

# A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE FLOUTING MAXIMS IN KICK ANDY TALK SHOW: "LASKAR PELANGI" BASED ON GRICE'S COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE

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## Abstract

*The present study addresses the issue of flouting maxims in talk show conversations viewed from a Gricean perspective. Conversations in Kick Andy talk show; "Laskar Pelangi" were analyzed with regard to acts of flouting of Grice's maxims. The qualitative data of the study gave evidence that three out of four Gricean maxims were flouted. The most frequently maxim flouted encountered was the maxim of quantity (71.42%); the second maxim flouted was the maxim of relevance (61.90%); and the least frequent maxim flouted was the maxim of manner (42%). Giving long-winded responses, changing the topic of the conversation abruptly, giving too much information than the situations required, and lacking of ability to interpret the questions were considered to be the causal factors of the speakers' failure in fulfilling the maxims.*

**Kata Kunci** : Gricean maxims; Flouting; Talk show; Failure

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Background and aim of the study

Language functions to transfer information (transactional) and to establish social relationship (interactional). When the communication between participants happens orally, it is then called conversation. Conversation involves at least a speaker and a hearer. In order to have smooth conversation, the speaker and the hearer have to be cooperative and have to give contributions that are needed in the conversation. The success of a conversation depends upon the various speakers' approach to the interaction. The way in which people try to make conversations work is called the *Cooperative Principle* (conceived originally by the philosopher H.P.Grice, 1975). Grice's Cooperative Principle is assumed to be a basic concept in pragmatics. The Cooperative Principle runs like this: "Make your 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" (Grundy 1999:74, Levinson 1995: 101, Thomas 1995, 61, Huang 2007: 25). According to the Cooperative Principle both speaker and hearer converse with the willingness to deliver and interpret a message. The speaker and hearer cooperate and that is why they communicate efficiently. In order to illustrate how to interpret meaning, Grice presented, in addition to the Cooperative Principle, four conversational maxims to show how to communicate effectively in the light of certain rules. Those four maxims

are maxim of quality, maxim of quantity, maxim of relevance and maxim of manner. The conversational maxims are not rules like phonological or syntactic rules. This principle is particularly about conversation, which about initial assumptions the speaker starts out with. It is important to fulfill these maxims because they specify what participants have to do in order to converse in a maximally efficient, rational, co-operative way: they should speak sincerely, relevantly, and clearly, while providing sufficient information (Levinson 1995; 102).

This present study tries to analyze flouting maxims in talk show conversations viewed from a Gricean perspective. Conversations in Kick Andy talk show; "Laskar Pelangi" were analyzed with regard to acts of flouting of Grice's maxims.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

### Grice on Implicature

Grice made a distinction between what is said by a speaker of a verbal utterance and what is implicated. What is implicated might be either *conventional* (that is, largely generated by the standing meaning of certain linguistic expressions, such as 'but' and 'moreover') or *conversational* (that is, dependent on the assumption that the speaker is following certain rational principles of conversational exchange). Grice's theory of implicature is an attempt to explain how a hearer gets what is meant, from the level of expressed meaning to the level of implied

meaning from what is said. (Levinson, 1983 Thomas, 1995).

### Grice's Cooperative Principle

A basic underlying assumption we make when we speak to one another is that we are trying to cooperate with one another to construct meaningful conversations. This assumption is known as the Cooperative Principle. Grice defines the Co-operative Principle (CP) in 'Logic and Conversation' as follows, "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" (Huang 2007:25, Yule 1996: 37, Thomas 1995:61, Levinson 1983, 101). In other words, we as speakers try to contribute meaningful, productive utterances to further the conversation. It then follows that, as listeners, we assume that our conversational partners are doing the same. You can think of reasons why someone might be uncooperative in conversation (maybe they're being interrogated for information they don't want to give up; maybe they hate the person they're talking to; maybe they're just crazy) but in the vast majority of conversations, it's safe to assume that both participants are trying to be cooperative.

Grice also identifies as guidelines of four basic maxims of conversation or general principles underlying the efficient co-operative use of language, which jointly express a general co-operative principle. Grice's co-operative principle and his four maxims are powerful tools when dealing with discourse and texts. A "maxim" is kind of like a rule of thumb. But these rules aren't nearly as hard and fast as the Cooperative Principle.

The maxim of Quality. Try to make your contribution one that is true, specifically:

- (1) Do not say what you believe to be false
- (2) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence

The Maxim of Quantity :

- (1) Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange (Don't say too much or too little).
- (2) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required

The maxim of Relevance. Make your contributions relevant (Stay on the topic)

The maxim of Manner. Be perspicuous, and specifically:

- (1) Avoid obscurity
- (2) Avoid ambiguity
- (3) Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
- (4) Be orderly

The four maxims, as specified above, can be rephrased as informativeness, faithfulness, relevance and perspicuity. It is important to

recognize Cooperative Principle and its maxims as unstated assumptions we have in conversations (Yule 1996:37). That is to say, if, in a conversation, a participant wants to fulfill the maxims of appropriate quantity, quality, relation or manner, he has to say no less and no more than what is required. In order for this to be fulfilled, the language must give him the freedom to choose a more or less specific expression, according to the circumstances. However, for one reason or another, he may also mark in his discourse that he may fail in adhering to one or more than one of the maxims under the Cooperative Principle.

In some cases, utterances may conform properly to the maxims. In some others, however, they may disregard one or more of the maxims by infringing, opting out of, flouting or violating them (Thomas, 1995). The infringement of the maxims occurs due to the imperfect linguistic performance of the speakers, e.g. low mastery of a language. The speakers opt out of observing the maxim if they decide not to cooperate in a conversation. For example, they prefer to say 'I don't think I can give you any information about it' or 'I can't tell you' even though they know the truth. The flouting of the maxims happens when speakers appear not to follow the maxims but expect hearers to appreciate the meaning implied, so the speakers deliberately break the maxims while still attempting to be cooperative in an exchange. The violation of the maxims, on the other hand, means the speakers intentionally disobey them, and are fully aware that the addressees will fail to perceive the real truth and interpret the speakers' utterance literally. As a consequence, the hearers falsely assume that speakers are cooperative while in fact there is a large lack of cooperation on the part of the speakers, resulting in misleading interpretation.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive qualitative research was employed in this study to analyze the data. The objective of this study was to analyze pragmatically the conversational implicatures of a conversational transcript based on Grice's Cooperative Principle and its maxims. The data of this study was the utterances which contained conversational implicature expressed by the guest stars of Kick Andy talk show. To obtain reliable data, the original VCD of Kick Andy "Laskar Pelangi" talk show was watched several times and then the transcription was made. The process of data analysis comprises arranging, organizing, categorizing, and interpreting. Kick Andy "Laskar Pelangi" program on Metro TV was selected since there were three famous writers and four

book readers who were invited to appear on that show and it was considered such an interesting thing to be analyzed. The dialogues from conversation transcript of Kick Andy program were analyzed based on Grice's Cooperative Principle and its maxims. The types of maxims flouted were classified and then the frequency of the occurrence of those flouted maxims was counted through the percentage figures. The formula used to was as follow:  $\frac{N}{?N} \times 100\%$

N : the number of each type of maxim flouted  
 ? N : the total number of maxim flouted

**4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The utterances taken from conversation transcript of Kick Andy "Laskar Pelangi" talk show were categorized and then analyzed based on Grice's Cooperative Principle and its maxims. Twenty-one utterances were considered to flout Grice's cooperative principle and its maxims. The report of the analysis was drawn as follow:

Table 1 : The report of the analysis

No	The Maxims Flouted	Dialogues	Frequency (%)
1	Maxim of Quality	-	-
2	Maxim of Quantity	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12,13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19,20	15 (71.42%)
3	Maxim of Relevance	1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21	13 (61.90%)
4	Maxim of Manner	1, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 19	9 (42%)

Based on the table above, it is clearly seen that three types of Gricean maxims are floated. The flouting on the maxim of quality is not encountered in the conversation. The most frequently maxim flouted in the conversation is maxim of quantity. It is floated for 15 times (71,42%). The next maxim floated is maxim of relevance (61.90%). The last maxim floated is maxim of manner. It is floated 9 times (42%). Each of maxims flouted will be analyzed one by one in the following part of this paper.

**Flouting the Maxim of Quantity**

A flout of the maxim of Quantity occurs when a speaker blatantly gives more or less in-

formation than the situation requires. (Thomas 1995, 69). The following dialogue is one of the examples of flouting maxim of quantity in the conversational transcript of Kick Andy "Laskar Pelangi" talk show.

Andi: Nah...ngomong-ngomong, kalo Siska nemu buku ini dimana?  
 (Ehm...by the way, where did you get this book, Siska?)

Siska: Dipinjamin sama temen sekamar...Jadi karena dia tahu saya suka baca, trus malem-malem saya... ehm... saya bingung mau ngapain...trus, katanya, 'Udah baca aja tuch, ada buku dipinjamin'. Dia dipinjamin juga, kayaknya sih bagus. Trus sudah saya baca...tengah malam gitu dia bangun mau ke kamar mandi....'Lo kenapa? Udah nangis...udah ...kok nggak jelas gitu'.

*(A roommate of mine ... because she knows that I like reading, then at night I....ehm....I got up and didn't know what to do....then she said, "Why don't you read, there is a book there". She was lent a book from a friend... and It looked interesting for me. Then I read it...in the middle of the night she got up to go to the bathroom..."Hey, what's wrong with you?" You....you...you're so weird??)*

Siska's response in the above dialogue appears to flout the maxim of quantity. She gives too much information that is not needed to answer Andy's question. The phenomena of giving too much information in response to the questions addressed to the interlocutors are mostly found in this talk show.

**Flouting the Maxim of Relevance**

The maxim of Relation ("Be relevant") is exploited by making a response or observation which is very obviously irrelevant to the topic in hand (e.g. by abruptly changing the subject, or by overtly failing to address the other people's goals in asking a question). In Kick Andy "Laskar Pelangi" talk show, the maxim of relevance is flouted 13 times (61,90%). An example of flouting the maxim of relevance by failing to address the topic is shown in the following dialogue.

Andy: Yak...disini juga ada seorang penulis buku yang sangat produktif. Namanya Gede Prama. Terima kasih untuk hadir bung Gede Prama ya...Yak, dalam buku-buku Anda banyak sekali yach...Anda menawarkan pemikiran-pemikiran, terus nilai filosofinya tinggi sekali. Saya termasuk pembaca beliau. Nah apa yang anda ingin sampaikan melalui buku-buku Anda?

*(Yupp...here, we also have a very productive book writer. His name is Gede Prama. Thanks for coming here Mr. Gede...In your books ...you offers some ideas, which possess very high philosophical values. I am one of his books' readers. So, what are you going to communicate from your books?)*

Gede Prama: Mau menjalankan panggilan kehidupan. Saya mengawali profesi penulis sekitar 27 tahun yang lalu, ketika saya masih SMP. Kala itu ada yang baca di koran. Manusia hidupnya tidak diselamatkan oleh pendidikan, tapi diselamatkan oleh ketrampilan. Saat itu saya berfikir apa ketrampilan yang harus saya kembangkan kalo mau hidup saya selamat sehingga satu-satunya pekerjaan yang tidak pernah saya lakukan tanpa terputus selama 27 tahun tuh menulis. Jadi ini memang sebuah pekerjaan yang tidak pernah putus, dan sampai hari ini teori itu betul. Yang menyelamatkan hidup saya adalah ketrampilan menulis

*(I want to perform the call of life. I started my writing profession since 27 years ago, when I was in Junior High School. At that time, I read something interesting in the newspaper. Man's life was not saved by the education, but it was saved by the skill. At that time I wondered what kind of skill I had to develop to save my life, so the only work I never stop doing in the last 27 years was writing. So this is indeed the work that I continuously do, and this theory works until now. Thing which saves my life is my writing skill.)*

Gede Prama seems failing to give the relevant response to Andy's question. He makes a response which is very obviously irrelevant to the topic in hand (by failing to address the other people's goals in asking a question). He also flouts maxim of quantity since he gives more informative response to the questions.

### Flouting Maxim of Manner

The maxim of manner is a matter of being clear and orderly when conversing. The speaker describes things in the order in which they occurred and avoids ambiguity and obscurity (Thomas, 1995). The examples where speakers are obscure or ambiguous, and also unclear to the point that the message is indecipherable for the hearer are also considered to be instances of breaking the maxim of manner. The following is an example of the flouting maxim of manner found in the dialogue.

Andy: Luar biasa kita disini semua dapat pencerahan hari ini yach.... Nah, di samping Anda ada seorang penulis juga. Nama-

nya Joseph Landrei. Jadi saya pembaca buku beliau tapi belum pernah ketemu orangnya. Pada hari ini saya baru pertama kali bertemu beliau ini. Buku pertama yang dibaca, saya dan istri membaca buku itu, 'Mimpi Anak Jadi Naga'. Apa sebenarnya isi buku itu?

*(Incredible we all here get the enlightenment today...Ok, beside me there is also a writer. His name is Joseph Landrei. I read his books but I never meet him. This is the first time I meet him. My wife and I have read his first book "Mimpi Anak Jadi Naga". Could you tell us about the book?)*

Joseph L: Ini ...Mimpi Anak Jadi Naga itu memang ada ceritanya gitu Pak...bahwa sebenarnya semua orang tua itu pengen anaknya sukses..paling tidak punya posisi, terkenal, punya duit, punya apa...paling tidak hidup nyaman lah gitu..Dalam hal ini saya pelajari ini. Anak itu sebenarnya semua punya bawaan Pak..Saya percaya itu..ada bawaan.Memang sih betul orang bisa bilang, kita ngelesin A,B,C,D, tapi nggak semua itu, bisa jadi nantinya. Jaman sekarang ini, the last twenty years belakangan ini, karena orang tua banyak punya uang, dulunya tuch mungkin miskin...sekarang banyak uang, jadi mungkin dia embat apa saja.. yang pasti anaknya musti lebih baik dari dia. Nah itu yang saya inspirasikan bahwa mungkin kurang tepat. Jadi saya bilang biarlah anak itu jadi apa adanya. Tentu saya tidak katakan kalo dia narkoba, kita biarkan saja, bisa rusak itu. Tetapi banyak orang tua begini coba anggap yach... yang simple aja. Saya katakan kalo bebek, jangan paksa jadi elang, Karena kalo paksa jadi elang, nanti tuch anak jadi belang..nggak bebek, nggak elang.

*This...Mimpi Anak Jadi Naga, indeed there is a story in it, Sir... it is undeniable that all parents want their children to be successful in life....at least the children hold a position, have money, have something....at least have a comfortable life..I take a lesson from this case that every child has talent, Sir. I believe it. It is indeed correct that people say , we send the children to get the additional course of A,B,C,D, but not children, later in the future be successful in their life. In this era, recently in the last twenty years, because the parents have much money, may be the parents used to be poor people...but now they have much money, so they do everything for their children. Their children must have better life than their parents are. In my opinion that is not absolutely*

*correct. So I suggest that let the children become what they want to be. Of course I do not say if they consume drugs, we just ignore them...it can be bad. But lots of parents do this...let me suggest simple thing...I say If it is a duck, don't force it to be an eagle. If you force your children to be an eagle, later they will become 'be-lang' (half a duck, half an eagle).....*

In the dialogue above, Joseph Landrei does not provide brief and clear response to Andy's question, and as the consequence he creates ambiguity. He is considered to have flouted the maxim of manner because of his incapability to speak clearly and he tends produce unnecessary prolixity.

### 5. CONCLUSION

Grice's maxims and the cooperative principle are used not only to understand how we communicate but also why and when we are uncooperative. When we converse we constantly fail to observe maxims in order to emphasize a message, create irony or to avoid unpleasant situations; in other words, to communicate effectively. In Kick Andy "Laskar Pelangi" talk show three out of four maxims are found flouted. Giving long-winded responses, changing the topic of the conversation abruptly, giving too much information than the situations required, and lacking of ability to interpret the questions were considered to be the causal factors of the speakers' failure in fulfilling the maxims.

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