



An Animated and Narrated Glossary of Terms used in Linguistics presents

Maxim of Quality







Definition

When engaged in conversation, the Maxim of Quality requires that you

- 1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
- 2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.



H.P. Grice (1975)

H.P. Grice

Slide 2





Basic Idea

- The Maxim of Quality requires information provided in conversations to be genuine and justified.
- It is one of the four conversational maxims of the Cooperative Principle.
- Grice proposes this maxim as an explanation for a certain kind of regularity in conversational behavior with respect to the authenticity of information provided at each turn of a conversation.

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Example 1

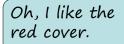


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Example 2





Jenny, how do you like this novel?

Why do we find Jenny's reply strange?

Because the Maxim is violated.

Jenny says something that evidently she does not believe in (i.e. she told a lie).



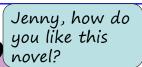




Example 2

Oh, I like its red cover.

The cover is clearly not red, and Jenny's response is not what one would expect when deciding if one likes a novel.



Deliberate and apparent violation of maxims is called "flouting".

We do not expect the Maxim to be violated. Flouting must be motivated.







Example 2

Oh, I like its red cover.



Inferences obtained from flouting of maxims are called implicatures.

Jenny may be implicating that there is nothing about the novel that she likes, not even the cover.

Note: Implicatures do not have to be necessarily true, since the inferences are guessed at rather than derived by formal logic.







The End

Wee, Lian-Hee and Winnie H.Y. Cheung (2009)

An animated and narrated glossary of terms used in Linguistics.

Hong Kong Baptist University.

