Croatian Journal of Philosophy
Vol. XVIII, No. 53, 2018

Do Conversational Implicatures Express Arguments?

MARTINA BLEČIĆ
University of Rijeka, Rijeka, Croatia

I suggest that the idea that conversational implicatures express argument can be significant for the notion of communicational responsibility. This underlying argument should be included in the reconstruction of conversational implicatures as a justification for the belief formed by the hearer on the basis of indirect communication. What makes this argument specific is the fact that its only explicit element is the speaker's utterance taken as its initial premise. In order to reconstruct all the other elements, the hearer has to take into consideration factors such as the context and general knowledge of the shared language and the world. As the reconstruction of conversational implicatures in general, the reconstruction of implicatures as arguments is only potential. It is proposed that we should consider conversational implicatures as reason-giving arguments in which the speaker (arguer) addresses a hearer who does not need to reply. In those cases, the speaker is not trying to convince the hearer to accept his position but is explicitly stating a reason in support of his intended message. I believe that this approach can strengthen the idea of the speaker's communicational responsibility for an implicated message even in the case when he wants to distance himself from it.

Keywords: Conversational implicature, indirect communication, arguments, argumentation, communicational responsibility, justification, rationality.

1. *Introduction*[1]

Conversational implicatures are generally seen as a cancellable pragmatic occurrence that can never convey a message with absolute certainty. Additionally, the burden of responsibility for a belief formed on the basis of an implicature is often put on the hearer. This consider-

[1] The writing of this paper was supported by the Croatian Science Foundation under grant number IP-06-2016-2408.

ation can often be found in works dealing with the possibility of indirect testimony and indirect lying (labelled "misleading" or "deception").

In the literature linking pragmatic phenomena with argumentation, the leading approach consists in adding elements from pragmatics—often speech act theory—to the theory of argumentation in order to present the process of argumentation as a specific use of language that occurs among speakers in a certain disputational context. The idea I wish to present in this paper is that treating implicatures as arguments could help us question the aforementioned characterization of implicatures and portrait them as a more robust speech phenomenon, i.e., a phenomenon that is not guided by largely unpredictable private communicational inclinations but one that can be objectively evaluated on the basis of general rational and communicative principles. I will not look into how pragmatics can help the study of argumentation. I will go the other way around and try to show how insights from the study of arguments and argumentation can help us with the understanding of conversational implicatures, especially if we wish to explore their normative dimension.[2]

2. *Conversational implicature*

I will start by presenting some simple examples of conversational implicatures, a term introduced by H. P. Grice (1989). I will not go into detail about Grice's theory and the kinds of implicatures he presents. For the readers who are already familiar with his classification it is enough to say that I will focus on particularized conversational implicatures and that my interest in this particular kind stems from the fact that they are often characterized as the one least prone to systematization. I take that they are guided by rationality and conventionality in a larger degree than it is usually believed.

The first example is the following:

> Ani: How much longer will you be?
> Ben: Mix yourself a drink.

This dialogue starts with Ani asking a question. The answer to the question should be known to the addressee, Ben, since it is directly related to him. She receives a response that can be interpreted as saying that Ben needs more time to get ready. The question is how can

[2] This is not to say that the evaluation of conversational implicatures as phenomena that express arguments is not a valuable exploration of the limits of arguments. As Goddu writes: "[a]rguments, as I understand them, are expressed by a variety of sources. Most straightforwardly we have written or spoken texts that express arguments. I have no objection to saying that pictures, musical pieces, or even sculptures might express arguments. At the same time (…) pictures or musical pieces or sculptures will not themselves be arguments. In addition, while many texts that express arguments are themselves arguments, plenty are not, for any text with an implied conclusion is not itself an argument" (2003: 4). Conversational implicatures could fit nicely in this picture.

Ani carry out this interpretation and why is she justified in doing so since on the level of what is said the conveyed message differs from the intended one. In order for the belief to be justified the two components, namely what is said and what is meant have to be plausibly linked. In the interpretation of conversational implicatures there are two elements that carry a major practical and theoretical weight, namely, the context and the intention of the speaker. Conversational implicatures cannot exist in a vacuum, they need a specific context to be triggered. The same utterance will not give rise to an implicature in every context. In our example the utterance "Mix yourself a drink" conveys the message "It will take some time for me to get ready" only because it is a reaction to the question "How much longer will you be?" asked presumably in a context in which Ani and Ben are going somewhere together, let's say on a date. Additionally, there seems to be a requirement for the idea that there is a communicational intention behind the utterance that invites the hearer to infer a message that is different from what is said. This requirement is posed by the fact that we treat other people as rational if there is no evidence to the contrary.[3]

The notion of intention[4] is the starting point for the reconstruction of conversational implicatures. More specifically, according to Grice, conversational implicatures are always (potentially) calculable. This calculation is not a psychological process that occurs while the hearer interprets the utterance, but is a post facto reconstruction (see Haugh 2008) that competent speakers should be able to carry out according to the following scheme:

> [The speaker] has said that p; there is no reason to suppose that he is not observing the maxims, or at least the Cooperative Principle; he could not be doing this unless he thought that q; he knows (and knows that I know that he knows) that I can see that the supposition that he thinks that q is required; he has done nothing to stop me thinking that q; he intends me to think, or is at least willing to allow me to think, that q; and so he has implicated that q (Grice 1989: 31).

[3] Here the notion of intentional stance would be of help, at least considered in relation to the prediction of human behaviour: "[h]ere is how it works: first you decide to treat the object whose behavior is to be predicted as a rational agent; then you figure out what beliefs that agent ought to have, given its place in the world and its purpose. Then you figure out what desires it ought to have, on the same considerations, and finally you predict that this rational agent will act to further its goals in the light of its beliefs. A little practical reasoning from the chosen set of beliefs and desires will in most instances yield a decision about what the agent ought to do; that is what you predict the agent will do" (Dennett 1989: 17).

The notion of "theory of mind"/"mindreading" is also unavoidable: "[t]hat humans are capable of mindreading is all too obvious. We attribute mental representations to one another all the time. We are often aware of what people around us think, and even of what they think we think. Such thoughts about the thoughts of others come to us quite naturally" (Mercier and Sperber 2017: 94).

[4] Taken as the ascription of intentions to the utterer by the audience (see Sbisà 2001).

This calculation is used as evidence for the argumentative rationality associated with conversationl implicatures (see Sbisà 2006 and 2007).

Let's see another example.
Ani: Are you ready for the movie?
Ben: I am tired.

Again, we have a dating context. Ani and Ben decided to go to the movies together but when the time came Ben said that he was tired. In this kind of situation, the natural thing to do for Ani is to interpret his utterance as cooperative and relevant, which is in accordance with what Grice calls the Cooperative Principle: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged." (Grice 1989:26) Grice also individuates four maxims related to the Cooperative Principle—Quantity (make your contribution as informative as it is required), Quality (try to make your contribution one that is true), Relation (be relevant) and Manner (be perspicuous) (Grice 1989).

If Ani is a competent, and I will claim, a rational speaker, she will naturally be guided by the Cooperative Principle and the maxims and will be able to reconstruct the inferential process that let her to the interpretation of the speaker's message following the scheme mentioned above. The steps of her reasoning can be reconstructed as follows:

(1) I assume B is following the rule of relevance.
(2) His remark would not be relevant unless the fact that his fatigue is relevant to whether or not he is ready for the movie.
(3) I know that when people are tired they often do not wish to go to movie dates.
(4) If Ben is tired he does not wish to go to the movies.
(5) Ben probably assumes I will reason in this way, and has not said anything to stop me from doing so.
(6) I conclude that Ben intends to convey that he does not wish to go to the movies.

What I would like to do next is claim that somewhere inside this reconstruction lies an argument, or in other words, that conversational implicatures express arguments.[5]

3. *Conversational implicatures and arguments*

The connection between implicatures and arguments has been recognized before. Macagno and Walton, coming from a dialectical framework, claim that

> (…) conversational implicatures represent implicit meaning triggered by the use of a sentence and (…) they can be considered interpretations of

[5] We could also say that conversational implicatures are arguments, but this formulation should not be taken in a rigid literal sense.

> the meaning of a word or a speech act. On this perspective, conversational implicatures are triggered by conflicts of dialogical and epistemic presumptions that are resolved by a process of best explanation, which in turn are based on argumentation schemes such as inference to the best explanation, practical reasoning, argument from sign, appeal to pity and analogy. Depending on the context, the presumptions on which the process of explanation is based on vary, and therefore the conclusion of the implicit argument can be different. (2013: 223)

According to the authors, conversational implicatures are explanations for presumptive inconsistencies. We have seen in the two examples presented above that the hearer can be taken as starting her interpretation by wondering why the speaker has said exactly what he did and not something else, perhaps more informative and direct. The authors argue that conversational implicatures "need to be analyzed as implicit arguments, involving a pattern of reasoning leading from a specific premise to a conclusion" (Macagno and Walton 2013: 211).

According to the systematization presented by the authors our second example could be explained as an Argument from Cause. It is an instance of causal argumentation that links an event to its effects. The general scheme of argument from cause can be represented as follows:

"Major Premise: Generally, if A occurs, then B will (might) occur.
Minor Premise: In this case, A occurs (might occur).
Conclusion: Therefore in this case, B will (might) occur"
(Macagno and Walton 2013: 219).

In our second example, the speaker replies that he is tired instead of giving a direct negative answer to the question whether he is ready to see the movie. The goal of the utterance is not to inform the interlocutor about his fatigue, but to lead her to draw a conclusion from cause to effect. Tiredness is presumed to be incompatible with going to the movies: if someone is tired, he needs to stay at home, and if someone stays at home, he cannot at the same time see a movie at the theater. This causal relationship is presented as an alternative: either A or B; not A; therefore B. (Macagno and Walton 2013: adapted from 219).

At this point it is necessary to take a step back and see what kind of arguments could conversational implicatures possibly be. Trying to answer this question Moldovan (2012) states the following:

> [i]n order to avoid confusions it is relevant to point out that 'argument' is sometimes used to refer to a speech act of arguing, and sometimes used to refer to an abstract object, which is the content expressed by speech acts of arguing. (…) On the other hand, 'implicature', although sometimes used to refer to the content of an act of implicating something, it was introduced by Grice as a technical term to name the act of meaning that q by saying that p (…) To avoid confusion, the question under discussion here should be formulated as follows: is a conversational implicature always a speech act of arguing? And he concludes: "I think the answer to the above question should be negative. (2012: 304)

If we are faced with the choice between a speech act of arguing and an abstract object we could be tempted to deny that implicatures are in any way related to arguments. They are indirect speech acts so they cannot be considered merely as abstract objects[6] and since conversational implicatures are not characterized by a disagreement between the involved parties they cannot be considered as instances of the speech act of arguing. Consider again our examples. In both of them Ani asks a question to which Ben replies. He does not do so directly and Ani has to reach the intended message inferentially, but there is no disagreement that the parties need to solve. There is a communicative exchange aimed at the sharing of information. This sharing is achieved by the understanding of the implicature at play which can be represented as the reconstruction of an argument.

Luckily for us, the meaning of the words "argumentation" and "argument" are not exhausted by Moldovan's two options. At this point we can turn to a distinction proposed by Hitchcock in a general discussion about argumentation that will be useful in our current discussion about the connection between conversational implicatures and arguments: "[i]n English, the word 'argument' and the corresponding verb 'argue' are used in two quite clearly distinguishable senses." (Hitchcock 2017: 448). In the first sense

> arguing requires only one arguer (who in cases of collaboration in the production of an argument can be a group of people). The arguer expresses a point of view on a question, and offers as support for this position one or more reasons. The expression of the point of view and the provision of one or more reasons in its support constitute a complex of speech acts. The arguer addresses these speech acts to one or more readers, listeners or observers, who need not reply. (Hitchcock 2017: 448)

As we can see, according to the first sense arguments are produced by a speaker to put forward his point of view and the reasons he has to support it. The second sense presupposes two or more interlocutors sharing opinions.

> The other sense is that in which we say such things as "they were arguing with one another" or "they had a bitter argument" or "she argued with him". In this sense, arguing requires at least two arguers; if one argues with oneself in this sense, then one sequentially takes two different roles. The arguers express to each other divergent opinions on some question. Each attempts to get the other(s) to accept their point of view, not necessarily by offering reasons in support of it. (Hitchcock 2017: 449)

As we can see from the above quotes, according to Hitchcock an argument can provide supporting reasons for one's position or can be aimed at getting the other person to accept the arguer's position. He labels the first kind of argument the "reason-giving" sense and the second the "disputational" sense of "argument" and "argue". The application of this distinction to conversational implicatures is fairly simple. I would

[6] For a discussion about the ontological status of arguments see for example Goddu 2010, Sinard-Smith and Moldovan 2011 and Patterson 2013.

like to claim that conversational implicatures are reason-giving arguments in which the speaker (arguer) addresses a hearer who does not need to reply. In the case of conversational implicature the speaker is not trying to convince the hearer to accept a position she disagrees with but is explicitly stating a reason in support of his intended message.

As we have seen earlier explaining our second example as an Argument from Cause, if someone is tired he needs to stay at home, and if someone stays at home, he cannot at the same time see a movie. The explicit premise "I am tired" provides a reason for not going to the movies, that is, for the unstated conclusion. The general way of thinking of the form "if A occurs, then B will (might) occur" is the missing premise that links the explicitly given reason to the conclusion. Because of that we can reconstruct the argument on which the conversational implicature is based. The utterance is one of the premises, more precisely it is the only explicit part of the argument since all additional premises, as well as the conclusion, are unstated.

4. *Conversational implicatures and enthymemes*

Now we have arrived to the most unintuitive part of the view of conversational implicatures as arguments, or more precisely, utterances expressing arguments, namely the fact that in this strange kind of argument only one premise is explicitly stated, while the conclusion and one or more additional premises are implicit. The idea is that conversational implicatures can be considered a special case of enthymemes, that is, instances of arguments with unstated premises or conclusions. Enthymemes are reconstructed on the basis of their explicit elements using deductive, inductive or abductive forms of reasoning. These forms of reasoning differ in the level of strictness they possess. Induction is associated with statistical inference, deduction is not defeasible and abduction is characterized by plausible reasoning that can admit exceptions. The missing premises are generally taken to be assumptions that are needed to make the argument valid. The attribution of assumptions will often be justified by appealing to the principle of charity by which we should attempt to supply a missing statement that makes the argument valid or at least to choose the interpretation that makes the argument stronger. We have to keep in mind that the person we are attributing the conclusion to has never actually made that claim explicitly. Because of that we can say that enthymemes are not the same as the reconstructed arguments based on them. We can say that the reconstructed argument represents the original one. The same goes for conversational implicatures. The reconstructed argument is not the same as the utterance, but it can be a representation of it and of its underlying structure. The two are not the same, but are closely related. According to Gilbert (1991) incomplete arguments should be filled in with missing assumptions that are plausible to the intended audience or recipient of the argument and that appear to fit in with the position

advocated by the arguer, as far as the evidence of the text indicates. If we apply this idea to conversational implicatures taken as reason-giving arguments we could say that incomplete arguments should be filled in with missing assumptions that are plausible to the hearer and that appear to fit in with the position advocated by the speaker, as far as the evidence of the context indicates.[7]

If we accept that communication sometimes requires from us the interpretation of indirect arguments, it could be asked what are the advantages of such communicative strategy? Is there any additional reason why speakers would choose incomplete forms of argumentative reason giving besides communicational economy if there is always a degree of uncertainty that accompanies indirect communication? Jackson and Jacobs (1980) claim that enthymemes can be considered a special instance of Grice's Quantity Maxim: be as informative as necessary, but avoid being more informative that is necessary. They claim: "Enthymemes are not built the way they are for reasons of economy (i.e., merely to avoid the unnecessary); their method of construction optimally exploits the rules of turn taking so as to respect the preference for agreement. Giving too much support for an assertion or proposal is not merely pointless, but positively detrimental. Giving more support than is necessary increases the number of places where disagreement may occur—and does so without improving prospects for agreement." (264) Again, we should try to apply this idea to conversational implicatures as reason-giving arguments. If we accept that with the use of conversational implicatures the speaker provides to the hearer a reason to accept an implicit conclusion on the basis of that reason, qua explicit premise, and other unstated premises we could explain the appeal of conversational implicatures in the following way: in most cases the hearer will arrive, if she is cooperative and competent enough, to the intended message effortlessly and unconsciously. She will accept, or at least recognize as present, this unstated message that we have characterized as the conclusion of an argument. If she has reached this conclusion, we can assume that she has also individuated, or that she is capable to reconstruct, the inferential steps that lead to this conclusion, that is, that she can individuate the argument expressed by

[7] The arguments expressed by implicatures will always be characterized by a degree of uncertainty, but this is not specific for them: „[u]nlike verbal arithmetic, which uses words to pursue its own business according to its own rules, argumentation is not logical business borrowing verbal tools; it fits seamlessly in the fabric of ordinary verbal exchanges. In no way does it depart from usual expressive and interpretive linguistic practices. Statements with logical connectives (or other logical devices), and even sequences of such statements that more or less correspond to syllogisms, are just part of normal language use. They are used by speakers to convey a meaning that cannot be just decoded but that is intended to be pragmatically interpreted. Not only the words used but also the force with which premises and conclusions are being put forward are open to interpretation. They maybe intended as categorical or as tentative assertions, hedged by an implicit "in normal conditions." (Mercier and Sperber 2017: 163, 164).

the utterance. Since she has drawn the conclusion herself she cannot refute the whole inferential process directly. If she tried to refute the unstated conclusion the speaker could (truly!) say that he never said that. She could try to refute the stated premise but doing so in isolation from the whole argument would yield strange results—looking back at our examples, could Ani really say things like "You are not tired" or "I can't mix myself a drink" without Ben being confused?

It could be claimed that this picture puts a heavy burden on the hearer, leaving to the speaker the opportunity to distance himself from the indirect message, that is, to cancel the implicature. The idea that the hearer is somehow responsible, or even guilty for the believes he forms on the basis of indirect messages, is not uncommon in epistemology and ethics[8]. Still, I believe that this interpretation is erred. The view of conversational implicatures as argument gives more support to the hearer to justify her believes formed through indirect communication than it gives room to the speaker to cancel his message. Let's return once again to our examples.

Ani: Are you ready for the movie?
Ben: I am tired.

According to the standard interpretation, Ben is too tired to go to the movies and this is the message that he wishes to convey to Ani. She will reach the intended message taking into account Ben's cooperativeness, his communicative intention and the balance between the relevance of what is said and what could have been implicated. Still, this is not the only option. We can imagine a situation in which Ben wants to go to the movies and in which his comment about his tiredness is just a passing remark that carries no additional communicative weight. In this situation, the reasoning could be the following: he never said that he does not want to see the movie and Ani inferred that the movie date is cancelled on her own. She could easily have stopped at the level of what is said. We can also imagine that this interpretation could be used by Ben in a fight between him and Ani a couple of days after the date should've taken place. On that occasion, Ani could complain that they never go anywhere, mentioning the cancelled movie date as a recent example and Ben could claim that he never said that he did not want to go to the movies. This could be true, which opens up two possibilities: it could all be a misunderstanding or Ben could have been manipula-

[8] For example, in the domain of testimony, Fricker writes: "[t]hese acts all share with paradigm tellings the successful getting across of a message. I shall not investigate here the respects in which they differ; except to say that where what is conveyed is not explicitly asserted there is, I believe, a diminution in the responsibility for the truth of what is got across incurred by the utterer" (2006: 246–7). Writing about misleading (what we could call intended false implicatures) Adler notes: "[d]epending on the nature of the deception, the victim feels anything from foolish or tricked to corroded. Not only has he been misled, but the embarassment or horror of it is that he has been duped into collaborating on his own harm. Afterward, he cannot secure the relief of wholly locating blame externally" (1997: 442).

tive. Even if it is undeniably true that Ben did not actually say that he does not want to go to the cinema I would claim that Ani was correct in reaching this interpretation.

To sum up, there are, I suggest, three interpretative possibilities in this case. Ben either wanted to implicate that he does not want to go to the movies, to mislead Ani into thinking that, or he made a communicational mistake. In each scenario, the responsibility for the belief that he does not want to go to the movies formed by Ani on the basis on Ben's utterance can be justified taking into account the context of the utterance, the relevance of Ben's answer and the general communicational practice in which stopping at the level of what is said would be considered weird, uncooperative and even irrational. Think for example of the request "Can you pass the salt?" Stopping the interpretation of this utterance on the level of what is said and answering with "Yes, I can" without actually passing the salt to the utterer would be in most cases considered as a silly joke. The general idea is that competent language users should take conversational implicatures into consideration while communicating with other people; they should be aware that speakers could use them and that speakers could seek for indirect messages in what they said. If the context is known to both parties, in most cases, the interpretation should yield a true belief. Not only that, if the context is known to third parties they should also agree, at least to a certain degree, to one specific interpretation. This makes it possible for the reader to understand the examples presented in this paper, as well as in all other papers concerned with indirect communication. That is because the intention of the speaker is not important per se. What is important is the possibility to reasonably attribute an intention to the speaker and then build on it by relying on the best theoretical and normative considerations.

The possibility of the reconstruction of an implicature as an argument makes the justification of Ani's belief even more openly a process that is not private and unconceivable by anyone other than the person who formed the belief in question. In a particular context, for reasons of communicational relevance, the utterance of the speaker should be taken as a premise on the basis of which the hearer (and all other interested parties) could reconstruct an argument whose conclusion is the intended message. As we have seen it could be suggested that by adding the missing premises and accepting the conclusion of this implicit argument the hearer is somehow responsible for accepting the conclusion. Still, I suggest that accepting the implicated conclusion is the only cooperative and rational thing to do in a situation in which the hearer can rationally presuppose that the intention of the speaker is to send a message that is different from the uttered one. This presupposition is made plausible by the application of the notion to instrumental rationality to indirect speech. The guiding question is how to make sense of the utterance. If the direct reading does not satisfy the requirement of relevance, that is, it is not informative enough for the current

communicational exchange, under the presumption that the speaker is instrumentally rational we should look for a reasonable explanation of his behavior. I suggest that a reasonable explanation could be the idea that he intended to communicate something else—this makes indirect communication an instrumentally rational means to achieve a certain communicative goal. To find out what he wants to communicate we have to start from the presupposed intention and reach a conclusion by filling in the gaps, that is, providing the missing premises of the argument expressed by the implicature.

5. *Conversational implicatures as inferences or explanations*

One thing we need to look into is the possible objection that we should consider conversational implicatures as merely inferences or explanations. I would like to maintain the position that there is more to them and that it is best to consider them as pragmatic phenomena that express arguments.

Allan (2001) compares the inferencential process related to conversational implicature to the case in which someone concludes that the person on the other side of a telephone line is female because the speaker has a high-pitched voice. This inference could be incorrect and, as claimed by the author, so could those related to implicatures. The way implicatures generate belief and knowledge is probabilistic even if it is based on deductive reconstruction, but there is a difference between the inference present in the phone case and that related to the understanding of conversational implicatures that can bring them closer to arguments. As we have seen, conversational implicatures are a conversational endeavor just like the act of argumentation. On the other hand, the inference made on the basis of a high-pitched voice on the other side of the telephone is private, it is not meant to share information or create a belief in another person. Also, there is no premise in the phone case, at least not a verbal one. In a conversational implicature there is one explicit premise, which is the utterance intentionally addressed to the hearer. This is a direct invitation to reach the intended message, that is, the conclusion of the argument that can be reconstructed. I believe that this kind of communicative invitation marks a clear difference between conversational implicatures and inferences like the one present in the phone call example.

Talking about the difference between arguments and inferences, Mercier and Sperber write the following:

> [a]n inference is a process the output of which is a representation. An argument is a complex representation. Both an inference and an argument have what can be called a conclusion, but in the case of an inference, the conclusion is the output of the inference; in the case of an argument, the conclusion is a part—typically the last part—of the representation. The output of an inference can be called a "conclusion" because what characterizes an

> inferential process is that its output is justified by its input; the way however in which the input justifies the output is not represented in the output of an intuitive inference.
> What makes the conclusion of an argument a "conclusion" (rather than simply a proposition) is that the reasons for drawing this conclusion on the basis of the premises are (at least partially) spelled out (2011: 58).

As I wrote before, my suggestion is that the utterance that triggers the implicature can be seen as the only explicit premise in the argument that can be reconstructed on its basis. This premise carries the reason to accept a certain conclusion in a certain context. It is an invitation to make an inference and a commitment of the speaker to the relevance of what is said. Seeing the connection between an utterance and its conversational implicature as the link between a premise and a conclusion is in contrast with the stance that in the case of conversational implicature the speaker wants to convey a message only loosely related to what is said.[9]

To sum up, we can say that the difference between the reconstruction of implicatures and any other kind of reconstruction related to inferences is the following: the reconstruction of implicatures starts from an explicit premise—from "what is said"—and relies thus, at least partially, on other people, their input, their intentions, the common ground etc. In this context, "what is said" is an invitation for the hearer to draw an inference. This makes the creation and interpretation of implicatures an intrinsically communal endeavor. On the other hand, inferences can be private and often there is no linguistically coded input.

Now we can take a look at the relation between conversational implicatures and explanations. Discussing the relation between arguments and explanation Govier writes the following: „[a] fundamental difference between arguments and explanation is that in arguments, premises are intended to provide reasons to justify a conclusion whereas, by contrast, in explanations claims are put forward to show how a phenomenon came to be. In an explanation, someone tries to explain why some claim is true, whereas in an argument a person tries to demonstrate that it should be accepted" (2014: 14).

If we apply this reasoning to conversational implicatures seen as arguments, we can say that in an implicature the premises (stated and unstated) are reasons to accept the conclusion. The existence of an im-

[9] When Bach writes about the difference between conversational implicature and impliciture he notes the following: "Impliciture is to be distinguished from Grice's (1967a) conversational implicature. In implicature one says and communicates one thing and thereby communicates something else in addition. Impliciture, however, is a matter of saying something but communicating something else instead, something closely related to what is said." (1994: 126). This formulation can be considered misleading and it certainly goes against the intuitions presented in this paper. If conversational implicature is not closely related to what is said how can we ever reach the intended message? Seeing this connection as the link between a premise and a conclusion could be one way to explain the relation between what is said and what is implicated.

plicature can be explained by reconstructing the argument beneath it, but this will include additional elements, such as a general theoretical notion of implicatures themselves. We could say that the argument that can be expressed by a conversational implicature can be part of the explanation of the existence of the implicature, but the explanation will have to include nations such as context, intention, relevance and so on.

I conclude by pointing out the usefulness of an approach that treats conversational implicatures as speech phenomena that can be said to express arguments, or that can be reconstructed as arguments. The general idea is that if the use and interpretation of conversational implicatures are guided by argumentative reasoning this phenomenon can have a normative aspect: we could ask if there is a right way to interpret them or if we can talk about communicational responsibility for what is implicated. I would like to propose a normative view of the use and interpretation of conversational implicatures that can be applied in epistemology and ethics. Communicational responsibility[10] for what is said can be supported by the view of implicatures as arguments since if the speaker is presenting a premise to the hearer he is inviting her to reach a conclusion. If the hearer is competent and rational she will do so. The burden of proof in case the speaker wants to distance himself from the conclusion lies on him and not on the hearer.[11] He has to prove that the hearer has reasoned wrongly. In this paper, I wanted to argue for the idea that it will be more difficult to do so if we consider conversational implicatures as speech phenomena expressing arguments. The underlying argument gives strength to the conversational implicature and to the belief formed by the hearer on its basis.

I have used different formulations to describe the relation between arguments and conversational implicatures: in a loose sense it could be said that they are argument, we can say that they can be reconstructed as arguments, and we can talk about conversational implicatures expressing arguments. The best wording could perhaps be found by ask-

[10] The notion of "communicational responsibility" could be linked to the notion of "epistemic culpability", a term from social epistemology which describes a "failure to respond to evidence in the appropriate way" (see for example Begby 2013). The notion of "epistemic culpability" is present primarily in the discussion about epistemic injustice and prejudice and is primarily linked to the "hearer". I use the notion of "communicational responsibility" primarily in relation to indirect communication, but it could be considered in a much broader sense as the commitment of a competent language user to the belief his interlocutor forms on the basis of his or her words, assuming that the hearer is also a competent language user in the sense that he or she respects general linguistic, interpretative and rational standard during the belief forming process.

[11] Of course, there could be cases in which the speaker ha san implicature in mind but the hearer does not reach the intended conclusion or rejects the conclusion and takes into consideration only what is conveyed directly. In such cases, we should consider the hearer as not competent enough or as not cooperative. The argumentative view of implicatures could be also used in these cases to give strength to the implicated message.

ing who produces the argument—is it created by the speaker or by the hearer? I believe that it is best to associate the argumentative aspect of conversational implicatures with their reconstruction and to make it part of the justification of a hearer's belief. Nevertheless, the first input (the explicit premise) in the argument has to be provided by the speaker in the form of an utterance. As the reconstruction of conversational implicatures in general, the reconstruction of implictures as arguments is only potential. It does not have to be actually carried out while interpreting and understanding an utterance but it is important that competent and rational language users could provide such reconstruction. Even if only potential, this reconstruction is crucial since it creates the argument that justifies the belief held by the hearer. The reconstruction and the argument can be presented to the speaker as a justification of the belief held by the speaker and as proof of his communicative responsibility.

6. *Conclusion*

This paper should be considered as one of the first steps towards a more comprehensive theory of communicative responsibility. Such theory is needed since it is often claimed that the hearer is, at least partially, responsible for a belief she formed on the basis of implicated content she attributed to the speaker even if this attribution is justifiable.

I want to suggest that if a rational and competent hearer formed her belief taking into account all the factors needed for the understanding of a conversational implicature, she should be considered a cooperative and competent language user. Even in the case the belief she formed turned out to be false due to malicious intentions on part of the speaker or because of a misunderstanding, it is wrong to consider her even partially responsible for holding false beliefs since forming the belief in question was, from a communicative, and subsequently an epistemic and moral point of view, the right thing to do in that particular context. I believe that this position could be reinforced by considering conversational implicatures as speech phenomena that express arguments. In this way we do not use pragmatics to explain and advance our knowledge of argumentation but vice versa, we use argumentation to give strength to indirect communication.

The idea that conversational implicatures express arguments could be unintuitive, after all, meaning q with p could be just that, an inference from what is said to what is implicated. Still, I would like to claim that conversational implicatures are not merely inferences or explanations, as could also be suggested. This is due to the fact that a competent language user should always be capable of reconstructing the process that led him to conclude q from p. This reconstruction will have the form of an argument in which there is only one stated premise. On the basis of that premise and a reasonable attribution of intention to the speaker the hearer will fill in the gaps of the argument in question

relying on the context, general knowledge of the used language and other relevant factors.

We can consider conversational implicatures as reason-giving arguments in which the speaker (arguer) addresses a hearer who does not need to reply. In those cases, the speaker is not trying to convince the hearer to accept his position, as in the case of disputational arguments, but is explicitly stating a reason in support of his intended message.

By grasping the intended message, the hearer intuitively accepts the reasons provided for it and can also reconstruct the argumentative path that lead from an explicit reason, qua premise, to the intended conclusion. This could be interpreted as a justification for the view that the hearer is responsible for the belief she formed on the basis of conversational implicature, but I would like to claim that it actually justifies the idea that forming her belief as she did was the only cooperative and rational thing to do.

References

Adler, J. E. 1997. "Lying, deceiving, or falsely implicating." *Journal of Philosophy* 94 (9): 435–452.

Allan, K. 2001. *Natural Language Semantics*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Bach, K. 1994. "Conversational Impliciture." *Mind and Language* 9 (2): 124–162.

Begby, E. 2013. "The Epistemology of Prejudice." *Thought: A Journal of Philosophy* 2 (2): 90–99.

Dennett, D. 1989. *The Intentional Stance*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Fricker, E. 2006. "Testimony and Epistemic Autonomy." In J. Lackey and E. Sosa (eds.). *The Epistemology of Testimony*. Oxford: Clarendon Press: 225–250.

Gilbert, M. A. 1991. "The Enthymeme Buster: A Heuristic Procedure for Position Exploration in Dialogic Dispute." *Informal Logic* 13 (3): 159–166.

Goddu, G. C. 2003. "The Context of an Argument. OSSA Conference Archive. 28" https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/ossaarchive/OSSA5/papersandcommentaries/28.

Goddu, G. C. 2010. "Is 'Argument' Subject to the Product/Process Ambiguity?" *Proceedings of Proceedings of the 2010 ISSA Conference*. Amsterdam. June 29.

Govier, T. 2014. *A Practical Study of Argument*. Wadsworth.

Grice, P. 1989. "Logic and Conversation." In P. Grice. *Studies in the Way of Words*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 22–40.

Haugh, M. 2008. "The place of intention in the interactional achievement of implicature." In J. L. Mey and I. Kecskés (eds.). *Intention, Common Ground and the Egocentric Speaker-Hearer*. New York: De Gruyter.

Hitchcock, D. 2017. *On Reasoning and Argument: Essays in Informal Logic and on Critical Thinking*. Berlin/New York: Springer.

Jackson, S. and Jacobs, S. 1980. "Structure of conversational argument: Pragmatic bases for the enthymeme." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66 (3): 251–265. DOI: 10.1080/00335638009383524.

Macagno, F. and Walton, D. 2013. "Implicatures as Forms of Argument." In A. Capone et al. (eds.). *Perspectives on Pragmatics and Philosophy*. Berlin/New York: Springer: 203–224.

Mercier, H. and Sperber, D. 2011. "Why Do Humans Reason? Arguments for an Argumentative Theory." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 34 (2): 57–74.

Mercier, H. and Sperber, D. 2017. *The Enigma of Reason*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Moldovan, A. 2012. "Arguments, Implicatures and Argumentative Implicatures." In H. Jales Ribeiro (ed.). *Inside Arguments: Logic and The Study of Argumentation*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishers.

Patterson, S. W. 2013. "Are arguments abstract objects?" *OSSA Conference Proceedings*. Ontario Society for the Study of Argumentation.

Sbisà, M. 2001. "Intentions from the other side." In G. Cosenza (ed.). *Paul Grice's Heritage*. Brepols: Turnhout.

Sbisà, M. 2006. "Two Conceptions of Rationality in Grice's Theory of Implicature." In E. Baccarini and S. Prijić-Samaržija (eds.). *Rationality in Belief and Action*. Rijeka: Filozofski fakultet.

Sbisà, M. 2007. "On argumentative rationality." *Anthropology & Philosophy* 8 (1/2): 89–100.

Simard Smith, P. L. and Moldovan, A. 2011. "Arguments as Abstract Objects." *Informal Logic* 31 (3): 230–261.