



Clarifying the point about “A woman walked in” vs. “Not every woman didn’t walk in”:

Grice’s maxim of manner: be perspicuous

“A woman walked in” is (one of) the most straightforward way(s) to express the existential content “at least one woman walked in”.

“Not every woman didn’t walk in” is not a perspicuous way to express the same content, it is longer and more complicated. Longer and more complicated contents tend to implicate different things, even when they are truth-conditionally equivalent e.g. “She sang *Home Sweet Home*” vs. “She produced a series of sounds that corresponded closely with the score of *Home Sweet Home*”; “I stopped the car” vs. “I caused the car to stop”, etc.

So while the sentence containing the indefinite triggers Gricean reasoning that begins with the standard “the speaker said *that at least one woman walked in*”, the truth-conditionally equivalent double-negated sentence is going to trigger different reasoning, based on the maxim of manner (why did the speaker say the more complicated thing?).

Pushing back on the pushback

Key point: the conversational participants are not accurately tracking the conversation if they think that there are two distinct things under discussion, say, a woman who walked in and another individual who ordered lunch.

Think about what this means for the novelty of peg idea. Novelty of peg does not require novelty of referent. But it does require novelty of object under discussion. That is, it is not a misunderstanding of the conversation to think that there are *possibly* 2 different individuals under discussion (this is what you are calling the guarantee of indifference). But in the summary cases this *is* a misunderstanding of the objects under discussion in the conversation. There is not indifference, rather it is a misunderstanding of the conversation to think there are, e.g., possibly 2 students under discussion. (Caveat, but not an exception to what I am saying: phrases like “one of them” introduces a new, indifferent dref for existing pegs. It is of course a misunderstanding to think it is not identical to one of the individuals already introduced, but it

