Pragmatics

- Austin – How to do things with words
- Grice – The Cooperative Principle
- Goffman – Face
- Brown and Levinson – Politeness
- Wierzbicka – Culture and Cognition

J. L. Austin <u>How to do things with words.</u>

- Locutionary Acts
  - Saying something about something
- Illucutionary acts
  - Doing something by saying something
  - Performatives.
- Perlocutionary Acts

Performatives

1. The uttering of the words is .. the performance of which is also the object of the utterance.
2. Circumstances around the performative must be appropriate
   1. good faith v. bad faith
   2. Other things have to go right (happy) (felicities)
   3. Must be an <u>accepted conventional procedure</u>
   4. Particular persons must be appropriate for the invocation of the act
   5. Procedure must be executed <u>correctly and completely</u>
   6. Person must have those thoughts and feelings requisite of the act
   7. Must actually <u>conduct themselves subsequently.</u>
3. Sinning against rules will make the performance **unhappy**
4. **Explicit** (I bet, I promise, ...) versus **Implicit** performatives (where the performative is only a possibility (might, perhaps, (you might be wrong)
5. **Entails** (all men blush) versus **Implies** versus **Presupposes** (all Jacks children are bald presupposes that Jack has children.

Examples of Austin's Performatives

1. Verdictives: Delivering a verdict,

    judgement official or unofficial, acquit, convict, find (as a matter of fact), hold, interpret as, understand, read it as, rule, calculate, reckon, estimate, locate, place, date, measure, put it at, make it, take it, grade, rank, rate, assess, value, describe, characterize, diagnose, analyze.

2. Exercitives: Giving a decision in favor or against a certain course of action from a position of power.

    appoint, degrade, demote, dismiss, excommunicate, name, order, command, direct, sentence, fine, grant, levy, vote for, nominate, choose, claim, give, bequeath, pardon, resign, warn, advise, plead, pray, entreat, beg, urge, press, recommend, proclaim, announce, quash, counterman, annul, repeal;, enact, reprieve, veto, dedicate, declare closed, declare open

3. Comissives: Commits the speaker to a course of action; implies obligation

    promise, covenant, contract, undertake, bind myself, give my word, …

4. Behabitives: Adopting an attitude in reaction to the behavior of others

    1) apologize, 2) thank, 3) sympathy 4) attitudes 5) greetings, 6) wishes, 7) challenges (dare, defy,   protest, challenge).

5. Expositives: Expounding one's views, clarifying

* 1. affirm, deny, state, describe, class, identify; 2. remark, mention,

Examples of Austin's Performatives

Verdictives	I state my judgement
Exercitives:	I exercise my power
Comissives:	I take on an obligation
Behabitives	I express my reaction to other's doing
Expositives:	I am expounding my views, clarifying

Points to remember

- Austin demonstrated that while some words were used to describe things (a locutionary act), other words (and sentences) did things.

- The variety of words on the previous slide point this out clearly.

- Austin's work introduced a new field of language study now known as pragmatics.

- Bourdieu pointed out that conditions of the performative are all associated with the institution.

Institutions (Bourdieu) and Speech Acts

1. **Roles:**
   1. Particular persons must be appropriate for the invocation of the act
2. **Practices:**
   1. Must be an accepted conventional procedure
   2. Must be executed correctly and completely
3. **Other Considerations**
   1. Sincerity: Person must have those thoughts and feelings requisite of the act
   2. Consistency: Must actually conduct themselves subsequently.

H. P. Grice
Cooperative Principle

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.

Grice (1975, 45)
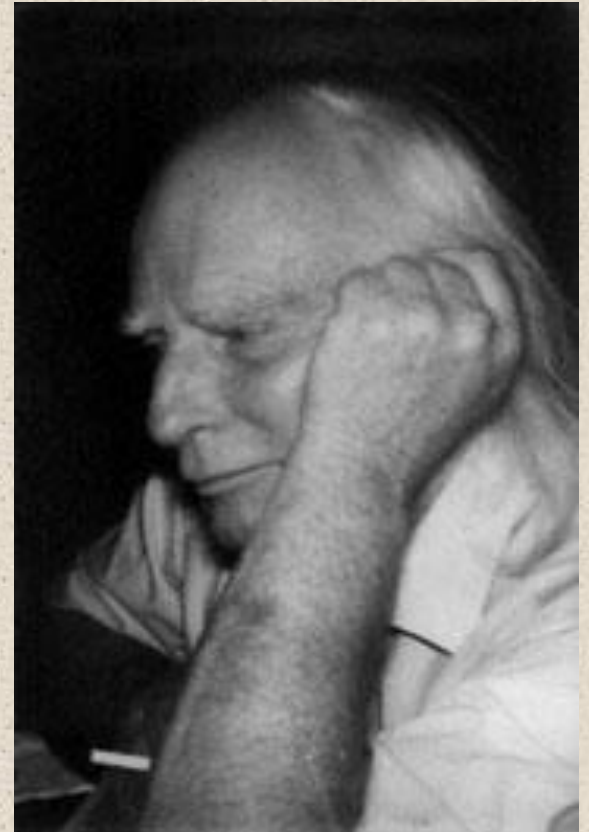
Gricean maxims

The maxims operate as a type of baseline for a conversation, allowing hearers to make inferences based on speaker intention and _implied meaning_. This is called _conversational implicature_. This does not mean, however, that the conversational maxims are adhered to all of the time. On the contrary, there are many occasions on which they are not, but when this happens, hearers (or readers) consider whether the non-adherence is signicant in itself – in other words, whether we can _make certain inferences_ when they are not adhered to.

Gricean maxims

Conversational implicatures are inferences that depend on the existence of norms for the use of language, such as the widespread agreement that communicators should aim **to tell the truth**. (It is for historical reasons that conversational is part of the label.
Implicatures arise as much in other speech genres and in writing as they do in conversation; so they are often just called implicatures.)

Gricean maxims

Apparent violations of the norm of truthfulness (referred to below as the "quality maxim") can invite metaphorical interpretation, as when a reader finds a way to reconcile the real-world unlikelihood of someone's face curdling with an assumption that Jenny Diski aimed to make a true statement when she wrote 'my mother's face curdled'.

Gricean maxims

8.1 A: "I was bitten by something in Berlin Zoo."
B: "Was it an insect?" A: "Yes."
The inferences called implicatures are ever-present in language use, but, unlike entailments, they are not guarantees.
In (8.1) I could have been wrong in my guess – an implicature – that A did not know quite what had bitten her in the zoo, or over the further implicature that it was an insect that had bitten her.

Gricean maxims

Speakers, writers and addressees assume that everyone engaged in communication knows and accepts the **communicational norms.**
This general acceptance is an important starting point for **inferences**, even if individuals are sometimes unable to meet the standards or occasionally cheat (for instance, by telling lies).
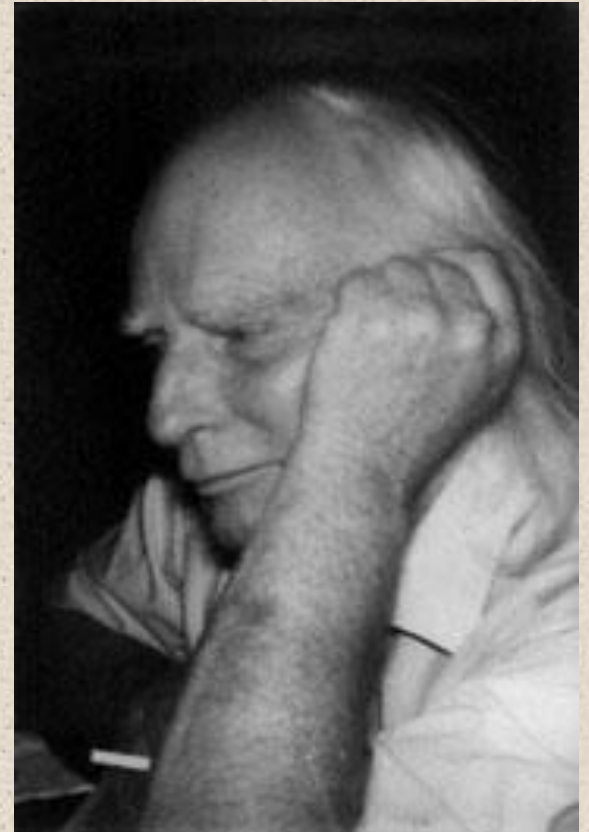
H. P. Grice
Conversational Implicature

A: How is C getting on in his job [at the bank]?

B: Oh quite well, I think; he likes his colleagues, and he hasn't been to prison yet.

i.   **What is the implicature?**

    i.   *While A hasn't been to prison, he is the sort of person who could easily end up there.*

    ii.   *What is a Conversational Implicature as opposed to Strictly Speaking?*

The Cooperative Principle and the Maxims

- **The Principle CP**
  - Make your conversational 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.
- **Specific Maxims**
  - Quality: make contribution 1) as informative and 2) not more informative than required.
  - Quality: don't say 1) what you believe to be false and 2) that for which you lack adequate evidence.
  - Relation: Be relevant
  - Manner: 1) avoid obscurity; 2) avoid ambiguity; 3) be brief; 4) be orderly.
  - Others? Aesthetic, social, or moral, be polite, ...
- **Cultural Differences:** What is relevant, polite, true will vary from culture to culture.

A man who by saying that p [he's not in jail] has implicated q [he's likely to steal money] may be said to have conversationally implicated q provided that:

1. He is presumed to have followed the maxims or at least the CP.
2. The supposition that he is aware that (q) is required in order to make his saying (p) consistent with this presumption;
3. The speaker thinks that it is within the hearer to workout that the supposition is required.
4. And not what happens if it does not.

Conventional Schema
(things that are assumed to be in place)

- The conventional meaning of the words used, together with the identity of any references that may be involved.

- The CP and its maxims

- The context, linguistic or otherwise, of the utterance;

- Other items of background knowledge; and

- The fact … that all relevant items falling under the previous headings are available to both participants and both participants know or assume this to be the case.

Group A: No maxims violated

- **Petrol Example**
  - A: I am out of petrol. B: There is a garage around the corner.
  - B would be infringing the maxim of "be relevant" unless he thinks that A can by petrol at the garage.
- **Jail example**: presumption that connection between implication and prison statement is obvious.
- **The Smith Example**
  - A: Smith doesn't seem to have a girlfriend these days. B: He has been paying a lot of visits to New York lately.
  - In this example too, the speaker implicates that which he must be assumed to believe in order to preserve the assumption that he is observing the maxim of relation.

Group B: Conflict between Maxims

An example in which a maxim is violated, but its violation is to be explained by the supposition of a clash with another maxim.

- A: Where does C live? B: Somewhere in the south of France.

- B is being vague (violating maximum of quality by saying less) because to be more informative he would have to say something he does not know thus violating the maxim of quality.

Group C: Flouting

Examples that involve exploitation, that is a procedure by which a maxim is flouted for the purpose of getting in a conversational implicature by means of something of the nature of a figure of speech.

- Letter of recommendation: Dear Si, Mr X's command of English is excellent, and his attendance at tutorials has been regular. Yours, etc.

- President: "I never had sex with that woman."

- Flouting allows one to say things through implicature without actually saying it (without directly lying).

- "Since the truth of a conversational implicatum is not required by the truth of what is said (...) The implicature is not carried by what is said, but only by the saying of what is said, or by 'putting it that way."

The Universality of the CP and Maxims

- Grice assumes the the CP and the maims are universal
- We may also add that while universal they may not act in the same way.
  - Different background knowledge.
  - Different ways of resolving conflicts (Group B) or flouting (Group C).
  - Do you really think I look nice in this outfit?
- Explain breakdowns in cross-cultural communication.
- The utility of these maxims in ordinary conversation.

Basis for the cooperative principle

- If it is universal is it genetic?
- If it is not genetic, why is it there and how/
- The social contract.

Erving Goffman: On Face-Work: An analysis of Ritual Social Interaction

- The concept of face:
  - The presentation of the self to the other.
  - Could be in positive or negative terms.
- Everyday terms
  - Maintaining face, Loose Face, Wrong face, Out of face, Poise, Save face, Give face
  - **Line**: a specific type of face in a specific situation.
- Basic structural feature of social interaction.

- **Rule of self respect**:
  - One is expected to maintain face
- **Rule of considerateness**:
  - person must go to certain lengths to save the feelings and the face of others present.
- **The Face-Threatening Act.**
  - Something that does damage to one's face.
- **Face Work:**
  - Maintaining face; correcting dammage
  - Often habitualized, Cultural variation, Individual variation

Basic Kinds of Facework

- **Total avoidance** to avoid possible FTA
- **Defensive measures**: avoidance; Shift topics; suppress feelings; hedging feelings, …
- **Protective maneuvers**:
  - Show respect and politeness; Show discretion about feelings on topics that might embarrass others; Employs circumlocutions and deceptions; Employs courtesies; joking manner; neutralize offending activities by explaining them in advance.
- **Denial** of FTA or the face threatening nature of the incident.
- **Loss of control** (ironically) others may protectively turn away from him to give him time to assemble himself.

The Corrective Process

When participants find themselves in an established state of ritual disequilibrium or disgrace, and an attempt is made to re-establish a satisfactory ritual state for them.

- **Ritual: one's face is a sacred thing**
- **The Stages**
    - **Acknowledgement:** Begins with acknowledge threat to face.

      (The interchange: seems to be a basic concrete unit of social activity.0
    - **The challenge**: participants call attention to the misconduct
    - **The offering:** whereby a participant, typically the offender, is given a chance to correct for the offence and re-establish the expressive order.
        - explain as a meaningless act, a joke, unintentional, a mistake, unavoidable, not acting himself, under the influence of something or somebody
    - **The acceptance** (or not) by the offended of offering
    - **Gratitude** by the offender (ritual equilibrium re-established)

Variations

- The offender patently refuses to heed the warning and continues with the offending behavior.
- Possibly calling offended's bluff: Untenable position because face for offender cannot be derived from it.
  - The offender withdraws in a visible huff (showing righteous indignation)
  - Emotions play an important part in this process.
  - both ways of salvaging face, but with high costs
- Some cultures apologize freely others with reluctance.
  - The Liberian apology:
    - I'm sorry your feelings were hurt when I said that.

The Game

- Every face-saving practice which is allowed to neutralize a particular threat opens up the possibility that the threat will be willfully introduced for what can be gained by it.
  - If a person knows that his modesty will be answered by other's praise for him, he can fish for complements.
  - He can arrange for favorable events to appear.
  - Sudden withdrawal leading to need for repair.
- Cooperation in face-work

The Ritual Roles of the Self: Two senses:

- The self as an image pieced together from the expressive implication of the full flow of events in an undertaking;
- The self as a player [agent] in a ritual game who copes honorably or dishonorably, diplomatically or undiplomatically, with the judgmental contingencies of the situation.
- Add this perspective to the view of the Self by G.H. Mead.
- Human need to be social

Greetings and Leave Taking

- How are greetings and leave-takings relevant to Goffman?
- Leave-takings are face threatening.
- Two ways to say good by
    - Blessing: Sidong fayn (CP), Adieu,
    - Will see again. Ma lo sina hoe (Mende) Au Revoir, See ya later.
- Greetings (Has our relationship changed since we last met?
- What about Aloha and Ciao which mean both hello and good bye?

So what?

- Universal human nature is not a very human thing. By acquiring it, the person becomes a kind of construct, built up, not from inner psychic propensities, but from moral rules that are impressed upon him from without.

- The general capacity to be bound by moral rules may well belong to the individual, but the particular set of rules which transforms him into a human being derives from requirements established in the ritual organization of social encounters. [*the social contract*]

- Similarly, the human nature of a particular set of persons may be specifically designed for the special kind of undertakings in which they participate [e.g., cultural varition].

- Similarities between Goffman and Grice

Politeness:
Brown and Levinson

- Assumptions
- Based on Goffman's concept of face
  - Face: The public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself.
  - A communication (speech act) may contain an imposition on the "face" of the Hearer.
- Language Universals extend beyond the confines of grammar.

Two types of face: Positive and Negative

- **Positive Face: Honor**
  - The public self.
  - The positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) by interactants.
  - the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others.
- Similar to the perspective of "me" of Mead,
- The "honor" of Weber.

- **Negative Face: Privacy**
  - Invented by Brown and Levinson
  - The concept of the right to privacy.
  - The basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction
  - the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others.
- Similar to the perspective of the "I" of Mead
- Similar to freedom of action and freedom of imposition.

Intrinsic FTAs

- It follows that "certain kinds of acts intrinsically threaten face ... when they "run contrary to the wants of the addressee or speaker.

First Distinction: Kinds of face threatened

- **S threatens H's Negative Face [imposition]**

- Those that put pressure on H to act: Orders and Requests; Suggestions and Advice; Reminders; Threats and warnings.

- Those that put H in debt (offers, promises)

- Those that expression desire or envy of H's possessions which lead H to think that he has to protect them (complements, envy, expressions of strong emotion (hatred, anger, lust))

- **S threatens H's Positive face**

- negative evaluation: disapproval(criticism); disagreement

- indifference to H's positive face: violent emotions (reason to fear S); irreverence; bad news about H (good news about S); raising divisive topics (politics); non-cooperation; wrong terms of address

Second distinctions:

Threats to H's face versus threats to S's

- **Those that offend S's negative Face**

- S expressing thanks, S acceptance of H's thanks; S's excuses; S acceptance of offers; S's response to H's faux pas; unwilling promises and offers

- **Those that damage S's positive face**

- apologies; acceptance of a complement; breakdown of physical control, self-humiliation, confessions, emotional leakage

Strategies for doing FTAs	On Record (directly Com-municating the FTA directly and un-equivocally (I promise to ...)	Without redressive action, baldly	
		With redressive action Redress: action that gives face to addressee by attempting to counteracting the potential face damage of the FTE	Positive politeness Oriented toward the positive face of H [honor]
			Negative politeness Oriented toward redressing the negative face [privacy]
	Off Record (indirect): This strategy: involves some ambiguity so that H is not obligated to respond (Damn, I'm out of cash cf. Grice.		
Don't do the FTA			

Sociological variables (331)

- Computing the Weightiness of an FTA

- Wx = D(S,H) + P (H,S) + Rx

- D = Social Distance between S and H for the purposes of that act and as determined by such things as the frequency of interaction and the kinds of material and nonmaterial goods exchanged....

- P = Power differential (Weber's sense). Degree to which H can impose his own plans and own face at the expense of S's plans and face.

- "I think you will take me to the store."

Conclusion: Pragmatics

- Austin: Speech Acts (Illocutionary Acts)
  – The linkages of these acts with institutions (Bourdieu).
  – The range of vocabulary in any language that have to do with speech acts.
- Grice:The Cooperative Principle and conversational Maxims
  – A Universal that is pragmatically grounded
  – Helps explain implicature and variation
- Goffman: Face
  – Activities involved in the presentation of self
  – Pragmatically based universal
- Brown and Levinson: Politeness (positive and negative face)
  – Types of strategies for interaction.
  – Positivistic rules. (structuralist?
  – Universals versus cultural variation?

Summary

Ricoeur	Structuralism v Post structuralism	The dialectical relationship between langue and parole
Mead	Symbolic Interactionism	The role of language The socially constructed self
Berger & Luckmann	Basis for institutions	The importance of the face to face interaction.
Austin	Illocutionary Acts	Connection of words with institutions.
Grice	CP and Maxims	Uses of implicature
Goffman	Face	Importance of face work to humans
Tannen	Frames, Schema and Knowledge	Elaboration of Discourse
Fairclough	Power/Ideology	The inclusion of power and ideology in the analysis of texts.

The End