

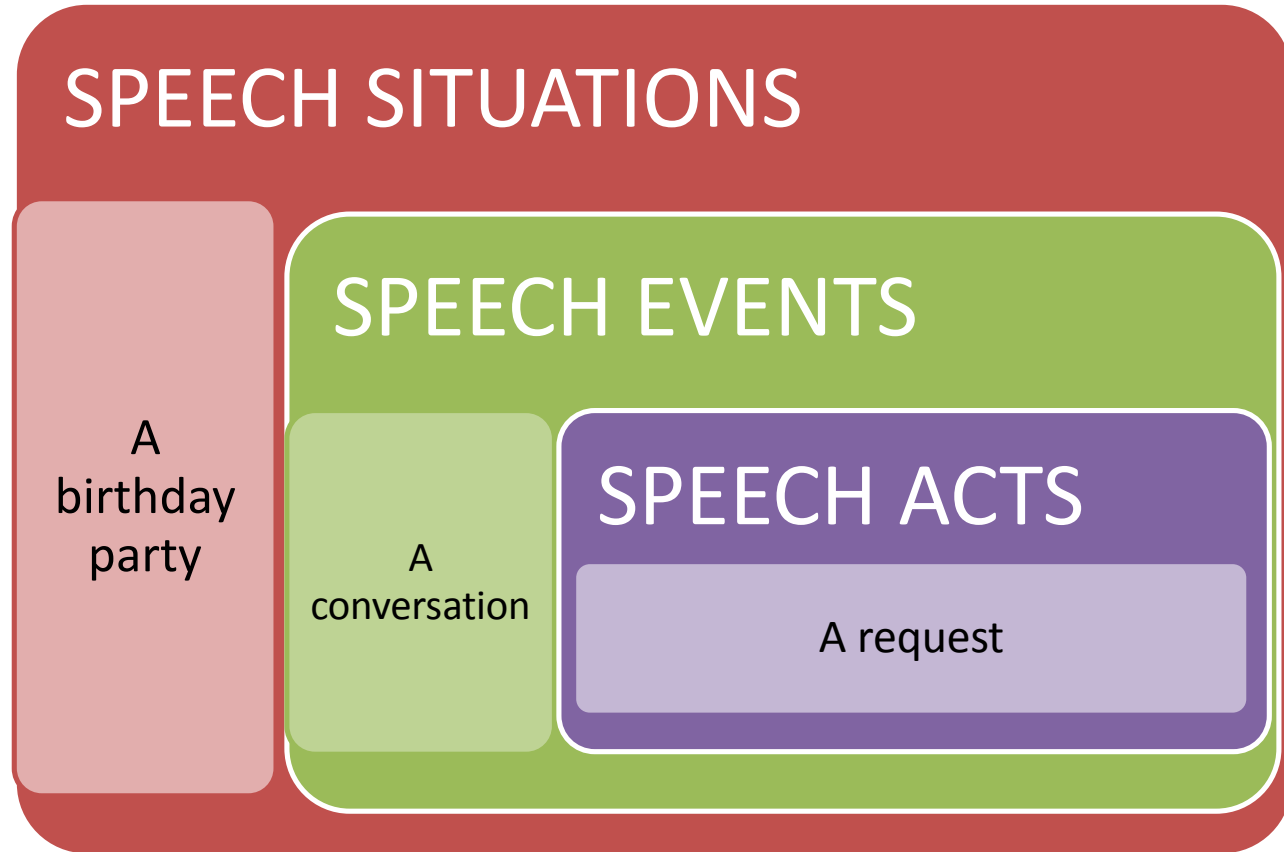
UNITS OF INTERACTION

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- In order to study the communicative behaviour within speech community, it is necessary to work with **units of interaction**.
- Hymes (1972 b : 58-9) suggested that a nested hierarchy of units called **the speech situation, speech event, and speech act** would be useful, and his suggestion has been widely accepted.

UNITS OF INTERACTION

A NESTED HIERARCHY



SPEECH SITUATIONS

- speech situations are 'situations associated with (or marked by the absence of) speech.
- They are not purely communicative
- They are not themselves subject to rules of speaking, but can be referred to by rules speaking as contexts (the situational context)

SPEECH SITUATIONS

EXAMPLES

- weddings, funerals, inaugurations, memorials, graduation ceremonies, fights, hunts, meals
- **A conference** is a type of speech situation which includes speech events such as the welcoming speech, keynote presentation, participants' presentations...etc.

SPEECH EVENTS

- Speech events are events defined by the speech occurring in them – a lecture for example.
- They are, on the other hand, both communicative and governed by rules for the use of speech.
- It takes place within a speech situation and is composed of one or more speech acts.

SPEECH EVENTS

- a conversation (a speech event) which takes place at a party (a speech situation).
- A welcoming speech at a conference

SPEECH ACTS

- The speech act is the third level in the hierarchy.
- It is the simplest and considered to be the most troublesome level.
- It is the 'minimal term of the set' (Hymes 1972a : 56).
- Sometimes, it is not so minimal.

SPEECH ACTS

EXAMPLES

- ‘By the authority vested in me by the laws of this state, I hereby command you to leave this building immediately’
- ‘Would you mind leaving now ?’
- ‘I sure would like some peace and quiet’,
- ‘Out !’ (all interpretable as commands, if the context is right).

SPEECH ACTS

RIDDLES

- **Q:** A dad and his son were riding their bikes and crashed. Two ambulances came and took them to different hospitals. The man's son was in the operating room and the doctor said, "I can't operate on you. You're my son."
How is that possible?

- **A:** The doctor is his mom!

SPEECH ACTS

- Q: I'm tall when I'm young and I'm short when I'm old. What am I?

- A: A candle

SPEECH ACTS

- ‘the level of speech acts mediates immediately between the usual levels of grammar and the rest of a speech event or situation in that it implicates both linguistic form and social norms’ (Hymes 1972a : 57).

'SPEAKING' MNEMONIC

- Hymes formulated a preliminary list of features or components of these events to be described.
- The list was intended to be '**useful guide**' (Hymes 1964) towards identifying components of speech considered to be universal.

'SPEAKING' MNEMONIC

- **'S' The situation**
 - **The setting (locale):** concrete; the time and place
 - **The scene:** abstract; a recurring institution, a type of social occasion; e.g a family meeting on a Friday evening.

'SPEAKING' MNEMONIC

- **P participant**
 - The speaker
 - The addressee
 - The addressor
 - The audience

‘SPEAKING’ MNEMONIC

- **P participant**

- Addressor

- The distinction between addressor and the speaker is illustrated by formal scenes among the Wishram Chinook.
 - **the words of a chief (addressor) are repeated by a spokesman (speaker)**



‘SPEAKING’ MNEMONIC

- **P participant**

- The audience

- Labov’s study of ritual insults called ‘sounds’ among black American adolescents.
 - The rituals require other youngsters to be around to evaluate the insults
 - They say remarks such as ‘ooo, what a bust ! or ‘That’s stale.’

‘SPEAKING’ MNEMONIC

- **E ‘End’** (purposes)
 - **outcomes** and **goals**.
 - Outcomes: conventional outcomes. E.g. ‘a sale’
 - Goals: in bargaining events for example, the seller’s goal is to maximize the price ; the buyer wants to minimize it.

'SPEAKING' MNEMONIC

- **'A' Act sequence:**
 - Message form (how something is said)
 - Message content (what is said).

‘SPEAKING’ MNEMONIC

- Albert (1972) reports in an article entitled **‘Culture patterning of speech behaviour in Burundi’** that in **burundi**, people are expected to speak in a hesitating and inept manner to those of higher rank, but to speak fluently to peers and to those of lower rank.

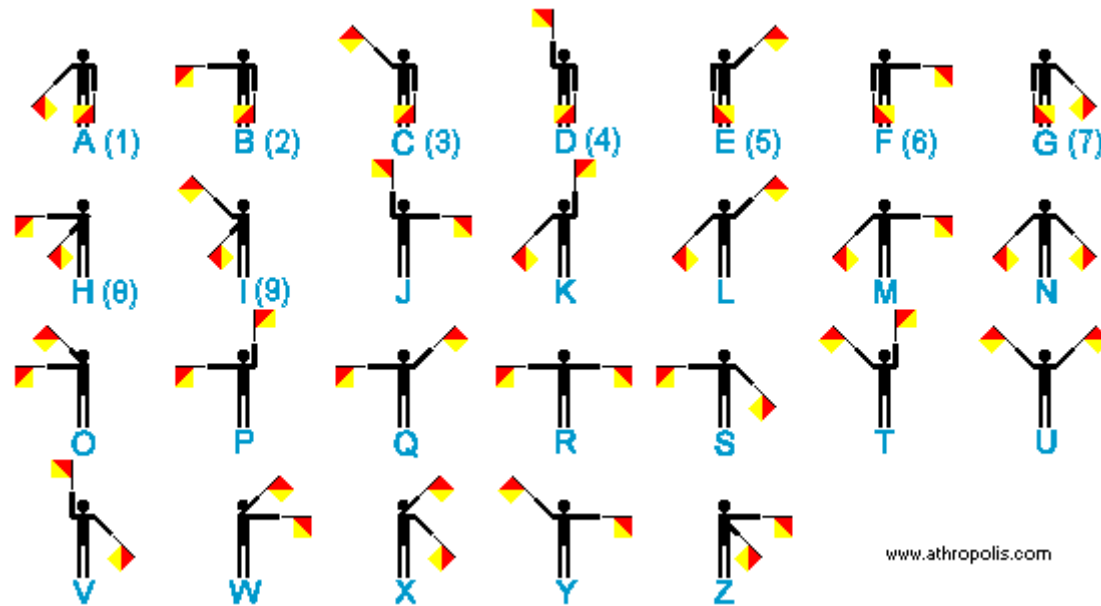
‘SPEAKING’ MNEMONIC

- ‘K’ Key :
 - It refers to the manner or spirit in which a speech act is carried out. (mock or serious, perfunctory...)
 - The key is solemn in a church but jovial in a circus.

'SPEAKING' MNEMONIC

- **'I' Instrumentalities:**
 - Channel (telegraph, email, semaphore, smoke signals, or drumming.)
 - Forms of speech: Hymes means languages and their subdivisions, dialects, codes, varieties, and registers.

Semaphore



‘SPEAKING’ MNEMONIC

- **‘N’ Norms:**
 - normative aspect of both interaction and interpretation:
 - To be competent in communicating in a certain culture, you have to follow norms of interpretation as well (reading between the lines).

‘SPEAKING’ MNEMONIC

- EXAMPLE : The London bus incident (Cited in Gumperz 1977)
- It is customary for bus drivers to ask passengers for exact change by using the expression ‘exact change please’. The following intonation is used:
 - Exact cha↓n↑ge plea↑s↑e↑

'SPEAKING' MNEMONIC

- The west Indian driver:
- Exact cha↓nge (brief pause) PLE↓A↓S↓E



‘SPEAKING’ MNEMONIC

- The British driver:
- Exact chan↓n↑ge plea↑s↑e↑
- The West Indian driver:
- Exact cha↓nge (brief pause) PLE↓A↓S↓E

'SPEAKING' MNEMONIC

- This caused a passenger to become angry as he found the way the driver said it very rude and threatening.

‘SPEAKING’ MNEMONIC

- 1- separate the word ‘please’ from the rest of the sentence by a brief pause.
- They give a special emphasis to the word which might lead the hearer to understand that they are supposed to pay a special attention to it.

‘SPEAKING’ MNEMONIC

2- say the word ‘please’ with higher pitch and greater loudness than usual

The passenger would note the special emphasis on ‘please’ and take it to mean that the driver was emphasizing the fact that he was making a request. He might be understood as saying:

‘This is a REQUEST which I have to repeat because you ignored the first one’

‘SPEAKING’ MNEMONIC

- 3- The use of a falling intonation which would indicate finality to a British or American English speakers. It will be understood as the following:
 - the speaker considered the speech act concluded and the conclusiveness seems excessively direct. He seems to be saying:

‘you are in the wrong so there is nothing further to be said or done except for you to make it right by paying the fare with the exact change.’

'SPEAKING' MNEMONIC

- 'G' Genre:
 - refers to categories like poems, myths, proverbs, lectures, and commercial messages.