

# An Investigation of the Grice's Cooperative Principles and his Maxims for Humor in Suketi and Annabelle's Revenge

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## ABSTRACT

The paper aims at analyzing Grice's maxims in order to understand and interpret dramatic conversation in general and humor in particular. For analyzing different features of humor in a conversation, a play is taken which consists of five scenes of 30 minutes duration. The paper explores the Grice Maxims' application on humorous utterances. Text is analyzed qualitatively and every act is separately described in graphs to show the percentage of following and flouting of maxims. The results show that the characters often violate the cooperative principle set by Grice. The beneficiaries of the study could be language instructors and students in a way that they will be able to analyze conversational implicature and inferences based on these principles

## Keywords

Cooperative principles, Maxims, humor, floating, implicature.

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## Introduction

This paper aims at investigating and implementing the Grice's cooperative principles as well as his maxims to analyze humor and trying to relate the Grice's cooperation principles on pragmatic level to performance investigation or analysis. "People assume that there is a set of principles which direct a particular interpretation of what someone says" (Grice, 1975).

The paper only deals with those domains of pragmatic theory which centered upon the concepts of cooperation. This concept is adequately popularized in William James lectures by Grice (1967). In Cooperative Theory, Searle (1985) states that the speaker and the listener agree on the basis of premises of maxims that can be exploited in order to rearrange the consistency principle and create implications. The concerned text is a horror comedy, but the paper is dealing with the humor and comic element only, leaving the horror unanalyzed.

The fictional plays involve majority of the nonfictional characters. Grice tried to reveal the inferential tracks that help us to understand what is said by speaker and what is meant. His lectures based on William James, deal with attitudes and approaches having polysemy tendency in meaning on semantic level by showing the presence of implicatures which had not previously adopted by anyone. There are three positions of Contemporary pragmatics as proposed by Grice.

- The performance of language is symmetrical to pragmatics as discussed by Levinson and Clark,
- Substitute maxims and alternative concepts based approaches as mentioned by Attardo, Lakoff, and Leech,
- Some (writers) who count on the relevant and related super-maxims (e.g. Wilson).

The research analyzes the examples of latest humor that unique and deviate the standard genres. The comical

interaction modality is not based on cooperativeness. It means that it does not follow a punch or tag line and cannot be nor can they be described by using simple words because everyone is familiar to genre conventions. Folk categories like jokes and pun are also excluded from this pattern. The argumentation is based on the Grice's scheme and will therefore outline it briefly.

This research is significant for various reasons. For those interested in learning spoken and written language it is necessary to understand the hidden purpose behind specific instances. Through literary and non-literary texts are slightly different but written language confines the same formula. This helps the linguists to explore the semantic and functional dimensions that were used in the spoken language as well as in written. Therefore, the review is ideal for students studying with literature as fiction and verse genre as it helps to explore the significance of the literature and reveals the relationship on linguistic level in literary texts.

The study has the main objective of proving the notion that how the usual conversation in general and the dramatic conversation in particular quite often flouts and violates the cooperative maxims of Grice's theory. The sample for the analysis is taken in the form of a play script consisted of 5 scenes. Every scene is analyzed in terms of how and when they are following the maxims. The analysis also shows how by flouting certain maxims, certain effects are thereof created such as humor, amusement, threat and horror. The beneficiaries of the study are the language students and language teachers since the study will help them in order to make certain assumptions on the basis of these principles.

## Literature Review

In pragmatics, plenty of work has been done related to Grice's maxims. Lakoff and Leech claimed that politeness violated the guidelines they had heard. For effective transmission of information, polite acts are often formulated

in an elaborative, indirect or vague manner. We therefore suggested maxims of contact, listing some other maxims to the stand and also recommended for replacements.

They often misunderstand the Grecian maxims and take it as commands for ideal communication, which may not be inspiring, as Grice has surely explained them as mode of instructions like use of do, do not make or say etc. Joint fanatizing, it is sometimes called fabulism, and it refers to fables, tales, myths, and allegory conventions. "Magical realism," maybe the most common term that suggests to fiction in general and literature specifically, with magic or the supernatural elements presented in an otherwise real-world or mundane setting.

The practice of verbal and written language shows a contrast in the real world or situations and the imaginary ones; the spoken medium of communication is different from the written medium of communication. On the one side, spoken language needs the presence in the written language of the paralinguistic signs. The paralinguistic features including facial expressions and gestures help in giving the words of a speaker additional meaning (Brown & Yule, 1983). They further added that unless interlocutor (the addressee) does not interrupt the speaker remains under pressure and keep on talking until the complete verdict is done.

Pragmatics is one of the fields that have evolved from other stages as a distinct linguistic group. Adams (1985) says it was created within the 20th century; it progressed gradually from one level to other level of language. He diagnosed that linguistics research has progressed from phonology to syntactic levels, from syntactic to semantic level, and at final stage from surface to inner (pragmatics) level. Instead, there is clearly evident a number of scholars who are involved in pragmatics trying to define pragmatics. At first, attempts were made to explain it; the principles of pragmatics came to differentiate it from semantics. Morris (1938), in addition to the principles of syntax and semantics, explains pragmatics as the "relationship between signs and interpreters" (Morris, 1938), but attempts to establish that behavioristic theory of semiotics is base of pragmatics (Black, 1947; Levinson, 1983).

It gave rise to a concept to pursue pragmatics in other fields just like semiotics. Levinson (1983) describes a tendency to attach pragmatics to linguistic semiotics to overcome issues related to other fields such as sociolinguistics, linguistics and psycholinguistics. Carnap (1959) has given equal importance to descriptive semiotics, pragmatics as well as natural languages. For Morris, it is confusing particularly to differentiate within descriptive and pure studies (Levinson, 1983).

Clark's (2004) appeal to consider the variation between principal and collateral indicators is greatly suggestive for possible solutions and methods to understand how new humorous interaction works. Humor analysis entails broad conversational ramifications in Grice's model, as a humorous statement should be tailored to context and co-existence.

The genres such as humorous sketches or jokes whose tone clues hearers to anticipate a particular line that can be termed as punch line and directs their interpretation in this way. The arrangement of the document is well structured. Data is presented within the genre in such a way that we anticipate incongruity and confusion from the outset, as well

as non- contextualization. The specific ways of manipulating or breaching a limit orientate the speakers and limitize the ways of how should cooperate in discourse and conversations for performance pragmatists.

They connect the Grice's notion into the dialogical action examination (Clark, 1996) and presume a contact level hierarchy. The specific ways of breaching or breaking a limit familiarize the speakers to the ways of cooperation in dialogue for pragmatic results. We tie the set of the Grice into the dialogical action analysis and presume a contact level hierarchy (Clark 1996). Speakers decides not only that what they should say, but also how they can say that in a better way.

Implications are divided into conventional implications and non-conventional or the implications of conversation. Conditional implications having lack of truth inferences are conventional implications (Levinson, 1983) which are not the outcome of conversation maxims. There are no hidden implications and meanings, so, the listeners do not feel difficulty to infer speakers' utterances.

Yule (1996) stated that the conventional implications do not depend on the maxims of Grice. To find out the hidden meaning, they don't need special contexts and they need certain words to get that specific meaning like "but", because, so and "and" English conjunctions. For instance, someone utters that "I am poor but happy" conversational implicature works here with Grice's Cooperative Principles and maxims.

Grice says that when people participate in the conversation, they have to give enough information to the people we're talking to so that they can grasp the concept or intended meaning they are trying to develop. Grice suggests (as cited in Levinson, 1983) that theories that they are used as guidelines for conversational communication in order to use language more efficient and effective to end discussions in cooperation.

Approaches that are focusing on substitute principles or maxims deal a maxim breach as a fissure of cooperation principle. Theoreticians will be discussed at the end of the paper, who wants to explain mutual creation of meaningful utterance with a solo super maxim of relatedness.

The author suggests that he has knowledge and experience shared with his readers. Nevertheless, as the meaning can be transmitted from the addressers to the addressees in a variety of contexts (Leech & Short, 2007), the situations in which messages are transmitted can be implanted in the literary discourse or correspondence. Therefore, the readers do not answer back and the messages are not conveyed between the producers and receivers, but transferred to implied receivers or mock readers from an implied author (Leech & Short, 2007). Both first suggested the implied author and the implied reader in 1961.

Humorous conversation is a hard test for a philosophy that is realistic. There is no realistic philosophy covering the whole range of humor and, in particular, one concerned with humor. The paper is restricted to analyzing the text by utilizing pragmatic theories; the maxims of Grice's Cooperative Principle. In particular, it is an essential part of pragmatism to diagnose the literary texts rather than the actual dealings and communication. The analyses revolve around the cooperative maxims and principles of Paul Grice.

## Objectives

The objectives of the paper are trying:

- To analyze the contribution of Maxims of Grice in the analysis of humor,
- To verify the violation of these maxims that occurs at various levels of meaning,
- To identify the roles of maxims in the interpretation of meaning in conversation.

## Research Questions

Following are the research questions of the study:

- What is the contribution of Grice's maxim in the analysis and interpretation of humor?
- How does maxims' violation occur at various levels of meaning and interpretation of language?

## Methodology

The theoretical framework of the paper is based on the Grice theory of maxims and the cooperative principles (1975).

### Maxims of quantity

Comprises of two factors:

1. Making the contribution as informative as is required.
2. Avoiding the extra information than what is required.

### Maxims of quality

Consists of two important points:

1. Restrict saying what is believed to be false.
2. Prescript whatever has inadequate evidences.

### Maxim of relation:

Requirement is to be relevant.

### Maxims of manner

States:

1. To stop confusion,
2. To be concise,
3. Should be brief,
4. Be orderly.

Data is analyzed by qualitative method of research. For the study the text of drama SUKETI AND ANNABELLE'S REVENGE written by Sintya Sugandi is taken.

## Sample

Story revolves around a girl named as Suketi. She was adopted by kind Shaman and his wife because they wanted to have a daughter. Her head was nailed so that she may convert into a human. Girl married Bramantio who belonged to a town and went to village for job purposes. Suketi and Bramantio had a daughter named Annabelle. Two men Reza

and Agus didn't like Bram and his family and tried to shatter them by making sketch of Suketi's nailed head. Their prime motive was to make Suketi ghost again and they murdered Annabelle and her nanny. At last both Suketi and Annabelle became revengeful ghosts towards them.

## Data Analysis

### 6.1 Scene 1

The play starts with the night scene where two main characters Shaman and his wife are trying to wake up a girl Suketi from the grave whom they want to adopt as their daughter. The whole scene represents how the conversation floats the cooperative principles to achieve humor on certain occasions.

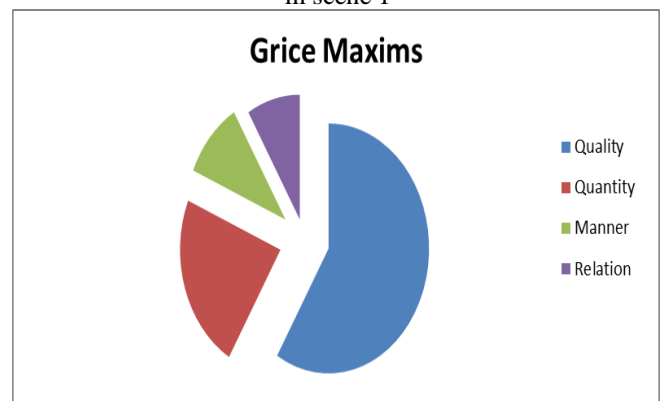
At many places characters are following the maxim of quality by providing the truthful responses. For example when kind Shaman asks Suketi why can't she come up, Suketi replies she has been locked out of heaven. When the wife insisted that they want her to be their daughter lines taken from the text:

THE WIFE: We don't intend to derange you, I just wanna adopt you as our daughter, I wanna Have a beautiful daughter, would you?

SUKETI (ALIVE): Where is my beautiful long hair? My white gown? My pierced back?

Here, the daughter, Suketi is only following the maxim of quality since whatever she is saying is true on the other hand she is floating the maxim of quantity and manner and relation by telling more than what is needed and giving an irrelevant response.

Figure below illustrates the proportion of maxims followed in scene 1



### 6.2 Scene 2

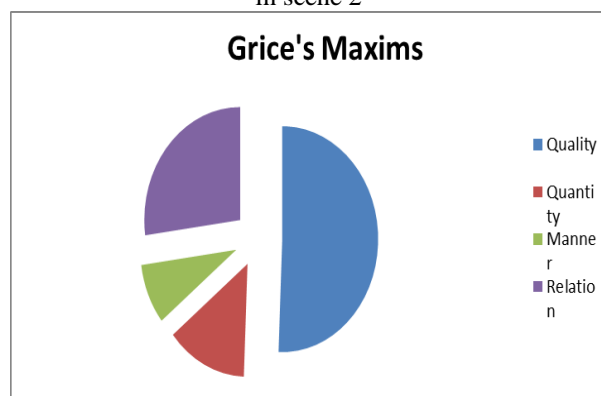
The second scene opens in the morning in a village where a businessman named Bramantio comes to village and falls in love with Suketi.

When Bram asks Suketi about the needle that fell down, "Is it yours?" Suketi replies as, "Yes it is mine". Here Suketi is observing all the maxims by keeping herself truthful, compact, relevant and orderly. Again when Bram asks about her name she says, SUKETI (ALIVE): My name is SUKETI, S-U-K-E-T-I.

Here Suketi even though is following the maxim of quality by telling her true name, she is floating the maxim of manner deliberately while spelling out her name aloud to

create humor. She is also following the maxims of manner and relation.

Figure below elaborates the proportion of maxims followed in scene 2



### 6.3 Scene 3

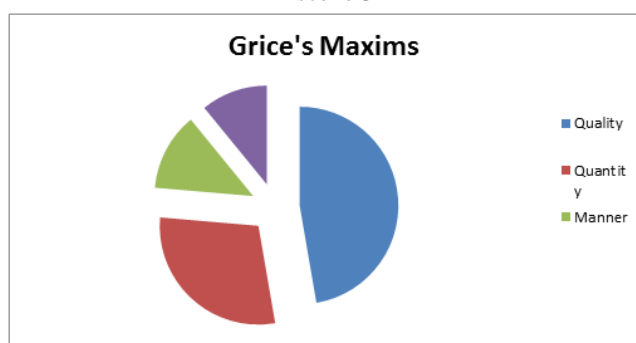
This scene starts again when its night. Reza and Agus approach the evil Shman to destroy Bram's family. Throughout the play the mantra reading creates an atmosphere with the tinge of horror. When the scene 3 starts the evil Shaman is reading a mantra (excerpt from textual lines):

THE EVIL SHAMAN: Hombalihom balihom balihom baling baling bambuuuu!!!

This abruptly makes the audience laugh. Mantra is violating all the maxims and the effect of humor is created. Here if something had said which would have made some sense, there would have being no humor at all. This example shows how violating the maxims can deliberately be done in order to achieve different effects on the listener. We can have another example of floating the maxim of quantity when Agus responds to the evil Shaman by saying:

AGUS: Uh, you are materialism! Only here you would have been sufficient and compact but he floats the maxim of quantity by adding "you are materialism" which creates humor to the spectators.

Figure below elaborates the proportion of maxims followed in scene 3



### 6.4 Scene 4

This scene starts in Bram's living room when both husband and wife are talking to each other and Bram's old friend Frans arrives to meet him. When the starts and Suketi tells her husband Bram, (reference from text)

"SUKETI (ALIVE): Honey, do you know? I'm very happy with our life, do you know why?"

Bram replies as,

"BRAM (CONT'D): Of course I know, because our family is very complete. We have wealth's more than enough. We have a beautiful daughter and do you know? The priced wealth in my life is you! You are my best wife."

Here Bram is following all the maxims except for the maxim of relation as in the end when he says "you are my best wife" it is not something related to the question asked.

When Frans visits Bram and the later asks him, (examples from text)

"BRAM: Hi Frans! When did you come? How are you bro?"

Frans replies as:

"FRANS: Very well. Bram, your wife is more beautiful, you are very lucky Bro hahaha"

Here, Frans is floating the maxims of quantity, manner and relation as he gave entirely irrelevant reply by praising about his wife's beauty thus floating the maxim of relation. Moreover, he says more than what is needed floating the maxim of quantity.

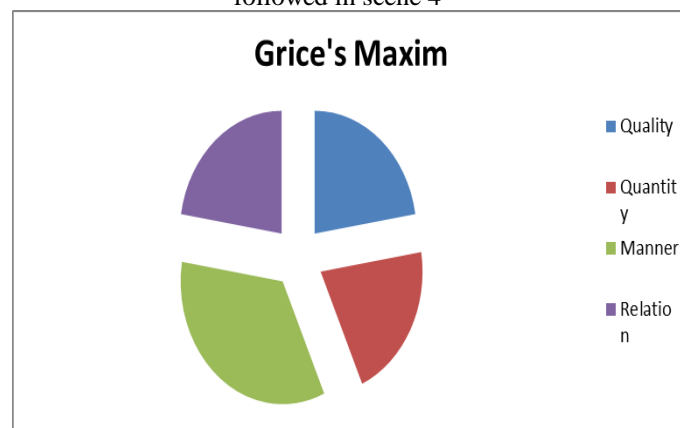
The author uses such techniques to create certain humorous effects. When Suketi is alone after Bram has left Reza and Agus come there with the intention of killing Suketi by taking the nail out of her head. Suketi asks them who are you? And Agus responds as "hands up" Here he violates all the maxims to create the threatening environment. Again when Suketi asks the evil Shaman,

SUKETI (ALIVE): Heh, what do you want? Go away! Don't touch me! THE EVIL SHAMAN: Hahahahahaha!

Suketi, your life will be end now! SUKETI (ALIVE): No! Go away! Go away! (lines from text)

Here the evil Shaman violates the maxim of quality and relation thus creating threatening environment.

Following diagram elaborates the proportion of maxims followed in scene 4



### 6.5 Scene 5

This scene starts when its night time and is set outdoor where Reza and Agus are gambling. The whole scene represents how supernatural effects can be created by keeping Suketi and Annabelle silent when others are talking to them. This seems spooky to the spectators and the effect is again achieved by making the supernatural characters violating the cooperative principles.

Following diagram elaborates the proportion of maxims followed in scene 5





### Conclusion

Humor is one of an opaque source for communication. The displayed "layering" of meaning is central to the performative particularities. There are several textual references discussed in detail, no doubt, kinds of humor in which speakers work together at all rates of utterance, locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. It violates the theory of non-cooperation of Attardo. For example, the interlocutors' violation of the maxims of manner is highly predictable manner, thus reaching the limit of Attardo (1999).

The same case can be seen in Levinson's (2000) discussion with reference to Sperber and Wilson (1986) asserted that texts are not greatly enriched with background information or evidences, but rather very selectively enriched. They need to learn the social norms and common ways of speaking to decide how specific job jokes are. Obviously there's a lot of humor in the dialogue, but the episodes aren't really fun for viewers. A general level of cognition alone is insufficient; humor enjoyment also has to do with subjective concerns. Local sequence production is a different dimension. Humor studies also take advantage of Levinson's (2000) concept that pragmatics as a preferred interpretation theory should be involved in humor based works for better understanding.

It is obvious from the study of humor based text that conversational as well as linguistic traditions and standards of all kinds possess the eminence of information, not of duty, as they are considered as the initial facts for comprehensible deviations.

Grice's model idea should be developed into a philosophy of combined action to examine satire, taking into account not only what is said, but also how it is said. The whole concept presented in this paper is considered to shed light upon the humor crowd of inference with various marks and degrees of efficacy. Analysis of contextualization techniques "piggy-backing" provides essential information and materials for creating layers within layers of meaning are one of these procedures have been addressed in the manner of conversation pragmatics.

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