Notes on Grice on meaning

I. Grice’s initial definition:

S means \( s_{\text{nn}} \) something by U iff S intends that U produces R in H by means of H’s recognition of this intention.

Strawson interprets this to mean:

1. S intends \( i_1 \) to produce R in H.
2. S. intends \( i_2 \) that H should recognize \( i_1 \).
3. S intends \( i_3 \) that the recognition of \( i_1 \) should be the reason (or at least part of the reason) for R.

II. Objections

a. Searle and the American soldier.

b. Strawson and the lion’s paw.

Strawson presents counter examples which satisfy 1-3, but where S does not intend that \( i_2 \) should be recognized. Can we block these by adding an \( i_4 \) to the effect that H recognize \( i_2 \)?

4. S. intends that H should recognize \( i_2 \).

But this looks like the start of an infinite regress, because now we may need an \( i_5 \) that H recognize \( i_4 \).

c. Counterexamples where the perlocutionary effect is not intended, as in answering an exam question.

III. Grice’s Revised Definition.

Same as above only now the effect is not that H believes that p (for assertives) or H does A (for directives) but that H believes that S believes that p (for assertives) and that H intends to do A because H believes that S wants H to do A (for directives).

Will these changes block the counterexamples?