

GRICEAN MAXIMS AND PROVERBS

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Abstract: *The article is about Paul Grice's cooperative principle, four types of maxims and how dealing with the proverbs. Proverbs are seen as a part of vernacular language used in oral and written form. Talk exchange situations are always meaningful as language is to be understood as a tool for cultural expression. Even if Grice's cooperative principle does not help define the most interesting aspect of talk exchange situations, the speaker's invention in proverbial speech and in other kinds of talk exchanges, the cooperative principle is a connection between the speaker and listener, where main goal is what speaker said. In proverbial speech also we can come across with the meaning of quantity, quality and manner.*

Keywords: *Grice's cooperative principle, proverb, proverbial speech, talk exchange, vernacular language.*

Paul Grice is one of the most important contributors to pragmatics, which is the study of context contributes to meaning. His best-known idea is the cooperative principle, which breaks down how people behave in conversations in order to enable effective communications, if a speaker violates one of these principles communication is compromised.

By his contribution he clearly shows the speech meaning in different fields.

The need for communication is based on the need for interaction in a group. An individual is always somehow tied to a society. To be able to participate in activities in society, the individual has to be able to communicate with the other members of that society.

The cooperative principle is the major concept in understandable talk exchange situations. It is a coherent whole. Cooperative implicatures are subcategories of the four main categories that create the cooperative principle. Grice refers to maxims and supermaxims as implicature. In general, speakers try to express their ideas in the way prescribed by the implicatures.

(Grice 1989)

The main message with Grice's cooperative principle is the demand to make a "conversational contribution such as it is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged". This is basic requirement for understandable and meaningful talk exchange. Grice names three features connected to success full communication. First, the participants have some common target with the communication. Second, the contributions of the participants ought to be compatible. Third, the discussions follow an appropriate style. These are expectations that proverbial speech also fulfils. The use of the proverbs or the proverb itself lends added value to the speech event. (David and Sterelny 1987)

Gottlob Frege contends that the meaning of an utterance is definable either by the principle of contextuality or by the principle of compositionality (Rott 2000). The principle of contextuality states that the meaning of an expression is always bound to the context in which it is used; the situational or wider context of a sentence gives the meaning of the words. The principle of compositionality requires that the meaning of a sentence must arise from the meanings of words and be determined by the meanings of its constituent expressions; the focus is therefore on words and on the interpretations of words (Harman 1975). Even scholars who consider the theories of Frege have not been able to tell which principle - contextuality or compositionality - Frege himself preferred

(Pelletier 2001).

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The cooperative principle includes the categories quantity, quality, relevance and manner. The first three categories could be called what is-said categories while the fourth, the category of manner, is related not to "what is said but how what is said is to be said. The category of quantity is related to the amount of information provided. This category includes two maxims. The first states that the contribution should be as informative as required for the current purpose. (Grice 1989)

Grice gives quality special importance. The most important aspect of speech, he argues, is to try to keep oneself truthful. Grice calls this the supermaxim. This category includes two further maxims. The first tells the speaker not to say anything they believe to be false and the second one directs the speaker not to say anything that lacks adequate evidence. Relevance, sometimes called the category of relation, requires the speech act to be relevant. This is the only maxim in the category. However, the difficulty is that relevance is an invariable, comprehensive concept. The fourth

category, manner, relates to well-aimed speech. This category includes four maxims and tells the speaker to avoid obscurity and ambiguity of expression.

(Grice 1989)

Implicature is an essential component of communication and literature that adds layers of meaning and complexity both spoken and written texts. In communication implicature plays a crucial role in conveying the intended message of the speaker or writer as it is often used to imply information that can not or should not be explicitly stated. This allows speakers and writers to communicate ideas implicitly, allowing for nuanced and flexible social interaction.

The importance of implicature in communication and literature lies in its ability to enhance communication and understanding by conveying meaning beyond the surface level of words. (Rakhmatova. M 2023)

Grice's cooperative principle is seen as the basic requirement for understandable and meaning full talk exchange. The principle includes the categories quantity, quality, relevance, manner.

Grice created the cooperative principle as an ideal model to explain speech situations.

Grice's Maxims

1. The Maxim of quantity, where one tries to be as informative as one possibly can, and gives as much information as is needed, and no more.
2. The maxim of quality, where one tries to be truthful, and does not give information that is false or that is not supported by evidence.
3. The maxim of manner, when one tries to be as clear as brief, and as orderly as one can in what one says, and where one avoids obscurity and ambiguity.

A short, easily remembered expression of a basic principle, general truth or rule of conduct. Think of a maxim as a nugget of wisdom- or at least of apparent wisdom.

While defining proverbs, F. L. Lucas states that "... Proverbs are anonymous wisdom – literature of the common man in ages past". Therefore, it is evident that proverbs are literary expressions from the past. In this way, they relate history and literature. Another fact that makes it clear that proverb connects literature to history is that it is a form of folk literature (Galit Hasan – Rokem 2012) "handed down from generation to generation" (Mieder 2008). Therefore, proverbs and history are complementary to each other.

The range of uses of proverbs in literature is manifold. Of course, in oral discourse even in casual conversations – proverbs can also have a considerable range of uses, as, moment by moment, we endeavor to *characterize* ourselves,

to create and project advantageous personas. It is a tradition that goes back to the Renaissance and beyond: the fashioning (or refashioning) of an identity, a *self* (Greenblatt, 1980). Like other aspects of language, proverbs are continually being used in that quasi-literary manner. We resemble the famous character in Moliere's play, who was delighted to discover that he could speak fluent *Prose*. We may not think of ourselves as sounding especially *literary*; however, like the great writers of our heritage, we can all speak Proverbs, and proverbs are the poetry of the people

A short statement, usually known by many people for a long time, that gives advise or expresses some common truth”

So what about maxim?

A short statement of a general truth, principle, or rule for behavior.

Here some examples of proverbs are given from the short stories:

Following are a few select stories and proverbs known to everyone which state the general facts about human behavior. The first fable is The Sick Lion which tells a story of a lion who approached the final days of his life. As the other animals come to know this, everyone started to show their resentments towards the lion. The boar hit him with his tusks, the bull stabbed his horns and the donkey kicked him in the face. The story uses the proverb “Only cowards insult dying majesty” (Aesop 2021). It is evident in the real-life as well that the weaker is often harassed.

From this example we can see this proverb conveys the meaning of manner.

The next story The Fox and the Grapes is very well known to all. The fox was very thirsty. He came to a grapevine and came across a bunch of ripening grapes. He thought that it was perfect for quenching his thirst. So he tried to catch hold of the grapes but failed after many efforts. He left the effort. The story states the proverb “It is easy to despise what you cannot get” (Aesop 2021). It is a general tendency that people leave the efforts to achieve something when they fail and present an excuse about ignoring the thing. The proverb becomes a stereotype for similar occurring situations. Thus, it states the fact that people start to scorn the things that they fail to obtain. The story is used even today in many similar contexts.

From this example we can acknowledge the meaning of quantity which is connected with the fact.

The last story is The Four Oxen and the Lion which is about four oxen and the lion. The lion tried to attack the oxen but failed as the oxen protected themselves by turning their tails to one another and facing the way from where the lion tried to attack. One day the oxen quarreled among themselves and separated from each other in the corners of the field. This made an easy opportunity for the lion to attack the oxen and

he attacked them one by one. The story uses the proverb “United we stand, divided we fall” (Aesop 2021). It states the fact that unity is the strength. When the oxen were together they were safe but the moment they got divided, they become insecure. This proverb proves a fact that unity is the strength.

Here, this example carries the meaning of quality.

Proverb are popular sayings that express some general truth or contain some practical advice.

However, proverb tent to give life advise while maxims tent to describe a general rule of conduct.

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