the conversational record.

One type of allegedly pragmatic interpretive effects that can be explained as cases of conventionally determined meanings involve accommodation. Roughly speaking, accommodation is a discursive mechanism whereby the conversational record is updated not only by the direct effects of the speaker's speech act – her assertion, promise, order, and so on – but also by the preconditions of the appropriateness of this act, i.e., by what is required by its felicity, truth, or other types of success (Lewis 1979; Thomason 1990; Thomason *et al.* 2006). Consider, for example, sentence (1):

(1) I have to pick up my sister at the airport.

There are at least two propositions that the felicitous utterance of sentence (1) contributes to the conversational record: (i) that the speaker has to pick up her sister at the airport, and (ii) that the speaker has a sister. The mechanism responsible for contributing proposition (i) is direct and explicit: the utterance is publicly recognized as a felicitous assertion, whereas the proper function of every speech act of this type is to update the conversational record with the proposition that the speaker asserts. In contrast, proposition (ii) is contributed indirectly or implicitly, through an accommodating mechanism that operates against the background of rules of appropriateness or rules of felicity. One of the rules constituting this background says that the felicity of an assertion made in uttering sentence (1) requires the speaker's commitment to the proposition that the speaker has a sister; in other words, this proposition constitutes the presupposition of the speaker's act. Therefore, the public recognition of the utterance of (1) as an appropriate assertion automatically results in adding what it presupposes to the conversational record.

According to some scholars, accommodation should be accounted for along the Gricean lines, e.g., by reference to general principles of rationality and cooperation (Thomason 1990) or in terms of exploiting conversational maxims of appropriateness (Stalnaker 1998, 2002). Lepore and Stone claim, in contrast, that the mechanisms underlying accommodation can be reinterpreted from the standpoint of their non-Gricean model of meaning-making. In particular, they suggest that accommodation should be regarded as a case of signalling and that “tacit actions by which interlocutors can implicitly advance the state of conversation” – that is, their private though publicly recognizable commitments to presuppositions and other preconditions of their speech acts – should be viewed “as a part of [their] conventional competence in pursuing their goals through conversation” (Lepore & Stone 2015: 217). My aim in this paper is to elaborate on these ideas and, as a result, to develop a more detailed non-Gricean account of the convention-guided mechanisms underlying accommodation.

The paper is organized into three parts. In the first one, I start by reconstructing and discussing the basic tenets of Lepore and Stone's non-Gricean model of meaning-making, that results from integrating direct intentionalism and extended semantics. In the second part, I describe the phenomenon of accommodation as it occurs in conversational practice. In the third part I use the tenets of the non-Gricean model of meaning-making to account for the discursive mechanisms underlying accommodation; in particular, I argue that the difference between the resulting account and the Gricean models proposed by Stalnaker (1998, 2002) and Thomason (1990) is not as big as one could expect.

1. The non-Gricean model of meaning-making

According to the Gricean project in the philosophy of language (Grice 1989; Bach & Harnish 1979; Bach 1994; Korta & Perry 2011; Wilson & Sperber 2012), the meaning of a conversational move is determined by the speaker's communicative intention, which is both prospective and reflexive. It is prospective, because it commits the speaker to producing an arbitrary response – cognitive or practical – on the part of the hearer; its fulfilment, then, goes “beyond what [the speaker] can control or orchestrate” (Lepore & Stone 2015: 204). In saying that it is reflexive, in turn, I allow for a specific mechanism whereby the hearer's response is to be produced: the fulfilment of a communicative intention necessarily involves (Grice 1989) or even consists in (Bach & Harnish 1979; cf Witek 2009) its recognition. The proponents of the Gricean project claim, then, that successful communication consists in the speakers' expressing and the hearers' recognizing prospective and reflexive communicative intentions. In other words, every act of successful communication results in the *mutual* recognition of the speaker's meaning-constituting intention and, as the corollary of this, contributes its meaning to the common ground construed of as “the mutually recognized shared information in a situation in which [the] act of trying to communicate takes place” (Stalnaker 2002: 704).

The proponents of the Gricean project also claim that verbal comprehension “involves a mixture of coding and inference” (Wilson and Sperber 2012: 263). The “coding” part of this process consists in using the rules of the lexical and compositional semantics of the speaker's language to produce a representation of the grammatically specified meaning of the linguistic form she utters. This representation is an input to the pragmatic inference whose function is to recognize the speaker's communicative intention. The inference is guided by general pragmatic principles – e.g., the Principle of Cooperation (Grice 1989) or the Principle of Relevance (Wilson and Sperber 2012) – and operates on relevant contextual information representing the state of conversation at which the utterance is produced.

According to the Gricean project, then, the meaning of a conversation move is constituted by the reflexive and prospective intention with which it is made. For this reason, Lepore and Stone call the Gricean account of meaning-constitution *prospective intentionalism* (Lepore and Stone 2015: 200). The recognition of the speaker's communicative intention involves general pragmatic reasoning and results in updating the common ground among the participants in a dialogue, i.e., the set of proposition they mutually believe or accept. The proponents of the Gricean program acknowledge that grammatically determined information – i.e., the representation of the semantically determined meaning of the linguistic form uttered by the speaker – plays a role in the inferential process underlying verbal comprehension. They claim, however, that the grammatically specified input to pragmatic reasoning is very poor and comes down to what can be determined by the rules of lexical and compositional semantics. In short, the Griceans assume the *bare-bones* model of semantics (Lepore and Stone 2015: 3), which plays a key role in pragmatic theories of *conversational implicatures* (Grice 1989; Bach and Harnish 1979; Korta and Perry 2011), *conversational implicitures* (Bach 1994) and *linguistic or semantic underdeterminacy* (Recanati 2004, 2010; Wilson and Sperber 2012; cf Witek 2015b). What these theories have in common are two ideas: first, that the grammatically specified meaning of an utterance underdetermines its

conversational function and communicated content and, second, that what fills the gap is a pragmatic reasoning guided by general pragmatic principles. In sum, the Griceans claim that most of the interpretive effects of our conversational moves are pragmatically rather than grammatically determined.

Lepore and Stone reject prospective intentionalism about meaning-constitution. They replace it with direct intentionalism: the view according to which the meaning of a conversational move is determined by the direct intention with which it is made, i.e., by the speaker's intention of producing an utterance of a certain form and contributing its grammatically specified meaning to the conversational record among the participants in a dialogue. Note that the speaker's basic intention, unlike her prospective intentions in communication, does not commit her to evoking an arbitrary response on the part of the hearer. Rather, it is used directly in controlling her act of producing an utterance equipped with certain lexical, syntactic and semantic properties. It is also instructive to note that the utterance thereby produced contributes its conventionally specified meaning not to the common ground construed of as the set of propositions presupposed or mutually accepted by the interacting agents, but to what Lepore and Stone call – following Thomason (1990) – the conversational record (for a discussion of the difference between the common ground and the conversational record see Lepore and Stone 2015: 250-256). The conversational record is an abstract data structure whose elements represent publicly recognizable effects of conversational moves, where “publicly recognizable” means “established by direct intentions that operate against the shared background of the rules and norms of meaning-making”. Unlike components of the common ground, elements of the conversational record do not have to be mutually recognized by the participants in a dialogue (no wonder, since direct intentions are not reflexive and, in this connection, their fulfilment does not require their recognition); rather, we expect them to be publicly recognizable or, more specifically, recognizable in virtue of being established by shared conversational standards, norms and rules.

Lepore and Stone reject also the Gricean bare-bones model of semantics and embrace a view that can be called *extended semantics*. More specifically, they adopt the strategy “of limiting the role of metapsychological processes in verbal comprehension [by arguing] for an extension in the domain of grammar, and hence in the scope of (non-metapsychological) linguistic decoding process” (Wilson & Sperber 2012: 163; to say that a given interpretive process is metapsychological is to say that it involves reasoning about the speaker's intentions and other her mental states). They claim, namely, that the scope of our linguistic conventions is broader than it is assumed by the proponents of the Gricean program; in fact, in planning and interpreting particular conversational moves we use an inventory of heterogeneous rules, norms and standards, the totality of which constitutes what can be called the *extended grammar*. The rules of the extended grammar function as conventions in Lewis' (2002) sense: their job is to help interlocutor in achieving coordination between their representations of the conversational record.

It is worth noting that one consequence of accepting extended semantics is a narrowing of the scope of interpretive effect that are traditionally accounted for along the Gricean lines. According to Lepore and Stone, “the specific interpretations we find in [some of] these cases are (...) a matter of linguistic knowledge that associates forms with interpretive constraints which completely determine the content of interpretation. Pragmatics merely disambiguates” (Lepore & Stone 2015: 94). In other words, the rules of the extended grammar produce ambiguities that are subsequently solved by pragmatic considerations. It is instructive to stress – following Bach (1994: 125) – that “ambiguity is semantic overdetermination” rather than linguistic underdeterminacy. Consistently, disambiguation is a weak pragmatic process that is linguistically mandated and controlled and as such should be carefully distinguished from strong pragmatic processes of free enrichment that are linguistically optional and uncontrolled (for a discussion of this topic, see Recanati 2004 and 2010). According to Lepore and Stone, then, verbal comprehension involves a mixture of coding and disambiguation, where the latter is a weak pragmatic process.

For the sake of illustration, let us consider the following three examples discussed by Lepore and Stone:

- (2) Can I have the French Toast?
- (3) a. A: I'm out of gas.
b. B: There is a gas station around the corner.
- (4) Oil price doubled and demand for consumer goods plunged.
- (5) Well, it looked red.

The speaker who utters sentence (2) can naturally be taken to make a request for the French Toast. Note also that after hearing sentence (3b), speaker A is entitled to think that the gas station to which speaker B refers is open. Next, after hearing an utterance of sentence (4) it is natural to assume that the two events under consideration – i.e., that oil price doubled and that demand for consumer goods plunged – are described in the order that they occur: oil prices doubled and *then* demand for consumer goods plunged. Finally, let us assume that sentence (5) is uttered in response to one's opinion that a certain handkerchief was red; in such a situation, it is natural to assume that in uttering (5) the speaker communicates that the handkerchief under discussion might not be red.

Let us note that all the above mentioned interpretive effects go beyond what can be determined with the help of the bare-bones semantic rules of English. According to the proponents of the Gricean program, then, they should be explained as cases of conversational implicatures or free enrichments. For example, one can say, following Searle (1979: 30-57) that the indirect request made in uttering sentence (2) is communicated at the level of what is conversationally implicated and as such is calculated along the Gricean lines. One can also explain the interpretive effects of the utterances of sentences (4) and (5) as conversational implicatures calculated from the Maxim of Manner and the Maxim of Quantity, respectively. Finally, the proposition conveyed by speaker B in

dialogue (3) – i.e., that the gas station is open – can be explained either as a case of implicature calculable from the Maxim of Relevance (see Grice 1989: 32) or as a result of free enrichment construed of as a linguistically optional process (see Recanati 2004: 45).

In contrast, the non-Gricean model of meaning-making developed by Lepore and Stone allows us to redescribe all the interpretive effects in question as cases of grammatically specified meanings. Following Asher and Lascarides (2001), one can explain the request made in uttering sentence (2) as a conventionalised indirect speech act; more specifically, one can assume that the extended grammar ascribes to sentence (2) the so-called dot type *question•request* that triggers the process of *dot exploitation* (roughly speaking, the idea that sentence (2) encodes the dot type *question•request* plays a key role in explaining its 'puzzling' linguistic behaviour, i.e., that normally its utterances behave simultaneously as questions and requests; for a discussion of this issue, see Asher & Lascarides 2001). Next, one can account for the assumption allegedly implicated by speaker B in dialogue (3) – i.e., the proposition to the effect that the gas station is open – by referring to what Lepore and Stone call the grammar of speech acts: the system of rhetorical structure rules posited by Asher and Lascarides (2001, 2003; cf Witek 2015a). More specifically, it is possible to argue that the conversational contribution made by B in her utterance of sentence (3b) stands in the relation of *Plan-Elaboration* to the contribution made by speaker A in his utterance of (3a); roughly speaking, to say that contribution β stands in the relation of *Plan-Elaboration to* contribution α is to say that the goal behind β is to provide information that would help the speaker of α elaborate a plan for achieving his conversational or domain goals (for a discussion of this topic see Asher & Lascarides 2001 and 2003). Finally, according to Lepore and Stone, the interpretive effects ascribed to utterances of sentences (4) and (5) can be redescribed as cases of conventionally specified meanings and accounted for by reference to the rules of the grammar of discourse reference and the grammar of information structure, respectively.

In sum, the gist of the model advocated by Lepore and Stone is that our conversational practice of meaning-making is an intentional rule-governed activity. It is intentional, because the meaning of a conversational contribution is determined by the basic intention with which it is made. In saying that it is rule-governed, we allow for the fact that basic intentions of interlocutors can function only against a shared background of conversational standards and norms that constitute the extended grammar and as such cannot be reduced to the system of bare-bones semantic rules. What is more, every act of meaning-making updates not the common ground among the participants in a dialogue, but what Lepore and Stone call the conversational record: an abstract data structure whose function is to track and represent publicly recognizable contributions to the state of the conversation.

2. Accommodation in conversational practice

Generally speaking, accommodation is a discursive mechanisms whereby the context of an utterance is implicitly adjusted or repaired so as to maintain the assumption that the utterance is an appropriate speech act of a certain type. In other words, if a given utterance takes effect as an appropriate assertion, promise, order, suggestion, and so on, and its appropriateness requires certain features of the context, then normally the context is adjusted so as to meet this requirement.

The term “accommodation” comes from Lewis (1979), who in “Scorekeeping in a Language Game” proposes the following general description of the discursive mechanism in question:

- (6) If at time t something is said that requires component s_n of conversational score to have a value in the range r if what is said is to be true, or otherwise acceptable; and if s_n does not have a value in the range r just before t ; and if such-and-such further conditions hold; then at t the score-component s_n takes some value in the range r . (Lewis 1979: 347)

What Lewis calls the *conversational score* is a sequence of abstract elements that represent contextual features relative to which a given utterance is to be interpreted and evaluated. In this respect, it can be likened to the conversation record in Lepore and Stone's sense, i.e., to the abstract data structure whose elements represent those aspects of the state of the conversation "that are specifically established by the [conventional] rules for meaning-making and inquiry" (Lepore & Stone 2015: 247). In his paper, Lewis discusses a few cases of accommodation, that involve the adjustment of such contextual factors as presuppositions, the borderline between what is permissible and what is impermissible, points of reference, rankings of comparative salience, standards of precision, and so on. In what follows, however, let us focus on two examples of accommodation: one involving accommodating presuppositions and the other consisting in indirectly establishing authority.

Let us consider a situation in which Sue utters the following two sentences:

- (7) a. I need to cancel our meeting. b. I have to pick up my sister at the airport.

In uttering sentence (7a), Sue *informs* her interlocutor that she needs to cancel their meeting; in uttering (7b), in turn, she *informs* him that she has to pick up her sister at the airport and thereby *explains* why she needs to cancel the meeting. As a result, the conversational record is updated with the following propositions: (i) Sue needs to cancel the meeting, (ii) Sue has to pick up her sister at the airport, and (iii) the fact registered by (ii) explains the fact registered by (i). Note, however, that it is equally natural to assume that the record is updated by what the utterance of (7b) presupposes, i.e., by the proposition that (iv) Sue has a sister. The accommodating mechanism behind this update is indirect and can be accounted for along the lines of pattern (6). More precisely, it uses the fact that the appropriateness of the speech act made in uttering sentence (7b) requires that the speaker is committed to proposition (iv). As the corollary of this, the public recognition of the utterance of (7b)

as constituting appropriate acts of informing and explaining involves adding proposition (iv) to the conversational record of the ongoing conversation.

Sue's speech act made in uttering sentence (7b) involves the so-called *informative presupposition*: a phenomenon that poses a challenge to the common-ground account of pragmatic presupposition (for a discussion of this topic see Stalnaker 2002; von Stechow 2008; Abbott, 2008; Gauker 1998). Assume, namely, that Sue knows at the moment of the utterance of sentence (7b) that proposition (iv) is not part of the common ground; in other words, she seems to flout the rule of appropriateness that plays a key role in the accommodating mechanism under discussion. Nevertheless, her utterance produces no sense of inappropriateness. How is it possible? What is more, the rule according to which it is appropriate to make an assertion is uttering a sentence involving a definite description "the *F*" only if the proposition expressed by the sentence "the *F* exists" is part of the common ground seems to be routinely flouted without producing a feeling of abnormality. As Lewis observed,

it's not as easy as you might think to say something that will be unacceptable for lack of required presuppositions. Say something that requires a missing presupposition, and straightway that presupposition springs into existence, making what you said acceptable after all. (Lewis 1975: 339)

For this reason, accommodation seems to give rise to a serious methodological problem recognized by Thomason (1990) and other critics of the common-ground theory of presuppositions (Abbot 2008; Gauker 1998). That is to say, it seems to loosen the connection between pragmatic generalisations about patterns of language use and linguistic evidence, resulting in depriving the generalisations of empirical content. Following Abbot (2008) and Thomason (1990; cf Thomason *et al.* 2006), however, I assume that an adequate model of accommodation do not have to assume the common-ground model of presupposition. I return to this topic at the end of this section.

Now, let me come to discussing a case of accommodation that results in implicitly established authority. Assume that Ann and other shipwrecked passengers who survived a plane crash found themselves on a desert island. They are shocked. Nobody knows what to do. Suddenly Ann takes the initiative and utters the following sentence:

(8) Go and pick up wood.

The addressees comply with what they are told. Let us assume that in doing this they implicitly take Ann's utterance of sentence (8) to be a felicitous and binding order. As a result, two normative facts become part of the conversational record among the shipwrecked passengers: the addressees' obligation to go and pick up wood and Ann's being entitled to expect them to do it. It is worth noting, however, that in making this felicitous order Ann indirectly or tacitly establishes her authority over the members of the audience: her power to issue binding orders to them becomes part of the conversational record. More precisely, Ann's authority over other members of the shipwrecked group is accommodated as a result of publicly recognizing her utterance of (7) as a binding order. What makes this accommodation possible is the fact that Ann's authority is required by the felicity of her orders. For this reason, the mechanism underlying the case of accommodation under discussion can be described and accounted for along the lines of pattern (6) (for a detailed discussion of this issue see Witek 2013 and Witek 2015c). It is also instructive to note, following Langton (forthcoming a, forthcoming b), that one of the preconditions for the successful establishment of Ann's authority is that her audience fails to block her tacit action.

Lewis takes pattern (6) to be a generalisation that “reports the empirical discovery of a linguistic [regularity]” (Lepore and Stone 2015: 32). Thomason (1990), in contrast, reinterprets it as a general rule of collaboration and accounts for cases of accommodation along the general Gricean lines. Roughly speaking, he assumes that accommodation consists in eliminating obstacles to the

achievement of adopted or shared goals. More specifically, he claims that the intention underlying an agent's action – let us call it the agent's *primary intention* and the action that results from its execution the agent's *public action* – is a complex structure that involves the agent's intended goals, the plan that specifies the method of its achievement, and preconditions “on which the success of the intention depends” (Thomason *et al.* 2006: 11). The preconditions in question can be spelled out in terms of the agent's commitments to certain states of affairs or the truth of certain proposition. These commitments are tacit actions implicitly made by the agent in the performance of her public action. We can say, then, that in performing her public action, the agent reveals or signals the tacit action that is part of her primary intention. For example, the primary intention underlying Sue's utterance of sentence (7b) is to *inform* the addressee that she has to pick up her sister at the airport and thereby to *explain* why she needs to cancel the meeting. One of the preconditions for the success of this intention is Sue's background commitment to proposition (iv). In uttering sentence (7b), then, she performs her primary acts of *informing* and *explaining* and, in doing this, she *reveals* her commitment to proposition (iv) or, in other words, she *signals* her presupposition that she has a sister. A cooperative hearer, in recognizing and adopting her primary intention, accommodates the precondition for its fulfilment, that is, accommodates the presupposition to the effect that Sue has a sister. The accommodation results in what Thomason, Stone and DeVault call *enlightened update*: a situation in which “the conversation moves forward not just through the positive effects of interlocutors' utterances but also from the retrospective insight interlocutors gain about one another's mental states from observing what they do” (Thomason *et al.* 2006: 5).

In short, what Thomason, Stone and DeVault call enlightened update consists in the speaker's revealing and the hearer's recognizing the tacit action the speaker makes in performing her public act. Indeed, it is a case of obstacle elimination: by recognizing and adopting the speaker's presupposition, the hearer eliminates – as part of their cooperatively working together to coordinate their representations of the conversational record – the obstacle to the fulfilment of the speaker's

primary intention. It is instructive to note, however, that in saying that the speaker presupposes a certain proposition, Thomason, Stone and DeVault do not commit themselves to the claim that the speaker presumes that this proposition is mutually believed or accepted. The gist of their model is that presuppositions are to be analysed in terms of the speaker's private though publicly recognizable commitments or tacit actions rather than in terms of the speaker's beliefs or assumptions about the content of the common ground. The model under consideration, then, is not committed to the Stalnakerian pragmatic rules “requiring an utterance involving a presupposition to be appropriate only if its presuppositions are mutually supposed at that stage of the conversation” (Thomason *et al.* 2006: 33); as a result, we can use it to account for the phenomenon of informative presuppositions without giving rise to the methodological problems discussed above.

3. Accommodation from the standpoint of the non-Gricean model of meaning-making

There seems to be a gap in the *enlightened update model* of accommodation discussed in the previous section. It assumes, namely, that successful accommodation consists in the speaker signalling and the hearer recognizing the speaker's tacit action, i.e., her action that she is committed to make implicitly as part of the performance of her public act. It is not clear, however, what is the source of this commitment. In other words, in virtue of what does the speaker's primary intention commit her to a particular tacit action?

After rejecting the Stalnakerian pragmatic rules of appropriateness – understood as generalisations about the patterns of language use – Thomason, Stone and DeVault claim:

the alternative rules that emerge from the ideas presented above would rather be (1) that an utterance involves a presupposition if the intention underlying the utterance is committed to the presupposition, and (2) that an utterance is only appropriate to the extent that its presuppositions can be recognized and added to the common ground. (Thomason *et al.* 2006: 33).

According to claim (2), the appropriateness of an utterance is to be analysed in terms of the cognitive effort required for the recognition of its presuppositions: “[f]or accommodation to work well, it should be cognitively inexpensive” (*ibid*). In other words, presuppositions of appropriate speech acts should be easily recognizable. According to claim (1), in turn, presuppositions are to be identified with tacit actions that the speaker is committed to by her primary intention in communicative action. One can ask, however, what is the origin of this commitment or, in other words, in virtue of what a given primary intention commits the speaker to a particular presupposition. One can also ask what makes the presupposition easily recognizable, i.e., in virtue of what the speaker can successfully signal them and, as a result, to make them part of the conversational record. In my view, these two questions can be answered by referring to the central tenets of Lepore and Stone's model of meaning making.

Recall that in *Imagination and Convention* Lepore and Stone suggest that the enlightened update model of accommodation can and should be reinterpreted from the standpoint of direct intentionalism (Lepore & Stone 2015: 216). In my view, it is natural to read this suggestion as supposing that the primary intention behind the speaker's public communicative action is to be regarded as her basic rather than prospective intention. For example, Sue's primary intention behind her utterance of sentence (7b) is to utter this sentence in accordance with the syntactic and lexical rules of English and thereby to contribute its grammatically determined meaning to the conversational record. In other words, in uttering sentences (7a) and (7b), Sue uses certain rules of meaning-making – that belong to the grammar of English – to signal a series of propositions that she intends to contribute to the conversational record:

- (i) Sue needs to cancel the meeting,
- (ii) Sue has to pick up her sister at the airport,

(iii) the fact registered by (ii) explains the fact registered by (i),

(iv) Sue has a sister.

In other words, signalling is an intentional and rule-governed act. It is intentional, because it is controlled by the speaker's basic intention; it is rule-governed, in turn, because the intention in question can operate only against the background of the rules of the extended grammar.

The basic intention that determines propositions (i) as the public meaning of Sue's utterance of (7a) tacitly refers to the rules of the compositional and lexical semantic of English. The same can be said of the intention that constitutes proposition (ii) as the public meaning of her utterance of (7b). The intention responsible for determining proposition (iii), in contrast, makes an essential use of a rule of the extended grammar or, more precisely, of what Lepore and Stone calls the *grammar of speech acts*. In my view, what plays a key role in determining proposition (iii) is the rhetorical structure rule according to which contribution (7b) stands – in virtue of its lexical and syntactic properties – in the relation of *Explanation* to contribution (7a) (for a discussion of this topic see Asher and Lascarides 2001, 2003; cf Witek 2015a). In general, the participants in a conventionalised conversational practice use the rhetorical structure rules of the language they speak “both to signal the implicit inferences that make discourse coherent and, relatedly, to signal their goals and intentions in organizing discourse” (Lepore & Stone 2015: 112-113).

What about the basic intention responsible for signalling proposition (iv)? Recall that this proposition is presupposed by Sue's utterance of sentence (7b). According to the enlightened update model, in turn, presuppositions are best understood as publicly recognizable tacit action. Lepore and Stone suggest that “we should view these tacit actions, like discourse relations, as a part of interlocutors' conventional competence in pursuing their goals through conversation” (Lepore & Stone 2015: 217). Therefore, we should expect the intention underlying signalling proposition (iv)

to refer tacitly to certain conventional rules that, like rhetorical structure rules, belong to the extended grammar of English. It remains to be established, however, what these rules look like.

To answer this question, I would like to distinguish between rules of appropriateness and the Maxim of Appropriateness. Rules of appropriateness make up a system that forms part of the extended grammar of English. They associate linguistic forms – definite descriptions, proper names, factive verbs, cleft sentences, and other presupposition-triggers – with tacit actions that the use of these forms commits the speaker to. For example, one of the rules under discussion says that the use of the description “my sister” is appropriate at time t only if the speaker supposes that the proposition that she has a sister either is part of the common ground at time t or can be accepted as part of the common ground “quietly and without fuss” (I borrow this idiom from von Stechow; see von Stechow 2008: 151). In general, every rule of appropriateness says that the use of such-and-such an expression is appropriate only if a certain proposition either is mutually accepted by the interlocutors or they are likely to find the proposition unproblematic and uncontroversial and, in this connection, they are ready to accept it.

The Maxim of Appropriateness, in contrast, is a conversational or social norm. More precisely, it is one of the norms of meaning-making and as such it can be either followed or exploited. It says “Speak appropriately” or, more precisely, “Make your conversational contribution as appropriate as it is required by the rules of appropriateness of the language you speak”. It is instructive to note, therefore, that the Maxim of Appropriateness makes an essential reference to the rules of appropriateness; otherwise, it would be empty and void.

In my view, the rules of appropriateness play a key role in determining the tacit actions that the speakers are committed to by their public communicative act. In other words, they constitute the background against which basic intentions can operate in determining presupposed meanings and contributing them to the conversational record. They give substance to the Maxim of Appropriateness or, in other words, determine the criteria for appropriate speech; in a similar vein,

the rhetorical structure rules can be regarded as defining the criteria of discursive coherence and thereby giving substance to the Maxim of Coherence, which says “Make your conversational move such as it is require by the rhetorical structure rules of the language you speak”.

It is instructive to note that the rules of appropriateness does not commit the speaker to presume that what she presupposes is mutually believed by the participants in a dialogue. Therefore, they can be used to account for the phenomenon of informative presuppositions without producing the methodological problems discussed in section 2.

Recall that the Maxim of Appropriateness is a norm of meaning-making and as such can be either followed or exploited. It is followed by Sue, who in uttering sentence (7b) signals her background commitment to proposition (iv) and thereby contributes it to the conversational record; the point is that proposition (iv) is, at least at the stage at which the utterance is made, uncontroversial and as such can be accepted “quietly and without fuss”. Consider, by contrast, the following sentence:

(9) O Dad, I forgot to tell you that my *fianc e* and I are moving to Seattle next week.

which is uttered by the daughter who talks to her father (I borrow this example from von Fintel; see von Fintel 2008: 163). In my view, in uttering (9) the daughter *ostentatiously flouts* or, in other words, *exploits* the Maxim of Appropriateness in order to communicate a controversial message indirectly. The fact the his daughter is engaged is something that the father might find controversial in that he “might be expected to want to comment on” it (Stalnaker 2002: 710). That's why it is inappropriate to communicate it indirectly, by keeping it in the background. Nevertheless, the daughter's conversational aim is to communicate it without making it the topic of conversation. That's why she decides to communicate it indirectly, by a mechanism that involves the exploitation of the Maxim of Appropriateness. In sum, we can say that cases of accommodation that involve

following the Maxim of Appropriateness constitute what Millikan calls *normal language flow*, whereas situations involving the exploitation of this norm should be accounted for along the Gricean lines as cases of tinkering “with the mechanisms of normal language flow” (Millikan 1984: 69; cf Recanati 2004: 39).

Let me end by making a short comment on the case of accommodation that consists in implicitly establishing Ann's authority over other members of the shipwrecked group. In my view, the basic intention that underlies this tacit action makes reference to one of the preparatory rules for the successful performance of the illocutionary act of making an order (for a discussion, see Austin 1975 and Searle 1979). The rule says that to make a binding order, the speaker is required to stand in an appropriate authority relation to her audience. Therefore, Ann's primary direct intention to order her colleagues to go and pick up wood – and thereby to update the state of the conversation with their obligation to do what they are told – commits her to the tacit action of assuming her authority over other members of the shipwrecked group. Like the rules of appropriateness, then, the rules for the performance of illocutionary acts can be regarded as part of the extended grammar (for a discussion of this issue, see Sbisà 2002, 2007 and forthcoming; Langton forthcoming a and forthcoming b; Witek 2013 and 2015c).

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