13. Aspects of Conversation

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Conversations in different modes
Studies on conversational interactions

(1) Narratives and content flow
(2) Social discourse
(3) Verbal communication
(4) Nonverbal communication
(5) Cognitive process
Meme theory [Dawkins 1976]
Meme as hypothetical information unit introduced by Dawkins (1976) that contribute to the evolutionary process of ideas and cultural style in the society.

Narratology [Edwards 1997]
Stories and narratives are not only means for communicating messages with each other but also that for recognizing and understanding the world.

SPGU and dynamic memory [Schank]
Knowledge-based understanding of stories. In search for how people learn from stories to build dynamically evolving memory.

Discourse theory [Brown (1983)]
Topics play a critical role for people to recognize a collection of information as a cluster. Story is a staged presentation of complex information. Coherency of information presentation is critical for the audience understand the presentation without difficulty.
“The language is meant to serve for communication between a builder $A$ and an assistant $B$. $A$ is building with building-stones: there are blocks, pillars, slabs and beams. $B$ has to pass the stones, and that in the order in which $A$ needs them. For this purpose they use a language consisting of the words “block,” “pillar,” “slab,” “beam.” $A$ calls them out; – $B$ brings the stone which he has learnt to bring at such-and-such a call. – Conceive this as a complete primitive language.”
[Wittgenstein 1958, p. 3]

Evring Goffman, among others,
- Behavior in Public Places (The Free Press, 1963)
- Forms of Talk (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981)
- Interaction Ritual, (Pantheon Books, 1967)
Behavior in public places

Public places, situation, social occasion

- “Traditionally, “public places” refer to any regions in a community freely accessible to members of that community; “private places” refer to soundproof regions where only members or invitees gather – the traditional concern for public order beginning only at the point where a private gathering begins to obtrude upon the neighbors.”  p. 9
- “By the term situation I shall refer to the full spatial environment anywhere within which an entering person becomes a member of the gathering that is (or does then become) present. Situations begin when mutual monitoring occurs, and lapse when the second-last person has left.”  p. 18
- “When persons come into each other's immediate presence they tend to do so as participants of what I shall call a social occasion. This is a wider social affair, undertaking, or event, bounded in regard to place and time and typically facilitated by fixed equipment; a social occasion provides the structuring social context in which many situations and their gatherings are likely to form, dissolve, and re-form, while a pattern of conduct tends to be recognized as the appropriate and (often) official or intended one -- a "standing behavior pattern," to use Barker's term. Examples of social occasions are a social party, a workday in an office, a picnic, or a night at the opera.”  p. 18

[Goffman 1963]
Behavior in public places

Situational proprieties, unfocused interaction, focused interaction

• “The rules pertaining to this area of conduct I shall call situational proprieties. The code derived therefrom is to be distinguished from other moral codes regulating other aspects of life (even if these sometimes apply at the same time as the situational code): for example, codes of honor, regulating relationships; codes of law, regulating economic and political matters; and codes of ethics, regulating professional life.” (p. 24)

• “The communicative behavior of those immediately present to one another can be considered in two steps. The first deals with unfocused interaction, that is, the kind of communication that occurs when one gleans information about another person present by glancing at him, if only momentarily, as he passes into and then out of one’s view. Unfocused interaction has to do largely with the management of sheer and mere copresence. The second step deals with focused interaction, the kind of interaction that occurs when persons gather close together and openly cooperate to sustain a single focus of attention, typically by taking turns at talking. Where no focused interaction occurs, the term unfocused gathering can be used. Where focused interaction occurs, clumsier terms will be needed.” (p. 24)

[Goffman 1963]
Involvement, Involvement shield, {main, side} involvement

• “To be engaged in an occasioned activity means to sustain some kind of cognitive and affective engrossment in it, some mobilization of one’s psychobiological resources; in short, it means to be involved in it.” (p. 35)

• “Given the fact that involvement signs must be signified and witnessed before the appropriateness of involvement allocation can be inferred, we may expect to find a variety of barriers to perception used as involvement shields, behind which individuals can safely do the kind of things that ordinarily result in negative sanctions.” (p. 39)

• “Men and animals have a capacity to divide their attention into main and side involvements. A main involvement is one that absorbs the major part of an individual’s attention and interest, visibly forming the principal current determinant of his actions. A side involvement is an activity that an individual can carry on in an abstracted fashion without threatening or confusing simultaneous maintenance of a main involvement. Whether momentary or continuous, simple or complicated, these side activities appear to constitute a kind of fuguelike dissociation of minor muscular activity from the main line of an individual’s action. Humming while working and knitting while listening are examples.” (p. 43)
Moreover, it is possible for the individual, by his staring or his "not seeing," to alter his own appearance hardly at all in consequence of the presence of the others. Here we have "nonperson" treatment; ...

Currently, in our society, this kind of treatment is to be considered with the kind generally felt to be more proper in most situations, which will here be called "civil inattention." What seems to be involved is that one gives to another enough visual notice to demonstrate that one appreciates that the other is present (and that one admits openly to having seen him), while at the next moment withdrawing one's attention from him so as to express that he does not constitute a target of special curiosity or design.

In performing this courtesy the eyes of the looker may pass over the eyes of the other, but no "recognition" is typically allowed. Where the courtesy is performed between two persons passing on the street, civil inattention may take the special form of eyeing the other up to approximately eight feet, during which time sides of the street are apportioned by gesture, and then casting the eyes down as the other passes -- a kind of dimming of lights. By according civil inattention, the individual implies that he has no reasons to suspect the intentions of the others present and no reasons to fear the others, be hostile to them, or wish to avoid them.

[Goffman 1963]

p. 84
Ritualization

“The movements, looks, and vocal sounds we make as an unintended by-product of speaking and listening never seem to remain innocent. Within the lifetime of each of us these acts in varying degrees acquire a specialized communicative role in the stream of our behavior, looked to and provided for in connection with the displaying of our alignment to current events.” (p. 2)

participation framework

“When a word is spoken, all those who happen to be in perceptual range of the event will have some sort of participation status relative to it.” (p. 3)

Embedding

“We can as handily quote another (directly or indirectly) as we can say something in our own name. This embedding capacity is part of something more general: our linguistic ability to speak of events at any remove in time and space from the situated present.” (p. 3)

[Goffman 1981]
Forms of talk

Replies and responses

- A two-way capability for transceiving acoustically adequate and readily interpretable messages.
- Back-channel feedback capabilities for informing on reception while it is occurring.
- Contact signals: means of announcing the speaking of a channeled connection, means of ratifying that the sought-for channel is now open, means of closing off a theretofore open channel. Included here, identification-authentication signs.
- Turnover signals: means to indicate ending of a message and the taking over of the sending role by next speaker. (In the case of talk with more than two persons, next-speaker selection signals, whether "speaker selects" or "self-select" types.)
- Preemption signals: means of including a rerun, holding off channel requests, interrupting a talker in progress.
- Framing capabilities: cues distinguishing special readings to apply across strips of bracketed communication, recasting otherwise conventional sense, as in making ironic asides, quoting another, joking, and so forth; and hearer signals that the resulting transformation has been followed.
- Norms obliging respondents to reply honestly with whatever they know that is relevant and no more.
- Nonparticipant constraints regarding eavesdropping, competing noise, and the blocking of pathways for eye-to-eye signals.

(p. 15)

[Goffman 1981]
Behavior in public places

Structure of participation

The people around an action divide first into those (participants) who are truly participating in it and those (nonparticipants) who are not.
- The speaker
- The addressee
- Side participant – taking part in the conversation but not currently being addressed.
- Overhearer – has no rights or responsibilities in it
- Bystander – openly present but not part of the conversation
- Eavesdropper – those who listen in without the speaker’s awareness.

[Clark 1996, p. 14]
Forms of talk

Replies and responses

C1:
A: "What's the time?"
B: "It's five o'clock."

C2:
(i) A: "Do you have the time?"
(ii) B: "Sure, It's five o'clock."
(iii) A: "Thanks."
(iv) B: [Gesture] "'T's okay."

“remedy”, neutralizes the potentially offensive consequence of encroaching on another with a demand.

“relief”, demonstrates that the potential offender's effort to nullify offense is acceptable.

“appreciation”, a display of gratitude for the service rendered and for its provider not taking the claim on himself amiss.

“minimization”, demonstrates that enough gratitude has been displayed, and thus the displayer is to be counted a properly feeling person.

Ritual interchanges

[Goffman 1981]
Forms of talk

Ritual interchanges

In making an assertion about facts, the maker must count on not being considered hopelessly wrongheaded;
- if a greeting, that contact is wanted;
- if an excuse, that it will be acceptable;
- if an avowal of feeling and attitude, that these will be credited;
- if a summons, that it will be deferred to;
- if a serious offer, that it won't be considered presumptuous or mean;
- if an overgenerous one, that it will be declined;
- if an inquiry, that it won't be though intrusive;
- if a self-deprecating comment, that it will be denied.

The pause that comes after a tactfully sustained exchange is possible, then, in part because the participants have arrived at a place that each finds viable, each having acquitted himself with an acceptable amount of self-constraint and respect for the others present.

(p. 17)

[Goffman 1981]
Interaction Ritual

On Face-Work

• “Every person lives in a world of social encounters, involving him either in face-to face or mediated contact with other participants. In each of these contacts, he tends to act out what is sometimes called a *line* -- that is, a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself.” (p. 5)

• “The term *face* may be defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes -- albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself:” (p. 5)

• “A person may be said to have, or be in, or maintain face when the line he effectively takes presents an image of him that is internally consistent, that is supported by judgments and evidence conveyed by other participants, and that is confirmed by evidence conveyed through impersonal agencies in the situation.” (p. 6)

• “A person may be said to be in *wrong face* when information is brought forth in some way about his social worth which cannot be integrated, even with effort, into the line that is being sustained for him. A person may be said to be out of face when he participates in a contact with others without having ready a line of the kind participants in such situations are expected to take.” (p. 6-7)

[Goffman 1967]
Greetings

2 party

[Image showing two figures A and B with an arrow from A to B, indicating a social interaction.]

[Kendon 1990]
Greetings

3 party

[Kendon 1990]
Spatial structure of participation

F-Formation system

[Image of a diagram showing O-space, P-space, and R-space with people in a formation, based on Kendon's 1990 work]
Patterns of behavior in focused encounters

Engagement display

Engaged

Disengaged

Gaze

Head direction

[Goodwin 1981, Chapter 3]
Patterns of behavior in focused encounters

Synchrony

Movement mirroring

Speech and movement

Direct addressee

[Kendon 1990, p. 96-106]
Patterns of behavior in focused encounters

Gaze

(a) Mutual gaze  
(b) Joint attention
Patterns of behavior in focused encounters

Turn taking

(a)  
(b)  
(c)  
(d)
Patterns of behavior in focused encounters

Engagement

[Nakano]
Speech act theory

Locutionary acts: action of making an utterance.
The speaker makes sound + facial expressions + ...

Illocutionary acts: a social action performed by an utterance.
The speaker asks for the place the flower was found.

Perlocutionary acts: social effects brought about by the utterance.
The speaker shows an interest to maintain friendship.

A: Here is a flower for you.
B: Thank you so much!
Where did you find it?

[Austin 1962; Searle 1969]
Performatives $\iff$ Constatives

(E. a) 'I do' (sc. take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife) -- as uttered in the course of the marriage ceremony.
(E. b) 'I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth' -- as uttered when smashing the bottle against the stem.
(E. c) 'I give and bequeath my watch to my brother' -- as occurring in a will.
(E. d) 'I bet you sixpense it will rain tomorrow.'

“What are we to call a sentence or an utterance of this type? I propose to call it a performative sentence or a performative utterance, or for short, 'a performative'.”

[Austin 1962]
Necessary conditions to be satisfied for performatives to work

(A. 1) “There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further,”

(A. 2) “the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.”

(B. 1) “The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and

(B. 2) completely.”

(C. 1) “Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further

(C. 2) must actually so conduct themselves subsequently.”

p. 14-15

[Austin 1962]
How to do things with words

Five general classes of performatives

(1) Verdictives. “Typified by the giving of a verdict, as the name implies, by a jury, arbitrator, or umpire. But they need not be final; they may be, for example, an estimate, reckoning, or appraisal.”

(2) Exercitives. “The exercising of powers, rights, or influence. Examples are appointing, voting, ordering, urging, advising, warning, etc.”

(3) Commissives. “Typified by promising or otherwise undertaking; they commit you to doing something, but include also declarations or announcements of intention, which are not promises, and also rather vague things which we may call espousals, as for example, siding with.”

(4) Behavitives. “A very miscellaneous group, and have to do with attitudes and social behaviour. Examples are apologizing, congratulating, commending, condoling, cursing, and challenging.”

(5) Expositives. (Difficult to define) “They make plain how our utterances fit into the course of an argument or conversation, how we are using words, or, in general, are expository. Examples are 'I reply', 'I argue', 'I conclude', 'I illustrate', 'I assume', 'I postulate'. “

[Austin 1962]
How to do things with words

Five general classes of performatives

(1) Verdictives: acquit, convict, find (as a matter of fact), hold (as a matter of law), interpret as, understand, read it as, rule, calculate, reckon, estimate, locate, place, date, measure, put it at, make it, take it, grade, rank, rate, assess, value, describe, characterize, diagnose, analyse

(2) Exercitives: appoint, degrade, demote, dismiss, excommunicate, name, order, command, direct, sentence, fine, grant, levy, vote for, nominate, choose, claim, give, bequeath, pardon, resign, warn, advise, plead, pray, entreat, beg, urge, press, recommend, proclaim, announce, quash, countermand, annul, repeal, enact, reprieve, veto, dedicate, declare closed, declare open

(3) Commissives: promise, covenant, contract, undertake, bind myself, give my word, am determined to, intend, declare my intention, mean to, plan, purpose, propose to, shall, contemplate, envisage, engage, swear, guarantee, pledge myself, bet, vow, agree, consent, dedicate myself to, declare for, side with, adopt, champion, embrace, espouse, oppose, favour

(4) Behavitives: (a) For apologies we have 'apologize'. (b) For thanks we have 'thank'. (c) For sympathy we have 'deplore', 'commiserate', 'compliment', 'condole', 'congratulate', 'felicitate', 'sympathize'. (d) For attitudes we have 'resent', 'don't mind', 'pay tribute', 'criticize', 'grumble about', 'complain of', 'applaud', 'overlook', 'commend', 'deprecate', and the non-exercitive uses of 'blame', 'approve', and 'favour'. (e) For greetings we have 'welcome', 'bid you farewell'. (f) For wishes we have 'bless', 'curse', 'toast', 'drink to', and 'wish' (in its strict performative use). (g) For challenges we have 'dare', 'defy', 'protest', 'challenge'.

(5) Expositives: (a) affirm, deny, state, describe, class, identify, (b) remark, mention, ?interpose, (c) inform, apprise, tell, answer. rejoin, (c1) ask, (d) testify, report, swear, conjecture, ?double, ?know, ?believe, (e) accept, concede, withdraw, agree, demur to, object to, adhere to, recognize, repudiate, (e1) correct, revise, (f) postulate, deduce, argue, neglect, ?emphasize, (g) begin by, turn to, conclude by, (g1) interpret, distinguish, analyse, define, (g2) illustrate, explain, formulate, (g3) mean, refer, call, understand, regard as

[Austin 1962]
A Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts

Alternative Taxonomy (p. 355-356)

(1) Representatives. “The point or purpose of the members of the representative class is to commit the speaker (in varying degrees) to something's being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition.”

(2) Directives. “The illocutionary point of these consists in the fact that they are attempts (of varying degrees, and hence more precisely, they are determinates of the determinable which includes attempting) by the speaker to get the hearer to do something.”

(3) Commissives. “those illocutionary acts whose point is to commit the speaker (again in varying degrees) to some future course of action.”

(4) Expressives. “The illocutionary point of this class is to express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content. The paradigms of expressive verbs are "thank," "congratulate," "apologize," "condole," "deplore," and "welcome."

(5) Declarations. “It is the defining characteristic of this class that the successful performance of one of its members brings about the correspondence between the propositional content and reality.”

[Searle 1975]
Proposition 1. Language fundamentally is used for social purposes.

Proposition 2. Language use is a species of joint action.

Proposition 3. Language use always involves speaker’s meaning and addressee’s understanding.

Proposition 4. The basic setting for language use is face-to-face conversation.

Proposition 5. Language use often has more than one layer of activity.

Proposition 6. The study of language use is both a cognitive and a social science.

[Clark 1996, p. 23-24]
Using language – Signaling

Language use could not proceed without signals.

Sign stands for an object and creates an idea in the mind.

A sign is either an icon, an index, or a symbol.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of sign</th>
<th>Relation of sign $S$ to its object $O$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Icon</td>
<td>$S$ resembles $O$ perceptually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>$S$ is physically connected with $O$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>$S$ is associated with $O$ by rule</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A signal is the presentation of a sign by one person to mean something to another.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of signaling</th>
<th>Sign created</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>demonstrating a thing</td>
<td>icon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indicating a thing</td>
<td>index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>describing as a type of thing</td>
<td>symbol</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Clark 1996, p. 155-156]
In conversation, most utterances are composites of the three methods – describing-as, indicating, and demonstrating – not just one or two. What is more, the three methods depend on fundamentally different processes, and these have to be integrated.

### Method of Signaling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Describing-as</th>
<th>Indicating</th>
<th>Demonstrating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>words, sentences, vocal emblems</td>
<td>vocal locating of “I” “here” “now”</td>
<td>intonation, tone of voice, onomatopoeia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hands, arms</td>
<td>emblems, junctions</td>
<td>pointing, beats</td>
<td>iconic hand gestures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face</td>
<td>facial emblems</td>
<td>directing face</td>
<td>facial gestures, smiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyes</td>
<td>winks, rolling eyes</td>
<td>eye contact, eye gaze</td>
<td>widened eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>body</td>
<td>junctions</td>
<td>directing body</td>
<td>iconic body gestures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Clark 1996, p. 184]
Using language – Collateral signals

A: “forty-nine Skipton Place”

T2 [Confirm that you heard] “forty-nine Skipton Place”

T1 [The address is] forty-nine Skipton Place

B: “forty-one”

T3 [Did you present] “forty-one”?

T2 [I heard] “forty-one”

T1 [I rafify the address as] forty-one

A: “nine. nine”

T3 [No, the “one” is] “nine”

T2

T1

[Clark 1996]
Using language – Collateral signals

Forms of collateral signals

Marked prosody. Every utterance in track 1 has an expected prosody. One way to create a collateral signal is to superimpose an unexpected, or marked, prosody on that utterance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track 2 signal</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trial constituent</td>
<td>A: a man called Annegra? - B: yea, Allegra</td>
<td>“Confirm that you know who I mean by Annegra.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installment</td>
<td>A: so Mr. D. Challam, B: yes</td>
<td>“Confirm that you understand this installment.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fade-outs</td>
<td>A: you know, she’s just gonna - - B: yeah</td>
<td>“I am sure you understand without my completing this.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Clark 1996, p. 248]
Using language – Three action ladders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>A’s actions in progress</th>
<th>B’s actions in progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A is proposing to B</td>
<td>Proposal and consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A is asking B</td>
<td>Signaling and recognition / meaning and understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A is presenting to B a signal</td>
<td>Presentation and identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A is executing for B’s perception</td>
<td>Execution and attention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Clark 1996, p. 151]
Using language – Speech acts as action ladder

\[ A \rightarrow B: \text{“please sit down”} \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perlocutionary act</th>
<th>A is trying to get B sit down.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary act</td>
<td>A is asking B to sit down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locutionary act</td>
<td>A is saying to B “Please sit down.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetic act</td>
<td>A is using the words \textit{please}, \textit{sit}, and \textit{down} with a certain sense and reference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phatic act</td>
<td>A is uttering the words \textit{please}, \textit{sit}, and \textit{down}.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonetic act</td>
<td>A is producing the noises that constitute “Please sit down.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Clark 1996]
Adjacency pairs

1. Adjacency pairs consist of two ordered utterances – the first pair part and the second pair part.
2. The two parts are uttered by different speakers.
3. The two parts come in types that specify which part is to come first and which second.
4. The form and content of the second part depends on the type of the first part.
5. Given a first pair part, the second pair part is conditionally relevant – that is, relevant and expectable – as the next utterance.

[Clark 1996, p. 197]
### Example of adjacency pairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjacency pair</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Summons</td>
<td>Jane: (rings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Response</td>
<td>Kate: Miss Pink’s office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Greetings</td>
<td>Kate: hello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Greetings</td>
<td>Jane: hello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Question</td>
<td>Kate: who is it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Answer</td>
<td>Jane: oh it’s Professor Worth’s secretary, from Pan-American College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Assertion</td>
<td>Jane: oh it’s Professor Worth’s secretary, from Pan-American College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Assent</td>
<td>Kate: <em>m</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Request</td>
<td>Jane: could you give her a message <em>for me</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Promise</td>
<td>Kate: <em>certainly</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Promise</td>
<td>Kate: I’ll tell her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Acknowledgment</td>
<td>Jane: thank you</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Clark 1996, p. 197]
Using language – Joint actions

Joint activities advance mostly through joint actions. (p. 59)

The coordination problem:
What participatory actions do they expect each other to take?

Coordination device:
Something to tell them which actions are expected. (p. 64)

Principle of joint salience:
The ideal solution to a coordination problem among two or more agents is the solution that is most salient, prominent, or conspicuous with respect to their current common ground.

[Clark 1996]
Using language – Joint actions

Coordination devices uniquely suited for solving coordination problems:
- Explicit agreement
- Convention

A convention:
  A community’s solution to a recurrent coordination problems.

E.g.,
In some societies, bowing is a solution to the recurrent problem of how to greet one other.

A convention is:
1. a regularity $r$ in behavior
2. partly arbitrary
3. that is common ground in a given community $C$
4. as a coordination device
5. for a recurrent coordination problem $s$.

[Clark 1996, p. 70]
Most everyday coordination is *continuous*, demanding adaptive moment-by-moment decisions that don’t readily divide into discrete coordination problems.

Joint actions can be coordinated because they divide into phases (phase: a stretch of joint action with a unified function and identifiable entry and exit times).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>extend hands</th>
<th>shake hands</th>
<th>withdraw hands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>grasp hands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pump hands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>release hands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Clark 1996, p. 82]
Synchrony of action requires coordination on the entry and exit times to each other.

To achieve synchrony, the participants must be able to project both times from what when before. They should be helped whenever the times are:
(1) good reference points – jointly salient moments in time; and
(2) easy to project from the previous phases.

Three coordination strategies:
- The cadence strategy
- The entry strategy
- The boundary strategy

[Clark 1996, p. 82]
Common grand is *sine qua non* for everything we do with others – from the broadest joint activities to the smallest joint actions that comprise them. (p. 92)

**Principle of shared basis:** For something to be a coordination device, it must be a shared basis for a piece of common ground. (p. 99)

**Shared basis**

*p* is common ground for members of community \(C\) if and only if:
1. Every member of \(C\) has information that basis \(b\) holds;
2. \(b\) indicates to every member of \(C\) that every member of \(C\) has information that \(b\) holds;
3. \(b\) indicates to members of \(C\) that \(p\).

[Clark 1996]
Types of common ground

1. Communal
   a. Human nature
   b. Communal lexicons
   c. Cultural facts, norms, procedures

2. Personal
   a. Perceptual bases
      gestural indications, partner’s activities, salient perceptual events
   b. Actional bases
   c. Personal diagies

[Clark 1996]
Using language – Joint Projects

Joint construals

How do speakers and addressees settle on what speakers mean?

Classic view:

“What the speaker means” is a specific, objective intention of the speaker, and addressees are to identify that intention.

Principle of joint construal:

For each signal, the speaker and addressees try to create a joint construal of what the speaker is to be taken to mean by it.

[Clark 1996, p. 212]
Using language – Layers

Layers

When someone tells a joke, the other participants must recognize it for what it is – a piece of fiction. Take this stretch of conversation:

Ken: You wanna hear - My sister told me a story last night.
Roger: I don’t wanna hear it. But if you must. (0.7)
Al: What’s purple and an island. Grape, Britain. That’s what his sister told him.
Ken: No. To stun me she says uh, (0.8)
There were these three girls and they just got married?
[Continues joke]

Layer 1

In Los Angeles in 1965, Ken Roger, and Al jointly presented that the events in Layer 2 are taking place.

Layer 2

Ken is telling Roger and Al about three actual girls who just got married.

[Clark 1996, p. 15-16]
Two Stanford University students, Ross and Cathy, have a date to study one evening, but Ross has a problem. Some old friends of his from Southern California have called to say they are arriving at Stanford that evening and want him to go to a basketball game at Berkeley, about an hour away, and he has accepted. He telephoned Cathy, describes the circumstances, explains he is going to the game, and says:

Ross: Do you want to come?
Cathy: That’s all right. I’ll pass.
Using language – Ostensible Invitations

Ostensible acts have the same properties as staged acts, but with several differences. If \( A \) ostensibly invites \( B \) to event \( E \), the invitation has these properties:

1. Joint pretense. \( A \) engages \( B \) in a joint pretense. (Ross and Cathy mutually recognize that Ross is making a pretense.)
2. Communicative act. The joint pretense is that \( A_i \) is sincerely inviting \( B_i \) to \( E \). (Ross and Cathy’s joint pretense is that he is sincerely inviting her to go to the game.)
3. Correspondence. \( A \) is to be taken as \( A_i \), and \( B \) as \( B_i \). (in their pretense, Ross is to be taken as implied Ross, and Cathy as implied Cathy.)
4. Contrast. \( A \) intends \( A \) and \( B \) to mutually recognize certain contrasts between the demonstrated and actual situations and to see \( A \)’s reason for highlighting them. (Ross wants Cathy to compare what could be, that he really wants her to go, with what is, that he doesn’t actually want her to go. She will then see that he would like to have been with her if circumstances had been different – that he still enjoys and wanted her company.)
5. Ambivalence. If asked, \( A \) couldn’t sincerely say he wanted \( B \) to go to event \( E \), nor could he sincerely say he didn’t. (Ross couldn’t honestly say “Yes, I really want you to come,” because he didn’t really want Cathy to go. Yet he also couldn’t admit to her publicly that he didn’t want her to come, for that would imply he didn’t regard her highly enough to invite her.)
6. Collusion. \( A \) expects \( B \) to respond to the pretense appropriate to \( A \)’s wishes. (If Cathy is cooperative, she will decline Ross’ invitation.)

[Clark 1996, p. 378]
Using language – Face

In using language, people are therefore motivated to maintain their own and their partner’s face. Suppose Alan is speaking to Barbara, making $A$ the speaker and $B$ the addressee:

1. Acts that lower $B$’s self-worth. $A$ may show disapproval for $B$ by his actions. These include criticism, contempt, and ridicule; disagreements and challenges; and raising embarrassing topics.

2. Acts that lower $B$’s autonomy. $A$ may reduce $B$’s freedom of action in many ways. These include requests, orders, suggestions, and warnings, since $A$ is getting $B$ to do something, and that will restrict her actions.

3. Acts that lower $A$’s self-worth. Any action by $A$ may lead to a lowering of his own self-worth, as when he apologize, accepts criticisms, or admits responsibility for actions that are disapproved of.

4. Acts that lower $A$’s autonomy. When $A$ makes promises, expresses thanks, or accepts offers, apologies, or thanks, he is limiting his own future course of action, reducing his autonomy.

[Clark 1996, p. 293]
The joint projects that emerge in many open situations are even more extended.

If such a transfer of goods is subject to equity, it should include equalizing devices of the expected types, and it does. A should try to define the situations as one in which one or more of these conditions hold:

1. **Justification.** It is reasonable for B to do the act for A. Examples: “I really need the money,” “I can’t get to the bank,” and “You still owe me $5, don’t you?”
2. **Minimization of request.** The act B is to do is not very costly. Hence: “I’m not really asking for much,” “It’s not out of your way,” and “You don’t have to do it right away.”
3. **Future obligation.** A intends to do something in return, as made explicit in “I’ll pay you back,” “I’ll remember this,” and “I’ll return the favor.”
4. **Maximization of B’s benefit.** B will benefit from doing the act, as expressed in “You’ll enjoy it” and “It’ll do you good.”

[Clark 1996, p. 304]
Summary

1. Conversation can be seen from a broad range of angles.
2. A coercive approximation of conversation might be to characterize it as a process of exchanging small talks or chitchats, regarded as components of larger stories.
3. Studies on conversational interactions consist of social discourse, verbal communication, nonverbal communication, and cognitive process.
4. Social discourse can be unveiled by shedding light on the situation surrounding conversational interactions.
5. Verbal communication can be investigated by analyzing how language is used.
6. Nonverbal communication not only affects the message flow in the conversation but also adds meaning to words.
7. The notion of joint activities -- conversation as a joint activity and conversation for a joint activity -- appears central.


