

Cooperativity

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Make your 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.

■ Quality:

Try to make your utterance one that is true:

- 1 Don't say anything you believe to be false.
- 2 Don't say anything for which you lack evidence.

■ Quantity:

- 1 Make your utterance as informative as is required (for the purposes of the discourse).
- 2 Don't make your utterance more informative than is required.

■ Relation: Be relevant.

■ Manner: Be perspicuous:

- 1 Avoid obscurity of expression.
- 2 Avoid ambiguity.
- 3 Avoid unnecessary prolixity.
- 4 Be orderly.

Grice indicates himself that his proposal is not quite serious:

- Some of the maxims are more important than others.
- The set is redundant.
- Grice's classification is copied from Kant's (1781) theory of judgments.



- Relevance \neq relevance to the purpose of the discourse.
- The maxims are geared for one particular type of speech act, viz. assertion.
- But speakers make lots of choices that are potentially relevant: cooperativity also applies to other speech acts and even to locutionary acts.

- The general trend in the literature has been towards more economical analyses of cooperativity.
(e.g., Atlas and Levinson 1981, Horn 1984, Sperber and Wilson 1995)
- Against this trend, I will argue that a richer account is needed.
- Whether or not an action is cooperative depends on its purpose, and as linguistic acts have many different purposes, there will be many different forms of cooperativity.
- Analyses of linguistic acts and cooperativity should be developed in tandem.

Speech acts

Non-assertions have implicatures, too

- 1** Where did you last see your poodle?
 \leadsto That may help you to find it.
- 2** Shoot the piano player!
 \leadsto The drummer can stay.
- 3** Do you have a pen or pencil?
 \leadsto Either will do.

If S addresses H in context c uttering sentence φ , then S thereby ASSERTS $\llbracket\varphi\rrbracket_c$ iff:

- 1 S has evidence for the truth of $\llbracket\varphi\rrbracket_c$. PREPARATORY
- 2 It is not obvious to S and H that H knows or needs to be reminded that $\llbracket\varphi\rrbracket_c$. CONDITIONS
- 3 S believes that $\llbracket\varphi\rrbracket_c$. ESSENTIAL CONDITION

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- Conditions **1** and **3** very much look like (positive versions of) Grice's Quality maxims.
 - Condition **2** looks like (a corollary of) the Quantity₂ maxim.
 - What are we to make of this?

- Suppose it is part of the conventional content of the declarative mood that, for any declarative sentence φ uttered in a context c , the speaker believes $\llbracket\varphi\rrbracket_c$.
- Then that does *not* imply that for any declarative sentence φ uttered in a context c , the speaker believes $\llbracket\varphi\rrbracket_c$.
- Grice's Quality maxim secures this sincerity inference (by way of implicature).

If S addresses H in context c uttering sentence φ , then S thereby ASSERTS $[[\varphi]]_c$ iff:

- 1 S has evidence for the truth of $[[\varphi]]_c$. PREPARATORY
 - 2 It is not obvious to S and H that H knows or needs to be reminded that $[[\varphi]]_c$. CONDITIONS
 - 3 S believes that $[[\varphi]]_c$. ESSENTIAL CONDITION
-

- Hence, the Quality maxim (for assertion) is not redundant.
- This maxim *requires* condition **3**: By uttering φ , S communicates that the *point* of his utterance is that he believes $[[\varphi]]_c$ to be true, and the Quality maxim states, accordingly, that S had better believe that $[[\varphi]]_c$ is true.
- Conditions **1** and **2** are implicatures.

If S addresses H in context c uttering sentence φ , then S thereby ASKS H WHETHER $[[\varphi]]_c$ iff:

- 1 S doesn't know if $[[\varphi]]_c$ is true. PREPARATORY
 - 2 It is not obvious to S and H that H will settle $[[\varphi]]_c$'s truth value anyway. CONDITIONS
 - 3 S wants to know whether $[[\varphi]]_c$. ESSENTIAL CONDITION
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- In this case, the sincerity inference is that S wants to know whether $[[\varphi]]_c$.

QUALITY SCHEMA

If you perform a speech act A, then be sincere with respect to A's essential condition.

- Rationale: the essential condition specifies the main purpose of the speech act.
- Grice's Quality maxim falls out as a special case.

SPEECH ACT	ESSENTIAL CONDITION
S asserts that φ	S believes $[\varphi]_c$
S asks whether φ	S wants to know whether $[\varphi]_c$
S requests that φ	S wants $[\varphi]_c$ to become true
S promises to φ	S intends that $[\varphi]_c$ become true

- Sincerity is an accidental feature of a speech act (even if it pertains to an essential condition).
- Not all conditions that define a speech act type are essential.
E.g. promising:
 - 1 I promise it won't rain.
 - 2 I promise I'll break your legs.
- Perhaps even essential conditions are defeasible.
E.g., we play a game with the main rule being that we are only allowed to assert falsehoods, and I say:
“Berlin is the capital of Germany.”
 \leadsto S believes that Berlin is not the capital of Germany.
- Is this an assertion?

1 Shoot the piano player!

\leadsto NOT: S wants H to shoot the drummer.

\leadsto S wants H NOT to shoot the drummer.

2 Can I have some of your popcorn?

\leadsto NOT: S wants all of H's popcorn.

$\overset{?}{\leadsto}$ S wants NOT all of H's popcorn.

- Non-assertions have quantity implicatures, too.
- Indirect speech acts have quantity implicatures, too.
- In at least some cases, these cannot be derived as part of the propositional content.

Relevance

☞ Discourse purposes determine only in part what is relevant.

- (1) A: What kept you so long?
B: I'm sorry, I was on the phone.
- (2) a. There's {an animal / a dog / a poodle} in the kitchen!
b. There's a {fish / stingray / pearl stingray} in the bath!

Kochira wa Takashi-kun no kyoodai no Michio-kun desu.
this TOP Takashi-Mr. GEN brother GEN Michio-Mr. COP
“Michio is Takashi’s brother.” (Matsumoto 1995)

~> S doesn’t know whether Michio is older or younger than Takashi.

ani “older brother” *otooto* “younger brother”
ane “older sister” *imooto* “younger sister”

QUDs are a special case of a special case

- Every speech act has a purpose.
- Discourse purposes are a special kind of purposes.
- Questions under discussion (QUDs) are a way of modeling a special kind of discourse purposes.
- Ergo: QUDs are especially special.

The pragmatics of what is said

- “Gricean pragmatics” is often restricted to illocutionary acts. (This seems to be Grice’s view, too.)
- Choosing words, intonation contours, syntactic constructions, etc., are linguistic acts, too.
- They, too, are answerable to criteria of relevance and cooperativity.

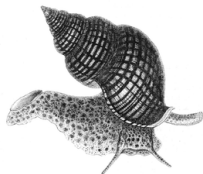
- “Chestnut” has several established senses:
 - #1 a glossy hard brown edible nut
 - #2 the large European tree that produces the edible chestnut
 - #3 a horse of a reddish-brown or yellowish-brown colour
- S says: “The chestnuts are shedding their leaves.”
- Q: What justifies the assumption that S intends to express sense #2?
- A: Cooperativity!
- This holds for monosemic words, too (if there be any).

Again, in cases where there is doubt, say, about which of two or more things an utterer intends to convey, we tend to refer to the context [...] and ask which of the alternatives would be relevant to other things he is saying or doing, or which intention in a particular situation would fit in with some purpose he obviously has (e.g., a man who calls for a “pump” at a fire would not want a bicycle pump). (Grice 1957/1989: 222)

- Utterance production and interpretation are Gricean from the word level up.
- Cooperativity is a matter of degree, and the degree of cooperativity of any given utterance is determined by a host of factors.
- As long as people are communicating, there cannot be anything like a complete lack of cooperativity.

- The production and interpretation of words are largely automatic processes, and surely routines cannot be Gricean.
- In general, it's not true that routinised activities don't admit of rational explanations.
- However, it is not clear that word production/interpretation are routinised activities.

- In principle, Gricean explanations *could* have the same status as optimality models in evolutionary biology.
- But that doesn't seem likely, as to some extent Gricean explanations conform to speakers' intuitions and, occasionally, speakers are explicitly Gricean.
- Alternatively, Gricean explanations *could* be real to their users only. But how likely is that?



- So let's entertain the possibility that cognitive processes are Gricean at least some of the time.
- But then it still seems unlikely that they are Gricean all of the time: a lot of the processing going on in production and understanding seems to be routine, or largely so.
- This *does not* imply that speakers and hearers are Gricean only some of the time.
- Think of Gricean processes as monitoring lower-level processes, and intervening only if needed.
- Then the speaker/hearer may still be fully Gricean, or at least Gricean to the extent that the performance of the system as a whole is optimal.

- s_0 Based on the currently justified belief that Pearly White is the best toothpaste, PW becomes my toothpaste of choice.
 - s_1 Sadly, I become a compulsive PW user.
 - s_2 PW tests begin to show mixed results, and the expert consensus crumbles. I start vacillating in my beliefs.
However, these alternating beliefs have no effect on my dental-care habits: I remain an inveterate PW customer.
- At s_0 , I use PW *because* I believe that it is the best toothpaste (even if I don't think about it).
 - At s_2 , this is not true anymore, even during periods that I have the same belief.

- This view poses a challenge for formal and experimental pragmatics alike.
- Formal theories still have the option of confining their attention to optimality models.
- But experimentalists will have to consider the possibility that the implementation of Gricean reasoning may be less straightforward than they had budgeted for.
- So their job becomes even harder than it was already, and I'm sorry about that.

**"That's
all
folks!"**

