

STRATEGIES OF CONVERSATIONAL RETREAT: WHEN PARTING IS NOT SWEET SORROW

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This research explores strategies and tactics persons use to unilaterally retreat from conversations. Based on metagoal theory, efficiency and social appropriateness were expected to differentiate retreat strategies from each other, with strategies used in mutually negotiated endings being located in the socially appropriate and relatively efficient area of the conversational retreat strategy space. Retreat strategies were found to include verbal bids such as hints (summaries, preclosings, future continuations, and positive statements), projections (ascribing excuses to the partner for parting), excuses, and departure announcements; changing one's focus onto another subject or person; and signaling rejection, restlessness, or nonresponsiveness. As expected by metagoal theory, these strategies range in their efficiency and appropriateness, and are more diverse than (though they include) those strategies typically used in mutually desired partings.

Sometimes simply, and sometimes thankfully, conversations end. Socially acceptable endings typically seek to decrease people's accessibility to each other without creating corresponding increases in feelings of rejection (Albert & Kessler, 1978; Clark & French, 1981; Knapp, Hart, Friedrich, & Shulman, 1973; Lockard, Allen, Schiele, & Weimer, 1978; O'Leary & Gallois, 1985). In other words, normatively enacted conversational endings resolve the problem of engaging in distancing behavior (ending of physical presence and interaction) without such behavior being interpreted as disapproval or dislike. Conversational endings occur for a variety of reasons, however, ranging from mutual agreement for talk to end (with the contact being broken off simultaneously) to unilateral desires to terminate conversations (without asking for or necessarily even negotiating their demise).

The study of conversational termination is approached most frequently from the perspective of mutually negotiated leave-takings rather than from the perspective of unilateral desires to end conversations (see, e.g., Clark & French, 1981; Levinson, 1983; O'Leary & Gallois, 1985; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). Leave-taking is commonly described as a set of regularly occurring behaviors that provide a normative, mutually agreed-upon process for terminating interactions (see, e.g., Knapp et al., 1973; O'Leary & Gallois, 1985). The typical verbal progression in such endings commences with the use of preclosings (e.g., "Well ...", "Sooo ...", "O.K."), followed by justifications (excuses), future continuation statements (e.g., "See you later"), well-wishing, and good-byes (Albert & Kessler, 1978; Clark & French, 1981; Knapp et al., 1973; O'Leary & Gallois, 1985).¹ The nonverbal progression is less clear, though common behaviors are breaking eye contact, shifting weight, and moving away from the other person (Kendon, 1976; Knapp et al., 1973; Lockard et al., 1978).

Unilaterally desired endings have been studied less frequently despite their

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common occurrence. Roughly 45% of all conversations may end because of unilateral decisions to end them (Chen, 1989; Reynolds, 1991). When faced with encounters that we desire to terminate unilaterally, the preferred approach is claimed to be the use of external and uncontrollable events (e.g., closing elevator doors, departing buses, third party entrances) as justification for termination (Albert & Kessler, 1976). Such justifications can mislead others about our true motives, thereby preventing feelings of rejection while nonetheless permitting conversational retreat. To the degree people are trying to inhibit feelings of rejection caused by terminating conversations, such an approach makes sense. Opportunistic use of external forces also offers a means of activating unilaterally what would appear to be a mutually agreed-upon leave-taking sequence (justification provided so the conversation can move to future continuation, well-wishing, and goodbye statements). Indeed, a general plan for conversational retreat may be finding ways of unilaterally activating conventional (mutually agreed-upon) ending processes.

Such strategies may not be the only means for achieving conversational termination when it is unilaterally desired, however. Less subtle tactics may be used when tact fails, when frustrations rise, or when rejecting the cointeractant is to be desired rather than avoided. Rather rude and abrupt strategies that ignore a cointeractant's feelings have been reported for a variety of goals such as resisting sexual advances (McCormick, 1979), gaining compliance (Marwell & Schmitt, 1967), and testing affinity (Douglas, 1987). Turning one's back and walking away is certainly not the most appropriate of strategies, but it is a recurring feature in many descriptions of the termination of conflict episodes. Tactics such as stopping talking and being completely nonresponsive might be adopted when the message to be communicated is rejection *as well as* distancing. Thus, it is likely that a number of strategies are available for conversational retreat that might not be typical of mutually agreed-upon leave-taking sequences. Consequently, one goal of this research is to explore the range of strategies available to persons to retreat from conversations after having made a unilateral decision to do so.

A second goal of this research is to explore how these strategies relate to and differ from each other, with an eye toward using this information to help understand how and why particular strategies are selected for use in specific encounters. This type of question has arisen in connection with strategies for achieving other types of social goals (e.g., affinity-seeking, affinity-testing, comforting, compliance-gaining, information-seeking, relational termination, and requesting, to name a few). For the most part, answers to this question have been domain specific; different answers have been generated for the use of compliance-gaining strategies than for the use of accounting, comforting, and requesting strategies. While it may ultimately be the case that the process of strategic choice differs as a function of the social goal being pursued, exploring answers that might work for various social goals bears some attention.

First, postulating different processes of strategic choice for different social goals is at odds with current knowledge about the cognitive system. For the most part, people are cognitive misers, using a limited set of processes and heuristics across a wide variety of domains and instances (Fiske & Taylor, 1984; Schank, 1982). While some discriminations can be shown to be context-specific, people

tend to apply "old knowledge" to new situations as much as they can; that is, they are applying principles across domains (Hammond, 1989; Reisbeck & Schank, 1989). Second, cross-domain answers might be valuable because individuals often pursue more than one social goal simultaneously in conversations (see, e.g., O'Keefe & Shepherd, 1987; Tracy & Coupland, 1990). How strategies are chosen to permit the achievement of multiple goals is not easily addressed by answers that are domain-specific. A strategy that maximizes one goal might interfere strongly with another, yet this would not be taken into account by within-domain approaches to understanding strategic choice. Finally, while any number of features might be found to differentiate a set of strategies for achieving a particular social goal, focusing on the more general issue of strategic choice might help to indicate which of these features is more likely to be used when people select strategies to enact.

The theory of strategic choice guiding this research falls within the domain of a constraint satisfaction model. Termed metagoal theory, this perspective envisions interlocutors' actions as being constrained by the joint concerns of the social appropriateness and efficiency of behavior relative to the social goal(s) being pursued (Kellermann, 1988, in press). Achievement of such diverse goals as comforting, affinity seeking, information seeking, and compliance gaining is regulated by persons' concern for the politeness of their behavior as well as their ability to reach these goals without expending unnecessary time, energy, and resources.

While appearing under numerous pseudonyms, efficiency and social appropriateness have been implicated (though not generally tested directly) as constraints (or metagoals) affecting strategy choices for such instrumental goals as remediating embarrassment, comforting, offering accounts, giving criticism, complaining, seeking affinity, getting to know others, avoiding becoming known to others, testing the state of relationships, engaging in conflict, making requests, seeking information, asking for favors, gaining compliance, and resisting compliance gaining attempts (see, for review, Kellermann, in press). Models of communication competence (see, e.g., Canary & Spitzberg, 1987, 1989; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984) have explicitly focused on the constraint of appropriateness in the regulation of conversational behavior, though only implicitly referenced efficiency through discussions of effectiveness. Models of planning, natural language generation, and lexical choice (Davis, 1982; Hermann, 1983; Hovy, 1988; McKeown, 1985; Wilensky, 1983) have focused more often on the constraint of efficiency, though typically they have presumed the constraint of appropriateness in doing so.

The conversational endings literature is no exception to this general trend. Conventions and routines of mutual leave-takings are considered, almost by definition, to be socially appropriate ways of distancing oneself without making others feel rejected. For example, "properly negotiated" endings are often equated with being "routine" endings (Levinson, 1983; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973); lists of "do's and don'ts" for ending conversations put tactics occurring in routine endings among the "do's" (Knapp et al., 1973); and routine endings are said to involve smooth transitions, a positive tone, and few negative statements (Albert & Kessler, 1976, 1978; Clark & French, 1981; Lockard et al., 1978; O'Leary & Gallois, 1985). Implicit to such statements is the belief that strategies

for ending conversations can vary in their appropriateness, mutually agreed-upon leave-taking sequences are the conventional or routine means for ending conversations, and that these routine and conventional sequences employ socially appropriate strategies.

Mutually agreed-upon endings are also presumed to maintain a certain level of efficiency (though not at its maximal level). Levinson (1983) references the issue of efficiency directly when stating a preference for tactics that are not "too slow." On the other hand, Levinson also suggests that *optimally* efficient and appropriate tactics, when considered jointly, may not be *maximally* efficient when taken singly, as people can be "overly hasty." In Levinson's perspective, conventional or routine conversational endings are not as efficient as they could be out of concern for social appropriateness. By contrast, Knapp et al. (1973) believe that mutually agreed-upon endings decrease accessibility without stimulating rejection in a manner that is very efficient and "in shorthand." In other words, mutually agreed-upon leave-takings are argued to be "efficiently appropriate." Such references inherently rely on the assumption that alternative strategies for ending conversations are either more or less efficient and more or less appropriate than those employed in the "conventional" or "routine" mutually agreed-upon partings.

While the literature on conversational endings has mainly been limited to those strategies that are jointly (though not necessarily maximally) efficient and appropriate, some discussion of other potentially differentially efficient (slower or faster) and/or less appropriate tactics has occurred. Knapp et al. (1973) are the most explicit in this regard, providing a table in which tactics were divided *post hoc* into direct, subtle, and supportive categories. Direct cues such as external and internal justifications (excuses), major body movements/shifts, handshakes, and declarations of goodbyes explicitly identify the finality of conversations while subtle cues such as nodding, breaking eye contact, smiling, tentativeness, and agreeing are polite signals of inattentiveness and nonresponsiveness. The direct cues are treated as efficient though inappropriate while the subtle cues are treated as inefficient though more appropriate. Schegloff and Sacks (1973), however, argue that these subtle cues of silence and nonresponsiveness are neither efficient nor appropriate because they only delay (inappropriately) the uptake of a turn at talk. In this view, a turn needs to be used that produces nothing new in order for it to be an appropriate and efficient means of ending a conversation. Preclosings and departure announcements fulfill this turn-mechanism requirement. Preclosings are statements such as "Well, . . .", "O.K.", and "So. . . ." that can be offered as a way to use a turn without saying anything, a strategy that Levinson (1983) has referred to as "passing." Preclosings are appropriate because they permit the other person in the conversation to continue it if they want to and are efficient because no delay occurs in the uptake of the turn at talk. Preclosings, however, are not as efficient as announcing one's departure (e.g., "I gotta go") because preclosings have an implied second-pair part (the "response" to the "Well, . . .") that departure announcements do not. From such statements it can be seen that efficiency and appropriateness are presumed to differentiate strategies for ending conversations and that mutually agreed-upon endings (because they are most commonly initiated with preclosings) are presumed to be optimally (though not necessarily maximally) efficient and appropriate.

Social appropriateness and efficiency are typically envisioned as competing constraints on strategy choice, i.e., how to end a conversation efficiently without offending the other person. This presumption of incompatibility between the two constraints is fairly common in the literature on strategic choice. For example, efficient ways of seeking information (e.g., interrogation) are relatively inappropriate while appropriate ways of doing so (e.g., relaxing the partner) are inefficient (Berger & Kellermann, 1983). Compliance-gaining strategies that are implicitly considered efficient (e.g., direct requests, threats, etc.) tend to be treated as being less polite than those considered less efficient (e.g., promises, altruism) (see, e.g., Kemper & Thissen, 1981; Miller, Boster, Roloff, & Seibold, 1987; Roloff, 1976). This tension between efficiency and appropriateness also underlies Brown and Levinson's (1978) theory of politeness: Politeness provides a reason for not having the efficient conversations described by Grice's maxims. In a similar fashion, though forwarding the opposite argument, Argyle, Furnham, and Graham (1981) argue that efficiency provides a reason for being inappropriate. Either way, social appropriateness and efficiency are seen as incompatible constraints on behavior; that which is appropriate cannot be efficient and that which is efficient cannot be appropriate.

Metagoal theory does not posit that social appropriateness and efficiency are inherently incompatible. Rather, these two constraints are argued to range from completely isomorphic (i.e., what is efficient is also appropriate) to independent (efficiency is unrelated to appropriateness) to incompatible (what is efficient is inappropriate). As already mentioned, social appropriateness and efficiency are negatively related for information-seeking strategies. By contrast, an affinity-seeking goal seems to yield compatibility between the two constraints. Efficient ways of ingratiating oneself to others (opinion agreement, rendering of compliments) tend to be socially appropriate (Jones, 1964; Jones & Wortman, 1973). Douglas (1987) found a positive correlation between social appropriateness and efficiency in terms of tactics that could be employed for testing whether other people like us. Consequently, efficiency need not be incompatible with appropriateness in terms of strategic choice for goal achievement.

In metagoal theory, compatibility is argued to be determined by the degree to which the goal being pursued places a task orientation on the social occasion. The greater the task orientation of the goal, the less the compatibility of the two metagoals. Such goals as passing the time, having fun, and comforting place a smaller task overlay on the social situation and should lead to a situation where appropriateness and efficiency are basically compatible constraints. By contrast, such goals as gaining compliance or seeking information place a much larger task overlay on the social situation and, consequently, should generate incompatibility between these two metagoals.

It should be noted that task orientation does not *ipso facto* create incompatibility between the constraints of social appropriateness and efficiency. Increases in task orientation first reduce compatibility between the metagoals until they reach a state of independence, and only then increase the metagoals' incompatibility (much as a correlation of 1.0 moves toward 0 and then moves toward -1.0). Metagoal theory visualizes appropriateness and efficiency as two dimensions cutting through a "tactical space" (a space where tactics can be mapped according to their efficiency and appropriateness for achieving a particular

goal). The space is unidimensional when these two metagoals are completely compatible. As the two dimensions increase in their angle to each other (to 90°), they reach independence where socially appropriate tactics can be efficient or inefficient as can socially inappropriate tactics. Social appropriateness and efficiency are completely incompatible when the angle between them in this dimensional space is 180° . Consequently, metagoal theory suggests that as the task orientation of primary goals increases, the *size* of the correlation between social appropriateness and efficiency should decrease (from 1.0 to 0.0 to -1.0).

Relying on Brown and Levinson's (1978) analysis of politeness, metagoal theory posits two characteristics that increase the task orientation of social goals: infringement (restriction of autonomy) and negative valuation (dislike, devaluation, rejection). The more the achievement of a social goal infringes on others' autonomy of action and/or permits inferences of dislike, devaluation, and rejection, the greater is the task orientation of the goal. The greater this task orientation becomes, the less the compatibility between efficiency and appropriateness. In the case of conversational retreat, it is difficult to know to what degree inferences of negative valuation would be made or the extent to which, if any, a restriction in autonomy would occur. Nonetheless, the literature is suggestive of some reduction in compatibility between the two metagoals due to the possibility of inferences of rejection. While the exact relationship between social appropriateness and efficiency is left as a research question in this research, the prior literature would at least lead to the expectation that these two metagoals are not perfectly compatible when people are trying to end conversations.

Thus, this research examines the range of strategies available for conversational retreat and investigates whether the constraints of social appropriateness and efficiency are potentially reasonable ones for guiding strategic choice. To accomplish these research goals, the study required three distinct data gathering and analysis phases. The purpose of the first phase was to identify specific tactics that are used for terminating conversations unilaterally; the second phase's purpose was to classify the tactics into strategies; and, the third phase's purpose was to determine whether the metagoals of efficiency and appropriateness differentiated the strategies from each other.

PHASE I. TACTICS OF CONVERSATIONAL RETREAT

Written protocols of actual attempts to retreat were obtained and coded in order to develop a list of tactics available for unilateral retreat from conversations. The goal was to identify as many different tactics as possible with this procedure.²

Protocol Procedure

Undergraduate students ($N = 145$) wrote protocols of actual attempts to retreat prematurely from a conversation. Four of these protocols were discarded because four coders independently agreed that the event reported was unrelated to the task the participants had been given. Based on pretesting of instructions, each participant was asked to recall a specific conversation where he/she "wanted to get out of the conversation before the normal end." Due to reports of differences in mutually negotiated endings for partners of varying

levels of acquaintance, half of the participants were asked to recall a conversation that occurred when talking to a friend or close friend; the remaining participants were asked to recall a conversation that occurred with an acquaintance or a stranger (Albert & Kessler, 1978; Knapp et al., 1973; O'Leary & Gallois, 1985; Summerfield & Lake, 1977). Participants were asked to have the conversation clearly in mind before writing a complete description of all the attempts they made to get out of it.³

Tactic Coding

The purpose of the tactic coding was to construct a list of all tactics people reported using across the 141 episodes of conversational retreat. Tactics were defined as reports of observable behaviors undertaken by the person writing the protocol for the purpose of terminating the encounter. Each of the written protocols was read by four coders in order to identify the tactics reported in each retreat attempt. Coders were trained to ignore reports of nonobservable events such as thoughts or feelings as well as reports of other persons' behavior. Multiple tactics were coded from each protocol. Coder training continued until simultaneous (across the 4 coders) unitization agreement exceeded .85 (which took approximately 4 hours spread over a two-day period). Simultaneous intercoder agreement for segmentation across all of the actual protocols was .83. After each coder had individually read and coded each protocol, all disagreements in tactic identification were discussed and resolved. A total of 623 tactics were initially identified in the protocols though elimination of duplicate tactics by the coders (defined as "nearly identical in wording") reduced the set of tactics to 350.

Discussion

The goal of phase one was to produce a list of tactics people reported using in episodes of conversational retreat. While 350 tactics for premature retreat from conversation were culled from the written protocols, it is unlikely that all 350 are distinctly different tactics having no relation to other ones in the set. Past research on conversational endings suggests that particular tactics can be grouped together into such strategies as excuses, preclosings, summaries, and the like. Phase II of the research sought to identify the strategies into which these 350 tactics naturally grouped.

PHASE II. STRATEGY IDENTIFICATION

Sorting tasks are often used for strategy identification, with respondents asked to place tactics into groups based on whether they perceived them to be similar to (or different from) others in each group. Sorting tasks are time intensive even for relatively small sets of tactics. Because of the very large number of tactics reported in Phase I, we first found it necessary to select a smaller subset of tactics to be used for the sorting task. This section describes each of the two steps (tactic selection and strategy composition) we took to identify strategies of conversational retreat.

Tactic Selection

The selection of a subset of tactics was undertaken with the goal of maintaining the same diversity of tactics in the subset as in the overall list. Because we

were interested in representing the diversity of tactics (and not the frequency of strategy use) in the subset we selected, stratified sampling was employed to produce a subset of 76 exemplar tactics from the overall set of 350 tactics generated in Phase I. To do this sampling, the tactics first had to be stratified. Four stratifiers were given the 350 tactics generated in Phase I and asked to sort them into categories such that similar tactics were grouped together. The stratifiers were instructed to create as many or as few categories as needed and were cautioned that when in doubt they should create a new category. After assigning each tactic to a category, the stratifiers were instructed to read through the set of tactics assigned to each category to make sure that each tactic belonged in the category in which it was placed. The four stratifiers produced individual groupings of the tactics that ranged from 7 to 17 categories. The four stratifiers then met as a group to discuss and merge their individual solutions.

While we will present this merged solution because of its heuristic value for results that are to follow, it is important to note that our interests are *not* in the validity of the stratification scheme. Our *sole* purpose in this stratifying effort was to separate the list of tactics into groups such that stratified sampling could then be employed to achieve a subset of tactics as diverse as the overall group. The check on whether we achieved our goal of representing the diversity of tactics is determined by the ability of the subset to represent the diversity of the overall list *despite* variations in how the list might be stratified in terms of the conceptual similarity of tactics. This check was conducted by having another stratification undertaken by a new group of stratifiers and then seeing whether the new set of stratification categories were equally well represented by the tactics already in the subset (even when the categories were defined differently by the new group of stratifiers). Thus, we selected tactics into the subset based on the stratifications of the first group and then checked the diversity of the subset of tactics by seeing how well it represented the categories generated by a second group of stratifiers.

Our first stratifier group produced a merged solution of 14 categories of conversational retreat: (1) Restlessness Signals ($n = 36$)—cues of impatience or preoccupation; (2) Gaze Diversion ($n = 20$)—breaking or removing eye contact from the conversational partner; (3) Transition Movements ($n = 32$)—body movements away from the partner to signal desire to end or to close off talk; (4) Nonresponsiveness ($n = 46$)—failure or refusal to notice or acknowledge the conversational partner or what the partner has said; (5) Limited Involvement ($n = 25$)—use of short, brief, and shallow responses; (6) Agreement ($n = 7$)—doing nothing more than concurring with whatever the partner is saying; (7) Rejection ($n = 12$)—physical and vocal refusal to continue the conversation, typified by abrupt and very direct statements of “finality”; (8) Projection ($n = 9$)—ascribing one’s own desire to end onto the partner; (9) Future Continuation ($n = 22$)—suggesting or assuring future contact; (10) Lying ($n = 8$)—fabricating excuses for departure; (11) Claims of Being Busy ($n = 63$)—time pressures offered as a reason for termination; (12) Topic Changes ($n = 16$)—switching the subject by offering or demanding another; (13) Third Party Help ($n = 7$)—initiating or responding to another person external to the conversation; and (14) Finale Statements ($n = 47$)—using departure announcements, preclosings, positive evaluations, summarizing, and other ritualized tactics for ending conversations.

This 14 category stratification was then used as the basis for conducting the

stratified sampling of the list of 350 tactics. As the number of tactics per category ranged from a minimum of 7 to a maximum of 63 and certain categories (e.g., claims of being busy, finale statements, nonresponsiveness, restlessness signals) were quite large and diverse, additional tactics were selected to represent both the central nature and the diversity of these larger categories. The number of tactics selected from any one category ranged from 3 to 11. After making an initial selection of 76 tactics across the 14 categories to serve as a representative subset of the total set of 350 tactics, the four stratifiers who generated the categories were asked to assess the degree to which these 76 tactics adequately captured both the central nature and diversity of each of the categories and the overall set. Based on these judgments, one of the chosen tactics was replaced. These resulting 76 tactics then formed the set of stimuli used for strategy identification, and will be referred to as "exemplar tactics."⁴

Strategy Composition

Strategy composition was explored by mapping tactics onto a psychological space where the distance between tactics represented their perceived dissimilarity. Tactics far apart in the psychological map are perceived to be different (belonging to different strategies), whereas tactics close together are psychologically similar (belonging to similar strategies). Psychological maps are obtained by having many people individually categorize tactics and then extracting clusters of tactics that commonly and consistently group together across people.

Procedures. Participants ($n = 243$) were provided 40 of the exemplar tactics on index cards and instructed to sort tactics into piles so that those similar in content were placed in the same pile and a new pile was started whenever a tactic was different in content from those previously sorted. Participants were told they could create as many or as few piles as they felt necessary to describe the similarities and differences between the tactics. Participants were provided with only 40 of the 76 exemplar tactics to minimize errors that would be brought on by fatigue. Pilot tests found that sorting all 76 tactics took over one hour while sorting 40 tactics was typically accomplished in less than 30 minutes. Participants were provided a uniquely composed and randomly arranged packet of 40 tactics that were randomly drawn from the set of 76 exemplar tactics. In other words, 243 different sets of 40 tactics were assembled. Because participants were exposed to less than the full set of exemplar tactics, some variance is inherently introduced into the findings. For example, two tactics that were placed together by one person might be separated by another simply because of the presence or absence of other exemplar tactics in the packet they were given. Faced with creating fatigue or accepting added variance, additional variance was considered the more conservative and acceptable option.

Any time a participant placed two tactics in the same pile, the paired co-occurrence of these tactics was counted as a "match." The total number of times two tactics were matched together by the participants was counted for each of the 2,850 possible pairings. These counts of actual matches were transformed to percentages to reflect the number of times two tactics could possibly be matched together. These match percentages, which reflect the degree to which tactics were perceived to be similar, were then placed in a tactic-by-tactic matrix and

submitted to cluster analysis in order to determine those tactics that cohere into strategies of conversational retreat.

Results. Hierarchical cluster analysis, based on the method of the average linkage between groups, was employed as a means of identifying the composition of strategies of conversational retreat. Because the cluster analysis employed is hierarchical, multiple solution points are possible, with solutions containing more strategies embedded in the structure of solutions having fewer strategies. Examination of the agglomeration coefficients for "jumps" and "flattenings" (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984) suggested that reasonable interpretations of clusters might occur at the 12, 9, and 5 cluster solutions. Because the stability of the 12-cluster solution does not warrant full confidence, the 9- and 5-cluster solutions will be emphasized. The listing of the exemplar tactics organized by 5-, 9-, and 12-cluster solutions appears in Table 1.

Restlessness Signals emerged as a major strategy for retreating from conversations (as it did in both stratifier groups). The cluster results demonstrate that Gaze Diversion and Use of Objects (categories used by the second stratifier group, see Note 4) are perceived to be ways of exhibiting restlessness. Restlessness Signals include not only breaking eye contact and packing up of belongings, but also yawning, fidgeting, shifting weight, and looking at the clock.

Nonresponsiveness also emerged as a major strategy for retreating from conversations (as it did in both stratifier groups). The cluster analysis revealed that stratifying these tactics into categories of no responsiveness, minimal responsiveness (Limited Involvement) and mindless concurrence (Agreement) is unnecessary; all are perceived as means of ending conversations by being uninvolved in them. In other words, saying and doing nothing, being and acting uninterested, mumbling shallow nothings, and restricting oneself to monosyllable grunts while letting the partner talk are relatively undifferentiated tactics of the more general strategy of nonresponsiveness.

Rejection also emerged as a major strategy of conversational retreat (as it did in the stratifier groups). Two types of rejection in the 12-cluster solution are combined in the 9-cluster solution. Physical rejection involves turning around, walking away, or otherwise removing oneself physically from the interaction. This physical rejection is similar though not identical to the stratifier categories of Transition Movements and Leaving the Encounter, both of which were defined by physical rejection as well as minor social distancing behavior. Rejection also occurs vocally through the use of curt and abrupt statements that cut off further talk.

Projection was found in the cluster analysis to be a distinct strategy of conversational retreat (identified as such in one stratification and subsumed into a larger Suggestion category in the other). Tactics of Projection identify the partner as needing or wanting to terminate the conversation rather than oneself; that is, it is the *partner* who is tired, busy, or needs to be let go.

Verbal Hints involve tactics that rely on implicatures for accomplishing the goal of terminating the conversation; that is, they are indirect allusions or cues that require "uptake" for retreat to occur. As a strategy, Verbal Hints was found to contain 3 substrategies in the 12-cluster solution, those being Summaries, Preclosings, and a combination of Positive Statements and Future Continuations. Verbal Hints include tactics from the stratifier categories of Finale

TABLE 1
CONVERSATIONAL RETREAT TACTICS

I. Restlessness Signals

I grabbed my books. I packed my things up. I stood up to signal that I wanted to go. I made obvious gestures of looking at my watch. I pulled my car keys out of my pocket. I interrupted with a sudden glance at the clock. I tried to make it seem as if I was in a hurry. I tried to act preoccupied about something else. I acted busy. I tried to make myself look tired. I started yawning. I fidgeted. I started to act kind of restless. I started shifting my weight back and forth from leg to leg. I started to move a little further away from the person. I gazed at objects at a distance from us. I looked around me. I broke eye contact with the person. I shifted my attention back to what I was doing.

II. Nonresponsiveness

I just sat there and said nothing. I gave no response to the statement that was made. I just listened. I let the person talk the whole time. I acted uninterested. I didn't pay attention to the person. I just agreed with whatever the person was saying. I just tried not to keep up with the conversation by agreeing with what my friend said. I began to talk to the person with monosyllable answers like "yeah," "no doubt," "uh-huh." I answered with an appropriate mumble as necessary, rather than actively engaging in the conversation. I gave little response. I responded very shallowly. I tried very hard to give disinterested answers. I used unusually long pauses.

III. Rejection

I walked away. I turned my back. I shoved my face into a book. (Physical Rejection)
I cut the person off when the person was talking. I made harsh comments to make the person feel guilty, upset, or angry. I said, "Would you please leave me alone?" I said bye in an abrupt way. My tone of voice became "curt." (Vocal Rejection)

IV. Verbal Bids

A. Projection

I said, "You probably have to go now." I told them that I should let them go because I knew they probably had better things to do. I said, "You sound tired."

B. Hints

I said, "I understand what you've been trying to say." I made a comment to summarize the conversation, such as "They just don't build them like they used to." (Summary)

I tried to use some conversation enders such as "Well, . . . take care. . ." I tried to end the conversation by saying "well" and "okay." (Preclosing)

I told them I would get back to them. I told them that I would like to talk to them again some other time. I said, "Why don't you just give me a call later?" I said, "I wish I had more time to talk." I said, "It really is nice talking with you." (Future Continuation)

C. Excuses

I started to mention all the things I had to do that evening. I noticed the time out loud like "Oh my gosh, it's already 7 o'clock." I asked if the person knew what time it was. I lied to the person that I was busy. I made up some phony reasons why I must go. I made up some kind of story like "I have an appointment with someone else," or "My next class is almost started." I said I was late for something else. I said I had to go somewhere. I said that it was late. I said, "Someone is waiting for me." I said, in a polite way, that I had to do something.

D. Departure Announcements

I said, "Good-bye." I said, "See you later." I said, "I have to go now." I said, "I'm tired." I flat out explained that I was busy.

V. Shift of Focus

A. Topic Change

I asked the person some simple questions that were not related to the subject the person was talking about. I tried to switch to another topic. I said, "Could we talk about something else?"

B. Third Party

I made little comments to people next to me while the person talked. I started talking to another person about how tired I was (sort of loud to let the person with me hear). Another person told me loud enough for the person with me to hear that I needed to get going. I signaled someone else to try to get me out of the conversation.

Statements (particularly summaries and preclosings that were also perceived to be tactics of Limited Involvement, which they probably are as they are often seen as "passing turns") and Future Continuations. Other ritualistic positive statements (e.g., "It's been nice talking to you") were also found to be part of this Verbal Hints strategy in the cluster analysis.

Lying and Claims of Being Busy (stratification categories) combined into a single cluster of Excuses (consistent with the categorization of the second stratifier group). Whether deceptive or true, Excuses focus on time pressures such as being busy, having appointments, or it being late.

Departure Announcements were a separate group in the cluster analysis. Notice of imminent leave-taking tends to take the form of declaring one is leaving and saying "so long" or "goodbye."

While differentiable, the strategies of Projection, Verbal Hints, Excuses, and Departure Announcements do share sufficient common features to form a single cluster in the 5-cluster solution. These four strategies of conversational retreat share two features in common: They are all verbal strategies of retreat and they are all negotiable bids (i.e., offers, tenders, proposals, etc.). While other strategies are verbal in nature or are bids for retreat, only these strategies are simultaneously both, hence the name Verbal Bids.

The strategies of Topic Change and Third Party Help (located in the categories of both stratifier groups) also emerged from the cluster analysis. Trying to switch the subject of the conversation (or demanding that this be done) leads to a change of focus analogous to shifting attention to a third party to talk or asking for help in terminating the conversation. Indeed, both of the strategies do share this common feature of a focus change and form a single cluster in the 5-cluster solution. This combined cluster was, therefore, labeled Change of Focus.

Discussion. Strategies of conversational retreat seem to subsume the conventions employed in mutually agreed-upon partings. Summary statements, preclosings, justifications, future continuations, and goodbyes were all uncovered in the 12-cluster solution as were breaking eye contact and weight shifts. However, the cluster analysis reveals that these tactics of mutual leave-taking tend to group into strategies of Verbal Hints, Excuses, Departure Announcements, and Restlessness Signals. Nonresponsiveness, Rejection (both Physical and Vocal), Projection, Topic Changes, and Third Party Help are strategies employed for unilateral decommitment that are typically not used when endings are jointly determined.

As strategies associated with mutually agreed-upon endings have been presumed to be socially appropriate and moderately efficient, it might be expected that the additional strategies uncovered here for use in conversational retreat are less appropriate, differentially efficient (less or more), or both. Phase III tested these predictions.

PHASE III. DIMENSIONAL STRUCTURE

The exact psychological space in which strategies of conversational retreat reside is expected to be two-dimensional, those dimensions being defined by the metagoals of efficiency and social appropriateness. Multidimensional scaling was used to map the psychological space, identify the number of relevant dimensions, and determine the placement of strategies and tactics of conversa-

tional retreat within that space. Judgments of the appropriateness and efficiency of each of the tactics were then used to determine whether they were reasonable candidates for the dimensions defining the psychological space.

Obtaining the Psychological Map

Nonmetric multidimensional scaling using the Kruskal, Young, Shepard, and Torgeson procedure available in ALSCAL (*SPSS-X User's Guide*, 1988) was employed to explore the structure of the psychological space defining conversational retreat strategies. One- through six-dimensional solutions were examined to determine the solution with the best possible fit. Examination of the stress (.427, .242, .154, .116, .101, .085) and r -squared (.523, .702, .826, .877, .894, .913) values suggested a three-dimensional solution best fit the data (stress = .154, r^2 = .826) based on the occurrence of an elbow in the plot of dimensions by stress. Examination of the various Shepard plots of distances, disparities, and judged similarities also suggested a three-dimensional solution. However, a two-dimensional solution was expected and, as it turns out, formed a similar plane in the three-dimensional space. In addition, the third dimension added only a limited amount of extra explanatory power (r^2 increasing to .826 from .702), with the bulk of structural fit coming from the two dimensional solution. This permits the results initially to be presented and interpreted in this two-dimensional plane with discussion of the third dimension following. Figure 1 provides a plot of this two-dimensional space for conversational retreat strategies where the cluster results have been superimposed on the multidimensional scaling solution.

Interpreting the Psychological Map

The metagoals of efficiency and appropriateness were expected to define the psychological space of conversational retreat strategies. To test this expectation, two separate groups of participants were asked to judge either the efficiency ($n = 33$) or social appropriateness ($n = 32$) of each of the 76 exemplar tactics for achieving the goal of terminating a conversation prematurely. The mean efficiency and social appropriateness levels for each of the 76 exemplar tactics were calculated (1 = low, 7 = high). If the 76 exemplar tactics can be differentiated in terms of efficiency and social appropriateness, metagoal judgments should converge on the mean levels, implying that the distribution of judgments for any one tactic should be "peaked" or leptokurtic. Examination of the distributions of judgments of efficiency and social appropriateness for each of the 76 exemplar tactics consistently reveals leptokurtic distributions. The mean level of social appropriateness and efficiency for each conversational retreat strategy (obtained by combining the ratings of tactics assigned to each strategy) is reported in Table 2.

The 76 exemplar tactics tend to be relatively efficient; that is, the mean efficiency level ($M = 4.38$, $sd = 1.12$) is significantly greater than the theoretic midpoint (4) of the efficiency scale, $t(75) = 2.94$, $p < .01$, two-tailed. By contrast, these same 76 tactics are moderately appropriate, as the mean appropriateness level ($M = 3.76$, $sd = 1.18$) is equivalent to the theoretic midpoint $t(75) = 1.75$, $p > .05$. As can be determined from Table 2, Departure Announcements, Excuses, and Rejection are the most efficient retreat strategies while Nonrespon-

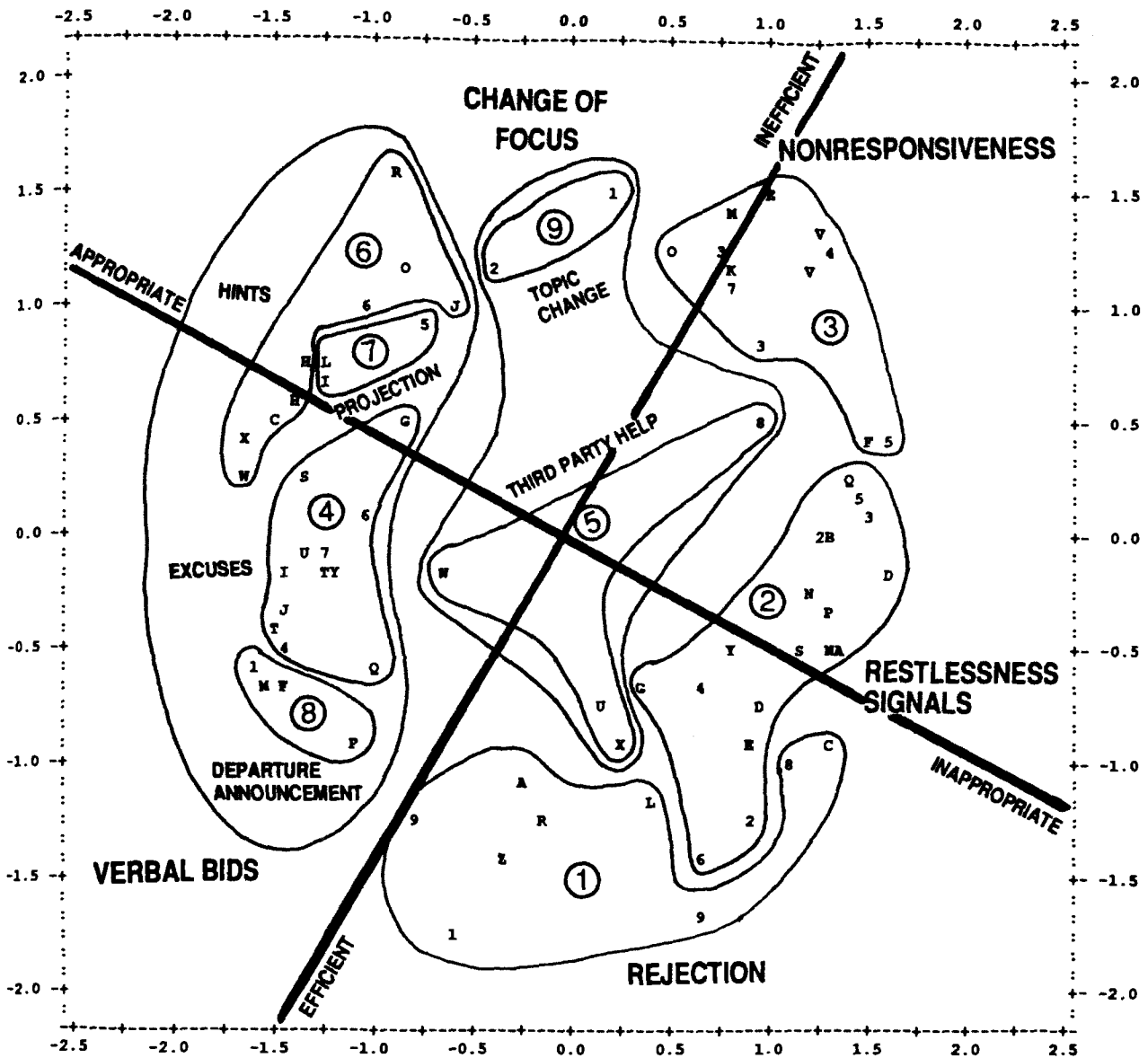


FIGURE 1.

CONVERSATIONAL RETREAT STRATEGY SPACE.

siveness and Topic Changes are the least efficient. Excuses, Verbal Hints, and Departure Announcements are the most appropriate strategies while Rejection is by far the least appropriate.

The degree to which social appropriateness and efficiency define the dimensions of the psychological space can be determined by regressing these judgments on the coordinates of the tactics as they are located in that space. Direction cosines (e.g., regression coefficients normalized so that their sum of squares equals 1.00) can then be calculated to obtain the angles for rotation of the axes as placed by the multidimensional scaling plot procedure (Davison, 1983; Kruskal & Wish, 1978). The placement of the dimensions by the multidimensional scaling procedure is arbitrary because the relationship between points in the space is what matters and not the statistical placement of the dimensions that "cut through" the space. As a result, multidimensional scaling solutions are invariant to rotation of the axes, meaning that interpretation involves considering how far each axis should be rotated in order to arrive at a proper understanding of the psychological space.

TABLE 2
EFFICIENCY AND SOCIAL APPROPRIATENESS OF RETREAT STRATEGIES

Strategy	Mean Efficiency	Mean Appropriateness
1. Restlessness Signals	4.12	2.66
2. Nonresponsiveness	3.12	3.09
3. Rejection	5.27	1.88
A. Physical Rejection	(5.48)	(1.68)
B. Vocal Rejection	(5.05)	(2.08)
4. Verbal Bids	(4.89)	(4.43)
A. Projection	4.05	3.13
B. Hints	4.19	4.91
1. Summary	(3.24)	(4.64)
2. Preclosing	(4.68)	(5.00)
3. Positive/Future	(4.65)	(5.08)
C. Excuses	5.29	5.02
D. Departure Announcements	6.02	4.63
5. Change of Focus	(3.98)	(3.56)
A. Topic Change	3.27	3.99
B. Third Party Help	4.69	3.13
Overall	4.38	3.76

Note: Means are provided for the 9-cluster solution. Numbers in parentheses are the means for the 5- and 12-cluster solutions.

TABLE 3
REGRESSION RESULTS FOR DIMENSIONAL INTERPRETATION

	DIM1	DIM2	DIM3	R	F	p
<i>Two-Dimensional Solution</i>						
Efficiency	-.548	<u>-.836</u>	—	.86	101.28	.001
Appropriateness	<u>-.858</u>	.514	—	.63	24.51	.001
<i>Three-Dimensional Solution</i>						
Efficiency	.536	<u>.664</u>	.522	.86	69.34	.001
Appropriateness	<u>-.811</u>	.213	.545	.82	50.24	.001

Note: Direction cosines (regression coefficients normalized so that the sum of squares is one) are reported and were used to calculate the angle for rotation. The multiple correlation coefficient was tested with an *F*-test having 2 and 73 degrees of freedom in the two-dimensional solution and 3 and 72 degrees of freedom in the three-dimensional solution. Underlined values indicate which dimensions can be interpreted as reflecting efficiency and appropriateness.

Efficiency and social appropriateness judgments were each regressed on the coordinates for the tactics for both the two and three dimensional solutions. The results of this analysis can be found in Table 3. One requirement for defining a dimension is that the multiple correlation coefficient be "high," indicating fit between the judgment and placement of the tactics in the psychological space. "High" is typically defined as having a multiple correlation coefficient greater than .70 which is significant at least at the .01 level. A second requirement is that the judgment have a higher weight (as defined by the direction cosines) on one dimension and a lower weight on others, indicating that only a small angle is needed for rotating a dimension from its arbitrary starting position. Mostly these weights have to be "noticeably different" from each other. Finally, the two dimensions should be minimally associated if they are to provide unique interpretations of the multidimensional space.

Examination of the results reported in Table 3 reveals that efficiency and

appropriateness define the dimensions of the two-dimensional solution and also define two of the three dimensions of the three-dimensional solution. Without fail, the multiple correlation coefficient is significant at the .001 level though once (in the two-dimensional solution) it falls below .70, going to .63 for appropriateness. Examination of the three-dimensional solution reveals that adding the third dimension (as should be done for an optimal fit) significantly improves the fit of the appropriateness dimension ($R = .82$). In addition, efficiency and appropriateness consistently have higher weights on one of the dimensions and lower weights on remaining dimensions, indicating the degree of rotation required is minimized. Finally, efficiency and appropriateness are only minimally correlated, $r = .227, p < .024$. Consequently, it can be concluded that efficiency and appropriateness are two dimensions defining the structure of the space of conversational retreat strategies. The direction cosines, therefore, were used to calculate the exact angle of rotation required. The two dimensions of efficiency and appropriateness were then rotated and placed into the psychological map of conversational retreat strategies in Figure 1.

Considerable time was spent attempting to interpret the added dimension in the three-dimensional solution. Interpreting the dimension was difficult because the coordinates are not meaningful in and of themselves; the dimensions they represent are arbitrarily drawn through the strategy space and have no inherent significance. Limitations in ability to visualize and mentally rotate a three-dimensional model of the strategy space make interpretation of the additional dimension difficult. Additionally, no theoretical reason was generated in advance nor could be culled from the leave-taking literature *post hoc* about what the nature of such a dimension might be.

A number of alternative interpretations of the third dimension were considered and rejected. For example, we found it tempting to argue that a nonverbal/verbal dimension might differentiate strategies of conversational retreat simply because they seemed to group naturally into those that are verbal and those that are nonverbal. However, clear overlap between this dimension and the appropriateness dimension occurs. As can be seen from both Table 2 and Figure 1, verbal tactics (e.g., Verbal Bids) are generally appropriate while nonverbal tactics (e.g., Restlessness Signals, Nonresponsiveness, Rejection) are generally inappropriate. Consequently, this nonverbal/verbal distinction is unlikely to add any unique interpretative information for understanding the nature of the additional dimension in the three-dimensional space. We also considered such dimensional possibilities as valence (good/bad), prosocial/antisocial, reward/punishment, self- vs. other-benefit, and directness; unfortunately, we found the first two to be conceptually isomorphic with social appropriateness, the middle two to be irrelevant to the nature of the strategies of conversational retreat, and the last to be (dependent on definition) either a synonym for efficiency (where direct means immediate and without waste of energy) or a synonym for appropriateness (where direct means rude or blunt). After considerable effort and failure, we find we must leave to future research the description and testing of this third dimension.⁵

Discussion

Inspection of Figure 1 reveals that the strategies that are socially appropriate and moderately efficient (Excuses, Projection, Hints, Departure Announce-

ments) are precisely the strategies that are said to typify mutually determined endings. Clearly, a more efficient strategy for conversational termination exists (Rejection), though noticeable losses in appropriateness accompany its use. It is instructive to compare these results to the claims made in the literature concerning the efficiency and appropriateness of various strategies and tactics for ending conversations. For example, Knapp et al. (1973) suggested that Excuses, Restlessness Signals (body movements/shifts), and Departure Announcements (declarations of goodbyes) were efficient means of ending conversations. While our results are supportive of the relative efficiency of Departure Announcements and Excuses as strategies of conversational retreat, they suggest that Restlessness Signals are only moderately so. Interestingly, Restlessness Signals were judged to be inappropriate despite some evidence from previous research that such tactics (e.g., weight shifts, gaze diversion, etc.) are incorporated into mutually agreed-upon endings. It is possible that these less appropriate cues are buffered by simultaneous use of more appropriate strategies (Lockard et al., 1978). As past research has not determined the degree to which Restlessness Signals are incorporated into mutually agreed-upon endings relative to more appropriate verbal bid strategies, it is impossible to know whether less appropriate cues are being buffered or whether these cues are not really part of jointly determined endings.

Whereas tactics of Nonresponsiveness were proposed by Knapp et al. (1973) to be polite signals of inattentiveness, we find them to be relatively inappropriate ways for ending conversations. However, Schegloff and Sacks (1973) seem correct in their belief that silence (Nonresponsiveness) is an inefficient means of ending a conversation due to delaying versus disruption of the turn-taking mechanism. As Schegloff and Sacks predicted, Preclosings were found to be an appropriate and moderately efficient means for ending conversations; Departure Announcements were found to be more efficient though less appropriate than Preclosings. While not tested in this research, the general support available for Schegloff and Sacks' predictions suggests that disruption of the turn-taking mechanism may be critical to understanding the appropriateness and efficiency of strategies of conversational retreat.

The small, positive correlation uncovered between appropriateness and efficiency offers both support and challenge to the literature on conversational endings. In this research, appropriateness and efficiency were found to be nearly independent and tending toward somewhat compatible constraints on strategy choice. This contrasts with the implicit presumption of much of the literature that presents these two metagoals as competing constraints on strategy choice. The implication of this result is that strategies of conversational retreat have the potential to be both appropriate and efficient rather than only one or the other. Departure Announcements and Excuses attest to the ability to have both appropriate and efficient strategies for ending conversations. It should be noted, however, that the relationship between these two metagoals does deviate significantly from perfect compatibility. The conversational ending literature suggests that the reason for this deviation concerns the feelings of rejection that could arise in the minds of cointeractants when leave-taking sequences are undertaken. While a direct test is not possible from these data, the results do offer indirect support for such reasoning.

In sum, four general conclusions can be reached from this phase of the

research. First, efficiency and appropriateness are two dimensions capable of differentiating conversational retreat strategies. Second, mutually agreed-upon endings tend to be socially appropriate and relatively efficient. Third, unilateral endings incorporate those socially appropriate and relatively efficient strategies employed in mutually agreed-upon endings but also include less appropriate and differentially efficient (both more and less) methods for prematurely closing down conversations. Finally, social appropriateness and efficiency are nearly independent constraints on the choice of leave-taking strategies.

CONCLUSION

This research had two goals: (1) to explore the range of strategies available to persons to retreat from conversations after having made a unilateral decision to decommit from them, and (2) to explore how these strategies relate to and differ from each other. Nine strategies of conversational retreat were uncovered: Rejection, Restlessness Signals, Nonresponsiveness, changes of focus via Third Party Help and Topic Changes, and verbal bids of Hints, Projection, Excuses, and Departure Announcements. These strategies differ in their appropriateness and efficiency for ending conversations. Excuses, Hints, and Departure Announcements are the most appropriate strategies for leave-taking while Rejection is the least appropriate. Excuses, Departure Announcements, and Rejection are the most efficient retreat strategies, while Nonresponsiveness and Topic Changes are the least efficient.

An intriguing feature of the description of the strategic repertoire for unilaterally desired leave-takings is the inclusion of strategies typically encountered in mutually negotiated endings. These methods of mutual termination of conversations are subsumed into the more general strategy space of unilateral retreat strategies, suggesting that people can direct conversational sequences to achieve individual as well as joint goals by activating what would otherwise be considered mutually negotiated leave-taking strategies. The ability to make it appear that a conversational ending is mutually negotiated might be a particularly useful means for unilaterally terminating conversations. The subsumption of mutually negotiated endings into one subarea of the strategy space (i.e., the area bounded by socially appropriate and relatively efficient tactics) suggests there is a greater diversity of strategies available for unilaterally desired retreat than for mutually negotiated endings. This greater diversity is reflected in the inclusion of additional strategies in the strategy space that are less appropriate and differentially efficient (more and less).

Why unilateral decisions to end conversations are supported by a larger repertoire of strategies than are mutually negotiated endings is an interesting issue. It may be, as is suggested in the literature, that mutually negotiated endings define the "social norm"; that is, they are what is considered to be conventional. If so, then conventional responses would constrain strategy choices to those that are acceptably efficient and appropriate. In this sense, conventions are societally acceptable solutions to problems of multiple and/or conflicting constraints (Argyle et al., 1981; Duncan & Fiske, 1977). If such is the case, then the implication is that psychological maps of strategy spaces for various interaction goals (e.g., compliance-gaining, affinity-seeking, information-acquisition, etc.) might be unduly limited if based only on "conventional" responses. While conventional leave-taking strategies are a subset of all possible strategies of

conversational retreat, they do not fully define the psychological space. Similarly, conventional compliance gaining attempts of simple requests, short justifications, altruism appeals, and promises (Dillard & Fitzpatrick, 1985; Tracy, Craig, Smith, & Spisak, 1984) might also not fully map the range of strategies available for situations when people are willing to ignore convention. Indeed, compliance-gaining research has consistently identified a far more diverse set of strategies and tactics than are typically used, though this set also subsumes these more conventional strategies (see, for review, Miller et al. 1987).

One issue to be considered, then, is how maps of strategy spaces can be obtained so that they include the full range of potential strategies rather than being limited to only conventional responses (i.e., socially acceptable in terms of appropriateness and efficiency). One way of addressing this issue is by considering factors that would lead people to activate nonconventional responses. In the case of conversational retreat, it was suggested previously that when tact fails, frustrations rise, or one actually wants to reject the cointeractant, then less appropriate strategies might be used. Similar factors (emotional arousal, goal failure, resistance) have been identified in the compliance-gaining literature for why more negative, aggressive, coercive, and threatening (and nonconventional) strategies might be employed (see, e.g., deTurck, 1985; Goodstadt & Kipnis, 1970; Kipnis & Cohen, 1980; Kipnis & Consentino, 1969; Lim, 1990). It should be mentioned that relatively few of these strategies would be likely to arise in research relying on observation or videotaping of ongoing interactions. For the most part, interaction studies observe or have persons converse in contexts that are highly likely to be regulated by appropriateness and efficiency constraints, thus leading to the production of conventional (defined as socially acceptable) responses rather than the full repertoire that might be used if situational constraints were lessened. Despite the recent preference for interaction based studies of conversational behavior, mapping strategy spaces might be an instance where the need for diversity in situational constraints is better met through various written protocol and survey procedures than through coding of ongoing interaction.

Obtaining more complete mappings of strategy spaces may be useful for understanding how particular tactics and strategies could be used to achieve simultaneously a number of different co-occurring goals. More often than not, individuals have multiple goals when conversing with others and the various strategies and tactics deployed for one goal must somehow cohere with strategies and tactics deployed for other goals. One means of achieving this coherence is to select those strategies that lie in the strategy spaces of each of the goals. Tactics that serve one or the other goal only or that actively interfere with the other goal would probably be avoided. Benoit and Follert (1986) discuss the simultaneous pursuit of impression-management and information-seeking goals in initial encounters, concluding that question-asking and agreement tactics are employed because they each simultaneously serve both primary goals. People having the joint goals of resisting compliance and ending a conversation might opt for such strategies as nonresponsiveness, rejection, or excuses because these strategies simultaneously serve attainment of both goals (see, for resistance to compliance, Lim, 1990; McCormick, 1979). If a person wanted to end a conversation as well as to test/determine another's affinity for oneself, nonrespon-

siveness or rejection might be employed. Douglas (1987) reports that one strategy for testing affinity is "withdrawing," defined by being nonresponsive or departing, the idea being that the partner will intercede if affinity exists. Similarly, when goals of evasiveness and retreat emerge, nonresponsiveness is a likely strategy that will be employed (see, for evasiveness, Berger & Kellermann, 1989). Exploring how two or more interaction goals are simultaneously accomplished might provide further understanding as to why seemingly inappropriate or inefficient strategies for a particular goal are enacted.

When people retreat from conversational encounters, many different strategies can be and are enacted. Conversational retreat is accomplished by using such verbal bids as hints (summaries, preclosings, future continuations, and positive statements), projections, excuses, and departure announcements; changing one's focus onto another subject or person; or signaling rejections, restlessness or nonresponsiveness. These strategies range in their efficiency and appropriateness, and are more diverse than (though they include) those strategies typically used in mutually desired partings. Unlike mutually negotiated endings, however, these partings are not always such sweet sorrow.

ENDNOTES

¹Conventional means for ending conversations were initially thought to commence with summary statements or other informational exchanges or requests (Albert & Kessler, 1978). However, these summarizing, informational, and request functions have since been argued to close *topics* rather than serving as unique cues for closing *conversations* (Knapp et al., 1978; O'Leary & Gallois, 1985).

²Because the present research relies on retrospective reports, and because the goal of the research is to investigate the diversity of different strategies, the design of the study precludes focusing on frequency of use of the various strategies. Even if data were tabulated reflecting how many different people reported using a given strategy, these data would not provide reliable information about the frequency of strategy use across a range of episodes by the same person.

³Retrospective verbal protocols were employed as the data gathering technique rather than the observation of actual interaction because of concerns related to diversity. Observation of actual interaction would be bounded by one set of contextual, relational, and other constraints (among them appropriateness and efficiency). Use of retrospective reports permits diversity in the nature of the context, relationship, and other features of the situation in each recalled interaction. Of course, use of retrospective accounts introduces its own problems related to the veridicality of the memories. However, when events are highly salient they tend to be better recorded and recalled (Ericsson & Simon, 1984). Many instances of conversational retreat seem to be highly salient events involving mindful decision-making and processing. Our subjects' reports of their encounters suggest this goal often leads to mindfulness and awareness. In addition, when people are asked to report on the specifics of a particular event, as they were here, versus a generalization from a set of events, the reports tend to be more veridical (Ericsson & Simon, 1984). Finally, our subjects reported tactics that have been observed in other interaction settings, which suggests their reports are consistent with these other types of data. Evidence from tactical instantiation of compliance gaining tactics also indicates that people are able to retain and recall *specific* tactical instantiations from a persuasive message (Green, Smith, & Lindsey, 1990).

⁴To further ascertain that the exemplar tactics could serve as a representative subset of the total set of 350 tactics, a new group of four stratifiers completed the same stratification procedure. The second stratifier group generated some of the same categories as the first group: Restlessness Signals ($n = 50$), Nonresponsiveness ($n = 25$), Limited Involvement ($n = 38$), Agreement ($n = 10$), Rejection ($n = 26$), Figure Continuations ($n = 23$), Topic Changes ($n = 9$), and Third Party Help ($n = 5$). The second stratifier group also reported categories of: (1) Using Objects ($n = 21$)—picking, packing, or pulling objects up, out, or in as a signal; (2) Leaving the Encounter ($n = 21$)—exiting the room or walking/backing away from the encounter; (3) Ignoring ($n = 7$)—refusal to respond; (4) Excuses ($n = 57$)—justifications and attributions for termination; (5) Suggestions ($n = 26$)—mentioning, introducing, or prompting for the other's desire to terminate the conversation, hints about the time, or positive evaluations; and (6) Departure Announcements ($n = 32$)—giving notice that one is leaving. The test of whether the diversity of the list of 350 tactics was represented by the subset of exemplar tactics is not found by comparing what categories emerged in the two stratifier groups, but rather by determining whether each category in the second stratification (regardless of whether it is the same or not) is adequately represented in the subset of exemplar tactics. No category of tactics emerged from the second

stratifier group that was not represented at all in the subset of 76 exemplars and virtually all categories of both stratifier groups were well represented by at least 3 tactics. The subset of 76 tactics (22% of the whole) seems to fairly well represent the diversity of the overall list of 350 *regardless* of the exact conceptual categories used to stratify and sample from that list. Consequently, we are fairly confident that the list of 350 tactics generated in Phase I has been reduced to a more workable and manageable set that is representative of the diversity of the overall set.

⁵It is not uncommon for the number of interpretable dimensions to be less than the dimensionality of the space. As Kruskal and Wish (1978) note: "If the two-dimensional configuration has two or more interpretable directions while the extra dimension in the three-dimensional space configuration does not participate much in any interpretation, then two dimensions should probably be used" (p. 57). Shepard (1962a, 1962b, 1974) argues explicitly that interpretability is a, if not *the*, primary criterion for determining the dimensionality of the psychological space. Much of Shepard's reasoning stems from his experience that people typically extract too many dimensions and that too much of decision-making relies on the values of stress and variance explained rather than on interpretability and stability. In fact, Shepard's analysis indicates that third dimensions should be ignored when they cannot be easily interpreted and account for a small amount of variance (.10 and .08 in two different examples). Consequently, we recognize that the psychological space may be better described two-dimensionally than three-dimensionally.

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