

Violations Of Grice's Maxim

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Submission date: 03-May-2024 08:35PM (UTC-0500)

Submission ID: 2370373158

File name: IJELLACUSH_-_VOLUME_2,_NO._2,_MAY_2024_Hal_84-93..pdf (1.25M)

Word count: 3549

Character count: 18660

Violations Of Grice's Maxim

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Abstract Violations in conversation are found not only in everyday life when people interact with other people, but also, in drama and films performed by characters, in novels, interviews, debates, and other forms of social interaction performed for various reasons. This study examines the violations of Grice's Maxim in the movie *Jack Reacher: Never Go Back*, focusing on the characters' conversational utterances. Using observation method and note-taking technique, the descriptive qualitative method was applied, analyzing data using the Theory of Cooperative Principles and Context situation. The results showed twenty-nine data of conversation were violated by the characters in the movie. Maxim of Quality (51,7%), Maxim of Quantity (13,8%), Maxim of Relation (10,4%), and Maxim of Manner (24,1%).

Keywords : Maxim, Violation, Movie

INTRODUCTION

Maxims are linguistic rules that regulate interactions and language use, based on Grice's principle of cooperation. These principles are divided into four types: maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation, and maxim of manner. The maxim of quality requires accurate and reliable information, while the maxim of quantity suggests avoiding overly informative speeches. Maxim of relation emphasizes staying on the topic, while maxim of manner requires clear and unambiguous responses. However, violations in conversation can occur in everyday life, drama, films, novels, interviews, debates, and other social interactions. This undergraduate thesis aimed to examine instances where characters in the movie "Jack Reacher: Never Go Back" violated Grice's cooperative principles maxims. The movie follows Jack Reacher, a fugitive on the run from authorities, as he seeks to uncover the truth behind a significant government conspiracy.

METHOD AND THEORY

The data for this research was gathered from the film *Jack Reacher: Never Go Back*. It was published on October 19, 2016 and watched via a website called Layarkaca21. This movie was directed by Edward Zwick with principal photography starting on October 20, 2015, in New Orleans. Thomas Cruise, the main actor, is a renowned American actor and producer. The data source reveals violations during discussions of characters from the film, analyzed using Grice's and Halliday's theories. The sentence outlines the methodology used for data collection and analysis in a research project focused on identifying violations of conversational maxims in the film "Jack Reacher: Never Go Back." The observation method via video was employed, along with transcription for qualitative data analysis. The process involved steps

Received April 13, 2024; Accepted May 04, 2024; Published May 31, 2024

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such as reading the screenplay, identifying maxims violations, analyzing reasons behind them, and organizing data systematically. Qualitative descriptive methods were used for analysis, with data presented informally through words and formally through tables to display frequency and context of maxims violations.

Literature Review

There were three undergraduate thesis and two articles published in international journals related to this research, as follows:

The first research, titled "A Pragmatic Analysis of Applying Violating the Maxims to the Yemeni Dialect" by Al-Qaderi (2015), focuses on exploring the Gricean Theory of Conversational implicature and its application within the Arabic language context. This research employed interviews to gather data, it also involved translating the collected data from Arabic to English for reader comprehension.

The second research, titled "Instances of Violation and Flouting of the Maxim by Gaddafi Interview During the Arab Spring," authored by Ayasreh et al. (2019), examines the flouting of Grice's conversational maxims by Arab leaders during the Arab Spring, specifically focusing on the types of maxims flouted by Gaddafi during interviews with ABC and ARD channels. Both of these studies and the current research draw upon Grice's cooperative principle theory, they diverge in context; the former delves into the political arena, analyzing interviews with the presidents of Libya and Syria.

The third research, titled "Violation of Grice's Conversational Maxim Found in The Movie 'To All The Boys I've Loved Before'" by Andi (2020). Both this research and the current study utilize Grice's theory, as well as the same data source, a movie.

The fourth research, titled "Grice Maxim In Talk Show 'The Ellen Show: Will Smith Episode'" by Cindy (2021). Similar to the current research, both studies utilize Grice's theory, but differ in data sources, with this study focusing on a talk show while the current study employs a movie as its data source. Another distinction lies in the research problem: while this study identifies applied and flouted maxims, the current research explores violated maxims and the reasons behind these violations in movie characters.

The last research, "Flouting Grice's Maxim In The Home Alone 2: Lost In New York Movie" by Stefanus (2023), analyzes the types of maxims flouted and the reasons behind these violations in the movie. Data from "Home Alone 2: Lost In New York." Similar to the current research, both studies utilize movies as their data sources. However, a key difference lies in the theoretical framework, as this study incorporates Dornyei's theory in addition to Grice's theory.

Theory of Cooperative Principles

Grice (1975) posits the cooperative principle as a framework encompassing guidelines for effective communication, applicable to both speakers and listeners. This principle comprises four maxims that should be adhered to for cooperation and mutual understanding.

1. Maxim of Quality

The definition of the maxim of quality is that the speaker should give correct information and not say what the speaker believes to be false.

2. Maxim of Quantity

The definition of maxim of quantity is that the speaker has to be as informative as required and should not say more or less.

3. Maxim of Relation

The definition of the maxim of relation is that the speaker's answer has to be connected with the topic of conversation.

4. Maxim of Manner

The definition of the maxim of manner is that the speakers must avoid ambiguity or obscurity and should be direct.

In communicating with other people, sometimes people have interactions that are not based on maxim. They do not follow principles and break rules to communicate their ideas to some people. In this case, the speaker violates and ignores principles to achieve something objective. Violation of the maxim is the condition in which the speaker not intentionally fulfill or obey the four sub-maxims.

The speaker can be said to violate a maxim when they know that their listeners will not know the truth and will only understand the surface meaning of those words. Here are the examples of following the violations of Grice's maxims:

Violations Maxim of Quality

[2-5]

A: "How much is your new dress?"

B: (see the tag 300 K, but instead says...) "only 150K."

(Cutting, 2002: 40)

The B answers violate the maxim of quality because of giving false information with the answer "150K" instead of "300K" and is lying to speaker A. The reason is because she does not want speaker A to know about the expensive price of her dress. So, she chose to lie and say the price of the dress was cheaper. By giving an incorrect answer, B has violated the maxim of quality.

Violations Maxim of Quantity

[2-6]

²A: "Does your dog bite?"

B: "No"

A: [Bends down to stroke it and gets bitten] "Ow! You said your dog doesn't bite!"

B: "isn't my dog." (Cutting, 2002: 40)

The conversation above shows that the receptionist violated ¹the maxim of quantity because she did not provide clear information to the person she was talking to. When speaker A asked about the dog in front of the receptionist, "does your dog bite?" and the receptionist answered "no" then when speaker A approached the dog and he was bitten, then protested to the receptionist who said that the dog did not bite. The receptionist answered by feeling innocent with her previous answer by saying "isn't my dog". This conversation clearly shows how the receptionist indifferently provides information to the person she is talking to. She should have understood the person she was talking to was asking about a ³dog near them, not the receptionist's dog at home. Therefore, she had clearly violated ¹the maxim of quantity.

Violations Maxim of Relation

[2-7]

A: "How much did that new dress cost, darling?"

B: "I know, let's go out tonight. Now, where would you like to go?"

(Cutting, 2002: 40)

¹⁶From the example above, it can be said that B violates the maxim of relation because B's answer technically has nothing to do with the question asked by the husband. B as a wife gives irrelevant answer which changes the topic of conversation by saying something that is not relevant to the question clearly shows that she is violating the maxim of relation. She did this because she did not want her husband to discuss the dress she had just bought. More precisely, ¹⁹she did not want her husband to know how much the dress cost, so she ¹changed the topic of conversation.

Violations Maxim of Manner

[2-8]

²A: "How much did that new dress cost, darling?"

B: "A tiny fraction of my salary, though probably a bigger fraction of the salary of the woman that sold it to me."

(Cutting, 2002: 40)

In ¹the previous example, wife (B) violated ¹the maxim ¹by deliberately responding ¹by changing ¹the topic of conversation. However, in ¹the context of this conversation, the wife gave an ambiguous answer. She said “a tiny fraction of my salary, though probably a bigger fraction of the salary of the woman that sold it to me.” That answer to let him know that the dress was not so expensive that she could afford it out of pocket, or simply because she could afford it. She did not want her husband to worry about the expensive price. This shows that B ⁹violated the maxim of manner because her response was not as clear as it should have been.

Theory Context of Situation

Halliday (1985) introduced an analysis of context consisting of three elements: field, tenor, and mode, which are crucial for interpreting utterances or sentences.

1. Field

The field of discourse pertains to the subject matter being discussed and includes considerations of where the topic or activity is happening. This aspect indicates the place of the activity.

2. Tenor

The tenor of discourse concerns ²the social relations ²existing between the participants in a speech situation. It encompasses factors like formality, power dynamics, and emotional affect. Tenor influences interpersonal choices within the linguistic system, affecting the linguistic structures and strategies chosen for communication.

3. Mode

¹Mode of discourse refers to how language is used in speech interaction, including the medium of communication (spoken, written, or a combination).

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The chosen movie had a total of twenty-nine violations where characters broke the rules of conversation. Below is a table showing which rules were broken, how often, and what percentage of all rule-breaking instances they comprised.

Violation of Grice's Maxim	Quantity	Percentage
Maxim of Quality	15	51,7%
Maxim of Quantity	4	13,8%

Maxim of Relation	3	10,4%
Maxim of Manner	7	24,1%
Total	29	100%

1. Violation Maxim of Quality

[3-1]

Turner :Where are you calling from?

Reacher :**Outside Independence I think.**

(05.11)

Based on the Grice maxim (1975) rules, this conversation does not follow the maxim of quality rules. It is because of giving an unsure answer. The character, Reacher, breaks the maxim of quality rule in this conversation because he seems unsure about his answer by saying “Outside independence, I think.” By saying “I think,” it is obvious that he is doubtful about what he says. His answer makes the listener, Turner, feels a bit confused because Reacher's uncertainty makes it seem like he is not sure about his position. By this, we can say that Reacher ¹violates the maxim of quality by giving unsure information.

Context of Situation

Field: Turner in the office and Reacher in the motel

Tenor: New Commander and Ex Major

Mode: Question and answer about Reacher's position by phone calling

When Reacher arrives at the motel, he calls his replacement commander, Turner. Turner is very happy to hear from him because Reacher has been missing for a long time and his position is unknown. Then Turner asks where Reacher is currently. But Reacher gives an unsure answer to Turner, he does this because he is used to moving around a lot and does not think his location is important.

2. Violation Maxim of Quantity

[3-2]

Wood : Who the hell are you?

Reacher : **The guy you didn't count on.**

(03.42)

In this conversation, another ¹⁰example of a violation of maxim of quantity occurs when the main character, Reacher, found by law enforcement at a cafe because he had attacked several people. Reacher answers Wood's question about who he is by saying "The person you don't

count on." This answer clearly ¹violates the maxim of quantity because it does not provide enough information to the police. Answers should provide sufficient information to the listener, but Reacher's answer is unclear and leaves the listener confused. Therefore, we can say that Reacher ⁴has violated the maxim of quantity by providing a response that does not explain in detail who he is. He hides his identity as an ex-army.

Context of Situation

Field : In a cafe where a fight

Tenor : Law enforcer and perpetrator of violence

Mode : Question and answer about Reacher's real identity

¹In the context of the situation in the conversation above, the police come to the scene of violence in a cafe. They see the victims outside the cafe and the perpetrator sitting relaxed inside the cafe. That person is the main character in this movie, Reacher. As the police are about to arrest Reacher in the cafe, Reacher predicts that there will be police coming to arrest them because they have made a mistake. And it happens, a few minutes later a police car comes to arrest the officer, not to arrest Reacher. The officer feels confused because Reacher knows everything, then out of curiosity the officer asks who he really is, but Reacher's response makes the officer confused and even more curious.

3. Violation Maxim of Relation

[3-3]

Harkness: You ⁶made a mess I hear.

Hunter: **This Reacher guy, is interesting.**

(35.55)

Based on the conversation above, this data is one of the instances that violate the maxim of relation found in the movie "Jack Reacher: Never Go Back." The perpetrator of this violation is the character who is Reacher's opponent, namely Hunter. He is an accomplice of the Parasource organization, tasked with hunting down Reacher, who knows about the illegal behavior of Parasource. In this conversation, Harkness, as Hunter's boss, contacts Hunter as his subordinate because he made a mess in the restaurant while fighting with Reacher. However, when Harkness says 'You made a mess, I heard it,' instead of apologizing for the mess he made, Hunter changes the topic by saying "This Reacher guy is interesting." This action clearly ²⁰violates the maxim of relation because it diverts the conversation away from the topic, leaving the other person dissatisfied and unable to accept the speaker's answer. Therefore, this instance in the movie is a violation of ¹the maxim of relation by changing the topic of conversation.

Context of Situation

Field: Parasource office and in the car

Tenor: Boss and subordinates

Mode: Talking about the mess Hunter made at the restaurant

In the context of the conversation above, Harkness, the leader of Para Source, finds out about the mess that Hunter created when fighting with Reacher, resulting in the death of 2 police officers. Harkness contacts Hunter by phone and asks him about the mess he caused. At this time, Hunter does not apologize for the mistake he made, but instead, he talks about Reacher, which is very interesting. He says that because he feels Reacher is very interesting as an enemy and he really wants to defeat Reacher

4. Violation Maxim of Manner

[3-4]

Hunter : When would you get back?

Reacher : **I'm not sure I ever did.**

(55.23)

The conversation described indeed constitutes a ³violation of the maxim of manner in the movie. According to Grice's rules, ¹speakers are expected to avoid conveying ambiguous or unclear statements. But ¹in this conversation, the main character, Reacher, violates the maxim of manner by responding ambiguously to his hearer, Hunter. His answer, "I'm not sure," is confusing and leaves uncertainty about whether he will return or not. Speakers are prohibited from making ambiguous statements, as they are expected to answer clearly and directly. Therefore, Reacher's response in this instance constitutes a violation of the maxim of manner.

Context of Situation

Field : New Orleans Airport

Tenor : Hunter and Hunted

Mode : Ask and answer about Reacher's arrival by phone calling

In the context it is described that Reacher, Turner, and Samantha, who are fugitives from Parasource, escape by flying to New Orleans. While on the plane, Reacher realizes that Parasource has sent people to follow him. Utilizing his instincts, Reacher identifies the person Parasource had sent and killed them in the plane's toilet, then takes their cell phone. Arriving in New Orleans, Reacher calls the last number on the cell phone, which turns out to be Hunter. Hunter asks when Reacher will be back, but Reacher responds that he is not sure when. This is done so that Reacher can quickly escape from Hunter, who does not expect that they have arrived in New Orleans

7 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis in the previous chapter there are two important points that can be drawn as conclusions. First, the analysis reveals four types of maxim violations committed by characters in a movie: quality, manners, and field. The quality maxim was most frequently violated due to lies, untruths, and lack of evidence and the manners maxim was most frequently violated due to ambiguous language. The analysis also highlights the contextual situation of each data point, providing insights into the reasons behind these violations.

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