

2.3.1. Grice Maxim Problems

State the correct **Grice Maxim** for each of the following cases.

1. Neko tells Jack: “Rex is a bear before he’s had his morning coffee.”

Jack assumes this sentence should **not** be read **literally**, because if it were Neko would be violating the Maxim of:

_____.

2. Dr. Slim: “Man, my eyebrows are getting bushy – I really should clip them.”

Jake: “My briefcase is right over there.”

Dr. Slim assumes Jake’s briefcase contains something to clip eyebrows with, because otherwise Jake be violating the Maxim of:_____.

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3. Ace: “Do you know where the remote control for the can-opener is?”

Rex: “It’s somewhere in the kitchen.”

Ace assumes Rex doesn't know precisely where in the kitchen the remote control is, because if he had known, then his response would have violated the Maxim of

_____.

4. Prof. Beakley tells the quiz-taking student: “Well, there are four Grice Maxims, and in the first three problems we’ve gone through all but the Maxim of Manner. I leave it to you to figure out the answer to the fourth problem.”

The student assumes that the fourth problem uses the Maxim of Manner, because otherwise Prof. Beakley would be violating the Maxim of

_____.

5. Trixie: “I’m not gonna stand here and listen to any more of your nonsense!”
 Elvis: “Well, there’s the door.”

Trixie assumes that Elvis is **indirectly** communicating that she should leave; because if he had only been communicating **directly**, he would have violated the Maxim of _____.

6. Jack: “Do want this last sardine?”

Neko: “That does sound good. On the other hand we’ll be having dinner soon, and I don’t want to spoil my appetite. But then again, a sardine would be a nice appetizer. Oh, but I should probably be watching my weight more....”

Jack (impatiently): “Look, you either want it or you don’t.”

(a) Does Jack mean his sentence to be interpreted **literally** (or is he, on the contrary, communicating that Neko *neither wants it nor doesn’t want it*)?

(b) What **second, unspoken message** is Jack communicating here?

(c) What **Grice Maxim** would Jack be violating if he hadn’t intended any second, unspoken message?

7. Rex: “Where’s that last donut?”

Suki: “Somebody ate it.”

As a matter of fact (and as Suki knows), Suki ate the last donut. Now given that she ate the last donut, it is true that somebody ate it – so she didn’t tell a lie. Still, it seems that she misled Rex with her answer. What Grice Maxim is Suki violating in order to mislead him?