

Interpretations of the Gricean Conversational Maxims Violations

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Abstract

Normal conversation anticipates that the speaker and the hearer to achieve a successful communication. Grice's perception of conversational maxims requires that speaker meaning be expectable on the basis of sentence meaning according to the violation of cooperative principles of conversation and the ability of the hearer to understand the speaker's meaning. However, this research reviewed several contexts that applied the violation of the conversational maxims and found that the implicature change in the change of the context, where the manipulation of the conversational maxims plays hidden message to color the choices to produce particular shades of meanings in terms of production and comprehension.

Keywords: Maxim, Conversational Maxims, Violation, Cooperative Principles, Flouting of Conversational Maxims.

1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The linguist Paul Grice stated that the conversation is a cooperative activity in which, the speaker and the hearer (addressee) engaged to achieve a successful communication. According to the Grice's theory the speaker and the hearer will cooperate to convey and to get the messages clearly in each turn of speech, so the speaker intends deliver his message clearly in an understandable fashion and the hearer intends to understand the speaker's message in each turn of the conversation.

Successful conversation is a conversation which fulfills the goals of cooperative principles; Grice (1989) summarized these goals into one main principle and four subheadings named as maxims. He defined his theory which is known as Grice's Cooperative Principle as follows: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (p. 26). In his theory the "Conversational Maxim", Grice (1975, 1978, and 1989) identifies a set of principles that make language effective in communication. This principle is called co-operative principle divided into maxims of conversation; these maxims are: maxims of quality (be truthful); maxims of quantity (be informative as required; maxims of relation (be relevant); maxims of manner (be perspicuous).

Grice (1975, 1969, and 1989), (Horn 2004) and (Frege 1984) investigate the conceptual relation between natural meaning and non-natural, linguistic meaning of utterances. Grice suggests two notions of implicature; conversational implicature is a generated inference when the maxims are flouted whereas, conventional implicature is defined as a non-truth conditional attached to particular lexical items and/or linguistic construction.

The success of a conversation depends upon the way of interaction between the sender and the receiver. Cooperative principle can be identified as the way in which the speaker and the hearer attempt to make their dialogues effective and meaningful. To convey and to get the messages clearly in each turn of conversation the speaker and the hearer should cooperate among each other, so the speaker intends to deliver his message clearly in an understandable fashion and the hearer intends to understand the speaker's message in each turn of the conversation.

The conversation should follow some principles to be a successful conversation. Grice (1975) proposed a principle called "cooperative principle" and if the speaker and the hearer follow those principles they will have a successful communication and he named them as "Conversation Maxims" and he classified them into four groups which are: Quality Maxim, Quantity Maxim, Relation Maxim and Manner Maxim.

Brown and Yule (1983:32) explain them as "The conversational convention or well-known as maxims, which support this principle are as follows: Quantity: Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange). Do not make your contribution more informative than is required; Quality: Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence; Relation: Be relevant; Manner: Be perspicuous; Avoid obscurity of expression; Avoid ambiguity; be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity); and be orderly." In the next part the researcher will explain them one by one by giving examples for each maxim. Grice's general principle could be explained clearly them by giving examples for each maxim and then explains the meaning of flouting maxims, observing maxims and implicature. The current researcher elaborates the four maxims of cooperative principle and also reviews some of the previous studies which relate to Grice's theory of cooperative principles (1975) in several contexts

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such as: religion, politics, movies comedy context.

1.1 Maxim of Quantity

Grice mentioned that the first sub-maxim related to Quantity is naturally essential in conducting debate as any type of conversation tries to present specific information that have to be adequate for the targets of the conversational exchange. Otherwise, the intended message could not be transmitted effectively to the listener. From another point of view, Grice confesses that the maxim quantity is arguable in relation to violating; this maxim can be concerned as time wasting but would not contravene the Cooperative Principle. Nevertheless, Grice (1975) alleges that "such over-informativeness may be confusing in that it is liable to raise side issues; and there may also be an indirect effect, in that the hearers may be misled as a result of thinking that there is some particular point in the provision of the excess of information".

1.2 Maxim of Relation

Grice talks about one sub-maxim related to relevance, and simply, it refers to exchange info that meet the goals of the conversation. For instance, if John requires a screw driver, Ahmad is expected to hand in a screw driver but not a hammer, cassette, keys, etc. Grice suggests this maxim as clarification for a specific kind of regularity in conversational behavior; meanwhile taking in his considerations the information relevance provided at each level of a conversation.

Grice (1975) pointed out that when you are involved in communication, Relation Maxim assumes you to be relevant. Grice presents this maxim as a explanation for a certain kind of regularity in conversational behavior with respect to the relevance of information provided at each turn of a conversation.

1.3 Maxim of Manner

Maxim of manner is to be perspicuous: by Avoiding obscurity of expression; Avoiding ambiguity; Being concise (avoid unnecessary wordiness) and being well-ordered. Grice proposes that manner maxims are totally different from the others; whereas other maxims care about "what is said", the manner maxim focuses on "how what is said to be said". When participated in a discussion, the Maxim of Manner requires you to be a person who has clear, understood expressions, which includes, but not limited to other smaller maxims like avoiding obscurity of expression, avoiding ambiguity, being brief (avoiding unnecessary prolixity) and being orderly.

The maxim of manner is related to how something is being said in the conversation. Grice proposes this maxim as an explanation for a certain kind of regularity in conversational behavior with respect to the way information is provided at each turn of a conversation.

1.4 Maxim of Quality

Regarding Quality, Grice refers to a super maxim that is simply expresses the truth. According to Grice, this super maxim includes two sub-maxims; the first one implies not telling lies and the second one indicates not saying things which you are not sure about.

Maxim of Quality was proposed by HP Grice in 1975, and he said that when you are involved in conversation, the Maxim of Quality requires that not saying what you believe to be incorrect, and that you do not say that for which you do not have ample evidence. In other words, do not commit the crime of laying.

The Maxim of Quality required information provided in conversations to be genuine and justified. Grice presents this maxim as an explanation for a certain type of consistency in conversational behavior regarding to the genuineness of information given at each turn of a conversation.

2. IMPLICATURE

Grice (1975) uses the definition "implicature" to refer to that kind of communication which is achievable. It will deal with speaker's intentions to imply, propose, or mean, as different from what the speaker intention (Brown and Yule, 1983). Findings gained from the flouting of maxims are called implicatures. Conversational implicature is able to apply to political context but we should have in mind that there are flouting of the four principles of maxims, since those political interviews which the researcher will choose them in a very critical period which is Arab spring they have to hide a lot of information so there will be flouting and the hearer can imply hidden meaning which is implicature. This next part introduces the technical background on implicature and what we mean by observing or violating the maxims and clarify that by providing examples.

2.1 Non-observance of Grice's maxims

Grice (1975) tries to identify the principal four maxims of conversation underlying the effective co-operative usage of language to enable people take part in an efficient conversation, he called the four maxims together as the Co-operative Principle that stated by him as: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged". (Grice, 1975: 45).

During daily conversation, people do not fulfill or observe the maxims on many contexts of everyday life and many occasions (Alvaro, 2011). We can refer this for many reasons as may be some people are incapable of speaking clearly because of nervousness, scare, stuttering, anxiousness, etc.) or because they tend to tell lies on purpose. Grice (1975) illustrated three ways of non-observance of the maxims: violating a maxim, opting out a maxim and flouting a maxim. Afterward, he put one more new category of non-observance the maxims: infringing a maxim.

Helmi (2010) found that the main characters flouted the

maxim of quantity on “Daddy Day Camp” since in tautology the utterances produce more information to be set than what is needed or when the speaker come up with utterance in the form of exaggeration.

Napis (2008) found that the quantity maxim was flouted by the main actors in the film of “John Tucker Must Die” because the characters want to convince the other performers to believe or to consent to them. In a similar way, Fauziyah (2007) in a study of the maxim quantity flouted by the leading characters in William Gibson’s “The Miracle Worker” are flouted as in tautology the produced words give too much details than what is needed. The maxim of quantity is also being violated while the speaker produces the utterances as understatement. Accordingly in this situation, the information being provided is less informative than required.

Napis (2008) analyzed the maxim of relevance by the actors in the film of “John Tucker Must Die” he found that the maxim of relevance was flouted by the well-known characters in the film because the characters did not offer relevant information as they wish to alter the topic of the conversation into the speaker’s interest intentionally or unintentionally.

Nailufah (2008) found that the Manner maxim was violated in the piece of drama “The Death of a Salesman” (17) when the speaker’s contribution is unclear, vague, and disorganized. In a similar study Afiati (2007) found that the maxim of manner was flouted by the main characters in “Bend It Like Beckham” by making the utterance ambiguous or not clearly stated without knowing the context.

Mashudi (2007) noted that the maxim of quality flouted in “the English translation of Surah Yasin” by using metaphor, when the speaker produces the text as a kind of metaphor or when the text does not clearly showed and ambiguous without understanding the situation. He found also that the maxim of quality is also violated when the text is leaded by a rhetorical inquiry.

As other researchers dealt with non-observance of the maxim as it is violation or flouting in general in some cases without concerning about the other types of non-observance the maxims as in (Cook, 1992). Cheirchia and Connel (1990) claimed that the violation of maxim sometimes caused by misunderstanding the hearers or when the hearer was not being able to make an conclusion from the speaker’s intention. As a result, this can be recognized only if the listener and the speaker have the same background knowledge. The knowledge restricted to the instructions for understanding the linguistics issues, but also the world awareness, to which the speaker can refer or imply (Coulthard, 1977).

3. FLOUTING OF CONVERSATIONAL MAXIMS

Dale and Reiter (1995) suggested that the maxims will be breached or ‘flouted’ on many occasions. Grice also contends that speakers may not having the ability to achieve these maxims in different ways while they are in a dialogue. These can be considered as opting out, flouting, violating and facing an incompatibility.

Flouting a maxim is one type of non-observing the maxims and it is different than the other types because it does not reduce the communication quality. However, the other incidents of non-observance of the maxims weaken the communication. This type of non-observance of the maxims happens when a speaker clearly does not succeed to observe a maxim and even though he knows that he did that not to deceived the listener but when he wants the hearer to figure out the meaning by himself. Thomas (1995) indicates that Grice suggested that a flout is so deliberate that the hearers is expected realizing for certain that an implicature was already created, although they didn’t get the right implicature.

3.1 Violating a maxim

Violating a maxim is the “unostentatious non-observance of a maxim”. According to Grice (1975) if a narrator breaches a maxim s/he did this because he wants to mislead the hearers. Thomas (1995) discussed that violation the maxims is done by the speaker to have a misleading implicature and he adds that these sorts of utterances can be found in many contexts such as governmental discourses and disputes or in advertisements.

4. CONTEXTS OF MAXIMS VIOLATIONS

Purwanto (2008) found that the four categories of maxims were flouted by the key characters and showed that the most frequent flouted maxim was the maxim of relevance. He also found that there are many causes of flouting the maxims; the characters flouted the maxims of relevance for the reason which employed by the hearer for flouting the maxim of quantity. Then the main reason of flouting the maxim of quality is to be sarcastic. The reason behind flouting the last type of the maxim which is the maxim of manner is to show the overflow of their feeling. Lastly he proved the fact that when a maxim flouted the dialogue, it will not break down all the conversation as Grice believes that the communication will break down when the maxims are flouted.

Hanifa (2001) conducted a study on violating of the felicity conditions of cooperatives principles “She Stoops to Conquer”. The result showed that the violating of the felicity terms covers the violating of the preliminary regulation. However, a study conducted by Harianto (2003) investigated the usage of conversational maxims on the special expressions used by Indonesian Chatters in IRC Malang Channel. The researcher indicated that maxims on the special terms were hedged and flouted the maxims for the Beginner Chatters. The special terms were acronyms or short message. He contravened the maxims when these terms were conveyed to the beginner chatters and these special terms are restrained when the maxims the chatters sent insufficient information of the messages on the special terms. In addition, he noted that manner maxim and quantity maxim are frequently flouted and hedged in the conversational context chatters often repeat the message and emoticons to their companions or offer uninformative answers or messages. Moreover, Rusdiana (2004) studied flouting and hedging maxims on the comical strip “Born Loser” in the Jakarta Post newspaper. She asserts that the maxims were violated when they are obviously

broken by the speakers in the utterances of the comic strip "Born Loser" such as producing the statements which seem as rhetorical strategies, namely; understatement, rhetorical, tautology, exaggeration, metaphor, question and irony. In addition, the maxims were hedged when the utterances that produced are not totally accurate, invalid whether the information is right or wrong, thus there was no responsibility for the truth of the utterances. In a similar way, in a study by Rohman (2005), it was found that the maxims are infringed when they are clearly broken by speakers in the utterances on *pojok* column in campus newspaper such as creating the utterances as rhetorical strategies, specifically; metaphor, understatement, overstatement, tautology, rhetorical question and sarcasm. Furthermore, violating the maxims can be done when the utterances that produced are not totally accurate and invalid regardless of whether the information is right or wrong. Thus there is no responsibility for the truth of the utterances. However, Saifullah (2002) found that generalized implicature is applied when the message being transmitted was clear, concise, in chronological order and there is no need for any kind of context for the reader to understand the information in the headlines. Furthermore, researchers indicate that particularized implicature usages take place when the journalist were not clear, sufficient and informative. The text is needed by the reader to comprehend the journalist's intention.

In examining to apply as reading materials for the pupils of senior high school,

Tambunan (1999) explored the cooperative principle within Pop novels and he found that the novelist deliberately violates the cooperative maxims. The maxim of quality was mostly flouts by offering imaginative material and logical actions in order to boost his reader's durable attention in reading.

Tupan and Natalia (2008) investigated in their study on the multiple violations by the characters in TV series (Desperate Housewives). The aim of their study is to investigate the reason behind violating the maxims by different characters. They find that the main reason of flouting the maxims is to eliminate the chance of speakers to respond.

Khosravizadeh and Sadehvandi (2011) analyzed the violation or flouting the maxim of quantity by the main characters in a movie entitled "Dinner for Schmuck." They sum up the finding as it was claimed by other researchers that to achieve the cooperative principles in communication, the process of conversation should be smooth for both the hearer and speaker but still people try to flout the maxims to achieve certain purposes.

According to Sikandar. et. al. (2012) politicians always try to get the favor of their people or their audience or to gain the social power by using deferent technique of playing with the words by flouting cooperative principles. His study also revealed how politicians chose to color their words to produce a particular shade of meaning which are not always conceivable to all people.

Ayasreh (2014), Ayasreh and Razali (2018) and Ayasreh et al. (2019) identify and analyze the process of flouting of Grice's maxim and to explain the causes why the Arab leaders

do violation of maxim during the Arab spring. Ayasreh and Razali (2018) and Ayasreh et al. (2019) found that the analysis of the maxims of the Arab leaders' speech reveals that the four maxims are flouted by the leader by playing upon words, talking too much, talking too short, changing the topic, and lying. The main reason of flouting the maxims to convey meanings in his favor and it also shows how the Arab leaders color the choices to produce particular shades of meanings which are not always conceivable to all readers in order to gain the support from the masses.

5. CONCLUSION

The cooperative principles were not observed in many context of our life such as: literature, religion, humor and jokes in oral and written context and other contexts by ignoring the authenticity, amount, relevance and the way information is provided at each turn of a conversation. The main findings of the previous studies related to the reasons of flouting the maxims are; Flouting the maxims of quantity: when the speaker produces the utterance as overstatement, when the speaker wants to show strong opinion or to show something is worse than it is appear or to try persuading other persons to agree with him or in repetition the statements produce are more details than what is needed. Flouting the maxims of relation: it describes the speaker disability to link his or her contribution to the former utterance, or at least to the issue being discussed, or when speakers do not wish to tell relevant information as they wish to alter the subject of the conversation into speaker's wanted topic consciously or unconsciously. Flouting the maxims of manner: once the speaker's participation is obscure, ambiguous, and disorderly. Flouting the maxims of quality: when the speaker view point is being conveyed less informative because the characters have something in their minds and they want something to gain but they do not want anyone discern the truth, or when the speaker produces the statements as metaphor or rhetorical question or irony. However there was a great change in the implicature when Applying the flouting of the maxims in political context where the main reason of flouting the maxims to convey meanings in his favor and it also shows how the politicians color the choices to produce particular shades of meanings which are not always conceivable to all readers in order to gain the support from the masses.

As it was reviewed here, over the years several linguistics theories have been developed when applying them in deferent contexts; different approaches have discrete perspectives on the definition of context and on the relative independence of pragmatic from other domains of language. Authors found that there is a lack of studies which explore the conversational maxims in language impairment. Due to that, authors hope that the current view provides basic information on the issue and can assist future researches to conduct studies in contexts which have not been covered in the literature such as; analysis of the violation of the conversational maxims in language impairment context.

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