Wordplay / Slipperiness of Language / N-tendres

Hi! I'm Lew Goldklang, Director of the 94941 Forensic Language Pathology Laboratory.

[Slide] Welcome to G4G!

It's an honor & a pleasure to be here with you again. G4G11 = G4GA, I think. A stands for Ace; can be either 1 or 11, as in Blackjack. But in hexadecimal notation, A=10, and B=11, so this must be G4GB, and two years ago G4G10 was G4GA (or G4GX), but we're not using Roman numerals anymore. K is the eleventh letter. By alphabetical ordering, G4G1 = G4GA, and G4G11 = G4GK. The Rev. level of G4G we're attending is ambiguous, unless we agree on the correct notation.

[Slide] Language Roots / Meaning

Thought is extremely complex. Language is a very rough approximation of thought. Speaking is thought made audible. Writing is thought made visible. Clear thinking leads to precise expression.

By using an agreed, uniform, precise language – mathematics! – to articulate our thoughts properly, we might be able to communicate clearly among ourselves.

As Humpty Dumpty explained to Alice, words mean whatever I want them to – no more, no less.

[Slide] Slipperiness

Much humor springs from the slipperiness of language – puns & phrases that have multiple meanings.

Slipperiness creates misdirection & surprise – aha! – producing magic & humor.

Less syntax makes phrases more slippery. With no rigid syntax, words can take on different roles (parts of speech – adjective, noun, verb).

There's a parallel with LISP – the least structured programming language; very slippery. LISP has almost no syntax, just text strings within nested parentheses.

Source code looks just like strings of data sets.

LISP allows recursion & self-referential definitions, like N!

(defun factorial (N) (if (= N 1) 1 (* N (factorial (- N 1)))))

We heard about some squares & rep-tiles earlier this morning. Here are some examples of

[Slide] Triple entendres

A Hi-Fi equipment store in Palo Alto named Sound Goods once sold fancy audio equipment.

1. Reliable products
2. Turntables / speakers / headphones – gear that conveys & amplifies sound
3. Sounds good to me!

[Slide] There's a bookstore in Marin named Book Passage.

1. Important section of text
2. Books are sold (change hands) here
3. Buy a travel ticket.
[Slide] **General Case**
The general case of a phrase with multiple meanings would be an **N-tendre**, which is itself a double entendre! I'm **coining that term** here today.

**G4GA Challenge**
Find a phrase with 11 nuanced meanings; an N-tendre with \( N = 11 \).

**Listen up** in the back! This gets a little . . . subtle.

**Explanation**
Our company manufactures delicious, healthy, energy-boosting snack wafers.

1. Company name = **Safe Crackers**
2. Product name = **Safe Crackers**
3. We use healthy ingredients. No trans-fats. Low salt. Crackers are **safe** to eat. Safe => edible, not risky, reliable.
4. The crackers are baked into cubes that look like little **safes**. Kids love them. Safe => shape of product.
5. Some crackers are shaped like little cylinders with a fuse. They look like **firecrackers** but they're safe to eat & play with. **Cracker** => shape of product.
6. The crackers are packed in **nano-carbon-fiber** sturdy boxes that keep the crackers **safe** from harm. Safe => protection from damage.
7. The **boxes** are designed to look like **safes**. Safe => shape of container. (Recursion – safes within safes.)
8. Boxes of freshly baked crackers are stored in a warehouse vault (a **safe**) for extra safety. **Mighty** safe crackers! Safe => extra security. (Recursion – safes within safes.) The safe is, of course, manufactured by the **ACME Safe Co.** for the Always Open Safe & Lock Company in Palm Desert. (American **Company Makes Everything**)
9. Crackers stored in the safe are the **Safe** crackers as opposed to the Shipped or Shelf crackers, or the crackers baking in the kitchen. Safe => location.
10. Carbon-fiber boxes are so strong that packing 'em tightly into the safe causes hairline fractures to appear on its inside walls. Product **boxes themselves** are safe **crackers** – they can crack the container holding them. **Cracker** => culprit.
11. The vault prevents **cracker-crazed felons** like the Beagle Boys (or Bagel Boys) from breaking into the secure storage bin & stealing them. The crackers are protected against safe-cracking thugs known as **safe crackers** by trade. Our **Safe Crackers** are safe from **safe crackers** (criminals)!

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There are more than 11 meanings. The time limit prevents me from explaining them all. I leave it as an exercise for you to find others. Discard the ones you like least, leaving 11.

[Slide] **Conclusion**

SAFE CRACKERS is a two-word N-tendre with \( N = 11 \).

The singular form of the phrase is SAFE CRACKER, spelled with 11 letters.

I brought some of our crackers with me today, for you to enjoy. If you eat them at the hotel here, they will be the safe Ritz crackers.

**Our Finance Expert**

We hired a brilliant, serious, Orthodox accountant – who specializes in double-entry bookkeeping – to keep track of our company’s finances, calculate our tax returns, & prevent us from drowning in data.

[Slide] His name is **Noah Counting**, CPA.

[Slide] **Cat Race**

Two cats swam a race across a river.

The American cat was named **One-two-three**.

The French cat was named **Un-deux-trois**.

Who won the race?

The American cat won, since the **Un-deux-trois** cat sank!

[Slide] **Coffee-vapor Bubbles**

You may recall our coffee-vapor bubble analysis from G4GX. You’ll be pleased to know that my food & drinks still send me important messages occasionally. Here’s a self-referential breakfast we had recently – a mighty close caricature.

[Slide] **Special Exchange Gift from G4GX**

This project took me a **full year**. I went to the trouble of ripping **three hundred sixty-five** 8” x 8” square sheets of Kirkland Signature stretch-tite® plastic wrap, to include one for each of you in the Gift Exchange bag, so you can analyze coffee-vapor bubble patterns in the privacy of your own kitchen.

[Slide] **Magnet Philosophy**

My refrigerator magnet reads: Any philosophy small enough to fit on a refrigerator magnet is insufficiently powerful to explain anything.

[Slide] **Counterexample**

Of course, there’s a powerful contradicting counterexample: \( E = M C^2 \).

[Slide] **Bumper Sticker Philosophy**

My bumper sticker reads: FREE TIBET! *

* With purchase of one regular Tibet of equal or greater value.
Language Philosophy
"It's impossible to speak in such a way that you cannot be misunderstood."
The philosopher Karl Popper said that, but I don't understand it.

Happiness
Is everyone happy? Is anyone happy?
Six of the seven dwarves are **not** Happy! Professor Raymond Smullyan told me that.

Pop Music Philosophy
How Can I Miss You When You Won't Go Away? — One of our favorite tunes.

T-shirt Philosophy
C D O — I may be accused of having **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder**, but at least I arranged the letters in their correct alphabetical sequence.

Atlanta Airport
The Atlanta airport is huge but very efficient, thanks to an internal train that connects all the terminals. On the train, an automated recording declares, “Next stop is A as in Alpha, then B as in Bravo, then C as in Charlie, then D as in . . . David!

The 1940's military alphabet sequence is altered, since if they announced "D as in Delta," all the passengers would disembark, thinking this is the terminal where their flight departs.

G4G Statistical Advantage
When you're odd, the odds are with you!

Thank you for your attention & patience. Speak clearly!

Good Luckies & Safe Passage!

POETIC QUIZ

ANNE RULON-MILLER
Naples, Florida

Six and/or six
A usual mix –
A Scot
would buy a lot –
Suitor supposes.
Choosing roses
For his dame.
He’d do the same –