Can we isolate a role for pragmatics in conventional meanings and conventional representations?

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Experimental pragmatic investigations have made headway into better appreciating the role of conversational implicatures, i.e. extralinguistic inferences, that listeners employ as they discern a speaker's meaning. Findings from those studies provide us with a relevant backdrop for investigating linguistic-pragmatic phenomena in which expressions themselves come ensconced with information having pragmatic import. The idea of making such a comparison comes in part from Grice, who distinguished between conversational implicature and conventional implicature, which refers to a class of expressions that include a pragmatic procedure but without altering an utterance's truth-conditional meaning (e.g., consider but, which provides contrast while being truth-functionally equivalent to and). However, before pursuing experiments on such phenomena, it also pays to consider more generally what is meant by convention. These reflections serve as a prelude to some recent attempts with colleagues to experimentally isolate pragmatic features linked with conventional expressions (as well as with conventionalized representations).