Cooperative Principle

Definition

The Cooperative Principle (CP) is a principle of conversation postulated by H. P. Grice (1975).

“Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk in which you are engaged.”
Motivation

Read this:

*I would like some salt please. This kitchen does not store harmful chemicals.*

Did it make any sense? **NO!!**

Obvious connection between the sentences missing.

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Motivation

I would like some salt please.

This makes better sense WHY?

This kitchen does not store harmful chemicals.
Ideas of the CP

According to Grice,
• Conversations do not normally consist of a series of disconnected remarks and
• are characteristically, to some degree, cooperative efforts.
• Each participant normally recognizes in conversations, to some extent, a common purpose.
• Given that conversation is a rational and purposive behavior, it is possible that there is a generally accepted principle which each participant is assumed to observe in conversations.

Conversational Maxims

Grice has elaborated the CP in four sub-principles, called conversational maxims.
1. Maxim of Quantity
2. Maxim of Quality
3. Maxim of Relation
4. Maxim of Manner

The CP together with its attendant four maxims are used as bases for explaining an interesting conversational phenomena: implicature.
Further reading


The End