

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This chapter discusses the theories used as foundation of the research and the tools for analyzing the data. Particularly, this chapter explicates Grice's Cooperative Principle, its maxims and previous research on Grice's conversational maxims, and problems with Grice's theory. Moreover, the explanations of implicature, non-observance of maxims, and debate are also provided in this chapter.

2.1 Cooperative Principle

Communication can be seen as a cooperative act. People cooperate with each other as they communicate just as they do in any other shared activity. This is what an English language philosopher, Grice (1975), believes. He points out that communication is a cooperative behavior. The basic assumption is that any discourse, whether written or spoken, is a joint effort. Both the speaker and the addressee have to follow certain rules in order to communicate effectively. This assumption is called Cooperative Principle (as cited from Paltridge: 2000):

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, 1975:45)

He also suggests that each participant's contribution is governed by certain principles: do not provide more or less information than is required, speak the truth, be relevant, and be clear.

2.1.1 Conversational Maxims

In observing the Cooperative Principle, according to Grice (1975), speakers normally try to satisfy the four maxims. These maxims are expressed to speakers as a rule how they should contribute to a conversation.

Maxim of Quantity

The rule of this maxim is to give the right amount of information. It demands a speaker to give information as informative as required, not too much or even too little. According to Grice (1975), this maxim is followed by two maxims (as cited from Thomas, 1995: 63):

1. make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange);
2. do not make your contribution more informative than is required

A brief analog of this maxim runs as follow (as cited from Rachmawati: 2006):

If you are assisting me to mend me a car, I expect your contribution to be neither more or nor less than is required; if, for example, at a particular stage I need four screws, I expect you to hand me four, rather than two or six.

(Grice, 1975:47)

Maxim of Quality

This maxim requires true contribution. It deals with the quality of information that a speaker gives to his addressee. It is followed by two maxims (Grice: 1975):

1. do not say what you believe to be false;
2. do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence (as cited from Thomas, 1995: 63).

The following analog can explain this maxim more clearly (as cited from Rachmawati: 2006):

If, for example, at a particular stage I need sugar as ingredient in the cake, you are assisting me to make, I do not expect you to hand me a salt; if I need a spoon, I do not expect a trick spoon made of rubber.
(Grice, 1975:47)

Or, according to Cruse (2004), this maxim demands a speaker not to make unsupported statements.

Maxim of Relevance

This maxim is followed by only one maxim, namely be relevant. According to Thomas (1995:70), this maxim requires the speaker to be relevant to the context and situation in which the utterance occurs.

An analog of this maxim runs as follow (as cited from Rachmawati: 2006):

Applied to cooking process, this maxim requires the contribution of the speaker to be appropriate to immediate needs at each stage of the transaction; if I am mixing ingredients for a cake, I do not expect to be

handed a good book, or even an oven cloth (though this might be an appropriate contribution at a later stage).

(Grice, 1975: 47)

Maxim of Manner

As cited by Thomas (1995: 64), this maxim is a matter of being clear and orderly when conversing. The speaker describes things in order in which they occurred and avoids ambiguity and obscurity.

It falls into more detailed maxims (Grice: 1975):

1. avoid obscurity of expression;
2. avoid ambiguity;
3. be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity);
4. be orderly (as cited from Thomas, 1995: 64).

As stated above, people try to be cooperative in communicating. By obeying this principle, they will achieve an efficient and effective conversation. Below is an example of how the principle works in a conversation taken from Thomas (1995:64):

- (1) Husband : Where are the key cars?
Wife : They are on the table in the hall.

The example above is a good example of how the principle works in a conversation. The wife provided information that is required by her husband. She answered clearly (Manner), provided truthful answer (Quality), gave the right amount of the

information (Quantity), and directly addressed her husband's intention in asking the question (Relation). She said what she meant precisely.

2.2 Implicature

In verbal exchanges, people often say something differently from what they really mean. The speakers do not state directly what they mean but hint it at the words to be interpreted by the hearers.

In linguistics, such a phenomenon is called implicature. An implicature is something implied, meant, or suggested different from what is said. Blakemore, in her book *Understanding Utterances* (1992) provides the following example (as cited from Paltridge, 2000: 43):

- (2) A: What's on television?
B: (After looking at the newspaper) Nothing.

In the example above, clearly, B does not mean 'nothing at all', but rather 'nothing worth watching'. A will assume this and implicate the second speaker's meaning.

Grice discusses two different types of implicature: conventional and conversational implicature. Thomas (1995:57) points out that in conventional implicature, no matter what the context is, the implication remains the same. Levinson (1983: 127) lists four examples of conventional implicature: *but*, *ever*, *therefore*, and *yet* (as cited from Thomas, 1995:57). Below is the example of conventional implicature taken from Grundy (1995:47):

- (3) He is smart but not at all boring.

The implicature in the stated example, depends on the word *but*, is that most people smart are boring. The implication of *but* shows the contrast what come before and after it (As cited from Dornerus: 2005).

Conversational implicature, on the other hand, is generated directly by the speaker depending on the context. This implicature may or may not be understood (Thomas, 1995:58). The dialogues below, taken from Cruse (2004:349), illustrate the explanation above:

- (4) A: Have you cleared the table and washed the dishes?
B: I've cleared the table.
- (5) A: Am I in time for supper?
B: I've cleared the table

In dialogue (4), B's implication is that he has cleared the table but has not washed the dishes. While in dialogue (5), B's implication is that A is late for dinner (Cruse, 2004:349).

2.3 Violating a Maxim

There are times when people fail to observe the conversational maxims. Thomas (2000: 64) states that incapability of speaking clearly and deliberate decision to lie are two examples of the reasons why people fail to observe a maxim.

Grice discusses that there are four ways of not observing a maxim. The first category is called flouting a maxim. It occurs when a speaker does not intend to mislead the hearer, but wish him to look for what is implied. To illustrate it further, Thomas (1995:71) provides the following example:

- (6) This interaction occurred during a radio interview with an unnamed official from the United States Embassy in Port-au-Prince, Haiti:

Interviewer : Did the United States Government play any part of Duvalier's departure? Did they, for example, actively encourage him to leave?

Official : I would not try to steer you away from that conclusion.

The official could simply have replied: 'Yes'. Her actual response is extremely long-winded and complicated. Moreover, it is obviously no accident, nor through any inability to speak clearly, that she has failed to observe the maxim of Manner. There is, however, no reason to believe that the official is being deliberately unhelpful (she could, after all, have simply refused to answer at all, or said, 'No comment').

The second type of the non-observance of maxims is named violating a maxim. It happens when a speaker is liable to mislead the hearer. This type of non-observance will be further explained later.

The third one is infringing a maxim, which occurs when a speaker unintentionally fails to observe a maxim. This non-observance occurs from imperfect linguistic performance rather than from the desire of the speaker to generate an implicature. (Thomas,1995:74).

The last type of the non-observance of maxims is opting out a maxim. It happens when a speaker unwilling to cooperate in the way the maxim requires. To illustrate this, the following example—taken from BBC Radio 4 (1991) is presented:

- (7) *The Conservative M.P., Teddy Taylor, had been asked a question about talks he had had with Colonel Gadaffi:*

‘Well, honestly, I can’t tell you a thing, because what was said to me was told me in confidence’ (As cited from Thomas, 1995:74).

However, Thomas (1995:72) points out that the need for the fifth category of non-observance of maxims, suspending a maxim, has been suggested by several writers. It occurs because there are certain events in which there is no expectation on the part of any participant that the maxims will be fulfilled (therefore the non-fulfillment does not generate any implicature). Suspending a maxim may be culture-specific or specific to particular events (Thomas, 1995:76). Below is an example of suspension of a maxim—taken from Hillerman (1990):

(8) *The speaker in this example and the next is the daughter of a murdered man. She is talking to Officer Jim Chee of the Navajo Tribal Police:*

‘Last time you were with the FBI man—asking about the one who got killed,’ she said, respecting the Navajo taboo of not speaking the name of the dead. ‘You find out who killed that man?’ (As cited from Thomas, 1995:76).

In the example above, the speaker fails on three occasions to observe the maxim of Quantity. On the first occasion, she refers vaguely to ‘the FBI man’, thereby generating the (true) implicature that she does not know his name. Then she refers in a similarly vague fashion to ‘the one who got killed’ and ‘that man’. Normally this would generate exactly the same implicature (that she does not know the name of the man). However, among the Navajo, this implicature would not be generated in the case of a person who had died a violent or premature death, because to mention his or her name in these circumstances is taboo. In this case, the non-observance of the maxim of

Quantity generates no implicatures because all the participants know that it is suspended. (Thomas, 1995:76).

Since this research focuses on the violation to the conversational maxims, this section will be emphasizing its discussion more on the violation to the maxims. In a conversation, as stated above, when a speaker is liable to mislead the hearer, it means that he violates a maxim (Grice: 1975). Here is the example taken from Thomas (1995:73-74):

- (9) *An English athlete, Diane Modahl, the defending Commonwealth Games 800 metres champion, pulled out her opening race and returned to England. Caroline Searle, press officer for the England team, said:*

‘She has a family bereavement; her grandmother has died.’

The next day it was announced that Ms. Modahl had been sent home following a positive test for drugs. What Ms. Searle had said was true, but the implicature (that the reason for Modahl’s returning home was bereavement) was false.

This type of non-observance regularly occurs in certain activity types such as trials, parliamentary speeches and arguments (Thomas, 1995:74). To make it more clearly, Cook (1989) provides another example:

- (10) The situation happens when two friends are talking over a cup of coffee:

A: What did you do on Friday?

B: Nothing special. I went to work.

It was an appropriate response given by B to the question asked by A. However, if someone were asked the same question as a witness in a court of law, a more appropriate reply might be ‘I woke up at seven forty. I made some toast and a cup of tea. I listened to the news. And I left for work about eight

thirty.’ Here, in order to be truthful, the speaker can no longer be so brief (as cited from Paltridge, 2000: 41). If, however, the witness were to say:

- (11) I woke up in bed. I was in bed. I was wearing pajamas. After lying still for a few minutes, I threw back the duvet, got out of bed, walked to the door of the bedroom, opened the door, switched on the landing light, walked across the landing, opened the bedroom door, went into the bathroom, put the basin plug into the plughole, turned on the hot tap, ran some hot water into the wash basin, looked in the mirror...

(Cook, 1989:69)

The witness’s reply would be even more truthful, but—this time—violating the maxim of quantity. He replies more than what is needed. A speaker may say more than what is required to indicate a sense of occasion, such as with a farewell speech, or with the effect of being blunt, or rude (as cited from Paltridge, 2000: 41).

2.3.1 Previous Research

There are numbers of researches on Grice’s conversational maxims. Myers (2000) conducts a study on violation of Grice’s Cooperative Principles in billboard advertisements (as cited from Prayitno: 2005).

The similar study is also conducted by Prayitno (2005). The comparable studies that focus on joke are investigated by Rachmawati (2006) and Firmansyah (2006).

The results of those studies show that the violation of maxims of quality and manner are the most frequent violations that occur in joke. While in advertisements, the maxim of quality becomes the most frequent violated maxim.

Another interesting research on the same theory is a research conducted by Dornerus (2005). She conducts a comparative study of

how scriptwriters break maxims in *Desperate Housewives* and *That 70's Show*.

She suggests that maxims are important for scriptwriters in order to evoke feelings and reactions of their audience. In the shows that she chooses to examine, maxims are broken in almost every interaction. It is necessary for scriptwriters to have the characters break maxims in order to create and develop humorous and dramatic situations in verbal interaction.

She finds that the maxim of relevance is the maxim that is most frequently flouted to create the different comical situations. The maxim of manner and quantity is also commonly flouted mainly to create humorous situations. The reason is that the characters in *That 70's Show* are often portrayed as slow and weird, not cruel or deceitful.

On the other hand, the maxims of quantity and quality are more often broken in *Desperate Housewives*, a dramatic context, in order to make the characters look shifty and unreliable. Since in drama shows, there are more frauds, infidelity, and mystery, the characters have more desire to mislead their interlocutors than the characters in comedies do.

In *That 70's Show*, humor is created when the interlocutor understands the speaker's implicature and takes offence or does not, and thus appears stupid. In *Desperate Housewives*, drama is created when the speaker intends to mislead the interlocutor and appear as deceitful or

when the interlocutor understands the implication of the speaker's utterance and gets offended by it.

Although there are numbers of comparable studies using the same theory, a research on Grice's conversational maxim in debate has not been found.

2.4 Problems with Grice's Theory

As cited from Thomas (1995:87), there are a number of problems related to Grice's theory:

To begin with, sometimes an utterance regularly has a range of possible interpretations. Thus, it is occasionally difficult to figure out when the speaker intentionally fails to observe a maxim and consequently that an implicature is intended. In other words, it is hard to know whether a speaker says what he really means or not.

Thomas (1995:89) provides the examples below related to the first problem with Grice's theory:

- (1) This note was sent by the head of a University department to all members of her department:

To all staff:

The Window cleaners will be in the building during the weekend 28th/29th November.

Please clear your windowsills and any valuables away.

It is rather difficult to figure out whether the sender was intentionally implying that window cleaners are dishonest, or whether this is simply an unfortunate inference which some readers might draw. Within Grice's theory,

it is difficult to explain in cases like the example above which implicature are intended.

Secondly, there is difficulty in differentiating types of non-observance of maxims, for instance, a violation from infringement. Grice does not explain how an interlocutor is supposed to differentiate between, for instance, a violation and an infringement to generate any implicature.

An example below is taken from Thomas (1995: 90):

- (2) Bluey, a married woman, has become friendly with James and has indicated that she would like to start asexual relationship with him. James doesn't want to become more deeply involved with Bluey, but neither does she want to hurt her feelings.

'You can't refuse just to come and have a drink with me,'

Bluey said to James.

'I don't want to refuse,' James said.

The utterance 'I don't want to refuse' can be interpreted in several ways. If James did not really want to refuse, it means that he really wanted to come. Otherwise, he said so because he did not want to disappoint her by refusing straightforwardly her invitation to come.

The third problem occurs due to different nature of maxims. Thomas (1995:91) states that not all Grice's maxims are of the same order. The operation of the maxim of quality is the most straightforward. It is generally yes/no—someone is either telling the truth or not.

Nevertheless, the maxims of quantity and of manner can be observed to a greater or less degree. It is rarely possible precisely the right amount of information or to speak with perfect clarity. Examples below are taken from Thomas (1995:91):

(3) The final night of the budget debate featured at its beginning and the end the first public performance of the new Lawson/Tebbit axis, the most principled alliance of its kind since the Aesthetically Handicapped Sisters put the squeeze on poor Cinderella.

(4) I once arrived at a Lancaster hospital for a meeting I was scheduled to attend, and the chairman said to me:

It's really very kind of you to come.

Example (3) was so complicated that the maxim of manner was clearly violated, whereas in example (4), it is hard to determine whether the maxim of manner was being flouted or not. The utterance in that example seemed effusive for a meeting which actually had been organized for 'I' to attend. It also cannot be concluded whether the chairman was being sarcastic or not to the invited person.

The next problem is that the maxims may overlap. It is not easy to determine which maxim is being invoked. Particularly, the maxims of quantity and of manner seem to overlap, as in the following example (Thomas, 1995: 92):

(5) A: What did you have to eat?
B: Something masquerading as chicken *chasseur*.

In the example above, B seemed to give more information that was required. He could just have said: *chicken chasseur*. On the other hand, the word *masquerading* appeared to flout the maxim of manner—since B was not being brief in answering the question.

In addition, the maxims overlap may also occur between the maxim of quantity and of relevance, as in the example below (Thomas 1995: 92)

- (6) Polonius: What do you read, My Lord?
Hamlet : Words, words, words.

In the dialogue above, Hamlet gave less information than was required by Polonius; thus, he violated the maxim of quantity. Moreover, he also violated the maxim of relevance as he failed to fulfill Polonius's goal.

From the two examples, it can be seen that the requirement of the CP in making the contribution such as is required is probably different for the speaker and hearer. An 'enough' information for the speaker may not be 'enough' for the hearer and vice versa.

The second thing that can be concluded from this fourth problem with Grice's theory is that the maxim of relevance seems to be in operation in every talk exchange.

The last problem is calculability. Grice did not provide a stable general principle on the basis of conventional meaning together with contextual information. On the other hand, the principle is needed to figure out the intended meaning made by a speaker since it presents a clear step to decide of how to figure out or to interpret the utterance; whether comparison from the information given by the speaker, the exact opposite, or an unrelated implicature need to be looked for.

2.5 Debate

Since this study focuses on conversational maxims in debate, it is obvious that debate should be clarified further. In Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1995), debate is defined as:

- a. A formal argument or discussion of a question, e.g. at a public meeting or in Parliament or Congress, with two or more opposing speakers, and often ending in a vote;
- b. argument or discussion in general.

In addition, debate is “a formal method of interactive and position representational argument. Debate is a broader form of argument than logical argument, since it includes persuasion which appeals to the emotional responses of an audience, and rules enabling people to discuss and decide on differences, within a framework defining how they will interact” (Bluedorn: 2008).

From the definitions above, it can be concluded that debate is a discussion involving two or more speakers who have different views on the discussed topic.

In accordance with Bluedorn (2008) and Rowe (2008), Debate is divided into four types; they include:

1. Parliamentary Debate. This debate goes on in colleges and universities. This debate happens between two people on each side where the resolution changes every round and pre-prepared evidence is not allowed.
2. Lincoln-Douglas Debate (also called value debate) is modeled after the namesake for the activity. In an Illinois election of the mid-1800s, Abe Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas debated the slavery issue before audiences in different towns around the state. In this

type of debate, two contestants will debate topics centered on moral issues or propositions of value or preference. It occurs between one person on each side where there is only one resolution each year and pre-prepared evidence is required.

3. Cross Examination Debate (also called policy debate or team debate). In this type of debate, two team of two debaters advocate or oppose a plan derived from a resolution that usually calls for a change in policy by a government. Team normally alternate, and compete in rounds as either "affirmative" or "negative". In most forms of the activity, there is a fixed topic for an entire year or another set period. In comparison to parliamentary debate, policy debate relies more on researched evidence and tends to have a larger sphere of what is considered legitimate argument, including counter plans, critical theory, and debate about the theoretical standards of the activity itself.
4. Academic Debate. This is a debate of a purely academic nature. This kind of debate occurs in schools, colleges, and universities. The purpose is to learn how to debate, argue, and do research. It will not influence a decision at all. There is no voting involved in this debate. The function of this kind of debate is to teach students how to debate.

Bluedorn (2008) states that all forms of debate, whether consciously or not, make certain assumptions about argumentation theory. The core concept

of argumentation theory is the notion of advocacy. In most cases, at least one side in a debate needs to maintain the truth of some proposition. A debate could also potentially be between two or more competing propositions or actions. Alternatively, debate could also be a purely exercise of charisma and emotion with no assumption of fixed advocacy, but it would possibly lose much of its consistency.

2.5 Concluding Remark

This chapter explained the theory used in this research, namely, Cooperative Principle along with its maxims stated by Grice. This section also discussed theory of implicature that clarifies how people get the intended meaning from what is said. In addition, the non-observance of maxims explaining how people fail to observe the conversational maxims, the previous researches on the conversational maxims, problem with Grice's theory, and theory of debate were inserted to complete the research. The methodology of the research will be presented in the next chapter.