

AN ARTICLE
AN ANALYSIS OF GRICE'S MAXIM VIOLATION IN DAILY
CONVERSATION:
A Study at English Department Students Semester VIII Academic Year
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ABSTRACT

AN ANALYSIS OF GRICE'S MAXIM VIOLATION IN DAILY CONVERSATION:

A Study at English Department Students Semester VIII Academic Year 2014/2015

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini ditujukan untuk memeriksa implementasi dari maxim milik Grice dalam percakapan sehari-hari mahasiswa program studi Bahasa Inggris. Ada 63 mahasiswa dari semester VIII diambil sebagai subjek penelitian. Dalam menetapkan sampel, digunakan teknik *random sampling*. Ada 4 sampel mahasiswa dan 10 sampel mahasiswi. Pada data analisis, digunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Populasi penelitian ini sebanyak 63 mahasiswa. Dalam menentukan sampel, digunakan teknik *random sampling*. Untuk mengumpulkan data, ada 3 teknik yang digunakan: rekaman, *note-taking*, dan wawancara. Setelah data terkumpul, rekaman percakapan (dengan durasi pada setiap percakapan antara 5 sampai 7 menit) disortir dan diterjemahkan. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa maxim yang dilanggar adalah *maxim of quantity* (11 kali), *maxim of quality* (7 kali), *maxim of relevance* (10 kali), dan *maxim of manner* (5 kali). Alasan dalam pelanggaran maxim tersebut terbukti dikarenakan oleh faktor budaya dan faktor kesenjangan sosial. Kesimpulannya, maxim yang lebih dominan dilanggar adalah *maxim of quantity*.

Kata kunci: *maxim Grice, pelanggaran, percakapan sehari-hari*

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the implementation of Grice's maxims in daily conversation of English Department students. There were 63 students from semester VIII were taken as a subject of the study. In deciding sample, random sampling technique was used. The samples were 4 male students and 10 female students. In the data analysis, descriptive qualitative method is used. For collecting data, there were 3 techniques used: recording, note taking, and interview. After the data were collected, the recorded conversation (the length of each conversation is about 5 until 7 minutes) were sorted and translated. The result showed that the maxims violated were maxim of quantity (11 times), maxim of quality (7 times), maxim of relevance

(10 times), and maxim of manner (5 times). The reasons for violating the maxims approved to be caused by cultural factor and social factor. In conclusion, the maxim that dominantly being ignored was maxim of quantity.

Keywords: *Grice Maxims, violation, daily conversation*

Background of Study

Broadly speaking, discourse analysis is a way of describing and understanding how language is used. McCarthy (1990) states that discourse analysis is the study of the relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used.

One of the most influential rule which gives discourse analyst greater interest is Gricean Maxims proposed by the British philosopher of language, H.P. Grice (1975). Grice states that there are some rules people should obey during the conversation. He proposes those rules called conversational maxims. These are a set of four common-sense norms that all speakers adhere to when conversing. Those rules are formed in order to organize the conversation to prevent the misunderstanding.

There are four maxims in total. They are maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relevance, and maxim of manner. Those maxims give the boundary within the interlocutors and avoid misconception. However, speakers sometimes use sentences which are not related to what the exact meaning. What they literally say might have another meaning. It means that sometimes a speaker does not always use a clear word or sentence in conveying their purpose. The hearer sometimes gives response to the

speaker's question by using a sentence that implies something. This phenomenon is a part of study in pragmatics that is implicature.

Beside the implicature, in conversation, speakers sometimes use sentences that violate cooperative principle so that the hearer does not understand what the speakers mean. Meanwhile the appropriate interlocutory based on Gricean maxims is conversing by obeying those maxims. This particular violation might be caused by some factors such as politeness, cultural factor, high/low social distance between the speakers and the hearers. In short, in a proper conversation, recently those maxims are rarely found or applied by some people. It is also not socially obligatory principle, in which people do not exhaustively obey it in their daily conversation, such as saying hello and good bye.

In reference to the explanation above and the strong desire of examining the implementation of those maxims, this study is expected to analyze violation of Grice's Maxims in daily conversation. Therefore, according to the preceding statement, the writer will conduct this study for "An Analysis of Grice's Maxims Violation in Daily Conversation: A Study at English Department Students Semester VIII Academic Year 2014/2015."

Some problems teased out in this study are formulated as follows: (1) Do

the English department students in semester VIII apply the Gricean maxims in their daily conversation? (2) What kind of maxims is often being violated in their daily conversation? (3) What factors may cause the violation?

1. Review of Related Literature

1.1 Pragmatic Approach to Discourse

Discourse is often defined in two ways: a particular unit of language (above the sentence), and a particular focus, on language use, Schifffrin (1987). Dealing with discourse, the term of pragmatic tends to frequently occur. It is because pragmatic itself is focused on speaker's intended meaning. In Brown and Yule (1983), it is stated that, "many discourse analysts describe what speaker and hearer are doing by using terms such as reference, presupposition, implicature, and inference."

In the term of reference, according to Lyon (1968) in Brown and Yule (1983: 28):

"The relationship which holds between words and things is the relationship of reference: words refer to things."

It means that if the speaker utters a word, it can have more than one single meaning and the hearer can interpret it in different things too.

The second term is presupposition. Here is the example of presupposition:

Al knows that he is unpopular.

From the example above, it can be interpreted that the word 'knows' presupposes that Al is unpopular. It is a relationship between a modifier/head noun presupposes discourse contrast. Stalnaker (1978) in Brown and Yule (1983: 29) define that:

"Presuppositions are what is taken by the speaker to be the common ground of the participants in the conversation."

From the citation above, the speaker's talk tends to be the common ground or the familiar topic for the other or the hearer. It means that the speaker assumes that the hearer is familiar with the topic. Therefore, it can be concluded that the source of presupposition is the speaker.

The inference, according to Brown and Yule (1983), may occur when the hearer has no direct access to the speaker's intended meaning in producing an utterance, he/she often has to rely on a process of inference to arrive at an interpretation for utterances for the connections between utterances.

The last term is implicature. Grice (1975) in Brown and Yule (1983: 31) states that the term implicature has purpose to account for what a speaker can imply, suggest, or mean, as distinct from what the speaker literally says. Moreover, they are certain identifiable characteristics.

However, pragmatics is most concerned with analyzing speaker meaning at the level of utterances and this often amounts to a sentence, rather than text, sized unit of language use, Schifffrin (1994).

1.2 Discourse Analysis

As mentioned in the previous section, discourse analysis deals with language in use. It means that discourse analysis does not simply means language but in a narrower part, talk-exchange. It includes conversation or interlocutory, one of the most fundamental activities of human being does in their daily life. There are two types of discourse itself. Those are written and spoken. It is because a discourse analysis is based on the details of speech which includes gaze, gesture and action, or writing that is arguably deemed relevant in the situation and that is relevant to the arguments the analyst is attempting to

make, Gee (2001). Meanwhile according to Nunan (1993), discourse analysis itself can be verified as a part of language which consists of perceived several sentences which are reasonably related in some ways.

Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) state that, *“the aim of discourse analysis is to map out the processes in which we struggle about the way in which the meaning of signs is to be fixed, and the processes by which some fixations of meaning become so conventionalized that we think of them as natural”*.

They also mention that pinpointing and analyzing the myths of society as objective reality that are implied in talk and other actions are one aim of discourse analysis. Therefore, the main point in this study is absolutely related to discourse analysis, which pinpointing and analyzing the myth of society. The maxims can be clearly defined as the myth of society and it will be compared in the real situation.

1.3 Cooperative Principle (Grice's Maxims)

Conversational principles or as known as Grice's Maxims are being issued by many linguists. It is postulated by Grice (1975). The idea itself was published by Grice in the William James lecture, and deliberated in Harvard in 1976. He argues that the speaker and the hearer are engaged in invisible direction while conversing. “They use the conversational principle to describe the condition under which people use different expressions to communicate referential intensions in discourse,” Schriffrin (1994).

a. The cooperative principles

The cooperative principles are one of the influential accounts of implicature. In the conversational

implicature Grice in Levinson (1983: 101) explains about a cooperative principle by saying that: “make your contribution such as required, at the stage at which it accrues, by the accepted purpose or direction of talk exchanges in which you are engaged”.

The purpose of the principle is to understand that conversation rules must be obey.

a. Four basic maxims, according to Grice (in Levinson, 1983 : 101) are as follows:

1) Maxim of quality : Be truthful

a) Do not say what you believe to be false

b) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

2) Maxim of Quantity : Be informative

a) Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of exchange).

b) Don't make your contribution more informative than is required.

3) Maxim of relation

a) Be relevant (make your contributions relevant)

4) Maxim of manner : Be perspicuous

a) Avoid obscurity /of expression

b) Avoid ambiguity

c) Be brief (avoid unnecessary proximity)

d) Be orderly

According to Grice (in Levinson, 1983: 102) “these maxims specify participants to do in order to converse in maximally efficient, rational, cooperative way: they should speak sincerely, relevantly, and clearly while providing sufficient information”.

However, according to Leech (1983), the conversational principle cannot explain why people are often indirectly conveying what they mean. It has been argued that the maxims of the conventional principles are not

universally used to language, because there are linguistic communities, in which do not apply it, Keenan (1974) in Leech (1983: 80). Furthermore, McCarthy (1991), in his book states that he himself never met an occasion where the maxims could be usefully applied.

These four principles of maxims are distinguished as follows:

1.3.1. Maxim of Quantity

Give the right amount of information:

a) *Make your contribution as informative as is required.*

b) *Don't make your contribution more informative than is required.*

The first maxim deals with the amount of information speaker gives to hearer. When conversing, the speaker should adequately share information to the hearer. Therefore, the speaker could not speak more than what the hearer needs. It can be seen at the example below:

A: *Is there ketchup on the table?*

B: *Yes, There is. Oh, here's a fun fact. Ketchup started out as general term for sauce, typically made of mushrooms or fish brine with herbs and spices. Some popular early main ingredients includes blueberry, anchovy, oyster, kidney bean, and grape.*

From the example above, it can be interpreted that A wants to know whether there is a ketchup or not on the table. However, B does not only tell A about the information required. B also tells A about a fact or a history about ketchup, by which B indirectly violates the maxim of quantity.

According to Grice, the speaker should only speak on the right amount of information. Therefore, B's utterances should be:

A: *Is there ketchup on the table?*

B: *Yes. There is.*

The amount of information is as informative as required. It is because A only wants to know whether there is a ketchup or not. And the allowed answer based on Gricean maxim of quantity is "*Yes. There is*".

According to Grice, this happens blatantly and intentionally but with no intention to deceive or mislead the other party involved in the conversation.

1.3.2. Maxim of Quality

Try to make your contribution one that is true:

a. *Do not say what you believe to be false*

b. *Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence*

The second maxim emphasizes on the quality. It forces the interlocutor to try to make their contribution one that is true. The maxim of quality is interpreted as the bridge to produce a sincere act. It can often be seen when the speaker talks about an invitation, makes a promise, and ask question or even answer question. It can be seen at the example below:

A: *Would you like something to drink?*

B: *Yeah, please. I'm dying for a coke.*

From the example above, maxim is being deliberately flouted to produce a special effect. In this case, speaker B is not really dying, he/she is just very thirsty, but he makes the assumption that B is familiar with the principle of cooperation and that, therefore, he/she will interpret this violation as an attempt to increase the effectiveness of A's message.

Principally, according to Alduais (2012), a maxim of quality is violated when a speaker provides either untrue information or information which he or she lacks an adequate evidence.

1.3.3. Maxim of Relevance

Be relevant

In short, this maxim is responsible for reproducing a large of standard implicatures. It considerably shows in the example:

A: *Would you like to go camping this weekend?*

B: *You're again forgetting it final-exams period.*

(Adapted from Bringing discourse analysis into the language classroom by Josep Maria Cots (1996))

If it follows strictly the rules of grammar it can be said that B's utterance is not correct as an answer to a yes/no question which is asked by speaker A. However, if people consider that B wants to cooperate with A, the hearer B will make an effort to discourse the relevance of his/her utterance and they will interpret it as a refusal of the invitation which, at the same time, succeeds in increasing the dynamism of the interaction.

In principle, a maxim of relation is violated when a speaker changes the main topic of the conversation by saying something irrelevant to the main topic of the conversation.

1.3.4. Maxim of Manner

Be perspicuous

- a. *Avoid obscurity of expression*
- b. *Avoid ambiguity*
- c. *Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)*
- d. *Be orderly*

Fundamentally, a maxim of manner is flouted when a speaker is being disorderly, vague, ambiguous, or wordy in his or her reply to the other party (ies). Once again, and just as it has been mentioned above this happens purposefully and the result is a generated implicature or an additional meaning rather than the communicated meaning.

A: *What are you baking?*

B: *Be I are tea aitch dee ay wye see ay kay ee.*

From the example above, it can be seen that the very first point in maxim of manner is flouted. It clearly shows that B's utterance is full of obscurity. Meanwhile, the first point leads the interlocutor to obey it. Another example of violation of manner:

A: *I hear you went to the opera last night; how was the lead singer?*

B: *The singer produced a series of sounds corresponding closely to the score of an aria from "Rigoletto."*

By the explicit avoidance of the example above is in favor of the prolix and also the consequent violation of the sub-maxim '*be brief*'. The speaker, instead of saying "*the singer sang an aria from Rigoletto,*" he/she answers A's question in a long sentence. And also, in this case, the speaker B implicates that there was in fact some considerable differences between the singer's performance and those to which term singing is usually applied.

2. Research Method

This study is conducted using descriptive qualitative method, which is a type of research that try to understand a social or human problem, based on building a complex, the whole picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. Maleong (1993) in Rizki (2010) states that qualitative is a research which produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral words of people and of behavior which can be observed.

The population in this research is all of all semester VIII English department students academic year 2014/2015 with the total number of students are 63. The samples not decided yet until the data obtained. In this study the researcher used random sampling.

3. Data Analysis

In analyzing data, the writer used descriptive method and pragmatic approach to analyze and expose the data. Descriptive method describes the object which is observed by using words. This method allows the writer to come to the deeper analysis and interpretation to answers the problem occur. When analyzing data, the writer did some steps as follows:

1. The writer transcribes the recording into its original forms in Indonesian language (mix Sasak)
2. The writer will sort the appropriate data
3. Translating the data into Indonesian
4. Translating the data into English
5. The writer identifies and classifies the utterances in the conversation by marking what maxims that occur, and determines the kinds of maxims that violated the most frequently (selected randomly to be analyzed).
6. After identified, the writer analyzes the data based on the kinds of maxim of cooperative principle.
7. The last, the writer describes the result in narration.

4. Discussion

Data 1

Lana : Siapa nangis itu?
Who cry DEF
"Who is crying?"
Fiana : Anak kecil
Kid little
"Little kid"

From the simple talk-exchange above, it can be seen that Fiana violates the maxim of quantity. They are in the middle of eating, and suddenly there was a crying sound of a child echoed. Lana were curious and asked Fiana, who sat close to the door. However, Fiana did not really pay attention to the

sound and answered Lana's question half-heartedly. She said "*little kid*", which was already known by Lana because everybody who was listening to the sound would know easily that it was a little kid sound. It meant, Fiana did not answer Lana's question cooperatively with adequate amount of information as required, and it was leaded to the violation.

Data 2

Januar : Kamu punya sepatu lari?
You have shoes run
"Do you have a running shoes?"
Nila : Punya. Sepatu volley.
Have shoes volley
"Yes, I do. A volley shoes"
Januar : Saya nggak punya
I not have
"I don't have any"
Juki : Pake sepatu pantofel aja?
Wear shoes pump just
"Just wear a pair of pump?"
Januar, Nila : Yaoq. Eeeee....
"Geez..."

Juki's utterances "*How about using a pair of pump?*" violates the maxim of quality because does not give the truth contribution to Januar required. Januar asked Nila and Juki about sport shoes that suitable for running. Nila answered it clearly and truly, meanwhile Juki answered in a joke when he suggested Januar to wear pump (a slipper with closed toes). He did not give the true answer of the question, but he joked around instead.

Data 3

Nila : PB?
Juki : Iya. Taman Budaya
Yeah Taman Budaya
"Yeah. Taman Budaya"
Nila : Pusat Bahasa?
Juki : Tuberculosis.
Juki, Nila : (Tertawa)

“(Laughing)”

Nila and Juki were talking about acronym and abbreviation. Juki mentioned TB (Taman Budaya) at first, but Nila misheard it as PB (Pusat Bahasa). They continued to make another nonsense guess for the abbreviation and laughed at the answer. The maxim of relevance suggests the interlocutor to be relevant while conversing. They should not jump from one topic to another topic. The whole interlocutory above seemed unrelated at all and it is seemed ridiculous by the other people who saw their interaction. It meant both participants were violating the maxim. But the interlocutors (Nila and Juki) understand each other's utterances well because they laughed at it.

Data 4

Januar : Mau nggak pake Jelly bean?

Want not use Jelly bean

“Do you want to use Jelly bean?”

Nila : Eii...

This conversation happened at Tia's House. Januar and Nila came to Tia's house in Mauled event. Januar, who is genuinely known as an IT freak, tried to convince Nila to use Jelly bean for her Android. He showed Nila his mobile phone, which was installed by Jelly bean while endorsing. Nila on the other hand, did not really certain about using Jelly bean because she knew that some application would not work after installing Jelly bean. Maxims of manner suggest being clear. However, according to the conversation above, instead giving clear answer like “No, I don't”, Nila gave obscure idea when she uttered an expression “Eii...” to answer it. The answer which Nila gave to Januar question is considering as a violation of maxim of manner. She disobeyed as she used obscurity

expression and ambiguity. The expression “Eii...” explicitly showed obscurity and ambiguity. It cannot be simply interpreted as a rejection nor acceptance.

From the appendix (see table 1 and 2) it can be concluded that the sample that mostly violated the maxims was Nila. And the maxim that dominantly being violated was maxim of quantity. However, it is overlapping somehow. It means that nothing is fixed. The notion of overlapping in categorizing the maxims in relevance with the utterance cannot be ignored.

4.1. The analysis of the interview of English department students semester VIII

In analyzing the interview result which was done with 3 Interviewees, the writer divides the analysis into several categories as follow: (1) Knowledge about the maxims, (2) The way they treat the maxims in daily conversation, and (3) Reason why they violate the maxims.

One of the Interviewees is Mujahidah Nafisah, woman. Description of the Interviewee

Interviewee MN, 22 year old, an English department student of semester 8 at FKIP Mataram University. She is one of the samples in this study.

1. Knowledge of the maxims

Getting asked about Gricean maxims, she answered that she has already know it from the discourse analysis class. However, she only knows slightly about it. Even while discussing the maxims in the class, it only appears briefly and most of the students do not really pay attention to it.

“I know about it at discourse analysis class at first. But I didn't really paying attention into it. One year later, one of my friends take the subject

as her study for her thesis. I know a lot from her seminar about the maxims.”

2. The way they treat the maxims in daily conversation

She does not think the rule as a universal rule, by which people should obey when talking. She thinks that the maxims are only considering as a rule when it talks in European culture. It is a way too distinctive from Indonesian culture.

“Well, it is not well known principle in Indonesia, right? I think the founder of this principle is considering the European culture only. Because if we look at Indonesia’s, or even Asia’s culture, it is not suitable.”

3. Reason why they violate the maxims

Emphasizing on her previous statement, she repeatedly says the reason of disobeying the maxims is a cultural factor. Each country might have different culture and she believes that each culture has different implementation of the maxims in their daily conversation.

“As I said before, it might be a cultural factor that impact the implementation of the maxims.”

4.2. Reason of Violating

From the data analysis and the interview above, it occurs that there are several reason why people violate the maxims regularly. The reasons by which people ignore the maxims are identified as follows:

4.2.1. Cultural Factors

As widely known by a lot of people, Indonesian people think that being cultured is the fundamental thing in society. Culture cannot be verified as simple thing, but it can build the community. It also can be a rule that leads people in their life. Culture from one society is different from another

society. Therefore, it is believed that culture is one of the reasons why people violate the maxims.

From the interview, one of the samples simply put her though that Grice himself do not consider another aspect like culture in his maxims proposal. He is from Europe and it can show that Europe culture is different from Indonesian culture. If Europe tends to be straight forward while conversing, Indonesian prefers some opening speech and goes around the bush even though it is classified as wordy. People who speak directly to the main point are considerately rude. For instance, when people want to borrow some money from the other in Indonesia, they begin to talk from some other things before going to the main point, which was also known as indirect speech. It is one of the aspects from being cultural in Indonesia. Opening speech is believed as polite demeanor. It shows the distinction from western culture. While western prefers direct speech, in which people talk straight to the main point.

4.2.2. Social Distance

Conversation or interlocutory, as one of the most fundamental activity of human being do in their daily life, is a part of talk-exchange. It often deals with more than single speaker. And any reasonable number of people can participate in the interlocutory. However, some problems occur while conversing. One of the causes of the problem is the social difference between the interlocutors. Therefore, conversation is divided into two types, they are formal and informal.

In the formal type of conversation, the interlocutors accustomed to use of formal language. They possess a high social distance in which people prefer standard level of politeness. It can be seen in the conversation between teacher and students in the classroom,

the teacher and the headmaster, and also boss with his/her subordinates.

Meanwhile, in the latter type, the interlocutors customarily use an informal language. It shows that they possess a low social distance, in which people do not really consider the level of politeness. The informal conversation is often shown on friend-to-friend conversation, family conversation, and relative conversation.

Social distance is topic when people talk about relationship with another. It tends to show the caste in society and also the closeness. In the past, people from low community cannot speak easily to people from high community. There is a boundary between them, and it establishes the term of high social distance occurs. It makes a better reason for violating the maxims, because friendly conversation is not limited. It can grow widely from one topic to another topic, even without any clear turn-taking. It can be seen on the conversation above. Between friends, same age friend, close friend, something like rule in the conversation is not well-accepted. It is because, they tend to relax say what they think or want to their friend. They are bound with a close relationship where people can say something irrelevant, nonsense, and without second thought.

5. Conclusion

After analyzing data which are taken from recording of daily conversation of English department students, the writer takes conclusion as follows: (1) The maxims which are violated in the study are maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relevance, and maxim of manner, (1) The maxim that dominantly being ignored is maxim of quantity, and (3) The reasons for violating the maxims are cultural factor and social distance.

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Appendices

Table 1. Frequency of Samples' Violations on the Maxims

No.	Name	Frequency (Times)			
		Quantity	Quality	Relevance	Manner
1	Insan	1	2	1	1
2	Nafisah	0	0	0	0
3	Tia	2	0	0	0
4	Nila	3	1	3	3
5	Fiana	2	0	2	0
6	Ika	1	1	0	0
7	Juki	0	2	2	0
8	Januar	0	0	0	0
9	Rela	0	0	0	0
10	Pian	0	0	0	0
11	Arga	0	0	0	0
12	Lana	2	0	2	1
13	Ly	0	0	0	0
14	Misnur	0	1	0	0

Table 2. Frequency of Maxims Violations

No.	Gricean Maxim	Frequency
1	Maxim of Quantity	11 times
2	Maxim of Quality	7 times
3	Maxim of Relevance	10 times
4	Maxim of Manner	5 times