

The Analysis of Shakespearean Implicature in the Play *The Merchant of Venice*

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Abstract

A few conversations as spoken by the characters in the play *The Merchant of Venice* illustrate a certain aspect of implicature which conduct an implied meaning. There are some questions which respond by violating the answer to another perspective that trigger the questioner to think twice in concluding the answer. Thus, this research uses the approach of implicature for obtaining a deep comprehension towards the meaning. This research tends to investigate the maxim as used in the conversation and analyze the respond towards the question in the conversation which profound an implied meaning. This descriptive qualitative research results the achieved forms of implicature; the maxim of quantity, relevant, quality, and manner as reflected in selected conversations in the play *The Merchant of Venice*.

Keywords: *conversation, implicature, implied meaning, maxim, meaning*

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Introduction

Many expressions as used by the characters in the play *The Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare indicates the implied answer as given to respond the question. Thus, the implied answer itself contains the certain maxim of implicature that study the meaning behind the implied form of answer to respond a question.

This research exerts the qualitative descriptive research. Qualitative research studies behavior in natural settings or uses people's accounts as data; usually no manipulation of variables (Hancock, Ockleford, and Windridge 6). As follows, it points to the records which are mainly taken from the play script. Likewise, since the conversation to be scrutinized dealing with implicature, and the branch of linguistic disciplines. It correspondingly takes secondary resources from linguistic and pragmatic journal and thesis in order to provide a comprehensive understanding on conversation.

The maxims of implicature employ in this research in order to get the implied meaning in the conversation. Those maxims are the maxim of relevant, quantity, quality, and manner. Relevant which is the conversation selected above is irrelevant between what the matter asked and the respond. The maxim of quantity means where one tries to be as informative as one possibly can, and gives as much information as is needed, and no more. Quality which is there is no evidence which becomes the base of their statement in the selected conversation. And the last is manner, which is the way the speaker used containing both the ambiguous words and complicated words or phrases to reveal their meaning in communication. Furthermore, this research is designed to study the maxims as used in the conversation in the play, and investigates the implied meaning on the conversation.

Underlying Theory

Implicature for the first time is introduced by Paul Grice in 1975 and eventually appeared in the paper *Logic and Conversation* (Benotti and Blackburn 1 qtd in.Grice, 1975). Tsojon and Jonah argue about the meaning of conversational implicature:

Conversational implicature (as he calls it) as something which is implied in conversation, that is, something which is left implicit in actual language use; the way we understand an utterance in conversation in accordance with what we expect to hear. (qtd. in Mey 45)

It depicts that implicature is the implicit meaning of the speaker's words in the conversation. The speaker expects the listener to understand what the words come out under the form of implicit words.

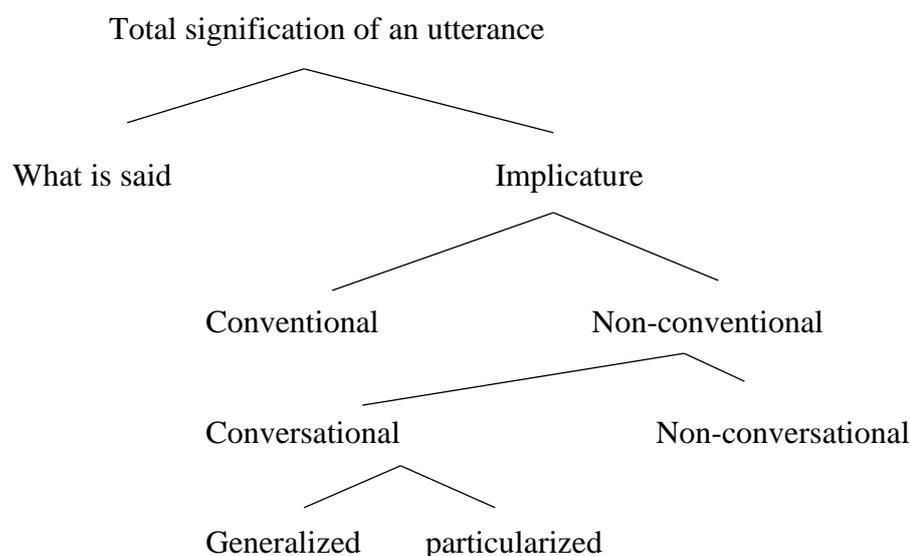
Example:

A: it is so cute! How much is this?

B: am I the shopkeeper? (implicature)

Above is the example of conversational implicature. B's answer seems has not correlation with A's question. Therefore, implicature has a function to explain those words. We can assume that, B does not know about the prize of something that A said cute. B uses the ambiguous words to stress that how come B knows about the prize while B comes along with A. Tsojon and Jonah add, "The term implicature to account for what a speaker can imply, suggest or mean as distinct from what the speaker literary says" (Tsojon and Jonah 43).

Grice describes and illustrates the scheme of implicature below:



The sum of what is stated in a sentence and what is implicated in an utterance of the same sentence are called the total signification of an utterance. (qtd in. Bottyan 2016).

Conventional implicature can be gotten directly through the meaning of words in the conversation, it is not gotten from the conversational principal.

Example of conventional implicature: He is an Englishman; he is, therefore, brave.

The characteristic of 'brave' he has is the consequences because he is an Englishman. If he is not the Englishman, surely the utterance above will not implicate the characteristic of 'brave' he has.

Non-conventional implicature or conversational implicature is part of what the utterance communicates, but they are not conventionally determined by the meaning of the sentence; they are pragmatically rather than semantically determined. (Francois 295)

Example of nonconventional implicature:

A: is it new? Why didn't you buy Mercedes?

B: too expensive.

The example implicates that A's car is cheaper than Mercedes. And A has no money to buy the expensive one.

From the scheme above, we can see that conversational implicature divides into two types. Particularized and generalized.

Bottyan explains the distinction between both Instances of particularized conversational implicature require special features of the context, while in the case of generalized conversational implicature, the use of a certain form of words in an utterance would normally (in the absence of special circumstances) carry such-and-such an implicature. (Bottyan 2).

Examples below provide the clear understanding toward both distinctions:

Example of particularized implicature:

A: Smith doesn't seem to have a girlfriend these days.

B: He has been paying a lot of visits to New York lately.

B seems doesn't answer A's question properly, but the implicature based on B's answer is, we can assume that Smith may be has a girlfriend who lives in New York, that's why Smith always visits New York.

Example of generalized implicature:

A: I found some money!

Through the example, we can assume that the money A found is not A's. Above is the normal or usual utterance which uttered by people commonly. Further, Bottyan explains:

Conversational implicature is triggered by "certain general features of discourse" rather than by the conventional meaning of a specific word. These features are the following: linguistic exchanges are governed by the cooperative principle, the content of which is detailed in the four maxims of conversation and their sub maxims. (qtd in. Grice 1975=1989a:26).

When one of the participants of the conversation seems does not follow these maxims of conversation, then the interpretation of the conversation will be on the contrary or misunderstanding. The result is, the failure of communication will happen between both. Benotti and Blackburn claims that, "The maxims are a tentative attempt to understand how human beings interact in conversation. The maxims are also useful in that they give us a (somewhat rough-and-ready) way of classifying conversational implicatures". (Benotti and Blackburn 6).

According to Peccei (1999) Grice sums up the Cooperative Principle into four conventional maxims namely, relevance (relation), quality, quantity and manner. (Tsojon and Jonah 44)

- a. Relevance (relation): this means that the information given in every conversation we have should be relevant, proper, and adhere with the topic we talk about.

Example:

A: Should we go dinner?

B: I have no money.

Example above shows the irrelevant conversation. What A's expect toward his question is between yes or no answer. But, B's answer is irrelevant, therefore the implicature we can assume that, B refuses the offers of A because B has no money to buy some foods for dinner with A.

- b. Quality: the information given in the conversation must be true and there is must any evidences to make sure that the information is true. We should not give the information that we believe it is false. They should try to make their contributions is truthful (Tsojon and Jonah 44)

Example:

A: I heard that Jane had passed the exam with the high score.

B: I don't know exactly, but John said that.

Example above shows that B makes the hesitate answer. Whether it is true or not, she doesn't know the truth about Jane's score in the exam. It needs evidences to make sure what John said to B is true.

- c. Quantity: every speaker should be informative (Tsojon and Jonah 44). The information given sufficiently, speaker should not say more or less.

Example:

A: give me 3 pencils

We should give A 3 pencils, appropriate with what is A asked. We should not give him 2 or 5.

- d. Manner: we should not give ambiguous or difficult meaning when we speak. Don't make the respondent / listener difficult in interpreting our meaning when we speak. It should be understandable. Avoid the complex words and phrases.

Example:

A: can I borrow your pen?

B: in my bag

Example above indicates the ambiguous meaning of B's utterance. A may does not understand what B is talking about. But the implicature is, it may be, B's pen is in his bag and B indirectly asks A to get it by himself.

Furthermore, Sedivy makes the simple notion from all of explanation of implicature above:

Notion of conversational implicature requires that speaker meaning be calculable on the basis of sentence meaning, and presumptions about the speaker's adherence to cooperative principles of conversation and the ability to work out the speaker's meaning. (Sedivy 475)

Henceforth, the theory of implicature above with its forms use to analyze the selected conversation in the work of William Shakespeare, entitled *The Merchant of Venice*. Moreover, the meaning will be obtained and those conversation will be classified in which form those all belong to the form of implicature.

Discussion

This section discusses the selected conversations in the play *The Merchant of Venice* which indicates the violation of maxim of cooperative principal of implicature.

BASSANIO O my Antonio, had I but the means

To hold a rival place with one of them,

I have a mind presages me such thrift

That I should questionless be fortunate.

ANTONIO Thou know'st that all my fortunates are at sea:

To raise a present sum therefore go forth. . . (Act 1 Scene 2)

The conversation appears as Bassanio tells his interest to Princess Portia in Belmont. Bassanio reveals his economic condition is fall down and undergoing pessimistic to be fortunate to go to Belmont for Portia. Though, Antonio gives a respond implicitly as he explains his fortunates are at sea imply a certain meaning that he understands Bassanio's intention as he wishes to borrow money from Antonio. However, Antonio expresses all his fortunates at the sea symbolize a current condition upon him that he is no longer stable in economy. As the matter of fact, he is unable to help Bassanio. Base on Bassanio's depiction that all his rivals in fighting for Princess Portia are unquestionably moneyed.

Clearly, conversation above violates the maxim of manner. Bassanio may do not understand what the meaning of the term "at sea" in Antonio's utterances is. The symbol of "sea" in Antonio utterance may have different interpretation or meaning with what Bassanio interprets. Furthermore, the way Antonio refuse to help Bossanio through his utterance is very complicated to be understood, he is not to the point toward his purpose which makes the hearer, Bossanio, needs extra time to dissolve the meaning of Antonio's utterances.

The maxim of quantity is also violated. Antonio's utterances seems does not answer what is questioned by Bassanio. Antonio's answer is beyond what is expected by Bassanio. The information given by Antonio is less than what is required.

BASSANIO If it please you to dine with us

SHYLOCK Yes, to smell pork, to eat of the habitation which your

Prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into. I will buy with you,

sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following you; but

I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What

news on the Rialto? Who is he comes here? (Act 1 Scene 3)

Can be seen clearly from Shylock's words that he is absolutely angry. Bassanio invites Shylock to dine with them, however, Shylock takes the context out from the topic by expressing something bad as a reply. Shylock illustrates the real condition at that time in 16th century that Jewish undergoes injustice/religious discrimination in Venice. As clearly portrayed above on the conversation between a Christian, Bassanio, and a Jew, Shylock that Shylock directs Bassanio to find the answer himself whether he wants to, or resists the invitation. From Shylock's expression, he can just go directly with the answer, whether he will, or vice versa. However, to what extent he wants to dine with them, he lets Bassanio concludes himself towards his utterances.

Conversation above violates the maxim of relevant. The answer which Shylock utters above is out of the topic. Even though we can assume that what means by Shylock is angry, there is no either punctuation or stressing which signifies the sense of angry.

There is the violation of quality. Shylock says ‘your Prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into’, but there is no evidence which shows that Bassanio’s Prophet conjured the devil. Except he recite it from the scripture.

The maxim of quantity is also violated. The answer of Bassanio’s offers clearly will be yes or no answer. But Shylock goes further by answering the question is more than what is necessary. He is too much in elaborating his words to answer the simple question of Bassanio.

BASSANIO Shylock, do you hear?

SHYLOCK I am debating of my present store.

And by the near guess of my memory

I cannot instantly raise up the gross

Of full of three thousand ducats. What of that? (Act 1 Scene 3)

A cliché of conversation above gives an indirect answer to the questioner. As Bassanio asks Shylock whether he is listening to him or not, for sure Shylock is enjoying the conversation by giving a respond to Bassanio. However, Shylock highly comprehends that Bassanio does not ask whether he listens to him or not, Bassanio needs an answer of his proposal for money. Hence, from Shylock’s answer, can be interpreted that he is thinking of giving him a hand, in fact, he listens to him.

There is violation of manner. Shylock uses complicated words and phrases in responding Bassanio. It may not be understandable. The ambiguous utterance of Shylock can make Bassanio feels confused about Shylock’s utterance.

The manner of quantity is also violated. The same is like other evidences, mostly the answer of the simple question is too much and beyond what is required.

ANTONIO Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding to you?

SHYLOCK Signor Antonio, many a time and oft

In the Rialto you have rated me

About my monies and my usance.

Still have I borne it with a patient shrug

For suff’rance is the badge off all our tribe. (Act 1 scene 3)

To answer Antonio’s question, Shylock uses to express his view of treatment towards Jew in Venice. Because this conversation appears after Shylock approves their proposal to borrow three thousand ducats from Shylock. Thus, Antonio asks whether they can be holding to him. A simple answer from Shylock that to express his hopes to be treated worthy in Venice from

long time ago is by revealing the attitude of Christians towards his tribe, a Jewish. Definitely, yes, he wishes to be fairly treated.

There is the violation of the maxim of quantity. To answer Antonio's question, he says more what is necessary at that moment. Shylock too elaborates his answer toward Antonio's simple question.

BASSANIO Gramercy; wouldst thou aught with me?

LACELOT Here's my son, sir, a poor boy (Act 2 Scene 2)

From the dialogue, it seems that Bassanio needs a kind of help, or does him a favor. Anything related to the Lacelot's willingness for giving his hand. However, Lacelot directly offers his soon for assisting Bassanio. From Lacelot's point of view, the way he offers his son means he escapes or tends to resist Bassanio in polite way by taking other people for switching his position.

Above violates the maxim of relevant. There is no correlation between the question of Bassanio and the answer of Lacelot. Bassanio asks for favor to Lacelot, but Lacelot instead answer out of topic. Bassanio may do not understand about the information Lacelot given, which Lacelot rejects to give kind of help to Bassanio.

The maxim of quantity is also violated. Even though the way Lacelot answer to rejects give favor to Bassanio can be said polite, but the words Lacelot used is long-winded, it needs a few minutes to understand the meaning of those words. The polite way to rejects something also can be done straightforwardly.

JESSICA Lorenzo certain, and my love indeed,

For who I love so much? And now who knows

But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

LORENZO Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art. (Act 2 Scene 6)

To express the answer of yes, or having the same perception in both speakers can be seen through the dialogue above. To respond Jessica's utterances about her feeling, Lorenzo employs the other things to represent his truly feeling about Jessica by saying heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art. In this context, Lorenzo cannot be love Jessica more as he implies the meaning behind of simile he uses to express his feeling.

The quotes above clearly violate the maxim of quality. How come Lorenzo states that heaven and thy thought are the witness of his feelings? Where is the evidence of Lorenzo statement? Has he ever visited heaven and then asks it 'do you want to be my witness of my true feelings toward Jessica'?

Conclusion

The literary work play of *The Merchant of Venice* reflects the use implicature in the selected conversation of the characters within. This study found that there are many violates of the maxim of quantity done in the selected conversation. It is related by employing the high-level of language in this classic work makes the answer of the characters argued is not

straightforward, to the point, and less than what is required. Besides the violation of the maxim of quantity, there are also violates the maxim of relevant, quality, and manner. Relevant which is the conversation selected above is irrelevant between what the matter asked and the respond. Quality which is there is no evidence which becomes the base of their statement in the selected conversation. And the last is manner, which is the way the speaker used containing both the ambiguous words and complicated words or phrases to reveal their meaning in communication.

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