

Grice's System

The Cooperative Principle

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.

The Maxims

Quantity:

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required.
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Quality:

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

Relation:

Be relevant.

Manner:

1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief.
4. Be orderly.

Working out an implicature

He has said that p, there is no reason to suppose that he is not observing the maxims, or at least the Cooperative Principle; he could not be doing this unless he thought that q; he knows (and knows that I know that he knows) that I can see that the supposition that he thinks that q is required; he has done nothing to stop me thinking that q; he intends me to think, or is at least willing to allow me to think, that q; and so he has implicated that q.