



AN ANALYSIS OF THE VIOLATIONS OF GRICE'S MAXIM ON THE POST MOVIE

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Abstract: Grice maxim is a tool that is very important to manage the flow of communication so that, there is no failure in the communication. Often listeners fail to understand what the speaker is saying because in the conversation there is an element of maxim violation. Maxim violation is a concept when people do the conversation they violate the rules of being cooperative. According to (Grice, 1975) violating a maxim prevents or discourages the listener from seeking for implicature and encourages their utterances at face value. Violation of this maxim often occurs in everyday conversation. The author conducts research on violations of maxims through a film entitled The Post. The main objective of this study is to answer 2 research questions: firstly, what types of maxims are violated in the post film, and secondly, what are the reasons for the characters in the post film violating these maxims. This type of research is qualitative research with the research method of discourse analysis. As for data collection, the author uses document instruments which are films and scripts from The Post movie. As for the research results, the first research question found that there were 4 types of maxims that were violated by the characters in the post film, namely violation of maxim quantity, quality, relevant and manner, and the second research question, namely the reasons for the characters violating 4 types maxim including for avoiding the discussion, pleasing the interlocutors and being polite.

Keywords: Grice's maxim, Violations of Maxim, The Post

INTRODUCTION

Language serves as a vital tool for human communication and interaction in daily life. Effective social engagement necessitates communication, for which language acts as the crucial medium (Wardhaugh, 2006:1). Language functions as a system through which individuals express ideas and information in conversations, involving both speakers and hearers cooperating to ensure comprehension and successful communication.

Communication among society may not succeed. Such as in a sentence that contains a lie, one sentence has a double meaning, information that is inappropriate in conversation that causes the speakers and hearers misunderstanding. This condition in pragmatics is called conversational implicature, which means that there is a difference between the meaning conveyed by the speaker and the pragmatic meaning. The meaning delivered by the speaker is different from the actual meaning of the sentence, this is a concept of conversational implicature.

However, challenges can arise, leading to conversational implicatures, where the intended meaning of a sentence diverges from its pragmatic interpretation. This phenomenon often occurs due to violations of the cooperative principle's four maxims: quantity, quality, relevance, and manner, formulated by linguist Grice (1975, p. 45). The maxim of quantity requires informative yet appropriately sized information, while the maxim of quality mandates honesty. Relevance is maintained by aligning conversations with their subject, and ambiguity is to be avoided under the maxim of manner.

The violations of maxims often occur in communication. First, violations of the maxim of quantity occur when the information delivered is too little or too much, not in accordance with the context of the conversation. Second, violation of the maxim of quality occurs when the information conveyed is a lie that causes failure in conversation. For example; a child comes home late at night, the child must give an honest reason according to the fact. In the other hand if the sentence contains a lie that is kind of violation in this maxim. Third, violations of the maxim of manner occur when the information conveyed is ambiguous. Last, violations of the maxim of relevance occur when the information conveyed is not relevant to the subject of the conversation.

Instances of maxim violations are common in communication. Quantitative violations arise from inadequate or excessive information delivery. Violations of quality involve lying, undermining the integrity of communication. Ambiguity in conveyed information constitutes a breach of the maxim of manner, while irrelevance constitutes a violation of the maxim of relevance.

This research focuses on applying Grice's theory to analyze violations of conversational maxims in *The Post* movie. The objective is to identify the violated maxims and reasons behind such deviations, with the aim of supporting effective communication, especially for English language learners. "*The Post*" 2017, American semi-fiction historical political thriller written by Liz Hannah and Josh Singer, directed by Steven Spielberg. *The Post* described the true story of attempts by journalists at *The Washington Post* to publish the infamous Pentagon Papers, a set of classified documents regarding the 20-year

involvement of the United States government in the Vietnam War and earlier in French Indochina back to the 1940s. This movie contains a lot of dialogue that relate with the topic of the study which is that's a lot of dialogue violated the 4 kind of Grice's maxim.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research methodology adopted for this study involves a descriptive qualitative approach, designed to understand the current state of phenomena. The research primarily focuses on analyzing the dialogue in *The Post* movie, utilizing qualitative methods to address research questions by examining the conversation. Qualitative research allows data collection through document analysis, films, and transcripts, as stated by Frankel and Wallen (2009, p. 423).

The subject of this research is *The Post* movie, released on 2017, American semi-fiction historical political thriller written by Liz Hannah and Josh Singer, directed by Steven Spielberg. The dialogue within the movie, characterized by ambiguity, serves as a point of interest for analysis, with the researcher seeking to identify various types of maxim violations.

The research revolves around Grice's Cooperative Principle, focusing on four conversational maxims: quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. Data collection comprises several steps. Firstly, the movie is watched to grasp its entirety and significant details. Then, the movie script is downloaded from the internet to aid accurate analysis. Subsequently, the movie is rewatched to align the transcript with the scenes, ensuring contextual understanding.

Data analysis involves identifying characters' utterances to Grice's maxims. The dialogue is categorized based on whether they adhere to or violate the maxims. Reasons for the characters' violations are then identified. The process continues with the description of sentences containing types and violations of maxims found in the movie's script.

The culmination of the analysis involves reporting the results. This research methodology aims to dissect the nuances of communication within the movie's dialogue, identifying instances where Grice's conversational maxims are breached and delving into the reasons behind such deviations. Through this qualitative exploration, the researcher aspires to shed light on how these violations impact the dialogue's dynamics and contribute to the overall cinematic experience.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Pragmatic is a subfield of linguistics that studies the ways in which context contributes to meaning. According to Levinson (1983:1) Charles Morris is a philosopher that introduced firstly the term Pragmatic. Maxim violation is a concept when people do the conversation they disobeying the rules of being cooperative. According to (Grice, 1975) violating a maxim prevents or discourages the listener from seeking for implicature and encourages their utterances at face value.

Hymes in Wardhaugh (1998: 243-244) gives a concept for describing context of situation which he uses the word of SPEAKING as an acronym for the various factors he deems to be relevant:

1. S (Scene and Setting), refers to the time and place, i.e., the concrete physical circumstances in which the speech event takes a place. Scene refers to the abstract psychological setting or the cultural definition of the occasion.
2. P (Participant), it is the various combinations which include speaker and listener, addressor and addressee, sender and receiver. They generally fill certain socially specified roles such as gender, status, age or profession of the participants.
3. E (Ends), it refers to the conventionally recognized and expected outcomes of an exchange as well as to the personal goals that participants seek to accomplish on particular occasions. In other words, it can be said as the purpose or the goal of the participants in the speech event.
4. Act sequence (A) refers to the actual form and content of what is said: the precise words used, how they are used, and the relationship of what is said to the actual topic at the hand.
5. Key (K) refers to the tone, manner or spirit in which a particular message is conveyed: light-hearted, serious, precise, pedantic, mocking, sarcastic, and so on. The key also be marked nonverbally by certain kinds of behavior, gesture, posture, or even deportment.
6. Instrumentalities (I) refer to the choice of channel, e.g., oral, written or telegraphic and to the actual forms of speech employed, such as language, dialect, code, or register that is chosen. Formal, written, legal language is one instrumentality.
7. Norms of interaction and interpretation (N) refer to the specific behaviors and properties that attach to speaking and also to how these may be viewed by someone who does not share them, e.g., loudness, silence, gaze return and so on. In other words, the meaning of norms here are the social rules that governs the event and the action and reaction of participants.
8. Genre (G) refers to clearly demarcated types of utterances; such things as poems, proverbs, riddles, sermons, prayers, lecture and editorials.

Grice (1975, p. 49) explain about “the Cooperative Principle and Conversational Maxims to be rational tool speakers to have an interest, given suitable circumstances, in participation in talk exchanges that will be profitable only on the assumption that they are conducted in general accordance with the Cooperative Principle and the maxims”. In addition, Grice (1975) state that people when do the conversation still tend to break the rational tool. Grice realize the speaker violate the maxims take place when intentionally refrain from applying the maxims in their conversation.

The analysis of The Post movie with regards to Grice's Cooperative Principle and its conversational maxims yields intriguing insights into the communication dynamics within the movie. By closely examining instance of maxim violations, we gain a deeper understanding of how these deviations contribute to the character development, plot progression, and audience engagement.

The reason why speakers violating the maxim there is between they do not want to tell the

truth or do not want to give other people the full picture of the information, (Grice, 1975;49). In addition, based on Thomas (2013:64) stated that people violate the maxim because they just want to lie or didn't want to speak clearly. In other hand, people have their own reason why they violate the maxim.

In this research, the data were taken from *The Post* Movie, with the duration of the movie being 1 hour and 56 minutes and all the character utterances inauthentic script and movie. This research gave the result about four types of violations of Grice's maxim and why the character do the violations. Four types of violations of Grice's maxim are explained below:

1. Violation of Maxim of Quantity

Throughout the movie, instances of the violation of the maxim of quantity are evident. Characters often provide information that is either insufficient or overly detailed, leading to ambiguities or excess information. For instance, contributing to the suspense, also diverges from the maxim's requirement for balanced information sharing.

Based on Grice, 1975, p. 45, maxim of quantity requires the speaker to provide sufficient information as is required. It means that in the conversation the speaker has to provide the amount of information. It can be clearly seen in dialogue from *The Post* movie.

For example in the dialogue 1:

Context: this scene happen in meeting room, they were discussing about the news, then frits ask about the reason why the bankers do "that things" In answering the question ben violated the Maxim of Quality because his response was too informative. Meanwhile, Key only needed a short answer to answer her question.

Fritz: "Which is why they want more control.

Ben: "They want assurances that she's not gonna squander it all. I mean, come on. Fritz, Kay throws a great party...but her father gave the paper to her husband. The only reason she's running things is because he... Because Phil died. Don't get me wrong, I think she is a lovely woman. But she got rid of Al Friendly... and brought in a pirate who does nothing but bleed our margins. I mean, you can't be surprised that the buyers are concerned... that she doesn't have the resolve to turn a serious profit. I mean, you can't be surprised that the buyers are concerned... that she doesn't have the resolve to turn a serious profit."

Maxim of Quantity enjoins speakers from contributing information more than is required (Grice, 1975, p. 45). Ben's answer in Dialogue 2 illustrated a violation of Maxim of Quantity. Ben gave too much information to fritz's question. Whereas, ben only needed a short answer. However, what fritz received from Ben was a too informative answer containing the information about someone. By providing such too informative information, fritz construed that ben did tell anything he knew about. However, it was too much information. Fritz did not need such an unnecessary answer. Grice (1975) considers such an answer as wasting time (p. 46)

2. Violation of Maxim of Quality

Maxim of quality enjoins speakers to provide true information (Grice, 2004, p. 46). Thus, the speakers must be honest with their utterances when providing information. In order to provide correct and reliable information, speakers have to back up their contribution with clear evidence or they would be stamped liars.

The maxim of quality violation is observable in scenes where characters provide false information or conceal facts. As shown in the dialogue below:

Context dialogue 2: the conversation happens in office, which is the den try to find something secretly without anyone knowing, and when den want to left the office, he met the security and tries to don't tell him what he's doing in the office, so he lied.

Security: Good night, Den.

Den: Night, guys.

Security: You okay, Den?

Den: Yeah. Yeah, thought I'd forgot something.

The response in Dialogue 2 illustrated that Den did not abide by the Maxim of Quality demanding him to be honest and true when providing the contributions. Den's response contradicted the experience he had done. In order to avoid the truth what he is doing in the office, Den lied to them by saying that he forgot something. he forced to lie because he did not want to other people know what he is doing in the office. Thus, the response showed that Den failed giving a true answer. The evidence of Den lied to security could be drawn here by providing Den's activity. Den kept ignoring.

3. Violation of Maxim of Relevance

Instances of the violation of the maxim of relevance occur when characters engage in conversations that stray from the main subject. For example:

Ben: But don't you think you have an obligation as well to the paper and to the public?

Key: Let me ask you something. Was that how you felt when you were falling around with Jack Kennedy?

This conversation illustrated a violation of Maxim of Relevance. The reason was that Key whole answer did not match Ben's question. The type of Ben's question was open because it needed Key's opinion or view to respond to his question. However, the question required a relevant answer. Thus, the relevant answer supposed to be provided by Key to Ben's question.

Key's answer implied that she attempted to change the topic by talking about another topic. The reason of doing so was Key try to avoid or do not want to talk about the topic that they have been discuss.

Supporting Khosravizadeh and Sadehvandi (2011), Dornerus (2005) says that one of the reasons of violation of maxims is to communicate the speakers' interests (p. 16). Thus, Key's purpose when violated the Maxim of Relevance was that she didn't want to talk about that topic or she just being sarcastic and avoiding the discussion.

4. Violation of Maxim of Manner

Grice (1975) underlines that speakers in their conversations "have to avoid obscurity of expression, avoid ambiguity, avoid unnecessary prolixity (be brief), and be orderly" (p. 46). This means when giving information, speakers must avoid obscurity, unnecessary redundancy, and ambiguousness. However, as a matter of fact, speakers cannot always undertake the requirements. It is obviously seen in Dialogue 4 taken from The Post movie.

The maxim of manner violation is notably present in dialogues containing ambiguous expressions, remarks and double entendre consistently challenge the characters' understanding and create an atmosphere of uncertainty. These violations enhance the movie's suspenseful ambiance, as viewers grapple with deciphering speaker's intentions.

Dialogue 5

Context: this scene happen in office when the Bradly give the command for the intern to find out what Neil Sheehan is working on. And then the intern ask about if its legal or not but the answer of Bradly is so ambiguous.

Bradly: yeah, yeah, find out what Neil Sheehan is working on.

Intern: Is that legal?

Bradly: Well, what is it you think we do here for a living, kid?

Bradly's response depicted a violation of Maxim of Manner because he stated an obscure and ambiguous response. Intern only wanted to know the command of Bradly legal or not. Thus, Bradly was supposed to answer "it is legal" or "it is illegal". Since Bradly knew the truth about it, he could just tell Intern, but it was not Bradly's right to tell Intern the truth so he did not tell her. In this sense, Bradly was in the conflict with himself about telling her the truth or not. Nonetheless, Bradly's response ended up with evoking the obscure and ambiguous answer.

Dialogue 6

Context: this scene happen in office when the Bradly give the command for the intern to find out what Neil Sheehan is working on. And then the intern ask about if its legal or not but the answer of Bradly is so ambiguous.

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The findings from this analysis emphasize that the deliberate violations of Grice's maxims contribute significantly to the movie's thematic elements. The tense interactions, fueled by dishonesty, ambiguity, and thematic digressions, heighten the horror and suspense, drawing audiences deeper into the narrative. Furthermore, these violations reflect the characters' personalities and motivations, providing depth to their development audiences deeper into the narrative. Furthermore, these violations reflect the characters' personalities and motivations, providing depth to their development.

5. Reasons Of Violating Grice's Maxim

Based on the findings of the second research question, it was found that there were 3 reasons for The Post characters violate Grice's maxims namely, protracting answer, avoiding the discussion, and communicating self-interest. Therefore, in order to answer the second research question, the researcher employed five theories namely, protracting the answer, pleasing the interlocutors, avoiding the discussion, and misleading by Khosravizadeh and Sadehvandi (2011), and communicating self-interest by Donerus (2005). Each theory provided the reasons for the characters of The Post violated Grice's maxims.

a. Avoiding the discussion

In the conversation, speakers may encounter an unpleasant situation. It was obviously seen in Dialogue 4.

Ben: But don't you think you have an obligation as well to the paper and to the public?

Key: Let me ask you something. Was that how you felt when you were falling around with Jack Kennedy?

In order to avoid getting into an unpleasant situation or discussing the things that happened to her, Key decided to give an irrelevant or unclear answer. Key didn't want to talk about her obligation to the paper and public that's why she answer with another question that ben feel offended.

b. Protracting answer

Protracting the answer in the conversation is one of the goals to be reached by speakers (Khosravizadeh & Sadehvandi, 2011, p. 123). The researcher presented Dialogue 1 to be elaborated in order to get profound understanding towards why the characters used protracting the answer to violate Grice's maxims.

Fritz: "Which is why they want more control."

Ben: "They want assurances that she's not gonna squander it all. I mean, come on. Fritz, Kay throws a great party...but her father gave the paper to her husband. The only reason she's running things is because he... Because Phil died. Don't get me wrong, I think she is a lovely woman. But she got rid of Al Friendly... and brought in a pirate who does nothing but bleed our margins. I mean, you can't be surprised that the buyers are concerned... that she doesn't have the resolve to turn a serious profit. I mean, you can't be surprised that the buyers are concerned... that she doesn't have the resolve to turn a serious profit."

In Dialogue 1 Ben provided a long answer for Fritz's question. By providing such a long answer, Ben wanted to tell Greta that he was honest with his answer and try to convince the Fritz that the Ben's answer is true. Therefore, the too informative contribution and the long unnecessary answer from Dialogue 1 showed that Ben wanted to protract the answer on Fritz by knowing the detailed information about where he could get the information about it.

CONCLUSION

Grounded on the research, the researcher came up with two conclusions. The first conclusion was that The Post movie characters verbally violated all of Grice's maxims. The Grice's maxims that were being violated were Maxim of Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Manner. The researcher found that the characters tended to violate the maxims in two types, namely single and multiple maxim violation. The characters, in one situation, violated one maxim in one utterance. The characters violated the Maxim of Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Manner, when they provided insufficient, dishonest, irrelevant, and unclear information.

The second conclusion was that the characters tended to intentionally violate the maxims in order to achieve particular reasons. By employing particular ways, they violated the maxims in order to protract the answer and avoid the discussion.

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