

Hannah Portes

10/8/2019

Writing Assignment: Psych 1

Below are the last 30 messages from a text conversation with my friend who I have been trying to get together with since my birthday (on September 7<sup>th</sup>). We have since seen each other at other events and around campus, but have yet to have our coffee date. The messages are in the chart below, with the total of each message in the bottom left corner. As you can see, the majority of messages have Butler Content, as the entire point of this month long conversation is to manage our availability and try to find a time to meet that fits with both our schedules.

	Deceptive Message	Non-Deceptive Message
Butler Content	<p>hi wait I have a brunch that might go long</p> <p>Total: 1</p>	<p>Hey girl! So we have a tree climbing outing tn :( they planned it last minute. Im so sad i cant make it to your party :( Lets do a birthday dinner/ lunch some time?</p> <p>hey girl! you free for dinner/coffee/lunch next week?</p> <p>So i have 2 prelims Thursday</p> <p>I can do coffe before then or dinner Thursday</p> <p>(If it's this week)</p> <p>Oh no girl!!!! Lol lets just do the weekend then?? Dont wanna stress u</p> <p>I'm free all weekend lol</p> <p>lol how does sunday sound?</p> <p>Sunday sounds perf</p> <p>I have something right before rosh hashana dinner :(</p> <p>i have a meeting at 2 🤔 iss all good tho! lol how does friday look? my week is just crazy packed bc prelim</p> <p>when is good for you?</p> <p>Im currently free 11-12 and after 215</p> <p>rip 🤔 i have rock climbing in the middle of the day</p> <p>I'm good with next week I think</p> <p>Except Yom Kippur lmao</p> <p>Total: 16</p>
No Butler Content	<p>Total: 0</p>	<p>I'm really sad i missed it 🤔 how was it!</p> <p>and thank you! i did lol but also got really bitten up</p> <p>hmmm</p> <p>lol</p> <p>Hmmm</p> <p>I feel dw</p> <p>Good luck !!!</p> <p>um</p> <p>Sounds good thank u</p> <p>what about next week?</p> <p>do you have time this week</p> <p>Omg dw yes !</p> <p>Hope u had fun !!</p> <p>Total: 13</p>

I will analyze the Butler Lie, told by me, in the chart above in terms of ambiguity, face, reciprocity, and plausible deniability as we have discussed in class. The lie above “hi wait I have a brunch that might go long” was told in the midst of this drawn out conversation on making plans. After numerous failed attempts at meeting due to classes, homework, and exams, Waffle Frolic in the Commons had \$4 off their delivery fee. I had previously made plans with another friend to order waffles on Sunday morning, and I realized the night before that we would not be able to order and leisurely eat before rushing to coffee. To avoid a morning of rushing around that I simply was not in the mood for, I informed my friend that I had plans and would have to reschedule.

**Ambiguity**, as discussed in lecture, is applicable to a situation when there are multiple plausible interpretations for a situation. This Butler message above does not have much ambiguity, as I provided a direct explanation as to why I would not be able to attend our planned coffee. However, by failing to provide a specific reason or individual associated with my brunch, I left the brunch itself slightly ambiguous. By simply explaining I had a “brunch” the recipient likely assumed it was more formal than ordering waffles with a friend. The recipient could have thought that my brunch plans were informal, but a formal brunch with parents or related to networking are just as likely with the specificity I provided. This ambiguity helped save face, and maintain plausible deniability.

**Face**, as presented in lecture, is a positive image an individual claims and hopes others will accept. The ambiguity of the message allowed me to save face, as my friend (the recipient) deserves respect and assumes I have good intentions and motives. Rather than send a message saying “hey coffee tomorrow is too much effort and I care about waffles more, can we reschedule?” my message allowed for the recipient to assume I have a prior important obligation.

I was able to maintain my face as a friend who really does want to catch up and get coffee and just happens to be very busy.

**Reciprocity**, in a social context, is the expectation that when one individual helps another, that other individual is in debt to the original helper. For example, if I give my friend a ride to the airport, sometime in the future she will reasonably owe me a similar favor and perhaps have to drive me to Target. In the context of this conversation and this Butler message, reciprocity is in terms of understanding. This whole conversation began as my friend couldn't make it to my birthday event. Then the rules of reciprocity came into play; I was understanding when she couldn't attend my event, then she was understanding when I have 2 prelims and had to cancel, then I was understanding when she had an extracurricular event, and she was understanding when I had brunch. We have maintained to cancel plans with each other more than 6 times without any loss of respect or animosity. This is because both parties are understanding of the other's commitments, both deserve respect and both respect each other. Our good intentions are not questioned; we both willingly believe that the other is incredibly busy.

Finally, most of the messages in this conversation, especially my Butler lie, have **plausible deniability**; the actions and messages above can be explained by both good or bad intentions. Every Butler message above can be the result of my friend and I attempting to avoid each other, being lazy, or not prioritizing our friendship, but each message offers a plausible explanation, and it is much easier to accept at face value that each message is well intentioned. Although the message regarding brunch is a Butler lie, the fact that brunch would go long and was more important than a last minute coffee date is plausible and easier to accept than theorize about my true intentions and dedications.

The brunch did not go long, in fact the friend with whom I ordered had to be somewhere 15 minutes before our coffee date would have been scheduled. I simply didn't want to rush around on my Sunday morning, and relied on the principles above to maintain our relationship. So far there has been no indication that our drawn out exchange has affected our friendship, and hopefully by the end of the semester there will be a time to finally get coffee.