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Quantity Maxim and Pakistani Women's Speech

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Abstract

Grice is of the view there should be observance of certain maxims which he termed as, in this book logic and conversation, maxim of quality, quantity, relevance and manner, in speech. Adherence to these maxims makes a speaker so obliged, that the information passed by him/her must carry quantity in it – it should be as informative as is required (Grice, 1975). Observance of these maxims in cooperative principal is a rational behavior which benefits the participants in conversation (Verschueren 1999). In this paper, Qualitative method was used to investigate either observance, or non-observance of Gricean maxim of quantity by females in their formal speech. For finding this, formal presentations of females were recorded in national / international conferences. So, the main focus of this research was to discover if the maxim of quantity was

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either observed, or not by females in their formal speech, or not. The results have proved that there does exist non-observance of quantity maxim in Pakistani females' formal speech.

Introduction

Gricean maxims and gender issues attracted the attention of many researchers to embark on this topic. According to Lakoff, there are multiple ways of women's speaking, which reflect their marginal, or subordinate role in a society. According to her, women's language is loaded with linguistic devices such as, mitigators, inessential qualifiers and so on. This language renders women's speech tentative, powerless and trivial, which is why they more often than not, are disqualified from the position of power and authority. This shows that language itself is a tool of domination which is learned as a part of learning to be a woman, in which societal norms plays a vital role. This ultimately keeps women in their place (Lakoff, 1975).

General Characteristics

In accordance with certain sociolinguists, women are more polite, cooperative and considerate than their male counterparts. But this can be generalized that this type of speech style can be associated, within a very specific context, and with a few middle class women (Ali, 2014). Holmes and Coates are of the opinion these cooperative styles must be re-evaluated and they even question whether powerlessness can be attributed to women's speech. Both argue that there must be re-evaluation of women's concern for others in speech (Coats, 1998). They claim that women's extra cooperation within the work environment leads to productive deliberations. Powerlessness is stereotypically associated with women, still, all women cannot be considered as impotent. So, this is a reason, why women are seen through the lens of men and they are judged aggressively according to certain norms, especially stereotypical ones (Sunderland, 2006).

Research Question

Is there any non-observance of Gricean maxim of quantity in females' formal speech?

Literature Review

Levinson (2000), in his theory of 'Generalized Conversational Principle', found ideas about the derivative nature of conversational meaning by Grice, are revolutionary in nature. And,

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according to Senft, Levinson was not the only one who gave this sort of idea about Gricean perspective. The idea given by Grice was adopted by many semanticists and pragmaticians as well linguists interested in the philosophy of language.

Especially the lecture delivered by William James at Harvard University in 1967 on 'logic and conversation' (Grice 1967, 1975), gave new insights that were taken up quite enthusiastically. Senft says that he himself was surprised, when he was doing his PhD about the nature of Gricean Maxims. Even at that time these maxims had already acquired a type of 'cult' and Senft himself was intrigued by the original nature of these maxims. He was intrigued by 'what is conversationally implicated is not implied but rather inferred on the basis of assumption about the nature of conversational activity as stated in Cooperative Principle and its constituted maxims of conversation' (Levinson, 2000). However there are still certain linguists who argue against conversational maxims of Grice, for example, Kiefer (1979) says:

There are ample references, in recent linguistic literature, where we come across conversational maxims which are asserted as basis on which non-literal meaning can be built. There is uncritical acceptance of these maxims, without having attention on their theoretical value.....in his renowned paper Grice mentioned several conversational maxims as general rules of conversation. The conversational maxims are, generally, unclear, so 'anything can be worked out almost on the basis of any meaning' (Senft, 2008).

So, non-observance is the means by which an illocutionary act is performed obliquely (Searle, 1975). It is the way in which meaning is conveyed by non-observance of the maxims of quantity, quality, relevance and manner e.g. if someone tells a lie, changes statements rapidly, forward information without having comprehension or use hedges in order to achieve certain goals (Ali, 2011). And in communication it can be taken as a strategy to achieve a certain goal, which carries multiple facets and can underlie phenomena such as humor, implication, irony, metaphor, etc.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

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Research Methodology

In this research a qualitative approach was applied to answer the research question. So, the data of Pakistani female presenters in national / international conferences was collected for this research work. Almost all of the presenters were teachers serving at different universities. There were both male and female presenters, but the recordings of females were conducted due to the nature of this research work. Purposive sampling was used for collecting data. All of the conferences were in Pakistan and held during my research period from 2011 to 2014. Twenty five presentations / lectures by female scholars were audio and video recorded. These recordings consisting of varying time, from 10 to 30 minutes, were transcribed later on.

These recordings were conducted in different conferences and later on the same recordings were transcribed in order to comprehend the nature of the speeches made by females in those conferences. In order to see the observance / non-observance of the maxim of quantity, the total number of words were counted and then divided into the number of minutes, so that we may have the actual standard number of words per minute. If the words are found more or less than the standard WPM, it means there is non-observance of the maxim of quantity. That all considered, the readers need to comprehend whether or not there is any non-observance of Gricean maxim of quantity in the formal speeches of Pakistani females.

Quantity Maxim

In his book 'Logic and Conversations', Grice (1975) introduced four rules to observe in conversation. These rules are termed as maxims of conversation. The maxim of quantity is one of these rules. These maxims are considered as unstated assumptions in conversation. It is generally assumed that people provide appropriate amount of information – that is why, people speak truth, give certain information and try to be clear and relevant, up to the mark. According to the maxim of quantity, the information passed by speaker must carry quantity in it – it should be as informative as is required. While an average speaker engaged in a conversation speaks at a rate of roughly 110-150 words per minute, so according to this standard wpm should be in between (Marshall, 2008). So, the use of more / fewer words per minute up to the standards wpm

shows non-observance of the maxim of quantity, because Grice is of the view that one should participate neither more nor less than the certain quantity.

Maxim of Quantity and Non-Observance

Sr. No.	Title of Presentations	Total Words	WPM	Non-Observance of Quantity Maxim
1	Inference meanings from text	1100	44	Quantity
2	Language Loss	1725	58	Quantity
3	Recent trends in Pakistani Protest Songs: A Critical Discourse Analysis	3560	119	Nil
4	Truth Value, Cognitive Strategies & the Black magic	1708	85	Quantity
5	Net-speaking	2215	63	Quantity
6	Language Policy in Pakistan	1808	90	Quantity
7	Investigate the intended meaning in different texts	2636	132	Nil
8	Language Death	2931	112	Nil
9	Translation and Inter-textuality: An Analysis of Translations of Iqbal's poems by Francis Pritchett	730	73	Quantity
10	Corpus Linguistics: A different perspective to Understand Language	3135	125	Nil
11	Autonomy in Learning	2373	79	Quantity
12	English Language Teaching	1062	70	Quantity
13	Classroom Management	1577	105	Nil
14	An American Barat	1403	93	Quantity
15	Speaking Skills, first step to communicate	1300	65	Quantity
16	Language legacy and impact on Colonialism	3060	129	Nil
17	Alice in the Modern Wonderland of	1497	112	Nil

	Violence			
18	Richards' Maxims in Teaching Profession	1336	110	Nil
19	Literary Aspect of folklores	2003	100	Quantity
20	Conflict Management	2340	117	Nil
21	Problems and Issues in English language learning	1789	119	Nil
22	Methods of Observation & Analysis in Research	1335	89	Quantity
23	Fictions and English Literature	1410	94	Quantity
24	Bilingual writers' writings in English	1868	121	Nil
25	The representation of the strange and the familiar in Jamil Ahmads' the Wandering Falcon	1797	100	Quantity

In this first presentation there were 1100 words spoken by the first presenter in almost twenty five minutes, 44 words per minute. While an average speaker engaged in a conversation speaks at a rate of roughly 110-150 words per minute, so according to this standard wpm should be in between (Marshall, 2008). Hence, the use of more / fewer words per minute up to the standards wpm shows non-observance of the maxim of quantity, because Grice (1975) is of the view that one should participate neither more nor less than the certain quantity. The numbers of words spoken by the second presenter are 1725, which means 58 words per minute, which once again demonstrates non-observance of the quantity maxim. But, the speaker is aware of the quantity maxim as she says, '**to cut the long story short**, when languages.....' In the fourth presentation there were 1708 words spoken by the fourth presenter in 20 minutes i.e. 85 wpm, because there is a less number of words than the standard quantity which shows non-observance of the maxim of quantity.

There was non-observance of the maxim of quantity by the fifth speaker, whose words were 2215 uttered in approximately 35 minutes, which shows 63 wpm. The same is the situation with the sixth presenter who used 1808 words in approximately 20 minutes, with the ratio of 90 words per minute. But one important factor worth mentioning is, the speaker seems to be cognizant of

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the maxims of quantity. However, in practice, in her effort to be precise, she says less than a normal speech limit.

1. So, **just putting the matter in nut shell**, (conscious of quantity maxim) the preservation of linguistics diversity has become a major concern to the nation.

There were 730 words spoken by the ninth presenter in approximately 10 minutes, which showed 73 wpm, which determines the non-observance of the maxim of quantity in her speech. Then there is non-observance in the eleventh, twelfth, fourteenth and fifteenth presenter, where the number of words spoken by the presenter was 2373 which means 79 words per minute, 1062, having 70 words per minute, 1403 words in approximately 15 minutes with the ratio of 93 words per minute, and 1300 words in approximately 20 minutes, having the ratio of 65 words per minute. All of the preceding examples show non-observance of the maxim of quantity. The last mentioned presenter was mindful of the quantity maxims as she said,

1. I am just **going to sketch** (Conscious of quantity maxim) the later part again.
2. **I am sorry to be so sketchy** (Conscious of quantity maxim).

Then non-observance of this maxim comes in with the nineteenth presenter where the number of words is 2003 in approximately 20 minutes, which showed 100 wpm. This type of non-observance can be seen in Achilles when he offers surplus reply – why he was making Priam to sleep outside and having misplaced the support that he could deal with a potential interference by Agamemnon.

This sequence of non-observance is carried on by the following three presenters: twenty second, twenty third and twenty fifth. There were 1335 words spoken by the twenty second presenter in approximately 15 minutes with the ratio of 89 words per minute, 1410 words spoken by the twenty third presenter in approximately 25 minutes, which showed 94 wpm, and there were 1797 words spoken by the last presenter in approximately 18 minutes with the ratio of 100 words per minute. The above quoted examples determined there was non-observance of the maxim of quantity.

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Conclusion

The total number of words spoken by the female speakers is 47698, in approximately 520 minutes in twenty five speeches, having 2404 words with the ratio of ninety words per minute. These recordings vary in size, ten to thirty minutes. As mentioned earlier, there must be 110 to 150 words per minute. According to Grice (1975), conversation should be neither more nor less than requisite. In twenty five presentations there is seventeen times non-observance of the maxims of quantity which shows the percentage of the non-observance is sixty eight. So, this shows the non-observance of the maxim of quantity in Pakistani women's formal speech.

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