UNDERSTANDING TACTICAL CHOICE: METAGOALS IN CONVERSATION

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Conversational behavior is neither randomly generated nor aimlessly produced; rather, conversational behavior occurs in the service of goals social actors are seeking to achieve. Persons converse to develop, maintain, and end social relationships; to seek and provide information from and about other people, events, and ideas; to alter others' attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and behavior; to provide comfort and support; to seek affinity; and just to pass the time. While conversational goals might vary, it is taken as a given that conversational goals exist and serve to guide behavior.

Most interaction situations involve the simultaneous pursuit of a number of interaction goals (Berger, 1988; Tracy, 1989). For example, when an individual asks another person out on a date, he or she may actually be trying to accomplish two or more goals at once, e.g., persuasion, developing or maintaining a relationship, elimination of loneliness, seeking of affinity, etc. These interaction goals may vary in importance, dissolve over time, be thwarted before they can be accomplished, or parlayed into other goals (Berger, 1988). The important point, however, is that goals rarely occur in isolation (Wilensky, 1983).

Despite the diversity in possible goals and the fact that multiple goals could be simultaneously guiding behavior, interaction goals can be differentiated in terms of their abstractness and breadth. For example, at a concrete level, interlocutors could have a goal of asking a question. At a somewhat more abstract level, interlocutors might desire to find out as much as they possibly can about conversational partners, which then drives the more concrete goal of wanting to ask a

question. At an even more abstract level, interlocutors might want their behavior to be socially appropriate which then drives planning, strategy selection, and tactical choice for accomplishing the information seeking goal. These three levels of abstractness will be referred to as tactical goals, primary goals, and metagoals.

Tactics are specific actional realizations of abstract cognitive representations such as schemas or plans (Berger & Kellermann, in press). In other words, tactics are the behaviors that are employed to carry out a strategy. Tactical goals are concerned with desires for specific behaviors (i.e., tactics). Wanting to ask a question, telling oneself to smile, and trying to inhibit crying are all examples of tactical goals. Tactical goals are interaction specific. Wanting to smile is not a tactical goal that would necessarily occur across situations; rather, it arises in specific interactions.

Primary goals are also interaction specific though they refer to the functional outcome(s) desired from the interaction. Goals such as gaining compliance, seeking affinity, acquiring information, and comforting are examples of primary goals. Primary goals are associated with multiple tactical goals. For example, if one seeks to ingratiate oneself through self-presentation, any number of specific tactical variations in verbal and nonverbal actions could be employed in the pursuit of this more general primary goal (Jones, 1964; Jones & Wortman, 1973).

Metagoals are cross-situational concerns, that is, constraints that influence the selection of tactical goals in the service of primary goals. Unlike primary and tactical goals, metagoals cannot be said to be achieved at a particular moment in a conversation; rather, they serve as ongoing constraints on the achievement of primary goals. Metagoals are satisfied by being continuously realized throughout encounters. In other words, metagoals are fundamental, cross-situational constraints that affect the ongoing selection of tactical goals for achieving primary goals. For example, an information seeking goal (primary goal) can be accomplished in many ways (tactics), though these tactics vary in the efficiency with which the desired information will be acquired as well as the social appropriateness in acquiring information in those ways (Berger & Kellermann, in press; Berger & Kellermann, 1983). Efficiency of goal achievement and social appropriateness of behavior serve as general constraints in the selection of information seeking tactics. This chapter focuses on the role of metagoals in the generation and production of conversational behavior.

Focusing on metagoals offers the opportunity to understand theoretically the derivation of tactical choices in the pursuit of primary goals. Recently, Berger (Berger, Mann & Jordan, 1988; Berger & Kellermann, in press) has lamented the atheoretical nature of much of the research on interaction strategies. Typically this research has attempted to describe various tactics or classes of tactics persons might use in the pursuit of some primary goal such as compliance gaining, information seeking, affinity seeking and the like (see, e.g., Daly & Wiemann, in press). While this research provides an important and rich descriptive base, it does not generate understanding of how goal-directed action is translated into behavior (Smith, 1984). Continued focus on tactics used in the pursuit of a single primary goal tends to ignore the multifunctionality of certain tactical choices. For example, smiling may simultaneously seek affinity as well as relax a target person so that information may be acquired. Such varied primary goals as social approval, persuasion, and information acquisition all tend to result in displays of similar nonverbal tactics for their accomplishment (smiling, gesticulation, attentiveness to other,

etc.) (Rosenfeld, 1966; Mehrabian & Williams, 1969; Kellermann & Berger, 1984). In addition, tactical choices cannot be understood solely from the perspective of the primary goal. Why, for example, would a person choose interrogation versus disclosure versus relaxation as an information seeking strategy? Moreover, are there general principles of strategy and tactical selection that govern choice that are not limited to particular primary goals? Cataloging reasons why given tactical goals will arise in the pursuit of particular primary goals tends to ignore the more general issue of tactical choice for any primary goal, whatever it may be.

Focusing on metagoals provides an opportunity to develop a general theoretical position about tactical choices for achievement of primary goals that operates across situational contexts (Wilensky, 1981). Consequently, this paper will outline a theoretical perspective on how metagoals influence the achievement of primary goals of social actors engaged in conversation. A limited number of metagoals are believed to exist and will be described in the first section of the chapter. The relationship between these metagoals will then be explored, revealing that varying degrees of tension between the metagoals may exist in different situations. How this tension is resolved by social actors will then be explained in terms of how tactical goals are developed in the pursuit of primary goals. Finally, enactment of these tactical goals will be examined in order to understand how similar resolution of tension in metagoals still permits variation in performance across social actors.

CONVERSATION METAGOALS

Two conversation metagoals can be identified based on past theoretic and empirical research: efficiency of goal attainment and social appropriateness of behavior. While appearing under numerous pseudonyms, efficiency and social appropriateness have been implicated as situational constraints for such varied primary goals as remediating embarrassment (Metts & Cupach, 1989), comforting (Burleson, 1984; Burleson & Samter, 1985), offering accounts (Cody & McLaughlin, 1985), giving criticism (Craig, 1986; Tracy, 1989), complaining (Alberts, 1988), seeking affinity (Bell & Daly, 1984), getting to know others (Benoit & Follert, 1986; Berger & Kellermann, 1983), avoiding becoming known to others (Berger & Kellermann, 1989), testing the state of a relationship (Baxter & Wilmot, 1984; Douglas, 1987), engaging in conflict (Canary & Spitzberg, 1987, 1989), disengaging from relationships (Cody, 1982), making requests (Blum-Kulka, Danet & Gherson, 1985; Kemper & Thissen, 1981), seeking information (Argyle, Furnham & Graham, 1981), asking for favors (Tracy, Craig, Smith & Spisak, 1984), gaining compliance (Clark, 1979; Dillard, in press; Seibold, Cantrill & Meyers, 1985), and resisting compliance-gaining attempts (McLaughlin, Cody & Robey, 1980). Models of natural language generation (Hovy, 1988; McKeown, 1985) and lexical choice (Davis, 1982; Hermann, 1983) also attest to the importance of efficiency and social appropriateness as governors of conversational behavior.

Efficiency of goal achievement and social appropriateness of behavior are commonly offered as general rules of interaction. Many scholars have noted that social appropriateness is a key feature regulating conversational behavior (e.g., Argyle, et al., 1981; Brown & Levinson, 1978). Indeed, people feel justified in confronting others over what they perceive to be others' inappropriate deeds (Newell & Stutman, 1988). Efficiency of goal achievement has also been offered as a general rule guiding behavior (de Beaugrande, 1980; Hermann 1983, Schonpflug, 1985; Wilensky, 1983), being important to planning (Hayes-Roth & Hayes-Roth, 1979; Suchman, 1987) and the generation of

routines (von Cranach & Kalbermatten, 1982). Judgments of effectiveness and competence are related to the efficiency and social appropriateness with which goals are pursued (Canary & Spitzberg, 1987, 1989; Frese, Stewart & Hannover, 1987; Hacker, 1985; Kemper & Thissen, 1981; Schonpflug, 1985; Stipek & Nelson, 1980).[1] Efficiency and social appropriateness are important cross-situational constraints on communication behavior and, hence, serve as the basis for the development of the theory of metagoals offered in this chapter. In this section, each of these two metagoals will be defined and their communicative significance noted.

Efficiency

Wilensky's (1981, 1983) work on planning has focused on the metagoal of efficiency under the presumption that conversational behavior can usefully be viewed from a planning perspective (Bruce, 1975; Perrault, Allen & Cohen, 1978). Much of the planning literature centers around efficiency as a constraint

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[1] Communication effectiveness refers to persons' ability to achieve their primary goals. Effectiveness does not adhere to particular communication strategies or tactics; rather effectiveness is a judgment of the use of particular tactics in specific settings for specific purposes. In other words, tactics may be effective in one situation while ineffective in others. It is possible to be effective, that is, to achieve communicative goals, in efficient or inefficient ways and in appropriate or inappropriate ways. While metagoal theory posits that jointly inefficient and inappropriate behavior is likely to be ineffective for primary goal achievement, it does not limit competent communicators to being jointly efficient and appropriate. Rather competence is a function of interlocutors' goals for particular situations. Less appropriate and/or less efficient behavior may be communicatively competent in particular circumstances.

underlying the development of social action plans (see, e.g., Hayes-Roth & Hayes-Roth, 1979; Sacerdoti, 1977). Wilensky has argued that the process of plan, strategy, and tactic fabrication and selection are controlled by the metagoal of efficiency. Wilensky (1983) argues that "it is good policy for a planner to try to produce plans that do not waste resources. This policy may be thought of as a kind of abstract goal of the planner" (p.12). Furthermore, Wilensky argues that efficiency is not an interaction specific goal, but rather a goal that is applicable to all situations in which primary goals are involved. A reasonable plan for any specific situation would thus be one that was efficient in achieving the primary goal for that situation. Efficiency is conceived to be an overarching goal that should drive the planning process which ultimately drives choices of tactics. "It is a bad idea to create a plan that is wasteful, even if the plan achieves its intended goals" (Wilensky, 1983, p.16). In other words, efficiency is being defined as doing no more than is necessary to achieve the primary goal, thereby avoiding the "waste" of unnecessary steps (Sperber & Wilson, 1986; Wilensky, 1981).

The idea of efficiency of goal achievement as applied to conversational behavior would mean that interlocutors have as a general cross-encounter goal the desire to develop efficient means for achieving primary goals. In other words, efficiency of goal achievement in conversational encounters can be defined as expending the least effort to obtain whatever outcome is desired (the primary goal) from that encounter. For example, if one's primary goal is seeking information, the most efficient means to do so is by asking questions (Berger & Kellermann, 1983). If one's primary goal is persuasion, efficient means for doing so may be telling the other person what you want or requesting their compliance. Regardless of the primary goal, however, the point is

that efficiency is a consideration in how one will achieve that primary goal.

The role of efficiency in the conduct of conversational behavior has been investigated in a few instances. Berger and Kellermann (1983) studied information seeking behavior, finding that the tactic of question-asking could be considered efficient only with respect to a person's primary goal. For those persons who desired to find out a great deal of information about their conversational partners, increases in question-asking increased efficiency of goal attainment. By contrast, for those persons who desired to *avoid* finding out information about their conversational partners, increases in question-asking decreased efficiency of goal attainment. Moreover, persons desiring to find out about their conversational partners asked significantly more questions than persons trying to avoid becoming acquainted. The metagoal of efficiency was found to be an important determinant of tactical choices in the pursuit of opposing primary goals. The efficiency (metagoal) of obtaining or avoiding obtaining information (primary goals) affected question-asking behavior (tactic).

Kellermann, Reynolds and Chen (1989) focused on strategies and tactics of conversational retreat (i.e., getting out of conversations when you no longer want to be in them). Efficient means of retreating from conversation include rejection (e.g., physically turning one's back and walking away; vocally demanding to be left alone), announcing one's departure, and the making of excuses. Hinting (summary statements, preclosings, references to future continuations), projecting one's desire to end onto the conversational partner (e.g., "You must be busy/tired"), getting help from a third party, and signaling one's desire to end the conversation by acting restless were found to be moderately

efficient. Inefficient means for beating a retreat from a conversation include being nonresponsive and changing the topic. Efficiency was found to be a major dimension along which strategies of conversational retreat could be differentiated.

Douglas (1987) examined the efficiency of various strategies for determining if one is liked by other individuals. The strategies did vary in efficiency with *confronting* (tactics requiring a partner to provide immediate and generally public evidence of his/her liking), *sustaining* (actions designed to maintain the interaction without affecting its apparent intimacy), and *approaching* (tactics that implied increased intimacy to which the only disconfirming partner response is compensatory activity) being the most efficient and *withdrawing* (tactics that required a partner to sustain the interaction), *hazing* (tactics that required a partner to provide a commodity or service to the actor at some cost to him/herself), and *diminishing self* (tactics that lowered the value of self; either directly by self-deprecation or indirectly by identifying alternate reward sources for a partner) being the least efficient in terms of determining whether another person likes you. Douglas argued that the most commonly employed affinity testing tactics are precisely those that are most efficient.

The theoretic analysis of Wilensky, complimented by the empirical research on information seeking, affinity testing and conversational retreat strategies suggests that accomplishment of primary goals through conversational behavior is guided by a metagoal of efficiency. If such were the case, then various heuristics that have been suggested to underlie the production of conversational behavior--such as Grice's (1975) maxims of quality, quantity, relevance, and manner--should be consistent with the concerns of efficiency. Brown and Levinson (1978) have argued that Grice's maxims are nothing more than a set of

statements about how to have maximally efficient conversations. Thus, one metagoal that is suggested to influence the tactical goals in the service of one or more primary goals for an encounter is efficiency. The implication is that regardless of one's primary goal(s) in any specific encounter, efficiency of goal achievement will be a consideration in the development of tactical goals.

Social Appropriateness

A second candidate for a metagoal guiding the attainment of primary goals in conversations is social appropriateness. Social appropriateness refers to an assessment that behavior (some particular tactic) is suitable, fitting, and acceptable for a particular purpose. Social appropriateness is a cross-situational consideration in the generation of tactical goals seeking to achieve primary goals in conversational encounters. Social appropriateness has been investigated under such labels as disclosure appropriateness, politeness, and deviance which attests to the cross-situational nature of social appropriateness considerations. For example, Derlega and Grzelak (1979) have argued that self-disclosure (i.e., a tactic) can serve many primary goals including expression, self-clarification, social validation, relationship development, and social control. Key to these researchers' thinking, however, is the idea that social appropriateness regulates actual tactical choices in the pursuit of these goals. Self-disclosure (as a tactical goal) has been found to be differentially employed in the pursuit of primary goals dependent on the appropriateness of that tactic across differing types of social relationships (Chaikin & Derlega, 1974) and at different points in the conversation stream (Jones & Gordon, 1972). Like Wilensky's argument in terms of efficiency, Derlega and Grzelak argue for maximizing social appropriateness in the choice of tactical goals that seek to obtain primary goals.

Research on politeness reinforces the superordinate status of social appropriateness in the conduct of conversational behavior. Brown and Levinson's (1978) seminal work accepts Goffman's (1967) presumption that all persons are concerned about their "face" or the image they project to others and they are aware that others have similar concerns about their own face. Because many communicative acts potentially threaten the face of oneself or another, individuals engage in facework, or politeness, to mitigate the threat inherent in the communicative acts. Lim (1988a) argues that this concern with acting in socially appropriate ways when communicating extends beyond face threatening acts; even where no face threatening act is involved such as in ritualized or formulaic exchanges like greetings, partings, appreciating, apologizing, and congratulating, social appropriateness is still an important concern.

Social appropriateness does differentiate particular tactics individuals could employ in conversations. For the primary goal of information acquisition, evidence has been provided to suggest that question-asking is less socially appropriate than self-disclosure which is less socially appropriate than relaxing the conversational partner (Berger & Kellermann, in press). Similarly, social appropriateness was found to differentiate conversational retreat strategies with such verbal bids as hinting, making excuses, announcing one's departure, and projecting the need to end onto the partner being more appropriate than physically or vocally rejecting the partner, acting restless, or being nonresponsive. Douglas's (1987) investigation of tactics that could be employed for affinity testing revealed that sustaining was by far more socially appropriate for testing how well one is liked, followed by approaching, offering, and networking; such tactics as confronting, withdrawing, hazing, and

diminishing self were judged to be inappropriate as affinity testing tactics.

Consequently, it is being proposed that social appropriateness is a meta-goal that guides tactical choices in the pursuit of primary goals in conversational encounters. The superordinate status of social appropriateness as a determiner of tactical choice has also been suggested by Price and Bouffard (1974). These researchers selected 15 different situations (job interview, church, date, etc.) and 15 behaviors (fight, shout, argue, laugh, talk, etc.) and then examined the appropriateness of each of the behaviors in each of the situations. The conclusion of this research was that "an important characteristic of social behaviors is their behavioral appropriateness which is reflected in the distribution of appropriateness ratings across a specified sample of situations. In addition, an important property of situations is their situational constraint which is measured in terms of the distribution of appropriateness ratings across a specified sample of behaviors" (p.582). Thus, certain behaviors might generally be inappropriate for a wide range of primary goals though quite appropriate for specific primary goals. By contrast, other behaviors might generally be appropriate for a wide range of primary goals but be inappropriate for certain specific primary goals. Regardless of the degree to which tactics might be appropriate to various primary goals, the point is that social appropriateness is a metagoal that guides tactical choice in the pursuit of primary goals.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EFFICIENCY AND SOCIAL APPROPRIATENESS

As two metagoals have been suggested to guide tactical goals in the pursuit of primary goals in conversations, the relationship between them deserves consideration. This section will explore the relationship between efficiency and social appropriateness in terms of the degree to which these metagoals are in concordance or conflict with one another and in terms of their relative and absolute importance in any given situation. Theoretically possible relationships of concordance and importance will be outlined, followed by principles that predict and explain the degree of concordance and importance in given instances.

Theoretically Possible Relationships

Degree of tension. The metagoals of social appropriateness and efficiency can vary in the degree to which they are mutually compatible for the purposes of tactical selection in the pursuit of primary goals. The extremes of this variance have been labeled goal conflict and goal overlap (Wilensky, 1983). Goal conflict occurs when mutually opposing goals exist internal to an individual while goal overlap occurs when mutually reinforcing goals exist internal to an individual. However, it is important to recognize that *degrees* of incompatibility between social appropriateness and efficiency might exist; that these metagoals may be "more or less" incompatible.

The degree of incompatibility depends on the primary goals of interactants. For example, goal conflict occurs in the seeking and restriction of information about the self during informal initial encounters. Efficient information seeking tactics (question-asking) are also the least socially appropriate while acquisition tactics that are relatively inefficient (relaxation) are far more socially appropriate (Berger & Kellermann, 1983, in press; Kellermann & Berger, 1984). Similarly, trying to remain unknown in the face of an inquisitive other is also characterized by goal conflict; the more efficiently people are evasive, the less socially appropriate their behavior becomes (Berger &

Kellermann, 1989). While perfect goal conflict does not exist for the primary goal of information acquisition (i.e., the correlation between efficiency and appropriateness is less than -1.0), information acquisition goals seem to place the simultaneous achievement of these metagoals in jeopardy, at least in terms of maximization. By contrast, an affinity seeking primary goal leads to the occurrence of goal overlap. When one's goal is to ingratiate oneself to another, the most efficient ways to accomplish this goal are also most likely to be socially appropriate. Persons might use opinion agreement and the rendering of compliments as tactics to reach an ingratiation goal (Jones, 1964; Jones & Wortman, 1973). Such ingratiation tactics generally involve the enactment of positive actions that are very likely to be judged socially appropriate. Similarly, Douglas (1987) found a positive correlation between social appropriateness and efficiency in terms of tactics that could be employed for testing whether another person likes oneself. Near-independence characterizes the relationship between efficiency and social appropriateness in terms of conversational retreat strategies (Kellermann, et al., 1989). In other words, persons can appropriately terminate conversations in an efficient or inefficient manner just as they can inappropriately terminate them in efficient or inefficient ways. For example, excuses and departure announcements are jointly appropriate and efficient strategies for ending conversations; hints and projections are appropriate, though less efficient; nonresponsiveness is both inefficient and inappropriate, while physical and vocal rejection is considered both inappropriate and inefficient.

Brown and Levinson (1978) argue that maximally efficient conversation as specified by Grice's maxims is a relatively rare occurrence because of persons' concerns for the social appropriateness of their behavior. "These Maxims define for us the basic set of assumptions underlying every talk exchange. But this does not imply that utterances in general, or even reasonably frequently, must meet these conditions, as critics of Grice have sometimes thought. Indeed, the majority of natural conversations do not proceed in such a brusque fashion at all. The whole thrust of this paper is that one powerful and pervasive motive for *not* talking Maxim-wise is the desire to give some attention to face...Politeness is then a major source of deviation from such rational efficiency, and is communicated precisely by that deviation" (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 100). In other words, Brown and Levinson are cognizant of the potential tension between the metagoals of efficiency and social appropriateness. However, Brown and Levinson *presume* this tension *must* occur rather than presuming varying degrees of tension ranging from "none at all" (or goal overlap) to "complete" tension (or goal conflict).

The point to be made here is that the degree to which social appropriateness and efficiency can simultaneously be achieved is the degree to which tension (or incompatibility) exists for these metagoals in terms of tactical choices that could be made to pursue particular primary goals. The tension between the metagoals of social appropriateness and efficiency will be represented by placing two continuous dimensions (one for each metagoal ranging from inappropriate to appropriate and inefficient to efficient) in a space where the angle by which the two dimensions are oriented towards each other represents the degree of tension. Theta, θ, is a parameter that tracks the angle between these two dimensions and defines the degree of tension between social appropriateness and efficiency. When theta is equal to 0°, social appropriateness and efficiency are perfectly positively correlated, implying that both metagoals can simultaneously be satisfied. When theta is equal to 180° then social

appropriateness and efficiency are perfectly negatively correlated, implying that attempts to maximize social appropriateness will necessarily lead to less efficiency in primary goal achievement. When theta is equal to 90°, then social appropriateness and efficiency are unrelated, implying that tactics that seek to maximize one of these metagoals will not restrict or in any way influence tactical choices seeking to maximize the other. In the first row of Figure 1 (on the next page) a number of possible relationships between social appropriateness and efficiency are diagrammed within the context of this representation. For example, diagram A(2) in Figure 1 represents the relative compatibility of social appropriateness and efficiency (as when seeking affinity) while diagram A(4) represents the relative incompatibility of these two metagoals (as when seeking information). In all cases, theta represents the degree of tension between the metagoals of social appropriateness and efficiency.

Importance. While efficiency and appropriateness stand in a given tension to each other for a particular primary goal, it should not be presumed that they are equally important in guiding tactical choices whenever that goal arises. Efficiency of goal achievement can be of greater, equal or lesser importance than social appropriateness in guiding tactical choices in the pursuit of goals. Just as social appropriateness is a reason not to be efficient (Brown & Levinson, 1978), efficiency is a reason not to be socially appropriate (Argyle, et al., 1981). Emergency situations are likely to result in lessened concerns about the appropriateness of one's behavior and heightened concerns about efficiency. By contrast, formal social events such as weddings and funerals are more likely to be regulated by concerns for appropriateness than desires to complete the rituals as quickly as possible. In other words, while efficiency and social appropriateness are cross-situational constraints on communication behavior, their

relative importance in governing tactical choices varies from situation to situation.

Not only do efficiency and appropriateness vary in terms of their relative importance, but in different situations they can vary in terms of the absolute level that is minimally acceptable. In other words, thresholds exist for acceptable (versus maximal) levels of efficiency and appropriateness when pursuing a primary goal in any given situation. At times, people outright prefer or are at least willing to tolerate great inefficiency (e.g., committee decision-making, talking with a friend), while at other times the minimum acceptable level of inefficiency is quite efficient indeed (e.g., in disaster situations, medical instructions). Similarly, some situations (e.g., job interviews, meeting the President) seem to generate a belief that no deviation from social appropriateness can be tolerated, while other situations (e.g., baseball games, talking with a friend) have lower thresholds for socially acceptable behavior.

The relative importance of social appropriateness and efficiency is independent of their absolute threshold levels. Social appropriateness can be relatively more important than efficiency when both are important or unimportant. Similarly, efficiency could be more important than social appropriateness without implying that efficiency is an absolutely important consideration or that social appropriateness an unimportant one. The greatest constraint on strategic choice happens when efficiency and appropriateness are both considered to be very important. Less constraint on strategic choice occurs as tolerance thresholds reflect the acceptability of less efficient and/or appropriate tactics.
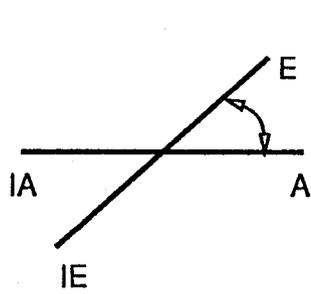
The central feature of the representation of tension between the metagoals of efficiency and appropriateness is the pivoting of the efficiency dimension in relation to the social appropriateness
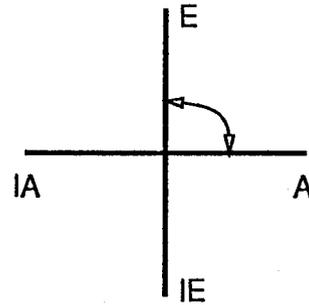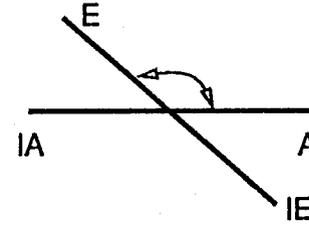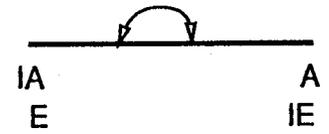
FIGURE 1. RELATIONS BETWEEN METAGOALS
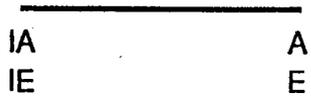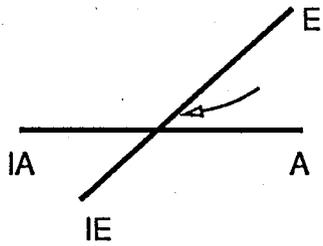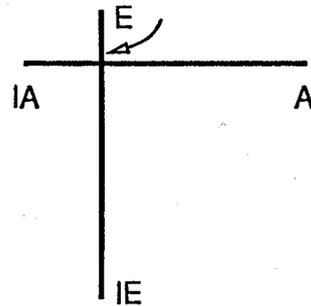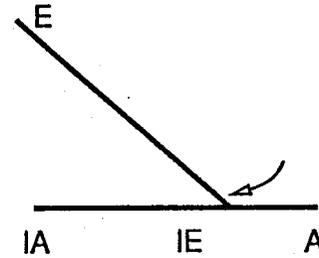
dimension.[2] The exact point at which the two dimensions pivot provides a means of representing not only the absolute importance of efficiency and appropriateness in any given instance, but also a means of representing their relative importance. In the first row of Figure 1, efficiency and appropriateness are always of equal importance with tolerance thresholds set at the midpoint of the dimensions (moderately efficient and moderately appropriate). By contrast, different levels of relative and absolute importance of efficiency and appropriateness are represented in the diagrams in the second row of Figure 1. Diagram B(1) in Figure 1 indicates that appropriateness is more important than efficiency, to the point where being maximally efficient is no longer possible. Diagram B(2) offers a similar perspective on the relative importance of the two metagoals, though for the case when more tension exists. In an instance of metagoal independence such as in diagram B(3), efficiency of goal achievement is critically important while appropriateness is considerably less so; efficiency is relatively more important than appropriateness in B(3) than appropriateness is of efficiency in B(2) or B(1). It is also possible that one metagoal such as efficiency may be an irrelevant consideration while appropriateness has some importance as is diagramed in B(4). The point is simply that the pivot point provides information about the absolute importance of each metagoal (called tolerance thresholds) as well as the relative importance of the metagoals to each other.

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[2] Note that either dimension could be considered the stationary one; however, to represent theta, one dimension must be stationary while the other pivots. As the representation is not unique to rotation or inversion, it is irrelevant which dimension is chosen to act as the stationary dimension.

Principles

Two theoretical questions immediately arise from this theoretical representation: (1) What determines the size of theta (that is, the degree of tension) between the metagoals of social appropriateness and efficiency? and (2) What determines the pivot point (that is, the absolute importance) of efficiency and appropriateness? A set of general principles will be suggested as answers to each of these questions, however, these principles should not be viewed as exhaustive. Rather, these principles are ones that can be developed based on the current state of the literature which, in the case of metagoals, is somewhat limited. As a result, new principles are likely to develop while, over time, some suggested principles will need to be amended and/or discarded. The theory can accept any number of principles that relate to determinants of concordance and conflict between social appropriateness and efficiency as well as determinants of their absolute importance in any given instance. The theory as a whole would need to be discarded, however, if (a) efficiency and appropriateness were determined not to be key dimensions differentiating conversational strategies and tactics; (b) the degree of tension between efficiency and appropriateness had no influence on tactical choices; and (c) the relative and absolute importance of efficiency and appropriateness did not constrain conversational behavior.

Determinants of theta. Determinants of theta are forces that serve to increase or decrease the amount of tension between efficiency and social appropriateness in the pursuit of primary goals. Tension, that is, the degree of concordance, independence, or conflict between social appropriateness and efficiency, is a function of the nature of primary goals themselves and so must be responsive to intrinsic differences between types of primary goals

persons seek to achieve. While much remains to be known about the nature of social goals, some preliminary statements are possible and these provide the foundation for understanding the extent to which different primary goals are governed by con-cordant, independent, or conflicting efficiency and social appropriateness constraints.

Recently, interest has emerged in identifying and classifying primary goals (Dillard, in press; McCann & Higgins, 1988; Rubin, Perse & Barbato, 1988; Schank & Abelson, 1977). Perhaps one of the most consistent and significant differences isolated in these analyses of primary goals is the extent to which task goals and task situations are differentiated from social goals and social situations (Argyle, 1980; Argyle, et al., 1981; Wish & Kaplan, 1977). This social/task distinction has also been a key feature in theory and research on small group interaction (see, e.g., Bales, 1950). However, labeling this distinction "social versus task" is probably a misnomer. While purely social goals (e.g., pleasure, enjoyment) lack a task component, task goals almost always carry both a task and a social component (Argyle, et al., 1981). It is this overlaying of a task purpose onto the social exchange that leads to increases in tension between efficiency and social appropriateness. For purely social goals such as enjoyment and pleasure, goal concordance exists: what is appropriate is also efficient. As the social exchange takes on more and more of a task orientation, the more efficiency and social appropriateness should be in tension with each other. Reflective of increased tension between social appropriateness and efficiency, the introduction of a task orientation has been shown to place greater constraint on behavior (Nascimento-Schulze, 1981) and alter the way people think about particular interactions (Argyle, et al., 1981). In other words:

Principle 1.   The more the social occasion is overlaid with a task purpose, the greater the tension between social appropriateness and efficiency.

Consider the interpersonal motives identified by Rubin, et al. (1988) of pleasure, relaxation, escape, affection, inclusion, and control. The pleasure motive generates a purely social goal--enjoying oneself (Argyle, et al., 1981). The motive of affection overlays a minor task component onto the purely social goal of enjoyment by introducing goals of helping, caring, thanking and/or encouraging others. These relatively minor task overlays should create some tension between social appropriateness and efficiency, though goal concordance should still be in evidence; that is, social appropriateness and efficiency should be positively though not perfectly associated. The inclusion motive represents a need for companionship and overlays a more clearly defined task on the social situation, though one in which pleasure is still a main component. As a result, goal concordance is anticipated, but less so than for affection. Under the presumption that inclusion motives are closely related to the use of affinity testing strategies, Douglas's (1987) report of a moderate positive relationship between efficiency and appropriateness would support this reasoning. By contrast, the control motive is likely to spark goal conflict. Studies of information seeking (Berger & Kellermann, 1983), requesting (Kemper & Thissen, 1981), and testing the status of relationships (Baxter & Wilmot, 1984) suggests that efficient and direct means of doing so are typically perceived to be less appropriate.

While knowledge of the degree to which various primary goals have a task orientation must await further research, two characteristics differentiating task from social goals can be extracted from Brown and Levinson's (1978) theory of politeness. One characteristic separating task from social goals is that of

infringement, that is, the degree to which achievement of a primary goal constrains others' autonomy. Typically, a purely social goal such as enjoyment places little constraint on others' freedom of action, unlike information seeking and compliance gaining goals which place automatic constraints on others' independence. Brown and Levinson (1978) refer to such infringement as threats to negative face and consider tension between efficiency and appropriateness to arise to the degree negative face is threatened. Consequently:

Corollary 1a. **The greater the infringement of the primary goal on others' autonomy of action, the greater the task orientation of that primary goal and, hence, the greater the tension between social appropriateness and efficiency.**

Brown and Levinson (1978) also focus on threats to others' positive face, that is, those actions that suggest dislike, devaluation, or rejection of others. Interpersonal motives such as pleasure, relaxation, and affection imply liking, valuation, and acceptance of others, whereas escape, inclusion, and control either fail to generate such implications or generate opposite ones. For example, the desire to terminate a conversation has been noted to result in this problem of a threat to positive face (Albert & Kessler, 1978; Knapp, et al., 1973) and might account for the degree of tension (r=.24) reported between efficiency and social appropriateness (Kellermann, et al., 1989). Consequently:

Corollary 1b. **The more the primary goal permits or promotesinferences of dislike, devaluation, and rejection of others, the greater the task orientation of that primary goal and, hence, the greater the tension between social appropriateness and efficiency.**

In sum, the degree of tension between efficiency and appropriateness is a function of the task orientation of the primary goal; the greater the task orientation, the greater the tension. It should be noted, however, that task orientation does not ipso facto create goal conflict; rather, increases in task orientation first reduce compatibility between the metagoals (less and less goal concordance), reaching a state of independence, and then creating more and more incompatibility (goal conflict).

Determinants of the pivot point. Not only does the tension between social appropriateness and efficiency constrain strategic choice, but the degree to which it is *important* to achieve a primary goal in efficient and appropriate ways also affects ongoing regulation of conversational behavior. In different situations, with different conversational partners, and for persons of different natures, the importance of these metagoals vary. The situational, relational, and personal determinants of the importance of social appropriateness and efficiency are outlined in this section.

Three situational determinants of the importance of the two metagoals can be extracted from past literature, one influencing the importance of efficiency in achieving the primary goal and two influencing the importance of social appropriateness. First, urgency is one force operating to increase the importance of efficiency in goal achievement (Brown & Levinson, 1978). In emergency situations and crises, or whenever time constraints are severe for accomplishing a primary goal, efficiency will take on more importance. For example, when helping the victim of an accident, it is likely that efficiency in providing aid (giving orders to others on how to help, demanding certain events occur, etc.) rises in importance in one's calculus. Research on leadership

behavior in groups has revealed that in emergency situations concerns for efficiency rise dramatically (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Hersey & Blanchard, 1977). Similarly, while doctors have often been faulted for incredibly intrusive (i.e., inappropriate) interaction behavior with patients (e.g., incessant questioning, failure to provide information), they justify this behavior on the basis of time demands (efficiency) (Cicourel, 1985). Under such circumstances, doctors believe that efficiency is important (in contrast to patients who would often prefer a little less efficiency). Berger (1985) suggests that the less time a person has available to influence another, the more direct the resultant persuasive attempt will be. Urgency has been found to influence the nature of requests as Berger predicted (Herrmann, 1983). Urgency can also be the result of the seriousness and intensity of a particular problem (i.e., a crisis). The more serious a problem a person faces, the more likely that efficient tactics will be used. For example, teachers used progressively more efficient strategies when faced with more serious and intense student misbehavior (Kearney & Plax, 1987) and managers resorted to more efficient, authority-based influence attempts the more serious the problem they faced became (Seibold, et al., 1985). Therefore:

Principle 2. The greater one's urgency for achieving a primary goal, the less tolerance exists for inefficiency.

This principle is also useful for understanding how persons could opt for inefficiency in the short-term, under the thesis that they will be successful in the long-term. Another way of looking at this short-term loss for long-term gain thinking is noting that there is little urgency of primary goal achievement, hence a greater tolerance for inefficiency in the short-term.

Situational determinants of the importance of social appropriateness include the formality of the situation and the private or public nature of the setting. Formality is a dimension that differentiates social episodes (Berger & Douglas, 1981; Wish, et al., 1976; Wish & Kaplan, 1977), with formal situations generating more behavioral constraint (Nascimento-Schulze, 1981). In fact, it is this aspect of behavioral constraint that leads people to prefer to observe others in less formal situations in order to learn about them (Berger & Douglas, 1981). Similarly, private situations result in fewer behavioral prescriptions than public ones (Price & Bouffard, 1974). For example, crying and mumbling in the privacy of one's room is seen as much more appropriate than doing so in a job interview (Calhoun, Selby & Wroten, 1977). In addition, requests made in public are less direct than requests made in private (Blum-Kulka, et al., 1985). Consequently:

Principle 3. The more formal the situation, the less tolerance exists for socially inappropriate behavior.

Principle 4. The more public the situation, the less tolerance exists for socially inappropriate behavior.

Not only do situational features affect the importance of efficiency and social appropriateness in the pursuit of primary goals, but the nature of the relationship between the interactants also plays a role. Concern for the relationship is an important determiner of the importance of social appropriateness. Dillard (in press) notes that the more concerned persons are for their relationship, the more likely they are to use socially appropriate compliance-gaining messages. Typically, persons are more concerned about their interactions with intimate others than nonintimate others, suggesting that social appropriateness should be more important in these instances. Positive

compliance-gaining messages are more common between intimate versus nonintimate interlocutors (Baxter, 1984; Clark, 1979; Miller, Boster, Roloff & Seibold, 1977; Roloff & Barnicott, 1978, 1979). However, concern for the relationship can be quite low even among intimates when the relational consequences are short-term versus long-term in nature. Short-term consequences increase persons' tolerance for socially inappropriate behavior, exemplified by the use of more aggressive and antisocial strategies for gaining compliance (Dillard & Burgoon, 1985). Relational concern can also arise prior to a first meeting. Anticipating interaction heightens persons' concern for social appropriateness (Kiesler, Kiesler & Pallak, 1967). For example, anticipation of future interaction results in attempts to restrict negative behavior (Kiesler, 1969) and to control the timing and intimacy level of disclosure (Shaffer & Ogden, 1986; Shaffer, Ogden & Wu, 1987). Finally, relational concern is reflective of the competitive/cooperative and hostile/friendly nature of relationships (Foa, 1961; Harre & Secord, 1972; Wish, et al., 1976; Wish & Kaplan, 1977). Hostility and competitiveness decrease concern for social appropriateness (Brown & Levinson, 1978; Donohue, Weider-Hatfield, Hamilton & Diez, 1985; Rubin, 1980). Consequently:

Principle 5. The more concerned persons are for the relationship, the less tolerance they will have for socially inappropriate behavior.

A second relational influence on the pivot point is relational position, that is, differences in persons' power, status, and rights in a relationship. Relational position has been found to be a critical dimension of relationships (Cody, Woefel & Jordan, 1983; Wish, et al., 1976; Wish & Kaplan, 1977). Typically, people are less assertive with persons of higher status, greater power, and more dominant roles and more assertive with persons of lower status, lesser power, and less dominant roles (Argyle, et al., 1981). For example, persons of relatively lower status display more deference, rely more on rational influence tactics, make lesser use of sanctions, and concede control more than persons of relatively higher status (Bell & Daly, 1984; Erez & Rim, 1982; Kipnis, et al., 1980, 1984; Rim & Erez, 1980). In other words, when one's status is less than another's, social appropriateness concerns increase and efficiency concerns decrease. Similar findings have been reported in studies of relational power. The more power one has relative to another, the more direct and less polite conversational behavior is likely to be (Baxter, 1984; Blum-Kulka, et al., 1985; Dillard & Burgoon, 1985; Falbo & Peplau, 1980). Power and status provide license to use more efficient and less appropriate strategies for achieving primary goals (Cody & McLaughlin, 1985; Putnam & Wilson, 1982). In fact, the legitimacy or right to seek particular primary goals is related to both the efficiency and social appropriateness with which primary goals are pursued (Cody & McLaughlin, 1980; Dillard & Burgoon, 1985; Kipnis & Cohen, 1980; McLaughlin, et. al, 1980; Newell & Stutman, 1988; Wiseman & Schenk-Hamlin, 1981). The more legitimate a request, the greater one's right to persuade, and/or the more one's right to resist, the more efficient and less socially appropriate the request or refusal is likely to be. Consequently:

Principle 6. The lower persons' relational position relative to the partner, the less tolerance for their own behavior to be socially inappropriate and the more tolerance for their behavior to be inefficient. Conversely, the higher persons' relational position relative to the partner, the less the concern for social appropriateness and the greater the concern for efficiency.

Situational factors of urgency, formality, and privacy along with relational factors of concern and position are complemented by personal factors that influence the placement of the pivot point. Personal factors affecting the importance of social appropriateness and efficiency in any given situation are a function of stable individual differences as well as temporary states. Certain individual differences variables systematically affect the importance of social appropriateness as a guide to persons' behavior while other individual difference variables systematically affect the importance of efficiency of goal achievement. For example, concern for social appropriateness is at the heart of such personality traits as public self-consciousness and self-monitoring. As public self-consciousness increases, so does concern for the reactions of others as well as use of more positive affinity seeking tactics (Bell & Daly, 1984; Froming & Carver, 1981; Hull & Levy, 1979; Scheier, 1980). Similarly, out of a concern for social appropriateness, high self-monitors tailor their messages to social constraints more so than low self-monitors (McCann & Hancock, 1983). By contrast, persons high in assertiveness, directiveness, and goal-orientation, tend to be more concerned with efficiency of goal achievement than persons who are less assertive, directive or goal-oriented (Bell & Daly, 1984; Frese, Stewart & Hannover, 1987). Because this orientation toward social versus goal aspects of situations is believed to be implicated in how males and females are raised, gender differences might also be expected in terms of the importance of efficiency and social appropriateness in any given situation. Indeed, females use more socially appropriate affinity seeking, influence, conflict and request tactics while males tend to use more efficient means of achieving those goals (Applegate, 1982; Baxter, 1984; Bell & Daly, 1984; Canary & Spitzberg, 1989; Falbo & Peplau, 1980; Fitzpatrick & Winke, 1979; Kline, 1981). In essence, persons who systematically focus on the social

situation tend to be more concerned with appropriateness while persons who systematically focus on the task they are pursuing tend to be more oriented toward efficiency. Consequently:

Principle 7. **The more persons are systematically oriented to focus on social situations, the less the tolerance for socially inappropriate behavior.**

Principle 8. **The more persons are systematically oriented toward achieving their goals, the less the tolerance for inefficient behavior.**

While many temporary states that serve to differentiate individuals can influence the importance of social appropriateness and efficiency as constraints on tactical choice in the pursuit of primary goals, assuming responsibility for social transgressions is an interesting one that has recently been of research interest. In general, the more severe the social offense, the more polite a person will attempt to be in mitigating the offense (McLaughlin, Cody & O'Hair, 1983; McLaughlin, Cody & Rosenstein, 1983). However, assumption of responsibility affects this increased concern for social appropriateness (Metts & Cupach, 1989; Newell & Stutman, 1988). For example, Metts and Cupach (1989) found that more socially appropriate tactics such as excuses were used to mitigate embarrassment when responsibility was assumed for the social transgression that occurred, but that verbal aggression was more likely when others were deemed responsible for one's social transgression. Consequently:

Principle 9. **The more persons assume responsibility for social transgressions, the less the tolerance for socially inappropriate behavior.**

Clearly, a wide variety of transitory states such as anxiety, fear, fatigue, stress, and desperation are likely to influence the

pivot point. Unfortunately, very little research links these transitory states to the importance of efficiency and/or appropriateness of tactical choice in the pursuit of primary goals. What little research does address this question of tactical choice does so from the position of goal blockage, thwarting, interruption and/or disruption. As will be discussed later, such goal interference generally does not alter the pivot point even though tactics and strategies for goal achievement tend to change; rather, people seem to enact inappropriate and/or inefficient behavior knowing that this violates their own tolerance thresholds. Consequently, the discussion on such transitory states will be taken up in the discussion of decisions about tactical choice.

The situational, relational, and individual factors that influence the importance of social appropriateness and efficiency in constraining behavior in any given instance can clearly be at odds with some factors serving to lower tolerance thresholds while others provide countervailing pressure. For example, consider the case where a person has little to no concern for the relationship, but the interaction is occurring in a public setting. On the one hand, tolerance for inappropriateness increases while on the other it decreases. Empirical research is required to assess the relative importance of these various determinants of metagoal importance with the recognition that the resultant hierarchy of causes could vary from person to person.

MAKING TACTICAL CHOICES

At this point, metagoal theory has defined the constraints placed on tactical choice, identified the degree to which the constraints are compatible, and examined the extent to which each is important in different encounters. What is now required is a discussion of how tactical choices can be made given the com-

patibility and importance of these constraints. Metagoal theory approaches this task by mapping tactics onto a strategy space defined by dimensions of social appropriateness and efficiency, and then locating a preferred strategy space. A choice algorithm is then employed to identify tactics to be used in a particular instance, though the starting point depends on several factors as does the trajectory tactical choice follows as conversations progress.
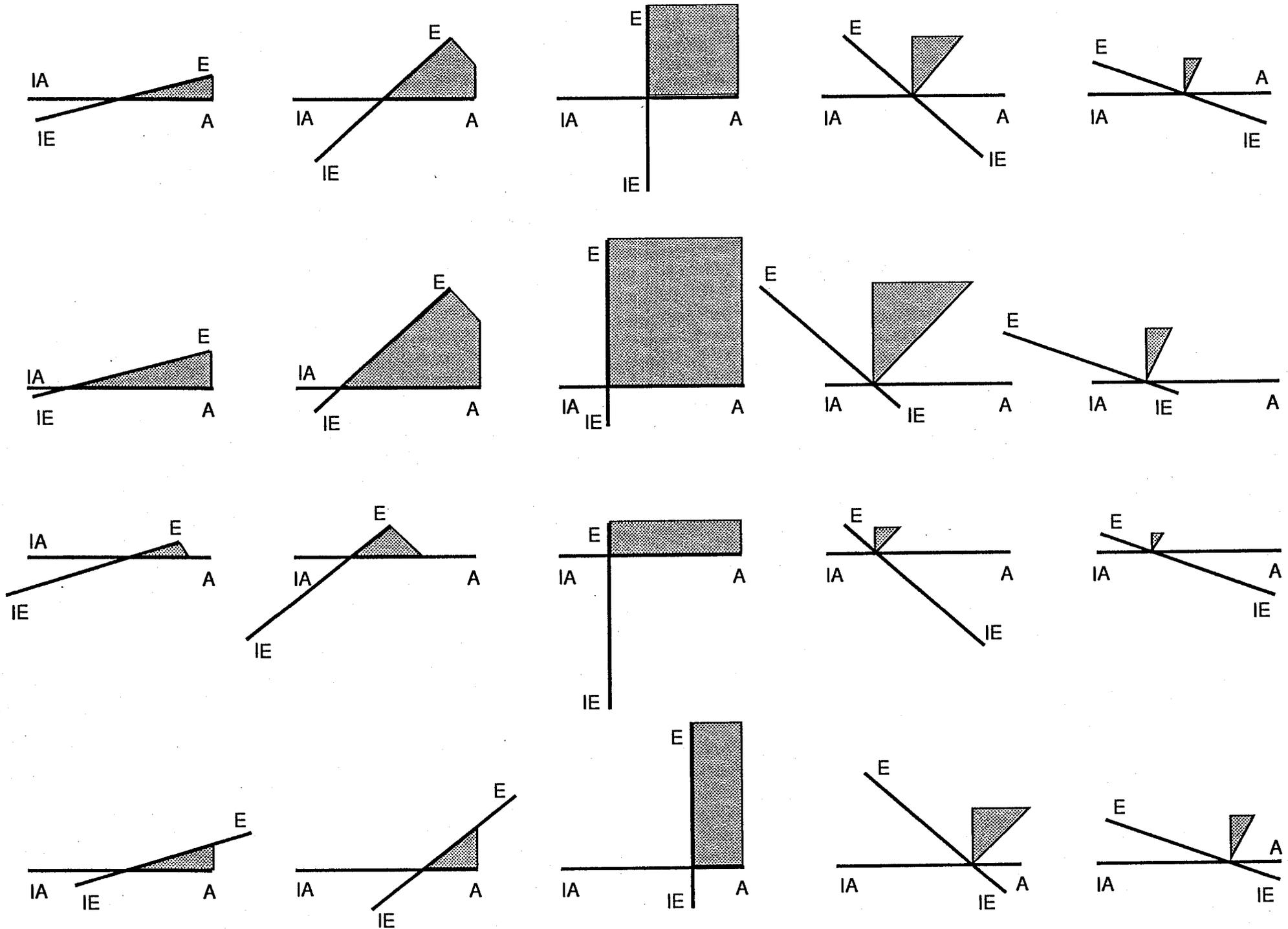
Preferred Strategy Space

The two metagoals of social appropriateness and efficiency define a strategy space in which tactics for achieving a given primary goal can be arrayed. While the tactics maintain an invariant relation to each other in this space,[3] the pivot point varies from encounter to encounter (and even over time within an encounter) representing the importance of appropriateness and efficiency in a specific instance. The pivot point sets a lower boundary for the tactics persons would find acceptable to use to achieve the primary goal in that instance. Preferred tactics for achieving the primary goal reside in that part of the strategy space bounded by maximal efficiency, maximal appropriateness, and the pivot point such that the tolerance thresholds for efficiency and appropriateness are maintained.

Figure 2 diagrams strategy spaces for 5 different degrees of tension and 4 different pivot points. In the first row of Figure 2, efficiency and appropriateness are of equal but moderate importance while in the second row they are of lesser importance

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[3] Of course, if individuals change their assessment of the appropriateness or efficiency of any given tactic, then its mapping onto the strategy space would be different. Invariance is being presumed for mapped tactics.

FIGURE 2. PREFERRED STRATEGY SPACES

(though still equal). The preferred strategy space increases in size the less important efficiency and appropriateness become. In other words, smaller preferred strategy spaces occur in more constrained situations. In the third row of Figure 2, efficiency is a more important consideration than appropriateness while in the fourth row, appropriateness is a more important concern than efficiency. The size and shape of the preferred strategy spaces are a function of the pivot point, maximal efficiency, and maximal appropriateness to the extent tolerance thresholds are observed.

A number of features of these preferred strategy spaces should be noted. First, at times maximal efficiency and maximal appropriateness are not theoretically (let alone pragmatically) possible. For example, examine the four strategy spaces in the lower left hand corner of Figure 2. In each of these instances, being more concerned about efficiency (row 3) or more concerned about appropriateness (row 4) makes it impossible to have maximal appropriateness or maximal efficiency, respectively. In other words, occasions exist where truly appropriate or truly efficient options are just not available. These occasions are defined by differential importance of efficiency and appropriateness under conditions of goal compatibility.

Second, at times maximal efficiency or maximal appropriateness are not preferred even if theoretically possible. Consider the four strategy spaces in the lower right hand corner of Figure 2. When efficiency is more important than appropriateness (row 3), maximally appropriate behavior violates the tolerance threshold for efficiency; when appropriateness is more important than efficiency (row 4), maximally efficient behavior violates the tolerance threshold for appropriateness.[4] As

a result, while maximal efficiency or maximal appropriateness may be theoretically possible, they are not always preferred. These occasions are defined by goal conflict.

Third, tactics that might be considered acceptably efficient and/or appropriate in one case may be unacceptable (outside the preferred strategy space) in another case. For example, consider the third column in Figure 2, where social appropriateness and efficiency place independent constraints on tactical choice. Certain tactics that are acceptable when efficiency is more important than appropriateness (row 3) are not acceptable when appropriateness is more important than efficiency (row 4). On the other hand, these less appropriate and less efficient tactics are acceptable when appropriateness and efficiency are of equal but low importance (row 2).

Fourth, some tactics fall more consistently in the preferred strategy space than others. Again consider the case of metagoal independence (column 3 in Figure 2). The more jointly efficient and appropriate the tactic, the more likely it is to remain in the preferred strategy space despite changes in the importance of efficiency and appropriateness. As is noticeable through examination of the strategy spaces in Figure 2, the more inefficient and/or inappropriate tactics become, the less likely they will be to fall consistently into preferred strategy spaces. Note, however, that relatively inappropriate and/or inefficient tactics can fall into preferred strategy spaces due either to conflict between the metagoals (see the last two columns in Figure 2) or because the situation is relatively unconstrained (see the second row in Figure 2). Research on requests has evidenced this differential consistency in being in the preferred strategy space, finding that

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[4] The tolerance threshold for efficiency is marked at the pivot point and maintained by moving out at a right angle just as the tolerance threshold for appropriateness is marked by the pivot point and maintained by moving out at a right angle.

some tactics are almost always used to make requests while others are almost always avoided (Gibbs, 1985; Tracy, et al., 1984).

Finally, the preferred strategy space reflects a number of assumptions common to the literature on strategic choice. Wilensky (1983) labels such presumptions "meta-themes", which include: (1) achieve as many goals as possible, (2) give more weight to achieving the more important goals, and (3) avoid impossible goals. Thus, a bias toward efficiency exists in the definition of the preferred strategy space when efficiency is more important while a bias toward appropriateness in the preferred strategy space exists when it is more important. This bias in strategy space definition can be seen by comparing the third and fourth rows (differential importance) to the first and second rows (equal importance) of strategy spaces in Figure 2. Note, however, both metagoals serve as constraints, with aspects being ignored when they are theoretically impossible to achieve. These biases in preferred strategy spaces under conditions of goal conflict reflect both Brown and Levinson's (1978) focus on appropriateness considerations being a reason to be less efficient as well as Argyle, et al.'s (1981) perspective that efficiency is a reason for being less appropriate.

Choice Algorithm

The initial place a person will search for tactics to achieve a primary goal is in the preferred strategy space as this achieves as many goals as possible while giving appropriate weight to each. The tolerance thresholds serve as constraints that remove part of the strategy space from consideration by eliminating those parts that fail to satisfy them (Chapman, 1987; Stefik, 1981). Choices can thus be restricted without having to generate and consider tactics that fall into nonpreferred areas (Stefik, 1981). Distraction or interruption might inadvertently initiate the search in nonpreferred areas, though these events are seen as disrupting the use of the choice algorithm rather than being part of it. Thus:

Principle 10. By default, searches are initiated in the preferred strategy space to locate tactics for achieving the primary goal.

Starting in the preferred strategy space is consistent with the literature indicating that people prefer to start with socially acceptable tactics (Baglan, Lalumia & Bayless, 1986; Goodstadt & Kipnis, 1970; Kipnis & Consentino, 1969; Miller, Boster, Roloff & Seibold, 1987; Tracy, Craig, Smith & Spisak, 1984). Note the difference between *acceptable* and *appropriate* tactics. Tactics from outside the bounds of the preferred strategy space are socially unacceptable. In other words, when efficiency is expected, it would be unacceptable to be inefficient just as when social appropriateness is expected, it would be unacceptable to be inappropriate. The implication here is that as the pivot point changes, the social acceptability of tactics can change though their absolute efficiency and appropriateness in achievement of the primary goal remain stable. In this way, tactics can be unacceptable because they are "not efficient enough" or "not appropriate enough" as well as because they are "too efficient" or "too polite" depending on the size and shape of the preferred strategy space.

Though persons initially limit themselves to the preferred strategy space, a search of that space is still necessary. In the event that only one tactic inhabits the preferred strategy space, it will be selected if it is located during the search of the space.[5] While

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[5] General principles of reminding and retrieval of knowledge (e.g., frequency of use, recency of use, similarity of episodes, etc.; see, Schank, 1982; Wyer & Srull, 1980, 1981) govern the accessibility of tactics in one's repertoire; that is, metagoal theory relies on and

tactics in the preferred strategy space are likely to be social conventions, a choice algorithm cannot be generated by reference to convention alone. Multiple distinct conventions are often found in the preferred strategy space (Argyle, et al., 1981; Duncan & Fiske, 1977; Gibbs, 1985). However, the notion that conventions are contained in the preferred strategy space is an important one; that is, they provide acceptable solutions to goal achievement when there is tension between social appropriateness and efficiency (Argyle, et al., 1981; Duncan & Fiske, 1977). An interesting implication of conventions residing in the preferred strategy space is that as the preferred strategy space changes in size and shape, so should what is considered to be "conventional" in conversational behavior. Gibbs (1985) has reported precisely this result in terms of the many different conventional forms of making requests in different situations.

So, given many potential conventions to choose from as well as the changing perception of what is conventional as the size and shape of the preferred strategy space changes, a choice algorithm is required for selecting tactics and/or restricting consideration of tactics from within the preferred strategy space. The body of literature on decision research, particularly the part that relates to rationality of decision-making, provides the means for specifying this choice algorithm. In general, the principle is to choose the most gainful alternative, with a gainful alternative balancing the benefits and costs (for review, see Jungermann, 1983).

The benefits of optimizing efficiency and appropriateness versus the costs of doing so depend on the value of the primary goal to the social actor. The calculus used by the social actor is that optimization best assures success and, as noted previously, efficiency and appropriateness are related to perceptions of effectiveness and communication competence. As Craig (1986) notes, communication competence is often defined as being able to satisfy all goals and constraints in an optimal manner. While optimizing efficiency and appropriateness does not guarantee success, it offers a priori the best chance for success. Consequently, when successful achievement of the primary goal is absolutely critical, persons are more likely to select tactics that are optimally efficient and appropriate. However, when failure is more tolerable, costs associated with optimization should interfere and tactics that are less efficient and/or appropriate (though still acceptable) will be chosen. In other words:

Principle 11. **The more social actors place priority on achievement of a particular primary goal, the more the tactics they select will involve optimizing efficiency and appropriateness constraints.**[6]

One implication of this principle is that metagoal concordance should more often lead to optimization than metagoal conflict. When concordance exists, there are fewer costs associated with optimization as tactics can more easily be located

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is congruent with the normal operation of the cognitive system in this regard. As these principles of reminding and retrieval affect any cognitive search and are not restricted to searches of tactical repertoires, the discussion focuses on the choice algorithm that is intrinsic to metagoal theory.

[6] The importance of the primary goal can be differentiated from the general importance of goal achievement discussed in Principle 8. In Principle 8 the focus is one person's general goal orientation regardless of the specific goal they are trying to achieve. By contrast, the focus here is on achieving the particular primary goal (limited by the situation and moment of time in which this achievement is desired).

that meet the constraints of both metagoals simultaneously (Wilensky, 1981). When the metagoals place independent constraints on tactical choice, interleaving of tactics is possible permitting each constraint to be solved independently and the solutions to be merged (Georgeoff, 1987; Lassez & Maher, 1983). However, with metagoal conflict, persons are unable to maximize both goals simultaneously and must resort to other, more effortful approaches to meet the constraints. A number of alternative options are available, though requiring more effort, an effort that is justified only by the importance of achieving the primary goal. For example, the most common approach is to locate tactics that partially fulfill each constraint, biasing the constraint satisfaction toward the more important one (Wilensky, 1983). This approach is already built into metagoal theory in the definition of the preferred strategy space. However, as goal conflict increases the preferred strategy space becomes smaller and persons are ever more likely to lack knowledge of tactics that reside there. As a result, persons typically focus on the more important constraint and try to modify at least some of their actions to provide some satisfaction of the other constraint (Waldinger, 1977). However, this modification is not always possible leading to loosening or abandonment of the least important constraint (Wilensky, 1983) or the employment of shifting or buffering strategies.

While strategy shifts (i.e., engage one set of tactics that are efficient, then shift to those that are appropriate, then shift back to those that are efficient, and so on) have been recognized as a theoretical possibility (Kluwe & Friedrichsen, 1985), little research has investigated the likelihood or nature of this approach to handling goal conflict. One instance where strategy shifts have been reported is when persons find it necessary to criticize others. In this case, criticism is preceded by positive statements meant to satisfy face concerns (Tracy & Eisenberg, 1986). A number of buffering strategies have been reported in the achievement of primary goals. Buffering strategies rely on the notion that incorporation of other behavior can offset the unacceptable consequences of pursuing the more important constraint. For example, persons appear to offset the intrusiveness of the efficiency-oriented verbal tactic of question-asking as a means to get to know others by integrating affectively positive nonverbal tactics into their conversational behavior (Kellermann & Berger, 1984). Conversational endings also appear to exhibit buffering, though in this case less appropriate nonverbal tactics (e.g., restlessness signals) seem to be buffered by more appropriate verbal tactics (e.g., excuses) (Lockard, et al., 1978; Kellermann, et al., 1989). Blum-Kulka, et al. (1985) report the use of upgrading and downgrading (e.g., modifiers and intensifiers) as means of buffering the effects of a more singular focus on either efficiency or appropriateness. Considerable research has been reported on the buffering of messages in terms of disqualification (e.g., evasiveness) as a means of resolving goal conflict (see, e.g., Bavelas, 1983, 1985; Bavelas & Chovil, 1986). Buffering appears to be a common approach to handling goal conflict when achievement of the primary goal is of some priority.

Even in the case of metagoal concordance, however, importance of the primary goal is likely to influence which specific tactics are selected. To the extent that maximizing appropriateness and efficiency is effortful, optimal tactics will not be employed even though available unless the primary goal is of sufficient importance to achieve. This perspective might account for the difference between being courteous (an acceptable though not maximal tactic) versus friendly when meeting another person for the first time. The importance of seeking affinity affects the tactics employed.

Of course, it is always possible that the preferred strategy space does not contain any tactics for achievement of a primary goal. In that instance, two outcomes appear to be possible. First, one of the metagoals can be abandoned (Wilenksy, 1983). Persons can then search outside the preferred strategy space for tactics, selecting those that are not precisely acceptable but that do not deviate too far (Schank & Wilensky, 1978; Wilensky, 1981). Typically, the constraint deemed to be least important is left unfulfilled (Descotte & Latombe, 1985). Second, the primary goal itself can be abandoned. Many have noted that absolute limits exist beyond which people won't go (Berger, 1988; Cody & McLaughlin, 1985). Abandonment of the primary goal need not be forever; the primary goal may simply be put aside until a situation exists in which it can be achieved (Dillard, in press). Patience is the determiner of constraint versus primary goal abandonment. Goals that are important to achieve within a near time frame lead to persistence in efforts to obtain them (Dillard, in press). Consequently:

Principle 12. The more important immediate achievement of the primary goal is, the less likely persons are to abandon it when their repertoires lack tactics in the preferred strategy space.

Corollary 12a. Primary goal abandonment is likely if tactics necessary to achieve it violate a person's ethical threshold.

Corollary 12b. When a primary goal is not abandoned and a person's repertoire lacks tactics in the preferred strategy space, the metagoal of lesser importance will be abandoned.

Delaying achievement of the primary goal not only permits situational changes to influence the size and shape of the preferred strategy space, but knowledge can be acquired so that tactics then reside in the original preferred strategy space, permitting the original situation to be dealt with more effectively in the future. In young children, plans for goal achievement tend to be constrained by a unidimensional focus due to social-cognitive limitations. However, as children get older and gain more experience, they are increasingly able to employ strategies that focus on more than one dimension (Meyer & Rebok, 1985). With experience, children's plans become more efficient (Meyer & Rebok, 1985; Pea & Hawkins, 1987; Rogoff, Gauvin & Gardner, 1987) and their communication tactics become more appropriate (Delia & O'Keefe, 1979; Burleson, 1984). In other words, tactics for preferred strategy spaces are being acquired.

Subsequent Tactical Choices

At this point, initial tactical choice has been described. However, ongoing tactical choices may be needed and are influenced not only by persons' own representation of the situation, but also by the results of their previous efforts to achieve the goal both prior to and in the present interaction. Clearly, an encounter can change the very nature of relationship, situation, and/or temporary states of individuals as they interact, thus potentially altering the pivot point and, as a result, the preferred strategy space. Other than to note that such alterations are possible, the principles already delineated account for how these changes in relationships, situations, and/or temporary states of individuals affect the representation of the strategy space. However, a new input to be considered relates to goal satisfaction. Failure to satisfy the primary goal brings about change in tactical deployment, resignation from further attempts, or goal transformation.

Failure to achieve a primary goal in a given instance generates arousal which is interpreted negatively (Mandler, 1976). The extent of this arousal is a function of a number of factors. Carbonell (1981) offers an insightful analysis of the effects of this arousal on subsequent tactical choice. When goal achievement is accidentally (versus intentionally) blocked, when the failure is a mere inconvenience (versus a total goal blockage), when the failed goal is trivial (versus important), and when persons are predispositionally inclined to handle conflicts cooperatively (versus competitively), then further tactical choices are likely to remain as they were (presuming they started in the preferred strategy space) or shift toward others in the near vicinity. This maintenance and shifting pattern was noticed in research on information seeking strategies. When persons were thwarted in their attempts to acquire information about their conversational partners, they tended to accrete relaxation and self-disclosure tactics to the already instantiated question-asking tactic (Berger & Kellermann, 1986). Tactical accretion occurred, most likely, because goal failure was not total (indeed, their evasive partners were less and less able over time to remain evasive); it was probably presumed to be accidental rather than intentional (at least initially); achieving the goal was probably not critically important (as they were just doing it for an experiment); and most persons are inclined to handle conflicts cooperatively (in informal initial interactions at least).

It is interesting to examine the few interactions in this information seeking study that involved a partner that was and continued to be incredibly evasive to the point where it was clear the behavior wasn't accidental and would cause total goal failure. In such instances, information seekers switched tactics, some altering their phrasing to become incredibly pointed and direct (movement toward increased efficiency), some becoming less

appropriate in their own actions, and some abandoning their goal temporarily to demand explanations for the behavior. Less socially appropriate behavior results from goal failure that is intentional, total and approached competitively (Carbonell, 1981). In addition, less socially appropriate tactics follow socially inappropriate behavior from the conversational partner and domination of the cognitive system by affect (Faught, et al., 1977; Schank & Abelson, 1977). Indeed, one of the most common findings in the social influence literature is that resistance to a request is followed by employment of more negative, aggressive, coercive, and threatening tactics (DeTurck, 1985; Goodstadt & Kipnis, 1970; Kipnis & Consentino, 1969; Kipnis & Cohen, 1980; Lim, 1988b).

Principle 13. **The more severe, intentional, or arbitrary the goal blockage, the less socially appropriate subsequently selected tactics will be.**

Principle 14. **The more inappropriately others act or the more competitively persons approach occurrences of goal blockage, the less socially appropriate subsequently selected tactics will be.**

More severe (i.e., total) goal blockages are also likely to lead to more efficient tactics being adopted as they tend to increase aggressiveness which, in turn, results in more efficient (as well as less appropriate) behavior (Dorner, 1985). For example, failure to achieve one's influence goals also tends to lead toward use of more efficient tactics (Berger, 1988). When goal blockage is severe, intentional, arbitrary, and unjustifiably enacted, tactical choices are likely to become not only less appropriate, but also more efficient (Argyle, et al., 1981). Even such arbitrary blockage as that related to noise in the communication channel generates movement toward move efficient behavior (Brown & Levinson, 1978). However, if affect comes to dominate the cognitive

system, that is, arousal gets very high, then subsequent tactics are likely to be both less appropriate and less efficient (Smith & Cody, 1986; Faught, et al., 1977). Arousal provides a countervailing force toward more efficient tactics in the face of goal failure, accounting for why persons might enact tactics they know to be completely unacceptable (i.e., goal frustration creates sufficiently high negative affect that their behavior simply degenerates). Finally, persons predispositionally inclined to handle goal failures in competitive ways are also more likely to shift toward more efficient tactics.

Principle 15. **The more severe, intentional, or arbitrary the goal blockage, the more efficient subsequently selected tactics will be.**

Principle 16. **The more inappropriately others act in or the more competitively persons approach occurrences of goal blockage, the more efficient subsequently selected tactics will be.**

Principle 17. **The more physiologically aroused persons become due to goal blockage, the less efficient subsequently selected tactics will be.**

These principles of subsequent tactical choice all hinge on the continued persistence of the social actor in seeking to achieve the primary goal. Persistence in goal-seeking falls within the domain of Principle 12 concerning when pursuit of primary goals will be abandoned and, thus, requires no further elaboration. However, the case of goal satisfaction has not been discussed. If initial tactical choices are successful, then there is no reason to alter one's strategy (Berger, 1985) unless greater success is a possibility. In such an instance, movement toward maximization of efficiency and appropriateness (within the preferred strategy space) might occur. For example, Davis (1982) notes that tactics

might become more efficient if others are being responsive. If, on the other hand, goal failure precedes movement in the direction of success, maintaining the less acceptable tactics seems unlikely. While speculative, such instances might be marked by a return to the preferred strategy space though with a perspective of minimizing appropriateness and efficiency relative to what was exhibited in the initially selected tactics. In this way, one's frustration could be further demonstrated; the more frustrated, the more the return to the preferred strategy space aims for the minimally acceptable tactic (i.e., the least efficient and appropriate tactic that still falls into the preferred strategy space). Continued success is then required to move back to or exceed the appropriateness and efficiency of initially selected tactics. As little research has examined tactical choice in the face of success (or even partial success) or in response to resumed success, the following principles are offered somewhat tentatively:

Principle 18. **Successful progress in primary goal achievement maintains or moves tactical choices toward initial or optimal levels of efficiency and appropriateness.**

Principle 19. **The more frustrated persons become from goal failure, the more that subsequent successful progress in primary goal achievement is likely to be met with minimally acceptable tactics.**

Failure to achieve one's primary goal in any given instance can impact on more than tactical choices within that encounter. Consistent failure to achieve goals promotes less acceptable behavior; that is, behavior that is overly efficient, not efficient enough, inappropriate, or too polite. Persons who consistently fail to achieve their goals have been reported to be more angry, hostile, and violent as well as less generous and cooperative and more exploitative (Forsyth & McMillan, 1981; Hokanson, Sacco,

Blumberg & Landrum, 1980; Isen, Horn & Rosenhan, 1973; Miller & Norman, 1979; Taylor, 1979; Zimbardo, 1977). However, persons who consistently experience goal failure might also become differentially efficient and/or overly appropriate as well. For example, Berger (1973) reports that those persons who have too few friends are precisely the ones who disclose information too early in initial encounters. The "brown-noser" stereotype is the quintessential example of overly appropriate behavior. The point is that a history of goal failure can influence initial and continuing tactical choices within particular encounters. Details on which unacceptable tactics will be selected are scare, consequently the following principle is phrased more generally than it ultimately should be.

Principle 20. **The more consistently persons experience goal failure, the more likely they will chose tactics outside of the preferred strategy space.**

Tactical choice is contingent on the representation of the strategy space, the importance of the primary goal, and experience in trying to achieve the goal.

MULTIPLE GOALS AND INTERACTING SPACES

Throughout the discussion, the focus has been on tactical choices for the achievement of one primary goal from the point of view (i.e., strategy space representation) of one social actor. Yet individuals often pursue multiple goals simultaneously and strategy space representations can vary dramatically. It is not uncommon to want to seek information and ask a favor; to give comfort and seek affinity; to develop a relationship and gain compliance; to end a conversation and also a relationship; or to pursue 3, 4 or even 5 of these goals simultaneously. "Most everyday problem solving consists of synthesizing solutions to

individually simple but complexly interacting problems" (Wilensky, 1983, p. 14). In addition, representations of strategy spaces can vary from person to person. If different goals are being pursued, the strategy spaces by definition will be different; even if similar goals are being pursued, differences in relational concern and position, perceptions of situational urgency, and individual predispositions to respond in particular ways can lead to very different representations of strategy spaces. Tactical choice for one primary goal will be affected by and affect tactical choices for the pursuit of other primary goals as the strategy spaces of one person interact through conversation with the strategy spaces of others. This section provides a brief look at the pursuit of multiple goals and the interplay of interacting spaces from the perspective of metagoal theory.

Pursuing Multiple Goals

Pursuing multiple goals simultaneously typically places restrictions on tactical choices. For example, Berger (1988) argues that tactical pursuit of more important goals is limited by the existence of less important goals. Conversely, goals of higher priority have been found to limit the accomplishment of lower priority goals (Tracy, 1984; Tracy & Moran, 1983). It is likely that the existence of multiple goals generates reciprocal, though probably unequal, constraints on tactical selection for each goal's achievement. It is also likely that people are not equally capable of pursuing multiple goals (O'Keefe & McCornack, 1987; O'Keefe & Shepard, 1987), placing further constraints on tactical choices. The restriction on tactical choice when pursuing multiple goals only makes sense to the degree that potential choices for one goal interfere with the attainment of other goals. In the words of metagoal theory, pursuing multiple primary goals is a problem to the extent a preferred tactic for one primary goal is an

unacceptable tactic (outside the preferred strategy space) for other goals that are also being sought. Indeed, the more that preferred tactics for one goal are unacceptable for others, the more the pursuit of multiple goals becomes problematic.

Consider for a moment pursuing the twin conversational goals of getting to know another person and seeking affinity. While some tactical choices for seeking information might very well interfere with being liked (e.g., demanding the information, threatening the other for it, and so on), these tactics are unlikely to be preferred for information seeking in the first place (Berger & Kellermann, 1983). Moreover, the preferred information seeking tactics of question-asking, nonverbal relaxation, and self-disclosure not only do not interfere with affinity seeking, but are among preferred approaches for doing so (Bell & Daly, 1984). By contrast, pursuing the twin conversational goals of offering criticism and seeking affinity is likely to be considerably more difficult. Criticism is inherently a face-threatening act (Tracy, 1989) and the polar opposite of a number of affinity-seeking tactics such as self-concept confirmation, sensitivity, supportiveness, optimism, and facilitate enjoyment (Bell & Daly, 1984). Consequently, the problem of pursuing multiple goals is one of understanding how specific tactics serve or interfere with the achievement of different goals.

Many tactics are multifunctional, that is, they are in the preferred strategy space of numerous primary goals. Some tactics have a wider domain of application than others, however. For example, fighting, belching, shouting, and arguing are less cross-situationally acceptable than talking, laughing, and kissing (Price & Bouffard, 1974). Consequently, one way of pursuing multiple goals is to locate tactics that are in the preferred strategy spaces of each of the primary goals, yielding an efficient and

appropriate solution to multiple goal pursuit. 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. Tactics that serve one or the other goal only (e.g., impression managing through modeling of behavior) or that actively interfere with the other goal (e.g., demanding information) are argued to be avoided. In other words, the strategy spaces for impression management and information seeking goals are being matched, with tactics in the preferred spaces of each being selected.

Unfortunately, no guarantee exists that tactics in the preferred strategy space of one primary goal will be in the preferred strategy space of another. Persons may sometimes be lucky to locate any tactics that can simultaneously serve two or more goals. Common tactics in the strategy spaces of the different goals are likely to be noticed, but may or may not be used. For example, a person having the joint goals of resisting compliance and ending a conversation might opt for such tactics as nonresponsiveness, rejection, or excuses because these tactics simultaneously serve attainment of both goals though not in equally acceptable ways (Kellermann, et al., 1989; Lim, 1988b; McCormick, 1979). Because excuses fall within the preferred strategy spaces of both goals, they would be more likely to be used. By contrast, affinity testing and conversational retreat goals have very few tactics in common and those they have in common tend not to be acceptable very often. The withdrawing strategy for affinity testing is tactically similar to the nonresponsiveness and rejection strategies for ending conversations. However, withdrawing is among the least efficient and least appropriate tactics for affinity testing while nonresponsiveness and rejection

are inappropriate and unacceptably efficient for conversational retreat (Douglas, 1987; Kellermann, et al., 1989). Pursuing these two goals with multifunctional tactics is likely to generate perceptions that one's behavior is unacceptable.

An alternative to using multifunctional tactics is to use tactics that help achieve each primary goal, but do not interfere with the achievement of the others. This approach to multiple goal pursuit is less efficient overall, though offering the potential to remain acceptably efficient and appropriate relative to each particular primary goal. It is similar in perspective to the interleaving of efficient then appropriate tactics in strategy shifts for maintaining metagoal constraints, only here the tactics that meet those constraints for each primary goal are interleaved or sequenced so that multiple goals can be achieved. This interleaving of tactics only works to the extent tactics for achieving one goal are irrelevant to the achievement of the others. Brown and Levinson (1978) describe one example of tactical interleaving that involves going through ritual conversational initiation prior to making a request in order that goals of affinity and compliance gaining can be met. It is unclear how often this irrelevancy criterion can be met when multifunctionality does not occur. Indeed, given how often people justify unacceptable behavior on the basis that they didn't know how to achieve some constellation of goals otherwise, leads to the suspicion that this irrelevancy criterion is difficult to meet. At the same time, it suggests that examination of how tactics are mapped into strategy spaces and how these spaces overlap for different goals might offer a fruitful means of understanding tactical choice when pursuing multiple goals.

Due to the speculative nature of most of this discussion, general principles will not be offered at this time, though

preliminary guidelines to tactical choice for multiple goal pursuit might be summarized as follows:

Guideline 1. **To the extent possible, choose tactics that are in or very nearby the preferred strategy spaces of the various primary goals;**

Guideline 2. **Avoid tactics that achieve one primary goal at the expense of others;**

Guideline 3. **Interleave tactics that achieve one goal without interfering in the achievement of others when acceptable multifunctional tactics aren't available;**

Guideline 4. **Maintain the acceptability of tactics for the more important primary goals more so than for less important ones;**

Guideline 5. **When ethical, knowledge, or other thresholds are reached, abandon achievement of less important primary goals.**

Interacting Spaces

People commonly have very different understandings of the acceptability of particular behaviors. Metagoal theory posits that these determinations of acceptability stem from differing representations of the strategy spaces being used. Specifically, the more conversational behavior deviates from the preferred strategy space of the perceiver, the more that behavior would be deemed unacceptable. Faulty or incomplete representations are one source of differing perceptions of tactical acceptability (Argyle, et al., 1981; Kluwe & Friedrichsen, 1985; Schonpflug, 1985). However, persons can also represent a situation with different goals or with different pivot points for the same goals. For example, O'Keefe and McCornack (1987) were interested in investigating regulative

situations (e.g., when persons control/correct the behavior of others) precisely because they can be represented with very different goals (e.g., pursuing and resolving conflict, seeking compliance, complaining/remedying). Tactics deemed acceptable for one goal, might not be so when judged according to some other goal by another person. Even if people have exactly identical primary goals, assessments of tactical acceptability can still vary, resulting from (1) different assessments of relational, situational, and personal concerns, thereby shifting the pivot point and the size and shape of the preferred strategy space; and (2) different assessments of the importance of each of the primary goals individually and with each other.

Differing representations of the strategy spaces may or may not become evident in any given encounter. For example, when two people have strategy spaces for a given primary goal that vary in the placement of the pivot point, tactics that optimize efficiency and appropriateness fall within the preferred strategy spaces of both, thereby not exhibiting the different pivot points in the representations. Similarly, persons may have different goals, but the fortuitous use of multifunctional tactics may not lead to any violations of either person's preferred strategy space. However, when tactical choices are unacceptable (i.e., they fall outside of preferred strategy spaces), then people are likely to confront each other over what they perceive to be a violation of expected conduct. Recently, Newell and Stutman (1988) analyzed social confrontation episodes and reported the occurrence of six differences in perception of the acceptability of social conduct. Nonlegitimacy is defined as a disagreement about the existence of a rule one person claims the other broke. From the perspective of metagoal theory, nonlegitimacy can come about either because of wildly different pivot points or because of different goals (and hence different strategy spaces) being used to represent the

situation. Even when a rule is accepted, however, the violation of it can still be denied. In this case, the same goal is likely to be activated though different pivot points are making tactics acceptable for one person fall outside the preferred strategy space for the other. Some confrontation episodes center around a violation that is justified by recourse to a superseding rule which, in terms of metagoals, would be referencing the pursuit of a more important goal in a multiple goal situation. Newell and Stutman also reported that persons denied having engaged in a tactic, refused to accept responsibility for the tactic, or acknowledged that the violation had occurred. Acknowledgement is a case of similar strategy spaces being used, refusal to accept responsibility is likely to justify not engaging in more acceptable behavior (see Principle 9), while denial of tactical production is an issue of performance, rather than tactical choice.

The issue of performance is not a minor one, though external to the perspective being described here. This chapter has focused on tactical choice rather than on tactical implementation. Clearly, persons could choose particular tactics for achieving primary goals but be unable to attain these tactical goals. Situational disruptions, personal anxiety, even being incapable of acting can all influence the ability to have these tactical goals be realized in behavior. Clearly, knowledge isn't performance. On the other hand, knowledge helps performance and metagoal theory is centered around how tactical knowledge guides communication performances.

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