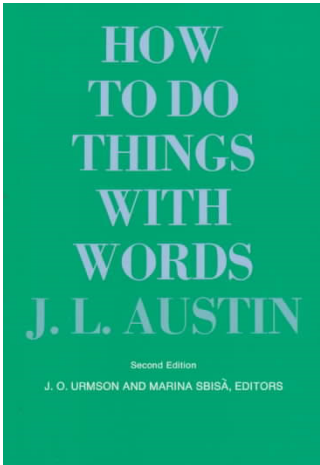
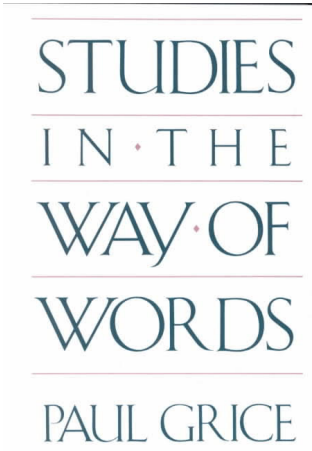


Grice's Conversational Maxims

The Cooperative Principle



Dr. Seuss (1989). *The Sneetches and Other Stories*. Random House. p.3; Unnamed character: Dr. Seuss (1988). *Green Eggs and Ham*. Random House. p. 25; Austin, J.L. (1975). "How to Do Things with Words". Harvard University Press. Cambridge, MA; Grice, P. (1991). "Studies in the Way of Words". Harvard University Press. Cambridge, MA.

The Cooperative Principle



Man: Kharlamova/Stock/Thinkstock; Unnamed character: Dr. Seuss (1988) *Green Eggs and Ham*. Random House. p. 25; Austin, J.L. (1975). "How to Do Things with Words". Harvard University Press. Cambridge, MA.; Grice, P. (1991). "Studies in the Way of Words". Harvard University Press. Cambridge, MA.

The Cooperative Principle

How to talk

"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."

"That is, cooperate."

(Grice 1975: 45)



The British Academy (2001). "Paul Grice". Used under Fair Dealing.

Four Categories of Gricean Maxims

How to talk, more specifically

- Relation
 - Be relevant.
- Quality
 - Be truthful.
- Quantity
 - Be sufficient (but not prolix).
- Manner
 - Be perspicacious.



Dr. Seuss (1989). *The Sneetches and Other Stories*. Random House. p.3; Unnamed character: Dr. Seuss (1988). *Green Eggs and Ham*. Random House. p.25; Hand: Noedelhap/iStock/Thinkstock

Conversational Implicature

How to talk and interpret

- Not moral or social injunctions
- Empirically derived principles
- Maxims that people naturally follow, and generally expect others to follow
 - To speak
 - To understand (conversational implicature)
- Observable mostly in violation

Conversational Implicature

Maxim of relation

Be relevant.

A1: There's a gas station at
King and Weber. [closed]

A2: You'll have to go all the way to Erb
Street; everything's closed around
here because of the anthrax scare.



Do you know where
I can get some gas?

Hand: Noedelhap/iStock/Thinkstock; Car: wenchiaawang/iStock/Thinkstock

Conversational Implicature

Maxim of quality

Be truthful

- Say what you believe to be true.
- Don't say what you believe to be false.



Do you know where
I can get some gas?

Car: wenchiaawang/iStock/Thinkstock

Conversational Implicature

Maxim of quantity

Be sufficient (but not prolix).

- Provide enough information
- But not too much

A1: Yes.

A2: Sure, King and Erb.

A3: Yep, King and Erb. They have a sale on gumboots at the hardware store across the street from it, too...



Do you know where I can get some gas?

Car: wenchiaawang/iStock/Thinkstock

Conversational Implicature

Maxim(s) of manner

- Be clear
- Don't be obscure
- Don't be ambiguous
- Be brief
- Be orderly

Q: Do you know where can I get some gas?

A: Yes. Somewhere near the theatre.

A: Yep. Next to the old Smith place.

A: Maybe I do, maybe I don't.

A: Of course. I know where every gas station build in the KW area since the Great War was located. First, there was the Ollie Petrie Service Station at the corner of...

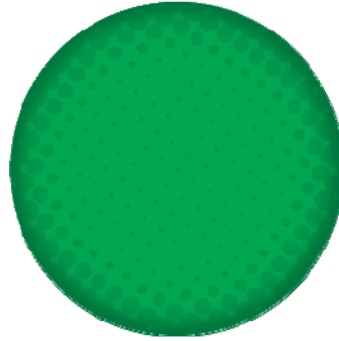
A: Sure. At Erb, turn right off King. To get to King, take Westmount, and turn left when you get there. Before that, go three lights down University and turn left at Westmount. First, however, ...

Hand: Noedelhap/iStock/Thinkstock

Conversational Implicature

The important point:

- Grice charted the many, many ways we coordinate our speech to each other's needs and expectations.
- people cooperate



Groom: mocoo/iStock/Thinkstock; Bride: mocoo/iStock/Getty Images Plus