

## **An analysis of Paul Grice's Maxims cooperative principle in sari-sari store conversation**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study entitled "An Analysis of Maxim's Cooperative Principle in Sari-Sari Store Conversation aimed to analyze, scrutinize and identify how the cooperative principle used in a conversation. The study focused on the analysis to what extent the four maxims violate in the conversation between the buyer and the seller. Furthermore, it sought to find out if it is possible that only one of the maxims is opted in the conversation. Therefore, a cautious look to any conversational exchanges must be taking aside for. The study revealed that a specific sari-sari store the conversation exchanged violate the four maxims. From the results formulated, the findings concluded that although Cooperative Principle describes the best practices in communication, in order to facilitate the process of conversation to be smoother for both the listener and speaker, people frequently disobey these maxims in order to achieve certain purposes.

Keywords: *Maxims, cooperative principle, sari-sari store conversation*

## INTRODUCTION

One of the basic problems when speaking an utterance is the use of inappropriate feedback in response to the messages received because we convey information that is not relevant to the context of the utterance. People must learn how to communicate properly and clearly to send clear and concise messages. The verbal component refers to the content of the message, the choice and its arrangement of words. When interpreting an utterance of a sentence, one assumes that the speaker complied with a number of principles ensuring that conversation is a cooperative activity.

In the Philippines, it is common that when someone asks something, the receiver tends to answer inappropriate feedback that does not even contribute to the conversation. As stressed by Grice (1975), "Make your contribution such as it required at the stage at which it occurs by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged." We believe that it is very important to have a proper way of speaking. In this research, we will know how Maxim's Cooperative Principle can make a conversation successful.

## METHOD

This study was qualitative in nature that employs a conversation analysis. It is an approach of social interaction, both verbal and non-verbal conduct, in situation of everyday life and has a distinctive and successful approach to the analysis of social interaction of Paul Grice's Maxim. The Cooperative Principle espoused by Paul Grice's serves as the main theoretical framework that guided the researcher in the analysis of the data gathered. The respondents of this study were the seller and buyer of a specific sari-sari store. They were the key sources for linguistic data gathered in this study. The tool used in this study was a mobile phone to record the conversation. The record function of the mobile phone served as an accurate method to capture the exchanges conversation in verbatim.

The data used for this study was the transcript of 15 exchanges conversation between the sari-sari store owner and random buyers. When analyzing the data in light of the guide research problem. Researcher must analyze each conversation using Paul Grice's Cooperative Principle.

The researcher considered the ethical issues surrounding the study. The researcher collected information for the specific purpose of understanding and applying

conversation analysis to linguistic data. And in doing so, adhered to the accepted code of conduct. As for the ethical issues in relation to data gathering procedure. The researcher obtained the informed consent of the owner of the sari-sari store. The owner of the sari-sari store was informed about the purpose of the study, the names of the random buyers were not taken nor revealed in this research. And thus, confidentiality and privacy were ensured.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Description: A young girl ages 10-12-year-old. Wearing red dress with a pony tail.

001: Ayo, naa moy ice water?

002: Tag dos.

003: Ay kulang diay ko ug piso.

This conversation doesn't follow the Paull Grice's maxims whereas it violates the Maxim of Quantity. The speaker should give the accurate contribution to be informative as what the Maxim oblige. This kind of violation is what we called the Opting Out, this happens when the speaker knows the maxim, but just taking aside of it. In this conversation, the seller gives an inappropriate answer to the buyer. The question thrown is answerable by yes or no but the seller responded with the price. As a result, both of them does not achieve proper way of communication. Furthermore, if people do not know how to give appropriate response, a conflict would probably arise.

### Conversation 2

Description: Two boys ages 9-10-year-old, wears green shirt, the other wears white shirt

004: Naa moy pikolo?

005: 00 Pila kabook?

006: Diyes.

This conversation violates the maxim of Quantity. The speaker should give the accurate contribution to be informative as what the Maxim oblige. This kind of violation is what we called the Opting Out, this happens when the speaker knows the maxim. But just taking aside of it. In this conversation, the buyer answered

the seller with the price of the thing instead of the number of pieces he will purchase. People at times, responded too quickly without thinking what to say.

### Conversation 3

Description: A teenage girl ages 19-20, tall, small face, fair complexion and has a tantalizing eye.

007: Palitadawkoana miss o,kanaoh,kanang color yellow.

008: Asa,kani ?

009: 0.

This conversation follows the Cooperative Principle of Paul Grice's Maxim of Quantity whereas both the seller and buyer exchanged conversation accurately and clearly. This kind of conversation is common especially when people wanted to explain or point out something, they really get an exact feedback from the hearer.

### Conversation 4

Description: Boy ages 22-25, dark complexion, 5'2-5'3 inches, wears black shirt.

010: Marlboro daw, Marlboro.

011: Wala.

This conversation follows the Cooperative Principle of Paul Grice's Maxim of Quantity whereas both the seller and buyer exchanged conversation accurately and clearly. The seller's answer was short yet informative. This kind of conversation is also simple. The seller gets the point of answering and gives the desired feedback to the buyer. Always stick on the topic otherwise, the conversation will be slow and will end to unnecessary things. The speaker and the listener could understand each other easily if they are both informative. Thus, this kind of conversation can result to a definite and clear communication.

### Conversation 5

Description: A young girl, wearing white dress ages 10-13-year-old

012: Palitdawana oh, kana oh!

013: Diara o.

This conversation follows the Cooperative Principle of Paul Grice's Maxim of Quantity whereas both the seller and buyer exchanged conversation accurately and clearly. When people try to point out something, most commonly they receive accurate feedback.

#### Conversation 6

Description: A 25-30-year-old man wearing white shirt

014: Palit daw ko, naa moy makabusog diri? Ah, buhi pa gani ta gilangaw nata unsaon

nalang kaya pag patayna. Kaninalangakoah ,Rebisco.

015: Says, pila kabook?

016: Naa moy softdri nks?

017: Sting lang.

This conversation doesn't follow the Paul Grice's maxims whereas it violates the Maxim of Quantity. The speaker should give the accurate contribution to be informative as what the Maxim oblige. This kind of violation is what we called the Opting Out this happens when the speaker knows the maxim, but just taking aside of it. In this conversation, the buyer gives an inappropriate answer to the seller. The question thrown is answerable by yes or no but the buyer responded with a suggested drink. As a result, both of them does not achieve proper way of communication. Furthermore, if people do not know how to give appropriate response, a conflict would probably arise.

#### Conversation 7

Description: A young man ages 19-23, wearing black shirt, with a cap on his head.

018: Naa moy Marlboro?

019: Unsa na Marlboro?

020: Kanang pula.

021: Hulat lang.

This conversation follows the maxim because as we can see the buyer asked the seller if Marlboro cigarette is available, though the question is close ended, but in

this case, the seller clarified what kind of Marlboro cigarette the buyer wanted to have. If the seller answered it directly with yes, perhaps a problem would arise because of not clarifying what type of Marlboro cigarette. It is important in communication to think first before giving feedback.

#### Conversation 8:

Description: A middle - aged man ages 45-50, with white hair, wearing white shirt and a khaki short.

022: Naa moy ice water diha miss?

023: Ambot lang kong naaba.

024: Kung wala inom na lang kog tubig.

This conversation follows the Cooperative Principle of Paul Grice's Maxim of Quantity whereas both the seller and buyer exchanged conversation accurately and clearly. The seller's answer was short yet informative. This kind of conversation is also simple. The seller gets the point of answering and gives the desired feedback to the buyer. Always stick on the topic otherwise, the conversation will be slow and will end to unnecessary things. The speaker and the listener could understand each other easily if they are both informative. Thus, this kind of conversation can result to a definite and clear communication.

#### Conversation 9

Description: A young aged man, smiling face ages 20-23-year-old, wearing gray shirt and a headband on his head

025: Ayo mamalit ko.

026: Unsa man?

027: Palit kog Jackpot.

028: Jackpot?

029 :(Tando)

This conversation follows the Cooperative Principle of Paul Grice's Maxim of Quantity whereas both the seller and buyer exchanged conversation accurately and clearly. The seller's answer was short yet informative. This kind of conversation is also simple. The seller gets the point of answering and gives the desired feedback to the buyer. In the conversation, we notice also that the seller asked again the buyer to clarify further to avoid mistakes. Always stick on the

topic otherwise, the conversation will be slow and will end to unnecessary things. The speaker and the listener could understand each other easily if they are both informative. Thus, this kind of conversation can result to a definite and clear communication.

#### Conversation 10

Description: A young beautiful small girl, ages 8-110 years old. wearing a black headband on her head with a blue shirt and maroon skirt.

030: Mamalit ko.

031: Sa man?

032: Palit kog uling.

033: Wa la mi uling.

This conversation follows the Cooperative Principle of Paul Grice's Maxim of Quantity whereas both the seller and buyer exchanged conversation accurately and clearly. The seller's answer was short yet informative. This kind of conversation is also simple. The seller gets the point of answering and gives the desired feedback to the buyer. Always stick on the topic otherwise, the conversation will be slow and will end to unnecessary things. The speaker and the listener could understand each other easily if they are both informative. Thus, this kind of conversation can result to a definite and clear communication.

#### Conversation 11

Description: A young handsome teenage boy, wearing green shirt with a grey pants, covered in jewelry

034: Naa moy Marlboro Black?

035: Wala

This conversation follows the Cooperative Principle of Paul Grice's Maxim of Quantity whereas both the seller and buyer exchanged conversation

Accurately and clearly. The seller's answer was short yet informative. This kind of conversation is also simple. The seller gets the point of answering and gives the desired feedback to the buyer. Always stick on the topic otherwise, the conversation will be slow and will end to unnecessary things. The speaker and the

listener could understand each other easily if they are both informative. Thus, this kind of conversation can result to a definite and clear communication.

#### Conversation 12

Description: A teenage girl wearing sleeveless shirt and sexy short

035: Naamoy load?

036: Unsana load?

037: TM.

038: Pila man?

039: 20.

This conversation follows the maxim because as we can see the buyer asked the seller if load is available, though the question is close ended, but in this case, the seller clarified what kind of load the buyer wanted to have. If the seller answered it directly with yes, perhaps a problem would arise because of not clarifying what type of load. It is important in communication to think first before giving feedback.

#### Conversation 13

Description: A young boy ages 12-15-year-old. wearing short and white polo shirt

040: Unsa imo?

041: Nescafe original

042: kanilang?

This conversation follows the Cooperative Principle of Paul Grice's Maxim of Quantity whereas both the seller and buyer exchanged conversation accurately and clearly. The seller's answer was short yet informative. This kind of conversation is also simple. The seller gets the point of answering and gives the desired feedback to the buyer. Always stick on the topic otherwise, the conversation will be slow and will end to unnecessary things. The speaker and the listener could understand each other easily if they are both informative. Thus, this kind of conversation can result to a definite and clear communication.

#### Conversation 14



Description: A young boy ages 10-15 wearing black shirt and shorts

043: Naamoy pan?

044: Unsana pan?

045: Walamo atong daghag asukar? Ah, kana diay o.

046: Kini?

047: Kanang isa.

048: O, kini?

This conversation doesn't follow the Paul Grice's maxims whereas it violates the Maxim of Quantity. The speaker should give the accurate contribution to be informative as what the Maxim oblige. This kind of violation is what we called the Opting Out, this happens when the speaker knows the maxim. but just taking aside of it. Where in the buyer asked question if what kind of bread the buyer wants which the seller responded with a question rather than yes or no answer. This kind of violation is called Opting Out. Most commonly, people used this type of conversation especially when they wanted to receive a direct response not even considering whether he/she had given an appropriate feedback. However, this conversation is discouraged since it could lead to misunderstanding.

#### Conversation 15

Description: A young cute teenage girl ages 18-20 wearing orange shirt and shorts

049: Naa moy sibuyas?

050: Singko

This conversation doesn't follow the Paul Grice's maxims whereas it violates the Maxim of Quantity. The speaker should give the accurate contribution to be informative as what the Maxim oblige. This kind of violation is what we called the Opting Out, this happens when the speaker knows the maxim, but just taking aside of it. Wherein the seller responded an inappropriate feedback to the question of the buyer which is only answerable by yes or no. Though the seller directly responded the buyer with the price of the onion which we may think that if he had given the price that means onion is available in the store, however, this does not follow correct feed backing. This kind of violation is called Opting Out. Most commonly, people used this type of conversation especially when the speaker wanted to receive a direct response without considering whether he/she had given

an appropriate feedback. However, this conversation is discouraged since it could lead to misunderstanding.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

There are some instances where the buyer and the seller violate the four maxims. First, when the buyer asks something to buy the seller responded with an inappropriate answer. Although it is understood by the buyer still it does not follow the accurate way of communication. Second, the seller at times doesn't know how to approach the buyer properly which results to poor communication. Third, the laziness of the seller to answer properly affects proper communication. As observed from several conversations, the seller responded indirectly to the question of the buyer to receive an immediate feedback. According to Tupan and Natalia (2008) in their investigation of multiple violations of characters in *Desperate Housewives* TV series, their study 27 revealed that the purpose of violating maxim was mainly to eliminate the chance of speakers to respond. Say for instance in Conversation 1, where the buyer tells the seller that s/he wanted to buy an ice water but instead the seller would ask the buyer "how many", the seller responded with the price. The maxim that is mostly observed in the recorded conversations is the Maxim of Quantity, likewise, the maxim that is mostly violated in the recorded conversations is the Maxim of Quantity. As what Lundstrom (2004) said, when a hearer misinterprets what the speaker wanted to convey the purpose meaning of speaker's utterance there would be misunderstanding occurs. It happens when a listener jumps for a different conclusion than the speaker wanted to relay.

The violation of cooperative principle is classified as follows:

- a) Opting out. Making clear that the speaker is aware of the maxim but is prevented for some reason from observing it.
- b) Violating a maxim. Often with an intention to mislead this is often a quiet act, also known as lying.
- c) Flouting. This occurs when the speaker makes it clear to the hearer that he/she is aware of the Cooperative Principle and the Maxims, so that the audience is led to consider why the principle of maxim was broken. The possible reasons why they are violated are when the speaker takes aside the maxim even though they are aware of it. Thomas (1995) intends that the speaker speaks the truth but implies what is false. Violating is frequently used in advertising when the advertising agency wants the

consumer to buy their product. Often claiming that by buying a certain product the customer can save 28% up till 25% without stating that he/she can actually get the said discount. This leads the customer to draw an incorrect conclusion

Recommend that the future researcher would conduct the same study using the Politeness Theory whereas this so-called theory is designed to correct the affront to face posed by face threatening acts to addressees. The Politeness theory implies the expression of the speakers' intention to scrutinize face threats that carried by any certain threatening face acts toward another. I recommend to have more data sources. The more data gathered the more accurate the study is.

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