

Lecture 19

LCD 306: Semantics & Pragmatics

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Outline

- 1 Gricean Maxims
- 2 Flouting
 - Maxim of Quantity

Table of Contents

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Gricean Maxims

Maxim of...

- Quantity
- Quality
- Relation/Relevance
- Manner

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Gricean Maxims

- The CP even works when the conversational maxims are apparently broken.
- People can and do intentionally violate these maxims all of the time in order to achieve certain effects

Gricean Maxims

- If a speaker intentionally violates a maxim, the listener seeks the reason why.
- Violations of the Maxims have meaning.

Gricean Maxims

- In other words, speakers often deliberately “break” the rules to give their utterance an additional implied meaning (an implicature).
- intentionally violating a maxim
→ **flout**

Conversational Implicature

- Purposely violating the CP/Maxims in order to have a conversational effect
- **indirect speech acts**

Indirect Speech Act

- A: Are you coming to the party tomorrow?
- B: I have a test
- Speaker B violates the Maxim of Relevance/Quantity

Indirect Speech Act

- Speaker B violates the Maxim of Relevance/Quantity
- Speaker A reinterprets B's utterance assuming that the answer is relevant
- the test must be scheduled in such a way that precludes B from coming to the party

Indirect Speech Acts

What is the effect of the following?

- Violation of **Quality**
- Violation of **Quantity**
- Violation of **Relevance**
- Violation of **Manner**

Indirect Speech Acts

Violation of **Quality**

- Sarcasm
- Hyperbole
- Metaphor

Indirect Speech Acts

Violation of **Quantity**

- Withholding
- TMI

A: What do you think of my art?

B: It was... interesting

Indirect Speech Acts

Violation of **Relevance**

- Changing the subject
- Avoiding answering

A: The NSA is criminally overstepping its bounds

B: I just can't wait for the summer

Indirect Speech Acts

Violation of **Manner**

- Vagueness
- Obfuscation

Donald Trump: "I own a small business"

A person with 11 cats: "I own a cat"

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Maxim of Quantity

- Make your contribution as informative as is required, but not more, or less, than is required.
- Give just enough information.

Violation of Quantity

- not saying enough
- giving TMI

Violation of Quantity

- A: What did you think of my friends Antonio and Graciela?
- B: Antonio seems like a really nice guy. We had an interesting conversation.
- **Violation:** B doesn't provide all requested info.

Violation of Quantity

- A: What did you think of my friends Antonio and Graciela?
- B: Antonio seems like a really nice guy. We had an interesting conversation.
- Implication: By saying something nice about Antonio and nothing about Graciela, B is discreetly expressing disapproval

Maxim of Quantity

- A: I lost my wallet!
- B: Where's the last place you had it?
- A: Well, I went to dinner last night with a couple of friends. Dan, James, and Rich. Dan and James are dating, but we don't think that'll last more than a month or so. Anyways we went to this place out in the middle of nowhere in Queens...

Maxim of Quantity

- A: Where are you going?
- B: Out.
- A: When will you be back?
- B: Later.

Maxim of Quantity

- A: How are you?
- B: Well, I had bloody diarrhea yesterday so I went to the ER and I had to have a barium sulfate enema. Turns out I have a colitis infection...