



Construction of Meaning in Verbal Communication

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INTRODUCTION

In the social sciences, coordinated meaning management (CMM) provides an understanding of how individuals create, coordinate, and manage meaning in their communication processes. In general, it refers to "how individuals establish rules for creating and interpreting meaning and how those rules are related in conversation where meanings are constantly coordinated". (West and Lynn, 2007)." Human communication is seen as a flexible, open and changeable process that develops in continuous mutual interaction, which allows movements, shifts, and ways of evolving with one another". According to Miller and Sarah (2019). CMM embodies this vision and enables interpersonal connections and open conversations between individuals or groups, and can be applied across a wide range of academic fields and social scenarios.

Therefore, defining CMM has become a challenge. However, some commonly agreed upon definitions of CMM are: it is "a multi-level structural theory in which rules describe the movement or relationship between meaning and action. From a CMM perspective, two people talk about compromises on interpersonal systems with two interpersonal component systems."

Pearce and Cronen (1984) offer CMM to "encourage us to look at communication processes and the ways in which meaning is made. We are encouraged to think about the ways we might act in critical moments." Miller and Sarah (2019) CMM "offers a framework that allows us to take a collaborative approach to taking the position of working together to explore meaning and arrive at a shared understanding and an agreed plan for moving forward".

Fundamentally, CMM is also "a social construction theory that posits how we create our relationships and even the world itself through communication. It is complex and includes ideas of coherence and mystery". [4] Data and information shared between two parties are understood visually and socially through "hierarchies and coordination of meanings in our messages" (Thompson and Kleine, 2016).

CMM THEORY ASSUMPTIONS

Assumptions of CMM suggest that; (1) humans live in communication (social constructionism), (2) humans create social reality, and (3) information transactions depend on personal and interpersonal meaning. From the beginning, CMM theorists argued that social situations are created by interactions. This theory believes that the people involved in conversation build their social reality which we call social constructionism. From this social construction several questions can arise: "What do you mean by that?" - the real questions to ask are: "What do we create together?", "How do we make it?" and "How can we make a better social world?", this is called human creating social reality.

THE MAIN PURPOSE OF CMM THEORY

This theory aims to explain how people create meaning in conversations. That, everyone, when conversing uses rules to interpret meaning. These rules can be the same or they can be different so that they can produce different meanings. The meaning of communication in conversation is only obtained when those who are conversing follow a constant and coordinated conversational structure. According to CMM theory; everyone will be able to "organize meaning hierarchically."

There are at least two things related to the hierarchy of meaning.

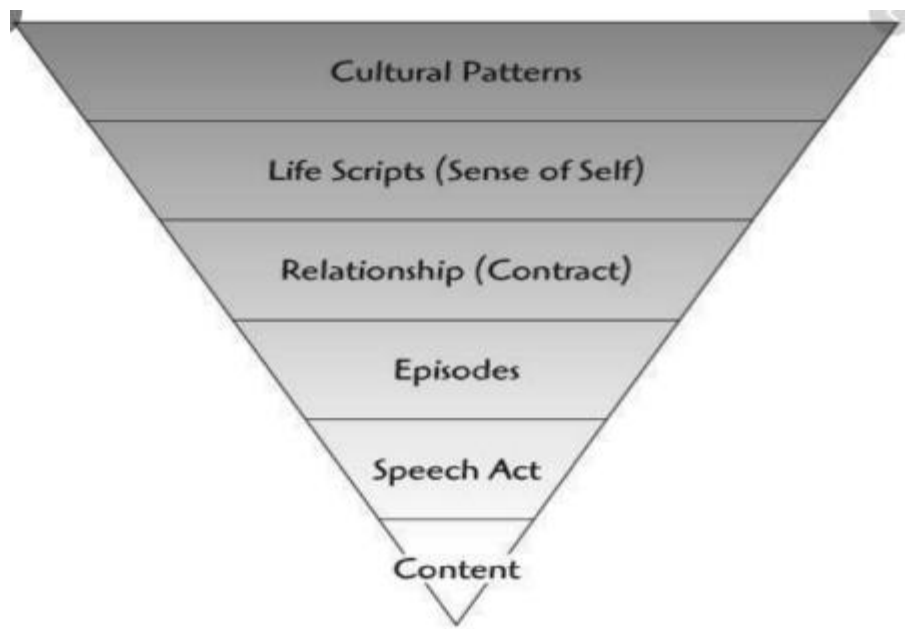
First, a hierarchy of meaning defines the context in which regulative and constitutive rules are to be understood. These are the rules for interacting according to the context or situation of the communication.

Context setting is part of much communication theory which refers to setting (where and when) participants, and relationship with (who); communication content (what), intention (why), means of communication used (how), etc. Interaction (and communication) rules occur within the context of interaction (and communication). There are also some rules that are generated in interactions and communication relationships (generative rules), there are also other rules that are imposed in communication situations (by) groups, communities, or society (enforced rules).

Second, the above contexts are arranged in an "abstract hierarchy" from the lowest to the highest. Higher level contexts define - and perhaps encapsulate - lower-level contexts. Or each context in the hierarchical level can be understood by looking at other contexts because each context always contextualizes other contexts.

HIERARCHY OF MEANING

There are at least six levels of meaning (from the lowest level to the higher level); namely: content, speech acts (speech act, episode, connection (relationship, contract, life scripts (sense of self), and cultural patterns (cultural patterns) (Veron E, Cronen; Pearce, W. Barnett; Harris, Linda M, 1979).



CONTENT

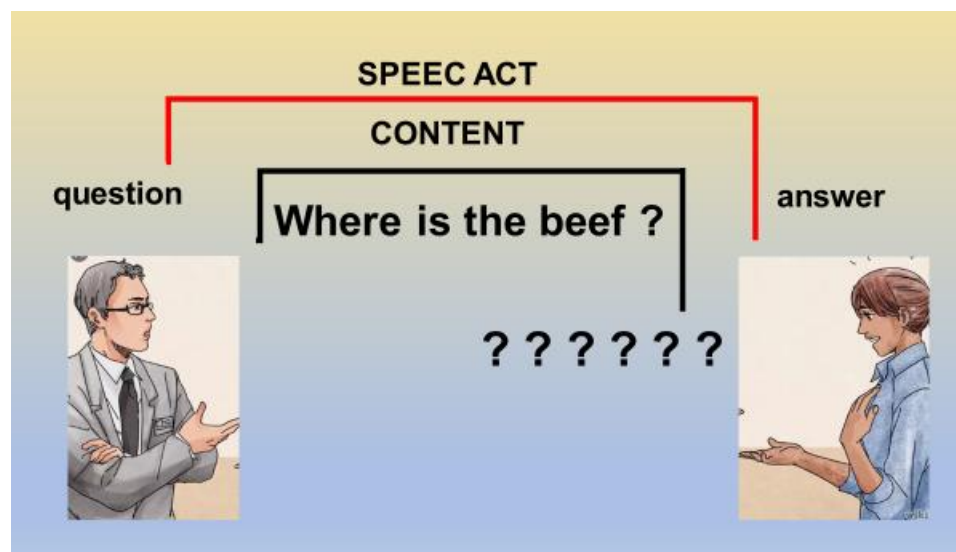
According to CMM theory, content or messages are related to the raw data of information spoken during the communication (conversation) taking place. Simply put, content is the word (words) used to communicate. Content is the basic building block of any language, but content alone is not sufficient to construct the meaning of communication. Linguists often refer to content as indirect speech acts which exist only in and can be understood in terms of context, is speech act, episode, relationship/contract, life scripts (self-concept) dan cultural patterns. The following image shows two people having a conversation. Conversational content is displayed through a series of vowel sounds represented by symbols. "Where is the beef?" is content whose meaning is 'not enough' understood so that the recipient still wonders what the sender meant. CMM theory suggests that we move to the next level, namely 'speech act' so that we can understand the content. (Note: all models in this article are sourced from all models in this article are sourced from <http://www.rdillman.com/HFCL/TUTOR/Relation/relate5.html> > March 4, 2023).



SPEECH ACT

According to CMM theory, speech acts (speech act) can be broken down into categories of sounds or utterances that 'can' be separated from one another. In linguistics and the philosophy of language, speech acts, are what the individual utters, the utterances do not only provide information but are followed by actions (Austin, 1972). This means that every utterance must have or display a 'story'. So, there are words, there are actions. Example: Ola's father told Soli, his son; "Soli, if you don't finish your homework then you can't watch TV" (the content contained in Ola's father's words is, monitoring or possibly punishing the child's behavior).

The CMM theory defines this speech as an illocutionary speech, an utterance from a sender who intends to make contact with the recipient; which is followed by perlocution as utterances that intend to change the recipient's behavior. There are many types of illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, for example questions, answers, orders, promises, and so on; our knowledge of this matter is very instrumental in communication. The question "Where is the beef?" need answers. The recipient's answers can vary, beef can be obtained at supermarkets, or they can refer to the famous fast-food advertisements in the 1980s. This example explains that the exchange of content meanings between two people is limited by speech act rules.



One common way to understand content is to understand speech acts. If the speech act takes place several times (episodes) and is supported by 'relationships', the meaning of the content will be quicker and easier to understand, moreover supported by nonverbal expressions (Bach, 2014). Speech act itu adalah ucapan yang selalu diiringi oleh permintaan suatu tindakan tertentu. Speech act is something that is common in everyday interactions even though it is present in many different contexts.

Speech act usually includes words such as apologizing, promising, ordering, greeting, asking, complaining, warning, ordering, refusing, and congratulating. 12) According to Yule (1996), whenever we communicate orally, there are always three actions, or layers of interpretation, that are performed to produce utterances. As Austin (1962) said, the term speech act contemporaneously refers to the development of performative utterances that Austin (1962)

calls a 'theory' of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Consider some sequences of sentences based on the type of action as follows:

- 1) Locutionary act: "Philip said to me, 'Slap the Mary!'; this statement refers to the act of 'slapping' Maria as a target.
- 2) Illocutionary act: "Philip urged (or suggested, ordered) me to slap Maria!"
- 3) Perlocutionary acts: (1) Philip persuaded me to slap Maria; (2) Philip made me slap Maria.

Locutionary Action

in speech act theory (speech act). The act of locution is the act of making a meaningful utterance (saying) 'something', the act of laying out spoken language. The British philosopher Austin introduced the term locutionary act or utterance act in his book "How to Do Things with Words" (1962). Later American philosopher John Searle addressed the same topic in his work "Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language" (1969) but replaced Austin's concept of 'locutionary action' with 'propositional action', namely the act of expressing a proposition.

Richard Nordquist (2018) quote Austin (1967) which divides speech acts (locutions) into three types; (1) say "something" which contains the difference between a group of actions that we say, (2) at the same time we say a conclusion about the action (replacing other words) of distraction, and (3) say a certain action which is approximately equivalent to what we say. Up to this point we have recognized two types of locutionary actions, namely (1) speech acts (we say something, which may not have meaning); and (2) propositional action (we make reference to a particular action). Sometimes what is meant by 'speech' is also referred to as 'action'; then 'perlocutionary act' is the same as 'perlocutionary utterance').

Austin, when updating his book entitled "How to Do Things with Words" (1975) perfected the idea of locutionary acts. According to him, the locutionary act comes from "within oneself" or exists "within oneself", a person's self when he states something meaningful. In carrying out locutionary actions, we will also take actions, among others;

- 1) Ask or answer questions
- 2) Provide some information or guarantee or warning
- 3) Announcing verdicts or intentions
- 4) Say sentences
- 5) Make promises, comparisons, or provide criticism
- 6) Make identification or provide a description

In other words, locutionary acts are not just meaningless utterances. Austin said that locutionary acts do not need to be further refined into illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. Because of what? Because locutionary actions by definition already have meaning, such as providing information, asking questions, describing something, or even announcing a decision. Including, also the actions of a person to convey something meaningful in order to communicate his needs and desires, for example persuading other people to his point of view.

Acts/ Illocutions

An illocutionary act (illocutionary act) refers to an action when saying something specific (as opposed to the general action of 'just saying something'). The power of illocutionary lies in the 'intention' of the speaker, for example the intention to provide information, order, warn, take

precautions, etc. For example, the phrase "Don't stand by the pool" (a locutionary action with distinct phonetic, syntactic and semantic features). This expression can be considered as a warning to the interlocutor not to stand near the pool (illocutionary act). If the interlocutor heeds the warning, then this speech act has succeeded in persuading the other person not to stand by the pool (perlocutionary act).

This taxonomy of speech acts was inherited by John R. Searle (2002), Austin's student at Oxford and later became an influential exponent of speech act theory. In other words, illocutionary act (illocutionary act) is the active result of an implied request or the meaning of the locutionary act. For example, if the act of distraction in an interaction is expressed as the question "Is there salt?"; the implied illocutionary request is "Could you pass me some salt?"; the concept of illocutionary act is at the core of the concept of speech act. Although there are several scientific opinions on how to define an 'illocutionary act', there are several types of action that are widely accepted as illocutionary acts. An example of this widely accepted illocutionary action is an order or promise. The first opinion is the opinion held by those who coined the term "speech act" (Austin, 1962). Illocutionary speech (illocutionary utterance) is an utterance that intends to make contact with the recipient.

According to Searle, "speech act" often refers to exactly the same thing as the term illocutionary act. Searle's work, speech acts is considered to have perfected Austin's concept, but some philosophers point out significant differences between the two concepts. Austin himself emphasizes conventional interpretation of speech acts, whereas Searle emphasizes psychological interpretation (based on beliefs, intentions, etc.) (Searle, 2002). One type of illocutionary act is 'performative speech acts', which are 'guidance' utterances. For example, 'I nominate John to be president of golf', 'I sentence you to ten years in prison', or 'I promise to pay your debt. v in these cases of typical and somewhat explicit performative sentences, the action described by • the sentence (nomination, punishment, promised) through the utterance of the sentence itself.

Perlocutionary Actions

Perlocutionary Actions (perlocutionary act) intended as the actual effect of locutionary and illocutionary actions. So, the effect of speech or utterances that contain someone's intention to: persuade, convince, frighten, enlighten, inspire, or make someone do or realize something, whether intentionally or unintentionally. The difference between illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts is that illocutionary acts are more related to the speaker while perlocutionary acts are focused on the listener. This means that there are 'perlocutionary acts' and 'perlocutionary utterances' which both have a 'perlocutionary' effect or speech act effect from the speaker to the listener. So, there is a speaker's utterances that can influence the thoughts, emotions of the listeners, or even affect the physical actions of the listeners.

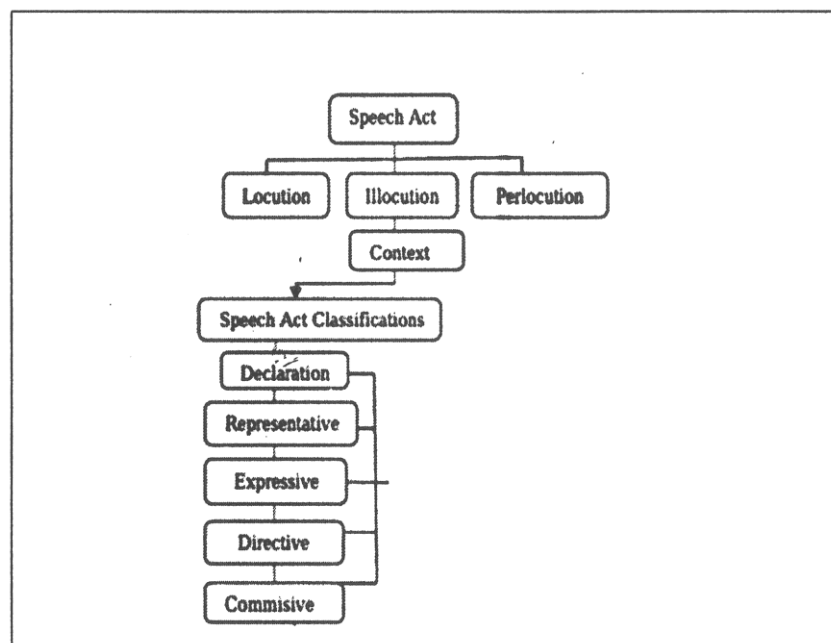
For example, if someone utters the sentence "I'm hungry", then the conversational effect on the listener is to persuade them to make a sandwich for the speaker (Birner, 2013). So, (perlocutionary utterances) include utterances that intend to change the behavior of the recipient. There are many different speech acts, including questions, answers, commands, promises, and statements. If we have enough knowledge about each of these levels then we will be able to play a big role in communication exchange.

Searle (1969) mengidentifikasi lima jenis tindakan ilokus dan perlokusi:

- 1) Assertive: statements can be judged true or false because they aim to describe a certain situation.
- 2) Direction: the statement seeks to make the actions of others conform to the propositional content.
- 3) Commissives: statements that bind the speaker to take action as described by the propositional content.
- 4) Expressive: a statement that expresses "the sincerity condition of the speech act".
- 5) Declarative: a statement that seeks to change something by "declaring something has been changed".

Perlocutionary acts are often called 'indirect speech acts' and are used to refuse plans or requests.

For example, someone asks, "Would you like to meet me for coffee?" and another replied, "I'm teaching." This second speaker has used indirect rhetorical action to reject the plan. Why not right away? Because the literal meaning of "I am teaching" does not require any form of denial. Speeches like this pose a problem for linguists, because it is confusing (at a rather simplistic approach) to see how the person making the plan understands that his proposal is being rejected.



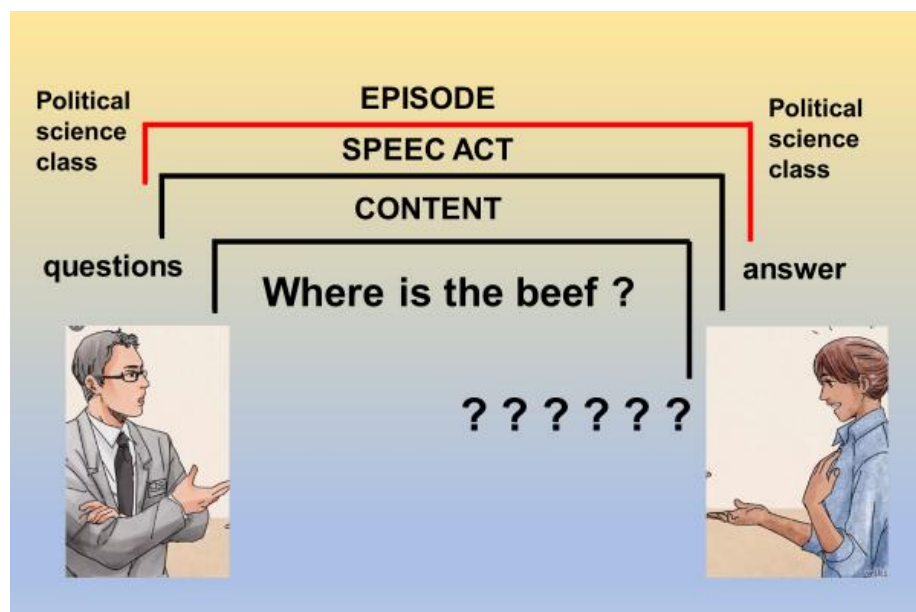
Adapted from Misyi Gusthini and Cece Sobama (2018)

EPISODES

Episodes are a series of speech acts that follow the same rule or set, in which there is; (1) communication routines related to time episodes, (2) where we emphasize the communication process, (3) conversations from the beginning, middle, and end conversations; and (4) the individual emphasizes various aspects of the episode. Episodes are situations that people create in conversation.

In other words, the episode plays a role in determining what type of speech act is uttered, and the speech act plays a role in determining the episode. For example, the phrase • used among family or close friends can mean completely different things in a job interview. In interactions, people can punctuate the same episode differently. This will result in people dealing with punctuation differences in the next episode. When someone is in a bicultural or multi-cultural situation, he has identified a number of specific actions that occur in an equivalent situation in another culture, which of course will disrupt the episode.

The following figure shows that the meaning of conversation has changed from the level of content, speech act to episode. Senders and recipients alike studying political science must go through 'episodes' of repeated or in-depth conversations to understand the meaning of the content "Where is the beat?". According to speech act theory, there are only two possibilities, two parties quickly understand the meaning of content denotatively or connotatively.

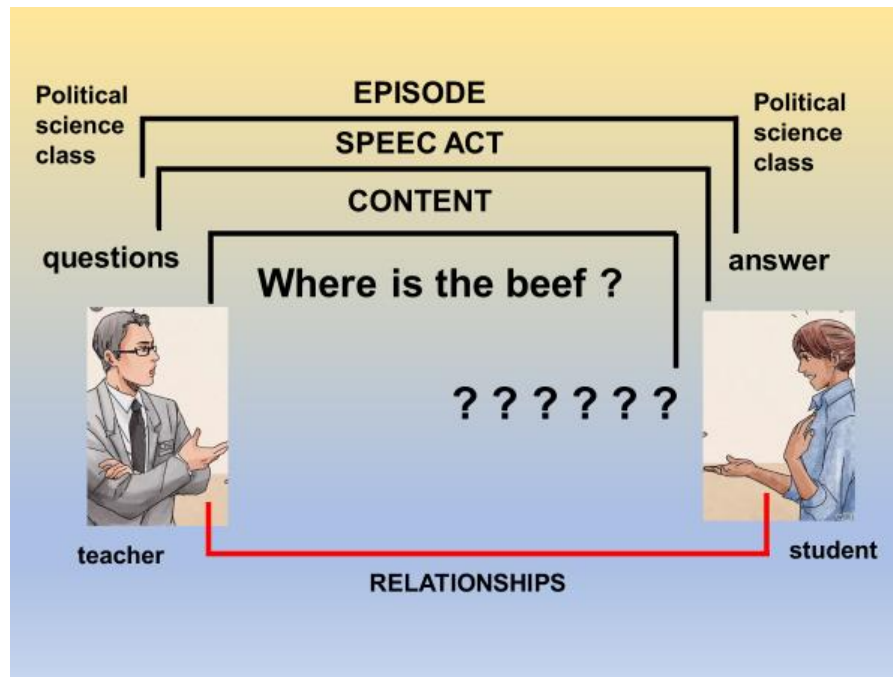


Another example. A married couple argues about buying a plasma TV. The husband is angry because his wife bought a TV without telling him. The wife is angry because the husband never supports her decision (Husband and wife focus on different time episodes of conversation). It means that episodes are related to or can explain communication routines (pay attention to the status of the two students) related to episodes of time, where we emphasize the communication process, whether at the beginning of a conversation, in the middle, or at the end of a conversation.

RELATIONSHIP

A common approach to describing episodes is a relationship from one time to another. In a relationship, there is always (1) relational agreement and understanding between two people, (2) they set guidelines and determine behavior. Example: a couple holding conflicting political views always doesn't talk about politics. Political topics are taboo in this relationship. Then the meaning of the content must be analyzed through the relationship between them.

Another meaning of relationship relates to a higher level of meaning, in which "relational boundaries within parameters are set for attitudes and behavior." This barrier is quite easy to understand because it is a dynamic of what connects two (or more) individuals during the exchange of information. Examples of relationships can be defined as parent/child, teacher/student, stranger, etc. Communication between strangers will likely be different from conversations between family members.

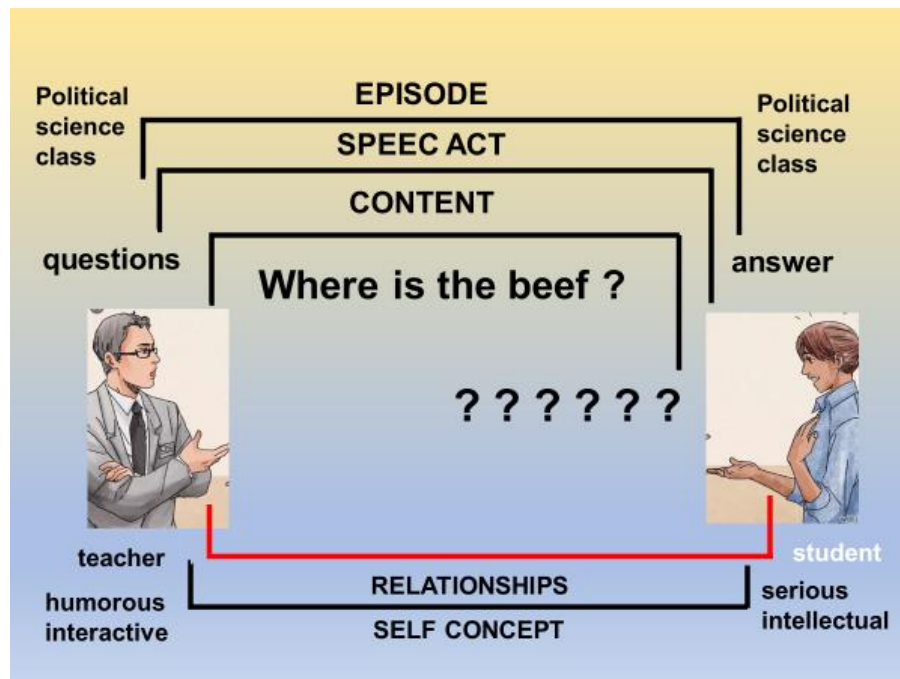


What does it mean? The picture above shows that reciprocity is crucial for two parties to quickly understand the content they are talking about. The closer the relationship between the two parties, the faster the two parties will understand the meaning of the content.

LIFE SCRIPT

Life script refers to the meaning attributed to events that occur to a person in the early stages of life. Psychologists believe that a person's life script is formed in his childhood, when he learns something unconsciously from transactions between father, mother and child. Whenever a person encounters any situation, he acts according to a script created as a result of past experiences and the way he perceives his life position. For example, (1) 'I am O.K - you are O.K'; (2) 'I'm not OK - you're OK, (3) I'm OK - you're not OK' and (4) I'm not OK - you're not OK. One can define a life script by understanding how thoughts, behaviors, ideas, etc. are affected by past experiences.

Look at the following picture which shows that two parties can begin to understand only if each party has a 'self concept', meaning that each knows himself, knows the life script so that it is easier to understand the meaning of the content. For example, each knows himself, knows about the relationship between the two, the relationship between a teacher who is humorous, interactive and a serious intellectual student.



A script is actually a complete life plan that offers two structures: (1) a structure that defines a victor (more loosely), and (2) a structure of authoritative warnings or orders, for example in giving prescriptions and approvals. Life script can be changed according to time, because these changes are not innate but learned. Life script resembling a play or film script that includes characters, dialogue, action, drama, etc. moving towards a climax and finally reaching an ending with the closing of the viewing screen. 14)

Where do these scripts come from? According to experts, our life script comes from messages from our parents to us, and the influence of other key people, both verbal and non-verbal messages. All of life script it forms our framework and makes the major decisions in our lives. In Transactional Analysis, there are four different sources of scripts that shape our personality from the time we are children;

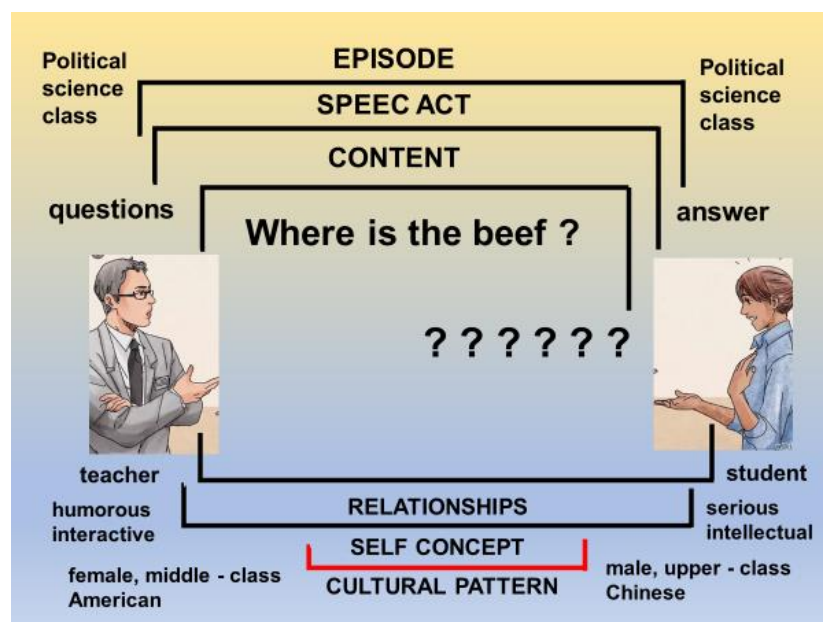
- 1) Modelling, when we are children, we observe how other people behave, including how other people show us how to do something.
- 2) Attributions, children are told about the ideal "What you should be like". Children are told what to expect or what to want. This expectation can be formed through labeling. "You are just like your uncle Angelo", "You are... smart, naughty, the best, clumsy, strong, different, sometimes terrible"
- 3) Suggestions, children, indirectly given messages through instructions and encouragement.
- 4) Injunctions, demands from parents against children for example to stop children from doing something. This life script is related to the desires, fears, worries, and anger of parents towards children.

There are many life scripts that we follow so they are called common life scripts, but one or several life scripts sound familiar to us. For example, everyone is better than me; I am not lucky; bad things always happen to me; i'm a loser; I am always the victim in situations; I can't make friends easily; I've always been bad at learning languages; I can never understand it; I am too

fat to lose weight; i am unlucky in love; I've never met the right person! people always leave me; I will not be happy until I meet someone; I'm not good enough, and I can't do it myself. This is an example of a life script. There are positive scripts that can empower our lives, but there are negative scripts that can severely limit our lives. Because we receive all these scripts since childhood, we seem to believe and let these scripts define our personality, as well as live them throughout our lives. As history always appears when 'played' repeatedly, that's the script.

CULTURAL PATTERN

Cultural patterns develop through people's perceptions, interpretations, responses and expressions of the surrounding environment. Ashish Agarwal (1951) wrote an essay on cultural patterns that explores the cultural system in India which consists of; faith based on Mahatma Gandhi's spiritual inspiration, shared family caste system, and country characteristics. Cultural traits are learned units of understanding or behavior that are often passed down from generation to generation and distinguish one group of people from another. For example, the importance of offering water to the sun in Hindu culture has no meaning in western culture. Clark Wissler (1999), an American anthropologist, particularly interested in Indian-American culture, says that it is certain cultural traits that shape cultural patterns. Features of this cultural pattern include language, materials such as food, clothing, tools and weapons, science, religion, ecosystems, property, art, government, and war. Shaking hands, tipping hats, wearing white at a wedding, walking barefoot, growing a beard, touching feet, kissing the cheek in greeting, drinking idol water, or eating from a brass bowl are all examples of cultural traits that become part of cultural patterns.



The picture above shows that there are two parties who are having a conversation, they have different statuses. The sender is a humorous teacher, female teacher, middle-class American - must talk to - serious intellectual student, male, from the lower classes, Chinese. Each party with a different cultural background means that they also have different cultural patterns. How do they convey content meaning? We follow the following example. A female teacher, named Lely, comes from a middle-class American cultural background. Lely teaches a number of male

students with high-class Chinese cultural backgrounds, from a conservative-traditional cultural environment.

Teks dan Context	Example 1	Example 2
1. Teks/Content	That dress really looks good on you.	Im alone now
2. Speech act (speech act) - some authors argue that there are a number of speech acts that may be performed)	Praise Sarcasm Joke Telling you etc	Telling you Inviting Instruction Request
3. Episodes	Interaction between teachers and students Initiating a date - salesperson offering help etc.	Share secrets on the phone Negotiating meetings Discuss failed relationships Discussing work
4. Relationship	Teacher/student Parents/daughters Romantic couple Friend	Workmate Interested partners Friend
5. Autobiography	Polite? Beneficial? Interested?	Introverts? Socially acceptable?
6. Culture	The first law of hope Politeness norms	Individualism? Direct and indirect (Baldwin, 2000)

What can be concluded? People can only communicate through a system of symbols that is agreed upon and regulated by regulations. What does it mean? Without agreement, rules and symbols, verbal communication will not work. The reality? After we learn a language in school, we don't spend a lot of time consciously, but thinking about all these rules, we just use them. Rules keep our verbal communication structured in a way that makes it useful for us to communicate more effectively.

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