RESEARCH TITLE

DEVIATION OF GRICE'S MAXIM IN WAITING FOR GODOT: AS PRAGMATIC STUDY

Lecturer: Mustafa T. Mutashar Al.Juboury[1]

[1] Karbala General Directorate of Education

Email: mt90iraq@gmail.com

Email: alimohalimohiraqi2@gmail.com

Abstract

The present study investigstes the deviation or flouting of Grice's relevance maxim in Becl "Waiting For Godot". Studying implicature which is arised from the contribution of such theories that of Grice's CP is important as it leads the readers to a better understanding of the texts. More implicatures, especially conversational implicatures, are expected not to be easily recovered since involve more than one implied meaning and, thus, are difficult to be detected. Misunderstanding implicature intended may lead to a state of miscommunication on the part of the addressees.

The current study aims at:

1. Investigating the violation or flouting of relevance maxim used in the play.
2. Identifying the implicatures which are arised through flouing of relevence maxim to show the inte meaning, or the implied message of the text.

It is hypothesized that Grice's relevance maxim is either flouted or violated in "Waiting for Go to achieve a specific purpose. In addition, The violation of relevance maxim is more common flouting.

The study is limited to examine the violation or flouting of just relevance maxim in "Waitin Godot". Some examples are selected for the purpose of illustration and analysis.

It is hoped that this study is useful for students of literature as well as teachers as it reflects how characters' violation or flouting of relevance maxim leads to a better understanding of the text. In other words, the students will be able to think about the intended meaning of the writer and what he intends to convey in this text.

Key Words: Deviation, Grice's Maxim, Waiting for Godot, Pragmatics.

1. Introduction

Pragmatics deals with the meaning of utterances as they occur in social contexts (Trudgill, 1992:61). To Trask (1999:224), pragmatics is the branch of linguistics which studies the ways in which meaning is derived from the interaction of utterances with the context in which they are used. One of the theories that is related to pragmatics is Grice's theory.

Mey (1993:80) explains that Grice theory has suggested itself as a modification and substitute to the CP. Sperber and Wilson (1986) believe that there is a clear redundancy in Grice's Maxims and that the only one maxim that is sufficient, is that of relevance, which says that every utterance creates in the addressee an expectation of relevance. The principle of relevance, Sperber and Wilson (1986:161) argue, is much more explicit than Grice's co-operative principle and maxims.

Literature Review

2.1 Cooperative Principle

Grice, (1975:45) claims that, at any point in a conversation, the speaker should be guided by these principles, in formulating what to say next: "make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged."

Grice suggests that the CP and its maxims are not arbitrary but are features of any rational behaviour, and hence are universal. However, not all linguists would accept this suggestion, such as Levinson (1983: 105) and Mey (1993: 74), and there is, in fact, some evidence to the contrary.

There is the question of whether the list of maxims suggested by Grice is exhaustive and whether the maxims have the same importance in different cultures (Bach, 2001:56). Mey (1993: 65-83) inquires whether we really need "all these maxims". Sperber and Wilson (1986:47) emphasize the importance of the maxim of Relevance to compensate for all other maxims. Moreover, it has been objected that these maxims describe a philosophical paradise, and are too ideal. This theory does not express precisely what goes on in everyday interaction.

As a reaction to the above criticism, Levinson (1983:143) defends Grice's view by suggesting that these principles are assumed by the hearers (Hs) in their inference process. The following example clarifies this point:

(1)   A: *Where's Bill ?*

B: There' a yellow VW outside Sue's house.

"A" assumes that B's reply is relevant. Depending on the shared knowledge that Bill has a yellow VW and that he is Sue's Friend, B can infer that he may be in Sue's house. It is this kind of inference that Grice refers to as "conversational implicature" (Ibid.: 101-103).

It is important however not to underestimate the importance of Grice's work. None of the scholars who have criticized some points of his views ignore the importance of his contribution to the study of conversation and utterance interpretation (Sifianou,1999: 19).

2.2 Grice's maxims

This principle is very general, and Grice therefore, gives a number of sub-maxims that he considers to follow from it. These maxims specify the conversation which participants in conversation should and normally do obey. These maxims are the following :

1-Maxim of Quantity (Informativeness)

*Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).

*Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

2-Maxim of Quality (Truthfulness).

Try to make your contribution one that is true, specifically:

*Do not say what you believe to be false.

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

3-Maxim of Relation (Relevance) .

Make your contribution relevant.

*Be relevant

4-Maxim of Manner (Clarity) .

Be perspicuous, and specifically:

*Avoid obscurity of expression.

*Avoid ambiguity.

*Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity.(

*Be orderly.   (ibid)

Levinson (1983:102) also explains that in order to converse in a maximally efficient, rational co-operative way, participents should speak sincerely, relevantly and clearly, while providing sufficient information.

These maxims are not scientific laws that govern the act of communication. They are conventions that can be deliberately violated in order to mislead, and they can also be deliberately and blatantly flouted. Someone who lies, for example, is violating a sub- maxim of quality. In violation, the hearer can recognize an apparent failure to conform to the CP. for example:

(2) What a lovely weather we're having!

If this sentence is said on a dreadful day, then it quite obviously violates a maxim of quality. In such cases, the hearer can assume a general intention to conform to the CP, and use a *conversational* implicature to work out what is meant for what is said, and hence to discover its ironic intent (Garnham, 1985:107).

In Thomas's (1995:56) words, Grice's theory is " an attempt at explaining how a hearer gets from what is said to what is meant, from the level of expressed to the level of implied meaning." To put it in another way, the conversational implicature is

a message that is not found in the plain sense of the sentence. The speaker implies it, whereas the hearer is able to infer this message in the utterance, by appealing to the rules governing successful communications.

2.3 Violation and flouting of Maxims

Grice (1975: 49) defines "violation" very specifically as the unostentatious non observance of a maxim. If a speaker violates a maxim she/he "will be liable to mislead."

Flouting a maxim, on the other hand, occurs when a speaker uses a language as a way which appears in an obvious way, to violate a maxim, when a listener normally assumes that a speaker is following these four conversational maxims, the speaker may break them (in lying, sarcasm, political debates …etc.) but conversation proceeds on the assumption that they do not. It is possible to deduce implications from what has been said conceiving what has not been said (conversational implicatures). (Fasold and Connor, 2006: 161). Thomas (1995:69) adds that in flouting a maxim, the speaker blatantly fails to observe the maxim, without any intention of deceiving or misleading, but because the speaker wishes to prompt the hearer to look for a meaning which is different from, or in addition to, the expressed meaning. This additional meaning is called "Conversational Implicature."

2.4 Conversational Implicature

Cruse (2000: 85) defines implicatures as parts of the meanings of utterances which although intended, are not strictly part of *"what is said"* in the act of utterance, nor do they follow logically from what is said. To him, it is an additional conveyed meaning.

Implicatures, for Levinson (1983: 104) are not semantic utterances, but rather inferences based on both the content of what has been said and some specific assumptions about the cooperative nature of verbal interaction. Thus, implicatures are partially derived from the conversational or literal meaning of an utterance, produced in a specific context which is shared by the speaker and the hearer, and depend on recognition, by both the speaker and the hearer, of the cooperative principle and its maxims. For the analyst, as well as the hearer, conversational implicatures must be treated as inherently in determinate since they are derived from a supposition that the speaker has the intention of conveying meaning and of obeying the cooperative principle. Mey (2001: 45) illustrates that if one asks a question, a response which on the face of it does not make *'sense'* can very well be an adequate answer. For example, if a person asks:

(3) A : What time is it?

It makes perfectly good sense for someone to answer,

B : The bus just went by.

In particular context of conversation. This context should include the fact that there is only one bus a day, that it passes by the house of the one who responds the question and at 7:47 a.m. each morning, and furthermore, that any interlocutor is aware of this and takes the answer in the spirit in which it was given as a hopefully relevant answer.

As Leech (1983: 30-31) remarks that, ***"interpreting an utterance"*** is ultimately a matter of guess work, or (to use a more dignified term) ***"hypothesis formation."*** To him, strict semantic or logical criteria will no help and neither will just guessing. But, guessing has to be in relation to the particular circumstances of the question, the persons involved in the situation, their background and soon. The more we know about the context, the more qualified our guesswork is going to be.

The concept of *implicature* is related to the traditional notion that one can say something and mean something else as in irony, metaphor, and double entendre. Thus, Fowler (1986:106) defines implicature as "what is said between the lines". Both Kempson (1977:43) and Yule (1985:111) treat implicature as an extra conveyed meaning.

The word implicature, according to Mey (1993:99), is derived from the verb 'to imply'. Etymologically, 'to imply' means to fold something into something else. So, to him "A conversational implicature is something which is implied in conversation, that is, something which is left implicit in actual language use" (ibid.).

Crystal (1997:153) regards implicature as the implication that can be deduced form the form of an utterance, on the basis of certain co-operative principles which govern the efficiency and normal acceptability of conversation". That is to say, that meaning is conveyed through an utterance rather than from the meaning of the words in an utterance.

For Kearns (2000:254), implicature is the syntactic part of communication which involves the interplay between what a speaker actually said and certain broad rules, shared by speakers and hearers, which govern communication.

2.5 Types of Implicatures

Pragmatists have different views on how to classify implicatures. Cahour (2003:135) distinguishes two types of implicit meaning; the first concerns the propositional content and the inference derived from it. A listener gets the inference intended by considering the general background knowledge, which is necessarily shared by the addresser and the addressee. Consider the example below:

(4) A: Do you like cats?

 B : I like all pets.

(A) can easily recover that B'S response implicitly conveys:

 C: I like cats

The second type of implicature is dealt with in a speech act- theoretic framework. Cahour (ibid) mentions that the illocutionary force conveys some kind of implicature. Since an illocutionary act involves, according to Austin (1962), creating a relationship between interlocutors, then an act of advising may convey a message of threaten and an act of asking can convey a sense of ordering, etc. Moreover, an addresser who makes an utterance may imply that the addressed can perform an action to respond to that utterance, as in example below:

(5): It is too cold in here.

The pronoun (it) implies that the addressee has to do something (close a window, for instance) to meet the preposition made by the addresser. Sperber and Wilson (1986: 56) propose a classification based on implicated premises and implicated conclusion where the former refers to the premises collected in the addressee's memory in a process of developing assumption schemas that is retrieved from memory. Addressees are supposed to select the most relevant assumption Schema. Implicated conclusions are deduced from the explicature of that utterance and the context. Therefore, they are explicatures by virtue of the addresser's expectation that the addressee would derive them (ibid: 195). In other words, most statements yield a number of implicated premises leading the addressee to infer more than one conclusion. Sperber and Wilson (ibid: 199) confirm that such premises and conclusions are either strong or weak where by the former refers to the premises and conclusions which "the hearer is strongly encouraged but not actually forced to supply, the weaker the encouragement, and the wider the rang of possibilities among which the hearer can choose, the weaker the implicature". Consider the following example:

(6) A: Do you want a hamburger?

   B: I'm a vegetarian

B's answer strongly implicates that he does not want a hamburger. But it also implicates a number of other weak implicatures like he (B) is a healthy person who lives a fairly healthy life or he objects to meat-eating.

Section Two

3. Methodology

3.1 The Summary of "Waiting for Godot" by Samuel Beckett

This play is part of a movement called the Theater of the Absurd, which is what it sounds like: presenting bizarre characters and situations with usually fairly minimal sets. This is a two act play. It is largely a blank stage; there's basically just a tree and a mound of dirt.

Its minimalism is kind of a departure from more traditional theater at the time. Any kind of black box theater stuff, where it's just actors on stage and no set? That's all influenced by Beckett and some others were doing at this time.

So let's go into what happens. Like I said before, it's really not that much. We've got these two guys: Vladimir and Estragon. Their nicknames for each other are Didi and Gogo, which is cute.

They meet at a maybe-pre-appointed place by this bare tree and they're going to wait for Godot. They talk in circles about the Bible and damnation and repenting. They keep forgetting their purpose. They have to remind each other that they're waiting for Godot. They keep forgetting. They aren't even sure if it's the right spot, or if they even came here yesterday to wait. Let's take it to the stage for that.

3.2 Characters' Violation of Relevance Maxim in Beckett's Waiting for Godot"

Example (1).

> *Estragon, sitting on a low mound, is trying to take off his boot. He pulls at it with both hands, panting. He gives up, exhausted, rests, tries again. As before.*

ESTRAGON:

Ah stop blathering and help me off with this bloody thing.

VLADIMIR:

Hand in hand from the top of the Eiffel Tower, among the first. We were respectable in those days. Now it's too late. They wouldn't even let us up. (*Estragon tears at his boot.*) What are you doing?

(Act: one, P:10).

Instead of doing an act that shows the willing for helping, Vladimir states something irrelevant to Estragon's speech. In addition, Vladimir asks Estragon what he is doing as if he doesnot hear his appeal of help. In doing so, Vladimir violates the maxim of relevance which reflects clearly vladimir's intention to be unhelpful. That is, instead of refusing to help Estragon directly, Vladimir states something which has nothing to do with what Estragon wants him to do.

Example (2).

VLADIMIR:

One out of four. Of the other three, two don't mention any thieves at all and the third says that both of them abused him.

ESTRAGON:

Who?

VLADIMIR:

What?

(Act One: p. 13)

It is expected that question that starts with the word (who) to be answered by giving information about the person who has done aspecific action that is mentioned in the preceding speech. However, Vladimir here answers Estragon's question with another question that starts with 'what'. The answer has no relation with the question and this illustrates Vladimir's violtion of relevance maxim just to be uncooperative. In other words, Vladimir doesnot want to tell Estragon about whom he is talking.

Example (3)

(Esragon and Valdimir turn conversation to talk about the bible)

VLADIMIR:

Then the two of them must have been damned.

ESTRAGON:

> And why not?

VLADIMIR:

> But one of the four says that one of the two was saved.

> (Act one : p. 13).

This example shows clearly Vladimir's intention to be uncoopertive. Instead of telling Estragon the reason for not being damned, Vladimir tells Estragon that one of the two men is saved. Doing so, Vladimir violates Grice's relevance maxim for unwilling to be cooperative.

Example (4)

> **(Valdimir and Estragon are waiting for Godot)**

VLADIMIR:

> Let's wait till we know exactly how we stand.

ESTRAGON:

> On the other hand it might be better to strike the iron before it freezes.

> (Act one : p. 18).

Vladimir asks Estragon to wait Godot in order to know what they shall do. Instead of agreeing or refusing to do that action of waiting, Estragon tells Vladimir that is better for them to strike the iron before it freezes. Estragon's speech shows clearly flouting of relevance maxim that rises animplicature. Estragon's speech actually, implies that they should get afaster chance. This, in its turn implies that Estrasonbelieves that waiting for Godot is useless and they should do something better.

Example (5)

> **((Valdimir and Estragon are listening to someone coming and his back horse. they think that he is Godot).**

VLADIMIR:

> I could have sworn I heard shouts.

ESTRAGON:

> And why would he shout?

VLADIMIR:

> At his horse.

> *Silence.*

ESTRAGON:

> (*violently*). I'm hungry!

> (Act one : p. 20).

It is supposed that people who are waiting for somebody to be serious rather than

ironic in such context. However, Estragon states something which has nothing to do with Vladimir's speech about his expectation for someone who is coming at his horse. Both, Vladimir and Estragon expect that the new visitor is Godot. Yet, Estragon pretends to be hungry as if he does not care for Godot's coming. Doing so, Estragon violates relevance maxim, perheps, because he is afraid of meeting Godot who represents hope for any body. Violation of relevance maxim here gives us aclear pichture of Estragon's character and helps us (as readers) to understand Estragon's deep suffering of life.

Example (6)

> **(Valdimir and Estragon and Pozzo are talking, Valdimir and Estragon want to go after along time of waiting)**

VLADIMIR:

> (*vehemently*). Let's go!

POZZO:

> I hope I'm not driving you away. Wait a little longer, you'll never regret it.

ESTRAGON:

> (*scenting charity*). We're in no hurry.

POZZO:

> (*having lit his pipe*). The second is never so sweet . . . (*he takes the pipe out of his mouth, contemplates it*) . . . as the first I mean. (*He puts the pipe back in his mouth.*) But it's sweet just the same.

Pozzo asks Vladimir and Estragon to keepon in waiting Godot and Estragon accepts to do. However, instead of being aware about their willing to leave, Pozzo talks about smoking which has nothing to do with the context of their speech. So, Pozzo violates the velevance maxim to show that he doesnot care about their leaving or waiting For Godot.

Example (7)

> **(Valdimir and Estragon decide to go especially Vladimir who really wants to do so. In the middle of their conversation with Pozzo)**

VLADIMIR:

> I'm going.

POZZO:

> He can no longer endure my presence. I am perhaps not particularly human, but who cares? (*To Vladimir.*) Think twice before you do anything rash. Suppose you go now while it is still day, for there is no denying it is still day. (*They all look up at the sky.*) Good. (*They stop looking at the sky.*) What happens in that case– (*he takes the pipe out of his mouth, examines it*) –I'm out– (*he relights his pipe*) –in that case– (*puff*) –in that case– (*puff*) –what happens in that case to your appointment with this . . . Godet . . . Godot . . . Godin . . . anyhow you see who I mean, who has

your future in his hands . . . (*pause*) . . . at least your immediate future?

(Act: one, P : 29)

Again, in this example, Pozzo shows his indifference about Vladimir's leaving and waiting for Godot any longer. This   inddifference is reflected by Pozzo's violotion of relevance maxim which is achieved by showing irrelevant things. This violation helps Pozzo to ignore Vladimir and stop discussion with him any more.

Example (8)

> **(Estragon and Pozzo looking to Lucky, Estragon asks about the reason behind carrying lucky his bags all time).**

ESTRAGON:

> Why doesn't he put down his bags?

POZZO:

> I too would be happy to meet him. The more people I meet the happier I become. From the meanest creature one departs wiser, richer, more conscious of one's blessings. Even you . . . (*he looks at them ostentatiously in turn to make it clear they are both meant*) . . . even you, who knows, will have added to my store.

ESTRAGON:

> Why doesn't he put down his bags?

POZZO:

> But that would surprise me.
>
> (Act one, P :29)

It is expected that Estragon's question about the reason behind Lucky's carrying his bags all time to be answered with forexample, an explantion of the cause behind this. However, Pozzo talks about his happiness of meeting people which is completely different subject. So doing, Pozzo violates relevance maxim for the purpose of misleading. In other words, Pozzo doesnot intend to tell Estragon about the cause of carrying Lucky his bags all time. Thus, such violation makes Pozzo seem un cooperative and his speech is rather misleading one. This explains the reason behind Estragon's repetition of the same question (Why doesn't he put down his bags) and how Pozzo, on the other hand, continues in talking about irrelevant things instead.

Example (9)

> **(Valdimir and Pozzo are talking while Estragon is doing a few limping steps and stops before Lucky).**

VLADIMIR:

> (*looking at the sky.*) Will night never come?

POZZO:

> But for him all my thoughts, all my feelings, would have been of common things. (*Pause. With extraordinary vehemence.*) Professional worries!

(*Calmer.*) Beauty, grace, truth of the first water, I knew they were all beyond me. So I took a knook. (Act one, Page :29)

Vladimir asks Pozzo about the time of the night coming as night is the time of meeting Godot which represents hope, happiness, savety, ….. etc to him. This actually reflects Vladimir's eagerness to meet Godot as well as Pozzo's indifference about him.This indifferece is shown through Pozzo's flouting of relevance maxim. Pozzo intends implicity and indirectly to tell Vladimir that he is hopeless of everything even Godot. Pozzo is sure that Godot will be unable to understand his feelings and thoughts. So, flouting relevance maxim arises an implicature (intended meaning)and makes Vladimir understand the extent of Pozzo's hopelessness and sadness.

4. Conclusion

Using Grice's theory in the analysis of Beckett's"Waiting For Godot ".This paper has found many examples of violation of relevance maxim. This violation is observed through saying irrelevant thing to achieve the aim of being unhelpful,uncooperative and misleading others. Therefore, violation and flouting have become a characteristic features in Beckett's "Waiting For Godot". In addition, flouting relevance maxim is noticed in "Waiting For Godot" which arises an imlpicature (intended meaning).

Teachers of literature can be motivated to teach their students communicative aims of the authors in the context of the drama. Applying the relevance maxim is a way to provide the readers with the latest meaning which the author intends to convey.

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