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**Grice’s Cooperative Principles and Maxims**

In order to communicate successfully, human beings are supposed to obey to a certain mode of interaction. For this reason, the linguist, Herbert Paul Grice, developed a mode of interaction for successful communication called the Cooperative Principle (CP) and its maxims based on ordinary language philosophy. The CP has been mentioned in many pragmatics works such as Yule (1996) and Grundy (2000) for its influence on the field of pragmatics.

In order to communicate successfully, each interlocutor in every conversation is needed to follow certain conversational rules. Based on this condition, Grice developed the CP which every person should obey in order to realise a successful communication. Grice (1989) states the Cooperative Principle as follows: “Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of talk exchange in which you are engaged.” Furthermore, he develops the classification of maxims into:

**a.Maxim of Quality:** Try to make your contribution one that is true.

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

**b. Maxim of Quantity:**

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

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

**c. Maxim of Relation:** Be relevant.

**d. Maxim of Manner:** Be perspicuous.

1. Avoid obscurity of expression.

2. Avoid ambiguity.

3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).

4. Be orderly.

Below is the example of all maxims in one conversation.

1. A: Where is Juliet?
2. B: She is in her room, I’m sure.

It can be seen that speaker B, according to Grice’s framework, observes all of the maxims as he answers speaker A’s question clearly (Manner) and truthfully (Quality). Moreover, speaker B’s contribution is sufficiently provided (Quantity), and his answer is directly relevant to speaker A’s question (Relation).

Interlocutors in a conversation are often expected to follow all principles in order to communicate successfully. However, there are certain situations in which people fail to observe the maxims; they may intentionally or unintentionally fail to follow the maxims because of their purpose of interaction. Grice (1989:30) states that a participant in a conversation may fail to fulfill a maxim in various ways.

Furthermore, Grice makes a distinction between violating a maxim and openly flouting a maxim. If the speaker flouts a maxim, he has deliberately and openly failed to observe one or more maxims for (a) communicative purpose(s), which leads to implicatures in a conversation. Below is an example of flouting a maxim:

1. Leila: Whoa! Has your boss gone crazy?

Mary: Let’s go get some coffee. (Yule 1996: 43)

According to Yule, Mary intentionally flouts the maxim of Relevance to make an implicature in her answer to Leila’s question. There are certain reasons that makes Mary reply to Leila’s question by unrelated answer and Leila has to make some inference from Mary (for example, the boss might be nearby) and she understands why Mary makes an apparently non-relevant remark. The implicature here is that Mary cannot answer the question in that context.

On the other hand, Grice defines maxim violation as “is quiet and unostentatious”. If the speaker violates a maxim, he or she is liable to provide insufficient, ambiguous, or irrelevant information, which might negatively affect communication and do not lead to implicatures. Let us consider the following example for a better understanding about maxim violation. This example is an extract from a fictional interaction between Thompson and his girlfriend, Ginny:

(3)

Thompson has been refusing to kiss Ginny, her girlfriend. So, she starts to think he may be having an affair:

‘Thompson. I’ve got to ask you this.’

She stopped.

‘Ask me then ¬–’

‘Will you give me a truthful answer? However much you think it’ll hurt me?’

Ginny’s voice had a little quaver.

‘I promise.’ Ginny looked at him.

‘Is there another girl?’

Thompson raised his chin and looked at her.

‘No,’ he said. ‘There isn’t another girl.’

Later Thompson asserts that he is not having an affair with another girl but with another man, but Ginny cannot help believing him on the basis of information he provides. The fact is that Thompson is having an affair with another man, but he does not want to reveal such information; therefore, he misleads Ginny and, according to Grice’s framework, violates conversational maxims.