

VIOLATION OF GRICE MAXIM IN *HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN*

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Abstrak

Kompetensi pragmatis sangat penting untuk komunikasi yang efektif, namun kepentingannya sering diabaikan dalam pendidikan akademis dan aplikasi nyata. Kesenjangan yang signifikan dalam literatur adalah terbatasnya fokus pada bagaimana teori pragmatik, seperti prinsip kooperatif Grice, termanifestasi dalam dialog yang dituliskan namun bersifat naturalistik, seperti yang ada dalam film. Penelitian ini meneliti pelanggaran terhadap maksim percakapan Grice dalam film *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004) untuk menghubungkan jurang pemisah antara wawasan teoritis dan pola wacana yang dapat diamati dalam media populer. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, data dikumpulkan dari skenario film dan dianalisis untuk menemukan contoh-contoh di mana karakter melanggar maksim kuantitas, kualitas, cara, dan hubungan. Pengumpulan data melibatkan pengamatan yang cermat terhadap interaksi karakter, dilengkapi dengan tinjauan naskah dan transkripsi. Prosedur analisis termasuk mengklasifikasikan ujaran berdasarkan maksim yang dilanggar dan menginterpretasikan setiap ujaran dalam konteks naratif dan emosional. Temuan-temuan tersebut mengungkapkan 39 kasus pelanggaran maksim yang menonjol, terutama yang melibatkan *Manner* dan *Quality*. Pelanggaran-pelanggaran ini sering kali didorong oleh motif-motif seperti menjaga kerahasiaan, menahan emosi, humor, dan penipuan.

Kata kunci: film, maksim, pragmatis, pelanggaran, prinsip kooperatif.

Abstract

Pragmatic competence is essential for effective communication, yet its importance is often overlooked in academic education and practical applications. A significant gap in the literature is the limited focus on how pragmatic theories, such as Grice's cooperative principle, manifest in scripted yet naturalistic dialogues, like those in movies. This study examines violations of Grice's conversational maxims in the movie *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004) to bridge the gap between theoretical insights and observable discourse patterns in popular media. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected from the film's screenplay and analyzed for instances in which the characters violated the maxims of quantity, quality, manner, and relation. Data collection involved close observation of character interactions, supplemented by script review and transcription. Analytical procedures included classifying utterances based on the violated maxim and interpreting each one within its narrative and emotional context. The findings reveal 39 notable instances of maxim violations, primarily involving *Manner* and *Quality*. These violations are often driven by motives such as secrecy, emotional restraint, humor, and deception.

Keywords: movie, maxim, pragmatic, violation. cooperative principle.

1. Introduction

Language can be defined as a system of symbols and grammatical rules; however, it is also a powerful medium of human interaction and meaning-making. In the context of communication, speakers do not always express their intended meanings explicitly. Frequently, the interpretation of these messages is dependent on contextual factors, existing knowledge, and established social norms. The focus of pragmatics, a major field of linguistics, lies in this aspect of meaning that extends beyond the literal. According to Yule (1996, p. 45), pragmatics is defined as "the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader)". Emphasizing how people use language in context to achieve communicative goals. Pragmatic interpretation requires the ability to comprehend indirect speech acts, implicatures, and presuppositions. These elements collectively demonstrate that meaning can extend beyond the limits of surface-level grammar and vocabulary.

A foundational framework within pragmatics is Paul Grice's Cooperative Principle, which describes how speakers generally cooperate to make conversations effective and meaningful. Grice proposed four conversational maxims: quantity, quality, relation, and manner. These maxims function as implicit guidelines for effective communication. However, in real-world interactions, speakers frequently violate these maxims, not necessarily with the intention of mislead. When such violations arise, they frequently generate implicatures, or meanings implied rather than explicitly stated (Cutting, 2002).

In both natural and fictional communication, these maxim violations are prevalent and significant. For instance, as Thomas (1995, p. 72) observed, "comprehending implicature and maxim violations offers insights into the manner in which speakers construct meaning and manage relationships." These perspectives underscore the notion that the significance conveyed through communication is inherently dynamic and often deliberately ambiguous.

In this study, the researcher examines how Grice's maxims are violated in the 2004 film *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, the third installment in the well-known Harry Potter film series. The film offers a rich array of conversational exchanges characterized by secrecy, emotional intensity, and strategic ambiguity, rendering it a valuable subject for pragmatic analysis. Characters such as Harry Potter, Sirius Black, and Professor Lupin frequently employ indirect communication to conceal the truth, protect others, or manipulate information. Such behaviors frequently result in the disregard of Gricean maxims, particularly those concerning quality and quantity.

The phenomenon under investigation emerges from the observation that fictional dialogues, while scripted, often mirror real conversational strategies. As Dynel (2011) has noted, films and television scripts can serve as authentic data sources for pragmatic research because they reproduce natural conversational structures and social dynamics. In a similar disposition, Aryanthi (2024) have found that Gricean maxim violations in movies are employed to portray characters' intentions, generate humor, and mirror actual communication patterns. Therefore, an examination of pragmatic phenomena in film dialogue can facilitate a more profound comprehension of how language functions as both an art form and a medium of communication.

Furthermore, this research offers theoretical and practical benefits. In principle, it contributes to the study of conversational implicature and maxim violation in literary and media discourse, thereby enriching pragmatic studies in non-traditional linguistic data. In practice, it assists students and researchers in developing a heightened awareness of how meaning operates in context, thus enhancing their skills in discourse analysis, media literacy, and communication. As Leech (1983) suggested, a comprehensive understanding of pragmatic principles is essential for effective interpretation of both every day and fictional communication.

Research question: 1) what type of Gricean maxim is violated by the characters in the Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban movie?; And 2) what reasons do the characters in the Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban movie have for violating the Gricean maxim?

2. Methodology

Method

This section describes the data source, data collection methods and techniques, data analysis methods and techniques, and data presentation methods and techniques to provide readers with a better understanding. The research of the study is designed to be qualitative. According to Polkinghorne (1983, p. 269), “qualitative methods rely more on linguistics than numerical data (scores), and we use meaning based rather than statistical forms of data analysis”.

Data Collection Technique

The primary data source for this study is the original screenplay and dialogue from the film *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004), directed by Alfonso Cuarón. The film and its script serve as the foundation of analysis, as they contain the characters' authentic lines and conversational exchanges. This study analyzes the entire movie by using the fulltime frame

from the beginning to the end. The researcher's analysis focuses on verbal interactions among the primary and secondary characters, including Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, Ron Weasley, Professor Lupin, Sirius Black, and other characters. A close examination of the film's dialogue illuminates the manner in which language is used to convey meaning beyond a literal level, and how the violation of maxims serves narrative and interpersonal objectives.

While the dialogues in the film have been scripted, they are designed to resemble natural speech. As Dynel (2011) observes, film and television scripts can serve as reliable linguistic data sources due to their capacity to replicate authentic conversational structures and social dynamics. Therefore, the utilization of *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* as the data source guarantees that the pragmatic phenomena studied are contextually rich and communicatively meaningful.

The collection of data in this study was carried out using the documentation method, a suitable approach for qualitative research. This method enables a systematic examination of existing records, including scripts, dialogues, and audiovisual materials (Creswell, 2013, p. 97). The documentation method facilitates the collection, review, and interpretation of textual and visual data concerning language use in the film. The process of data collection is conducted through several stages.

To begin with, the researcher will observe the film on multiple times to gain a complete understanding of the plot, the characters, and the conversational context. Repeated viewing of these scenes facilitates the identification of tone, emotion, and non-verbal cues such as facial expressions and gestures. These non-verbal cues are crucial in the interpretation of implied meanings. Secondly, the researcher meticulously reads and compares the official screenplay with the movie's spoken dialogue. This process ensures the accuracy and completeness of transcriptions. Subsequently, each relevant conversation that potentially contains a violation of Grice's maxims is carefully documented. Finally, contextual notes are taken regarding the speakers' background, the situation they are in, and the potential motivations behind their statements. The identified utterances are then organized and categorized according to scene, speaker, and potential type of maxim violation.

Data Analysis Technique

The analysis of data in this research employs a descriptive qualitative method, as proposed by Creswell (2013) this approach prioritizes interpretation over measurement, emphasizing the construction of meaning in natural communication. The objective of this study is to describe, classify, and interpret the manner and rationale behind the violations of Gricean maxims in the dialogue of *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*.

The analytical process is divided into multiple stages. First, data reduction is conducted by examining all collected utterances and selecting only those that clearly demonstrate violations of conversational maxims. Examples that are irrelevant or ambiguous are excluded. Secondly, the selected data are classified based on Grice's (1975) four conversational maxims: Quantity, quality, relation, and manner. Each utterance is meticulously categorized according to the specific maxim that is violated or flouted. Next, contextual interpretation is applied by analyzing each utterance within its situational background. In this analysis, the relationship between speakers, their intentions, and the emotional or social context are considered. The final step involves thematic analysis, which is employed to identify patterns and recurring motives behind maxim violations. The researcher's objective is to ascertain whether these violations are employed for purposes such as politeness, humor, secrecy, or tension building.

3. Finding and Discussion

There is a total of 39 data points, all of which violated Grice's (1975) cooperative principles theory. The data consisted of dialogues in which the characters violated the maxim. The researchers analyzed the data from the movie in the form of words, aided by transcripts, and specified them based on and specified them based on Grice's (1975) cooperative principle theory, which consists of maxims of quantity, quality, manner, and relevance. The results of the post- classification are shown below, and the big picture can be seen as follows:

Table 3.1 Violation of Grice Maxim

Scene	Violation Count	Type(s) of Maxim Violated	Characters Involved
Privet Drive Dinner (Aunt Marge)	2	Quality, Manner	Harry, Marge, Vernon
Leaky Cauldron (Fudge scene)	2	Quality, Relation	Fudge, Harry
Weasley Warning (Train Station)	3	Quantity, Manner	Arthur Weasley, Harry
Knight Bus ride	1	Manner	Stan Shunpike
On the Hogwarts Express	2	Relation, Quantity	Ron, Hermione, Harry
Marauder's Map confrontation	3	Quality, Manner	Snape, Harry
Hogsmeade conversation (Lupin)	2	Quality, Manner	Lupin, Harry
Common Room & Password Incident	1	Quantity	Neville, McGonagall
Malfoy Taunt / Hermione Punch	1	Relation	Malfoy, Hermion
Buckbeak Sentencing (Hagrid scene)	1	Quantity	<u>Hagrid, Hermion</u> Ron
Ron vs Hermione about Scabbers	2	Relation, Manner	Ron, Hermione, Harry
Trelawney Prophecy Scene	1	Manner	Trelawney
Sirius and Lupin confront Peter	3	Relation, Manner, Quality	Sirius, Lupin, Snape
Dumbledore's comments on truth	1	Manner	Dumbledore
Fred & George teasing Ron	2	Quantity, Relation	Fred, George, Ro
Hermione stopping Harry (Time-turner scene)	1	Quantity	<u>Hermione</u> , Harry
Fat Lady & Ghosts scene	1	Relation	Ron, Percy
Harry's rage (Scabbers & Buckbeak)	2	Manner, Relation	Harry, <u>Hermione</u>
Ending Time-Travel Loop (Buckbeak rescue)	2	Manner, Quantity	<u>Hermione</u> , Harry

The dialogue scenes in Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban feature numerous violations of Grice's conversational maxims, which help analyze how characters share or fail to share information. One of the most frequently violated maxims is Manner, particularly in scenes involving secrecy, confusion, or heightened emotion. In addition to Manner, the Quantity, Quality, and Relation maxims are also violated in order to shape character dynamics and plot progression. The Relation maxim, which requires relevance, is often broken for comedic or emotional effect.

Data 1

Time: 00.03.32-00.03.42

Aunt Marge: "It all comes down to blood. Bad blood will out. What did the boy's father do, Petunia?"

Petunia: "Nothing. That is... he didn't work."

In this scene from Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, Petunia violates the Maxim of Quality when she lies about Harry's father, James Potter, saying, "Nothing. He didn't work." This statement is deliberately misleading because James was a skilled and wealthy wizard, not an unemployed man. Petunia's falsehood reflects her desire to belittle Harry's background and align with Aunt Marge's prejudice against Harry's parents. Additionally, Petunia violates the Maxim of Manner through her hesitant and vague response. Her pause and self-correction ("That is...") signal a lack of sincerity, obscuring the truth and making her answer unnecessarily unclear. These violations highlight the Dursleys' ongoing attempt to discredit Harry's heritage and maintain their biased narrative.

Data 2

Time: 00.18.36-00.18.43

Arthur: **"He's broken out of Azkaban... to find you... and..."**

Harry: "Kill me?"

In this scene on the platform, Mr. Weasley violates the maxim of quantity by withholding information. He hesitates and stops mid-sentence, saying, "He broke out of Azkaban to find you...and..." without fully explaining the situation. His deliberate withholding of details leaves Harry to guess the rest, prompting Harry to ask, "Kill me?" Arthur also violates the maxim of manner with his hesitant and fragmented speech, making the warning vague and confusing. His lack of clarity and indirectness prevent Harry from understanding the seriousness of the threat posed by Sirius Black, which could compromise his ability to prepare or respond appropriately.

Data 3

Time: 01.15.24-01.16.00

Snape: "What are you doing wandering the corridors at night?" Harry: **"I was... I was... sleepwalking."**

Snape: "You're just like your father, arrogant." Harry: "My dad didn't strut. Nor do I."

Snape: "And this. What might it be?"

Harry: **"Spare bit of parchment..."**

During the interrogation, Harry violates the maxim of quality by lying to Professor Snape about his reason for being out of bed and the nature of the Marauder's Map. He claims he was "sleepwalking" and describes the magical map as a "spare bit of parchment." This deception is meant to protect himself and the map's secret, but it clearly breaks the expectation of truthfulness. Harry also violates the maxim of manner by being intentionally vague and misleading. His hesitant delivery and ambiguous phrasing obscure the truth, making it difficult for Snape to understand the real situation. These violations reflect Harry's attempt to outwit authority while protecting his friends and secrets.

Data 4

Time: 01.21.38-01.21.52

Trelawney: **"It is coming... the servant of the Dark Lord... will return to him..."**

In this scene, Professor Trelawney violates the maxim of manner with her cryptic and overly dramatic delivery of the prophecy. "It is coming...the servant of the Dark Lord...will return to him..." Her message is shrouded in vague, mystical language that lacks clarity and precision. This makes it difficult for Harry—and the audience—to grasp its meaning or implications. Rather than presenting the prophecy in a clear, understandable manner, Trelawney's theatrical tone and fragmented phrasing obscure the information's urgency and importance. While this creates suspense, it also causes confusion, which weakens the prophecy's effectiveness as a warning.

Data 5

Time:01.51.05-01.51.15

Hermione (pointing): **"Harry, you're in Hagrid's hut right now. You can't be seen."**

In this scene, Hermione violates the maxim of quantity by giving Harry only partial information about their time-travel situation. When she says, "Harry, you're in Hagrid's hut right now. You can't be seen," she offers a crucial instruction without explaining the full context, the mechanics of the Time-Turner, or the importance of avoiding interaction with their past selves. Hermione had known about the Time-Turner's rules and implications long before this moment, yet she chose not to share this information earlier. Withholding essential information leaves Harry confused and unprepared, creating unnecessary tension and risking

the success of their mission. Her selective disclosure disrupts cooperative communication by failing to provide the necessary information.

Data 6

Scene: Leaky Cauldron Time:00.17.07-00.17.13

Fred: **“No, not a soul. Unless you count Tom. The day maid. The night maid...”**

In this playful scene at the Leaky Cauldron, Fred violates the maxim of quantity by exaggerating the situation in response to Ron’s concern about privacy. Fred says, "No, not a soul. Unless you count Tom. The day maid. The night maid..." This overstatement provides more information than necessary and is clearly intended to tease rather than inform. Additionally, Fred violates the maxim of relation by providing irrelevant, humorous responses instead of directly addressing Ron’s concern. Instead of seriously reassuring him, Fred diverts the conversation with sarcasm, prioritizing humor over helpfulness and disrupting the cooperative nature of the exchange.

Data 7

Scene: Before Hermione reveals the Time-Turner Time: 01.48.10-01.48.15

Harry: “What just happened? Where’s Ron?”

Hermione: ‘ignores him, checks the clock’

Just before the Time-Turner is revealed, Hermione violates the maxim of quantity by withholding critical information from Harry. When he asks, "What just happened? Where's Ron?" she does not answer, but instead silently checks the clock. Her refusal to respond deprives Harry of essential context, especially in such a confusing and urgent situation. This silence also violates the maxim of manner, as her lack of explanation and avoidance of direct communication create unnecessary confusion and tension. By failing to address Harry's question clearly or promptly, Hermione disrupts the cooperative flow of the conversation, leaving Harry—and the audience—temporarily in the dark.

4. Conclusion

This study analyzed 39 cases of conversational maxim violations in Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, examining how characters intentionally violated Grice’s principles of quantity, quality, manner, and relation. The analysis revealed that the maxim of manner was most frequently violated, particularly in scenes involving ambiguity, secrecy, or heightened

emotion. Other maxims were violated for reasons such as humor, deception, or the protection of information. These findings illustrate that maxim violations are not random, but rather purposeful strategies used to express layered meanings, shape character dynamics, and advance the plot. By demonstrating these pragmatic strategies within a familiar and engaging narrative, the study provides a valuable teaching resource that contextualizes theoretical linguistics. However, the study's scope is limited to a single film and scripted text, which may not fully capture the spontaneity of natural conversation. Future studies could expand this analysis by examining multiple films or unscripted conversations to provide a broader and more authentic understanding of how conversational maxims operate in real-world communication. Nevertheless, the research shows that popular media can be a powerful tool for linguistic education, especially for introducing students to implicature and pragmatic interpretation.

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