

What speakers say...

- The speaker is always taking into account what the listener already knows
- Grice's conversational rules: COOPERATION
 - The participants in a conversation are committed to achieving maximally effective conversation.

Arnold: Can you tell me how to get to LeFrak Hall?
Betty: Yes, I could. (turns away)

Conversational rules

- rules of discourse that we have to follow if we want to communicate.
- Types
 - rules governing what people say (the character of their contributions)
 - rules for allocating turns

Rules governing the character of contributions

Maxims of Quality: The contribution one makes is true, to the best of your knowledge.

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

Rules governing the character of contributions, cont.

Maxims of quantity:

1. Make your contribution as informative as required for the current purpose of exchange.
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Arnold: I sold my house today.

Betty: Are you going to move?

Arnold: No, I still own the house I live in.

Rules governing the character of contributions, cont.

Relevance: The contribution is relevant to the topic being discussed.

As a listener, you assume relevance, and thus use this to make links between apparent nonsequiturs.

Arnold "I bumped into Fred the other day."

Betty "I can't stand stuck-up people."

Harold was in an accident.

He had been drinking.

Rules governing the character of contributions, cont.

Maxims of manner:

1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
2. Be brief.
3. Be orderly.

He drove away and started his car

She got married and fell in love. vs.

She fell in love and got married.

Rules governing the character of contributions, cont.

New: The contribution will add something new to the conversation.

Do you see this? This is a PENCIL.

Implying information

*Arnold: Did you see Peter and Jennifer yesterday?
Betty: I saw Peter.*

*Arnold: My cough is getting very bad today.
Betty: There is a drug store just around the corner.*

*Arnold: Does John have scars after his accident?
Betty (touching her right cheek with her index finger): Yes, he's got a big one right here.*

Following a harpsichord performance, Arnold asks Betty what she thought, and she says, "It was a nice piano recital."

Rules governing the character of contributions, summary

- **Maxims of Quality** (truth)
- **Maxims of quantity** (level of detail)
- **Relevance**
- **Maxims of manner** (how you say things - brief, orderly, clear)
- **Newness**

Another conversational strategy

- Given-New strategy
 - Can be marked by syntax (the vs. a, etc.), word-order or stress

You tend to put the given info first, and the new info second.

The black bowl is on the table.

The bowl on the table is black.

Rules about turn-taking

First described in 1974 by Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson.

1. Turns are made up of units, which are projectable.
(The listener can roughly predict when the speaker's unit will end.)
2. A speaker who has the turn is initially entitled to utter one such unit; at the end of that unit, they can assign the right & obligation to speak to someone else.

Rules about turn-taking, cont.

Arnold: I didn't sleep well last night. (To Betty:) Did you hear me clumping down the stairs?

Betty: No, I didn't.

Christian: I thought there was a burglar in the house!

Arnold: Hey Betty? Where's the nearest donut shop?

Betty: uh... (facial expression of cluelessness)

Christian: Oh, there's one over on

Rules about turn-taking, cont.

3. If the current speaker doesn't select someone else to speak next, then any other party may claim the next turn at this point. First one to start gets the floor; if no one else jumps in, the current speaker may continue.

A: *So, I told him that I could handle it. You know.*

B: *Yeah, that makes sense.*

Nonverbal cues to turn-taking

- Speakers generally catch the eyes of the listener when they are about to want to yield the floor
- Listeners usually raise their eyebrows when they want a chance to say something.

Anaphora

Joe rambled down the road. He hummed as he walked.

- Anaphora is a relationship between two words or phrases where the meaning of one (the antecedent) is linked to the later one (the anaphor)

John saw his mother

Mary likes herself

A man walked in. He sat down.

Each woman thinks she is smart.

- Anaphor resolution is the problem of resolving what a pronoun or a noun phrase refers to.

Anaphora, cont.

John helped Mary. He was kind.

*John took two trips around France.
They were both wonderful.*

*Julia and I went to see Paula, because she wanted me to
help her with her studies.*

General issue of binding: how do you connect different
words together appropriately?

John thinks he is smart. Joe does too.

Anaphora, cont.

*I had a look at a new house yesterday. The kitchen was
extra large.*

- Indirect anaphora – the antecedent wasn't explicitly present.

I'm going to stuff this ball through this hoop.

It's not clear that you'd be able to.

- VP ellipsis: VP from the first sentence is referenced without any particular words.

George likes winning votes as much as Al does.
