

FLOUTING THE GRICE'S MAXIMS FOUND IN MR. POPPERS' PENGUINS MOVIE

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Abstract

People engaged in the conversation commonly shared the principles of conversation which lead them to interpret each other's utterances, as the contribution to a conversation. According to Grice, cooperative principle that commonly used in the conversation consists of four maxims, they are: maxim of quantity, quality, relation, and manner. When people didn't cooperate each other in conversation, they actually broke the maxims. Grice classified them into violation, flouting, infringing, opting out, and suspending. This study is focused on the flouting of maxims. The study used descriptive qualitative approach to investigate a conversational phenomenon taken from a movie, *'Mr. Popper's Penguin'* directed by Mark Waters. The technique of collecting data applied in this study was by taking the samples of utterance in the conversation among the characters, involves: picking up the relevant utterances, identifying and classifying the data. While the data analysis involved: figuring out how flouting the maxims take place, and interpreting what the speakers actually try to convince, including the implicatures. The result of the study showed that maxim of quality and quantity were flouted 5x or 29.4%, maxim of relation was flouted 4x or 23.6%, and the last maxim of manner was flouted 3x or 17.6%.

Keywords: Cooperative Principle (CP), flouting the maxims and implicature.

A. INTRODUCTION

One of the most common language forms which is used by people in daily life is conversation. Levinson (1983: 284) defines conversation as the familiar kind of talk in which two or more participants freely alternate in speaking, which generally occurs outside specific institutional settings like religious services, law courts, classrooms, and the like. When people live in particular community, they can't avoid for having conversation. When they deliberately take a part in conversation, they actually share assumption and expectations about what conversation is, how conversation is fully conducted, and the sort of contribution they are expected to create (Richards and Schmidt, 1983: 122). Mey (1993: 192) noticed that conversation happens when people use language together and make sense if they put themselves in a common context. It means that in the conversation, among the participants should have the same background of knowledge, in order to conduct a good conversation. People mutually engaged in conversation will share common principles of conversation that lead them to interpret each other's utterance as the contribution in conversation.

This study mainly discusses on the phenomena of flouting the Grice's maxims. The main discussion is about how Grice's maxims are flouted by the speakers/ characters, which are found in *Mr. Popper's Penguins* movie, written by Renee Foley-Burke (2011). If a speaker flouts a maxim, he/she quite likely does it deliberately and the addressee might think that the speaker ignores the cooperative principles. Finally, the speaker will fail to observe the maxim

(Grice in Thomas, 1996: 64). The writer decides to study those four maxims because these phenomena are interesting and challenging to be explored, even only focused on the flouting of maxims.

B. GRICE'S MAXIMS THEORY

Cooperative Principle

The interesting part in conversations is that they are governed by a set of conventions. Grice (1975) formulated these conventions as the cooperative principles, which he referred to as 'maxims'. When people engaged in conversation, they agreed to act based on those maxims. Grice classified those maxims into four, Maxim of quantity (make your contribution as informative as is required, do not make your contribution more informative than is required), maxim of quality (do not say what you believe to be false, do not say that for which you lack of adequate evidence), maxim of relation (make your contribution relevant) and maxim of manner (avoid obscurity of expression, avoid ambiguity, be brief and be orderly).

Grice assumed that the speaker is operating the conversation according to the cooperative principles; there is no mechanism to prompt someone to seek for another level of interpretation (Thomas, 1996: 63). The four cooperative principles or maxims will help the speakers, who involved in conversation, to establish what that so called 'implicature', which is always embedded behind the utterances.

The cooperative principle, which is mutually understood by the speakers, is a basic assumption to give purposeful and effective communication in conversation. Grice, as quoted by Schiffrin (1994), proposed the cooperative principle as a general principle that participants are expected to observe says 'make your conversational such as is required, say what you believe is true, do not say that for which you lack of adequate evidence, be relevant, be brief, be orderly, avoid obscurity of expression and avoid ambiguity, as formulated by Grice.

Flouting the Maxims

In conversation, people may sometimes fail to observe those maxims. It probably occurs because some reasons, such as they are incapable of speaking clearly, or they do it deliberately (Thomas, 1996: 64). When a speaker blatantly fails to observe a maxim at the level of what is said, with the deliberate intention of generating an implicature called as flouting the maxim. Flouting of four maxims might happen anytime, in conversation. Grice in Thomas (1996: 64) stated that there are five ways of failing to observe a maxim, namely: (a) flouting, (b) violating, (c) infringing, (d) opting out, and (e) suspending. Grice argued that the most important category by far, the one which generates an implicature, is flouting a maxim whereas, the other four do not generate an implicature.

Flouting of maxim of quality is occurred when the speaker says something blatantly untrue, or for which the/ she lacks of adequate evidence. A flout of the maxim of quantity occurs when a speaker blatantly gives more or less information than the situation requires. A flout of the maxim of relation occurs when the speaker makes a response or observation which is obviously irrelevant to the topic in hand. While a flout of the maxim of manner occurs when the speakers cause ambiguity, obscurity and disorderliness in speaking.

Grice uses the term implicature to refer to what a speaker can imply, suggest, or mean, as distinct from what the speaker literally says (Brown and Yule, 1983: 31). Implicatures as noticed by Levinson (1983: 97) it provides some explicit account of how it is possible to mean more than what is actually said. Meanwhile, according to Thomas (1996: 58), conversational implicature arises only in a particular context of utterance. In other words, it also means that any utterances can take on various meanings depending on who produced it and under what circumstances. By understanding conversational implicature might give deep insight into spoken discourse, which often includes speakers' hidden intention and implication under the words and expressions uttered verbally.

C. CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES

The word implicature, according to Grice in Thomas (1996) can be distinguished into conventional implicature and conversational implicature. In this study, the researcher only focuses on the conversational implicature. In simple way, conversational implicature can be said as the hidden meaning of the utterance. Yule (1995: 45) defined conversational implicature as an additional unstated meaning that is associated with has to be assumed in order to maintain each participant will attempt to contribute appropriately at the required time, to the current exchange. So, conversation implicature always happens in our conversation as not all the utterance we said has the literal meaning.

Implicature or conversational implicature is the hidden or implicit meaning. So there need interpretation of utterance between participants. Each participant has different interpretation. That is why, sometimes the listener can interpret what the speaker means correctly but sometimes incorrectly. In Grice's theory, he develops the concept of implicature that is essentially a theory about hoe people use the language. Based on his theory, he suggests that there is a set of over arching assumptions guiding the conduct of conversation. The expectation of conversation is if the speaker asks about A, the hearer will answer A, not the others. This conversation contributes to make the conversation flows smoothly.

Understanding the implicature in conversation is very important. Because (i) it leads the explanation of meaning or the language facts which is not reached by the linguistic theory, (ii) it signals the different explanation briefly about what the speaker wants (iii), it gives the simple semantic difference about clause relationship with the related to the conjunction, and (iv) it reveals the relationship between the speakers and their utterances (Levinson, 1983). In this case, this analysis will be started with the conversation itself, as proposed by Cutting (2008:26)

Mr. Popper's Penguins Movie

Mr. Popper's Penguins was a comedy movie, which dominated by the family story. The movie is starred by Jim Carrey, a famous American actor in the comedy movie. Mr. Popper is a wealthy business man who has all the riches in the world, but lacks of love. He struggled to be a good father for his children. In the same way, his father provided little support for him. The story is began when when Mr. Popper ends up inheriting a box of penguins from his recently deceased dad as a means of (somehow) connecting and finding the love that he lost through his short-sighting endeavors. At first driving Popper up the wall, the penguins who each have their own delightful trait (namely Captain, Loudy, Bitey, Stinky, Lovey and Nimrod) soon warm up to their cold-hearted owner and vice versa as everyone involved learns that big fancy houses and a six figures income only matter as long as you're having fun, loving everything, wearing sweaters, giving high fives and being as routinely sickly as humanely possible without starring in an advertisement for the Nintendo Wii. The penguins gave much important lesson about live and love for Popper.

D. METHOD

In this research, the writer used qualitative approach to study a conversational phenomenon taken from a movie. The technique of collecting data applied in this study was by taking the sample of utterances in conversation, which displayed the flouting of maxims. The technique of collecting data involves, (i) selecting a movie, (ii) close reading and highlighting the characters, (iii) picking up the relevant utterances, and (iv) identifying and classifying the data. While the data analysis involves four steps, as follows; (i) classifying the data into category of the relevant maxim, (ii) figuring out how the flouting of maxim takes place, (iii) interpreting what the speakers actually try to convey, (iv) drawing the interference about the implicit message, behind the flouting of the maxim. The analyzed data were selected based on their close criteria to the flouting of maxims, as proposed by Grice. The object of study is *Mr. Popper's Penguins* movie, released in the 2011, directed by Mark Waters. The data analyzed

were utterances within conversation that occur among the characters in the movie. Here, the writer only took the utterances, which considered of containing flouting the maxims.

E. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As stated in the previous part, this study is focused on the flouting of maxims, by analyzing the utterances in the movie script. For answering the main question on flouting the maxims, the writer has tabulated the findings on the table below:

No.	Flouting of maxims types	Frequency	Percentage
1	Maxim of quality	5 x	29.4%
2	Maxim of quantity	5 x	29.4%
3	Maxim of relation	4 x	23.6%
4	Maxim of manner	3 x	17.6%
Total		17 x	100%

Table 1: The frequency of flouting the maxims

Based on the result of analysis, the writer then simply discusses it on the following discussion.

a. Maxim of quality

In the script times 00:08:56,619 - 00:09:06,403

Popper : What are we looking at?

Billy : 95 pounds of C-4 explosives on a hair trigger. Make sure you clip the right wire, otherwise...

Popper : Ba-boom!

The above conversation is uttered by Popper and his son, Billy, while looking at the upset Janie, Popper’s daughter. In this context, Janie was so upset due to the failed date with her boyfriend. Realizing this situation, Popper intended to have a talk with Janie, but he talked first to Billy. When Popper asked to Billy about what was actually happen to Janie, Billy answered the imaginative thing about his sister. The underlined sentences above were totally untrue. There were no C4, hair trigger and the wire on their sight. By saying those words, actually Billy flouted the maxim of quality, because said it deliberately.

The implicature of Billy’s utterances could be: Billy was actually symbolizing Janie’s anger as a big bomb, which could explode anytime. C4 is a horrible explosive substance, which commonly used for making the bomb. Besides that, Billy wanted to warn Popper for approaching Janie carefully, because Janie was getting angry.

In the script times 00:21:45,762 - 00:22:10,895

Front officer : Hey, Mr. P. I got your penguin for you.

Popper : What? What are you talking about? That's not my penguin.

Front officer : Oh, really?

The conversation is done in the lobby of Popper’s apartment, when Popper passed the lobby for going to work. The front officer stated that he got Popper’s penguin in the lobby, but then, Popper denied it by saying the underlined words above. The front officer knew well to whom the penguin belongs to, because he watched the CCTV record of what was actually done by Popper to the penguin. In this case, Popper flouted the maxim of quality because saying the untrue utterances to respond front officer’s words.

The implicature of Popper's utterances could be; Popper didn't want to take care of the penguin, that's why, he released it freely. He hoped that the penguin will go away from his apartment and his life as well. But then, the front officer got the penguin and gave it back to him. Popper really didn't want this happen to him again, that's why he denied it.

In the script times 00:23:01,421- 00:23:17,478

- Kent* : *Is that... Is that a pet I hear, Popper?*
Popper : *Pet? No. What? of course not.*
Kent : *Okay. I mean, I can't say I blame you. If I had your 3,200 square feet, I'd find someone to share it with, too.*
Popper : *It's not a pet, Kent. I left the television on. I'll take care of it.*

The conversation above is initially begun by the curious Kent figuring out the noisy voices from Popper's room. Kent was Popper's neighbor which heard the strange voices from next room. Kent asked to Popper about the pet, but Popper blatantly denied it because he wished nobody knows about his new pets, the six penguins. In this case, Popper flouted the maxim of quality, because intentionally told the lies to Kent. He tried to hide his penguins from his close neighbor.

The implicature of Popper's utterances could be; he wanted nobody knows about the new pets, because it was a strange thing to take care of the penguins as the pet inside the apartment. Penguins are protected animal strictly, and no one is permitted to pet them. Besides that, Popper anticipated someone else to exploit his penguins for irresponsible purpose.

b. Maxim of relation

In the script times 00:03:42,931- 00:03:56,944

- Mr. Gremmins* : *It's just that this building is my last holding and if I sell, then...*
Mr. Popper : *Then you're free, and that's a scary thing. Hey, I get it.*
Doing any sailing this year?
Mr. Gremmins : *Who has the time?*

The conversation above is happened in the Mr. Gremmins' office, while Popper trying to negotiate Mr. Gremmins for selling his building. When the negotiation was running, Popper suddenly switched the topic. He asked Mr. Gremmins about something which unrelated to the main topic. In other words, he uttered irrelevant contribution to Mr. Gremmins. Due to this utterance, he flouted the maxim of relation.

The implicature of Popper's utterance could be; he tried to talk in another way when doing negotiation. He knew that the situation wouldn't turn to support the negotiation, as he expected. Even though his utterance was irrelevant, but actually it was effective to influence the hearer's thought, and it finally worked. The negotiation is done as Popper's expectation.

In the script times 00:07:04,340 - 00:07:19,379

- Reader* : *But first you have got to get past Selma Van Gundy. She has gotten a thousand offers turned them all down.*
Franklin : *You've got one shot. You think you can close it?*
Popper : *I'm sorry, have we met? I'm Thom Popper. I do deals like this in my sleep.*

The above conversation is happened in the Popper's office. Reader and Franklin were Popper's boss in the company. They talked about the purchasing of Mrs. Van Gundy's private property, a tavern. In this case, the boss gave Popper an order to negotiate with Mrs. Van Gundy for selling her tavern to their company soon. When Franklin asked to Popper about his competence to do it, he replied by uttering the underlined response as written above. Of course,

Popper's response was irrelevant for replying Franklin's question. The appropriate answer could be, 'Yes, I can' or 'No, I can't', but he didn't. In this context, Popper blatantly flouted the maxim of relation because he gave irrelevant response for Franklin's question.

The implicature of Popper's response could be; he wanted to convince his boss that he can do the job well, he'll going to make it real. For Popper, negotiation was his expertise, that's why then, he said that he did it as take a sleep. Even though Popper's response was irrelevant in terms of cooperative principle, but it was acceptable for those who involved in the conversation.

In the script times 00:07:29,657 - 00:07:45,280

Rick : Thomas! Greetings.

Popper : Greetings, Rick, and welcome to our planet. Lately, we've been using the word, "Hi" or a simple "Sup?"

Rick : How are you?

Popper : I'm better now. Thank you.

The above conversation is happened when Popper came over to Amanda's home, between Rick and Popper. Rick greeted Popper, and Popper responded by saying the above words. When Popper said "welcome to our planet", he actually uttered an irrelevant response to welcome Rick. Lexically, Popper's words indicated that Rick was come from another planet, whereas both of them were in the same planet.

The implicature of Popper's utterance could be; Popper wanted to show his intimacy with Rick, in terms of their friendship. Even though it can be classified into flouting of maxim of manner, due to the irrelevant response, but it seems well accepted for both the speakers.

In the script times 00:30:42,674 - 00:30:53,000

Popper : It was a nice night. Yeah. My kids want to come over.

Street walker : Who gives a rat's butt?

Popper : Fair enough. Have a good one.

The conversation above is done by Popper and a street walker, in front of Popper's apartment. In this context, Popper expressed his happiness by saying above words to a street walker, which accidentally passed by. Then, the man responded by saying the underlined sentence above. The man's response was actually irrelevant with the Popper's expectation, that's why it could be classified as the flouting of maxim of manner.

The implicature of the man's utterance could be; he totally didn't care about Popper's feeling, because Popper was no one for him. The man showed his ignorant to Popper in such away, impolitely. Moreover, the man didn't know who Popper was.

C. Maxim of quantity.

In the script times 00:03:21,534 - 00:03:30,584

Pippi : I'm Mr. Popper's personal assistant. I process his paperwork and I procure his periodicals.

Popper : She doesn't even know she's doing it.

Secretary : Pardon?

Popper : Nothing.

Secretary : You can go in.

The conversation above is happened in the Mr. Gremmins' office, when Popper and his personal assistant, Pippi, wanted to meet Mr. Gremmins. Before meeting with Mr. Gremmins, Popper and Pippi asked for permission to Mr. Gremmins' secretary. When Pippi introduced herself to the secretary, Popper responded on Pippi's words. Then, the secretary tried to clarify what has been said by Popper, but he said a little word to respond the secretary's clarification.

By saying 'nothing' actually Popper flouted the maxim of quantity, because he gave less information as the secretary required.

The implicature of Popper's utterance could be; he actually didn't want to explain about his previous utterance, or even didn't want to repeat it anymore. It was due to the limited time for seeing Mr. Gremmins, so Popper said that word.

In the script times 0:06:26,469 - 00:06:48,281

Yates : *Tavern on the Green.*
 Popper : *Tavern on the Green?*
 Reader : *What's the matter, Popper?*
 Popper : *Nothing.*

The conversation above is happened in the Popper's office, between him and his two bosses. They were talked about a place which was going to buy. When Reader asked Popper about that place, Popper replied a little word 'nothing'. Popper's answer was less informative for Reader. in this case, Popper flouted the maxim of quantity, because giving unexpected contribution as required.

The implicature of Popper's utterance could be; he didn't want to explain or share about his feeling, related to that place. Based on the story, Popper had a lot of memories in 'Tavern on the green' with his family. That's why, when Yates mentioned that place, Popper seemed being very surprised. In one hand, his heart said that it wasn't good idea to take over the tavern, but in other hand, he had to do his job professionally.

In the script times 00:45:34,898 - 00:45:51,330

Billy : *Hey, Dad, come play hide and seek. Captain's "it".*
 Popper : *I'm still not speaking to them. What? What happened?*
 Janie : *Nothing. I'm fine. Billy, it's time to go.*
 Popper : *Janie, what happened?*
 Janie : *I said I'm fine.*

The conversation is happened inside the Popper's home, between him and his children, Billy and Janie. In this context, Janie was disappointed by her boyfriend. As a father, Popper tried to figure out what was happened to his lovely daughter, but Janie gave less contribution as Popper required. Based on the data above, Janie blatantly flouted the maxim of quantity, because giving less information than was required.

The implicature of Janie's utterance could be; she didn't want to discuss about what was happened to her. Janie felt that his father won't help her much. So far, Janie still considered that Popper was not a good father, because breaking some important promises and telling the lies. By saying the underlined words above, it was clear that Janie flouted the maxim of quantity.

d. Maxim of manner

In the script times 00:29:54,876 - 00:30:03,283

Billy : *They're mine, right? I can keep them?*
 Popper : *You kidding me? What kind of question is that?*
 Janie : *I don't know, Billy. I'd make him promise if I were you.*

The conversation above is happened after the coming of zoo keeper to take the penguins out from Popper's home. When Billy asked to Popper about keeping the penguins, Popper replied by answering an ambiguous utterance. Popper actually knew well that they couldn't keep the penguins as their pet inside the apartment for a long time. But to make it sound smoother, he replied Billy's question by those words. In this case, he flouted the maxim of manner because telling an ambiguous utterance for Billy.

The implicature of Popper's utterance could be; he didn't want to tell Billy that they couldn't keep the penguins at home, whereas he exactly knew it. He knew that telling that thing directly to Billy, will make him disappointed.

F. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Since the theory of cooperative principle proposed by Grice in 1975, there was a change on viewing the principles of conversation, especially to the language learners. The Findings of this study reveal the flouting of all maxim types along the conversation in the movie. Maxim of quality and quantity become the most flouted maxim in the *Mr. Popper's Penguins* movie. Maxim of quality is flouted 5 times or 29.4%, as well as on flouting the maxim of quantity. Maxim of relation is flouted 4 times or 23.5%, while maxim of manner is flouted 3 times or 17,6%.

The fact is that Grice believes that a communication can be a failure when maxims are flouted. However, the result of this study proves that it is never a guarantee that when a maxim is flouted, the communication will breakdown and stuck. To conclude, with regard to the fact that a conversation will not always breakdown even though maxims are flouted, it should then lead to better understanding when an application of cooperative principle is become the concern. Further research can also be done in this field in order to generalize these findings.

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