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## AN ANALYSIS OF CONVERSATIONAL MAXIMS IN DRAMA ENTITLED SALOME BY OSCAR WILDE : A Socio-Pragmatic Study of Drama

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### ANALISIS MAXIM PERCAKAPAN DI DALAM DRAMA SALOME KARYA ORCAR WILDE : Studi Sosio-Pragmatis Drama

#### ABSTRAK

Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis Maxim Percakapan yang terdapat di dalam drama yang berjudul Salome karya Oscar Wilde. Masalah pertama yang diangkat adalah jenis maxims yang terdapat di dalam drama. Analisis dilakukan berdasarkan Maxim Percakapan yang dicitakan oleh Grice. Masalah kedua adalah faktor sosial yang mempengaruhi pemilihan maxim. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Data diambil dari drama berjudul Salome. Data yang diperoleh berbentuk percakapan. Percakapan tersebut diidentifikasi dan dianalisis untuk mengetahui jenis maxim yang digunakan dan faktor sosial yang mempengaruhi dalam pemilihan maxim. Dari analisis ditemukan bahwa di dalam percakapan yang ada di dalam drama terdapat empat jenis maxim, yaitu; maxim kualitas, maxim kuantitas, maxim sikap dan maxim relasi/hubungan. Dalam analisis ditemukan juga beberapa kasus dimana maxim tersebut dilanggar (*flout and opt out*). Faktor sosial yang mempengaruhi pemilihan maxim adalah *setting* dan tujuan dari percakapan.

Kata kunci: Maxim Percakapan, Faktor Sosial

#### INTRODUCTION

Language has a main role in human daily communication. It is the major system by which meanings are communicated and expressed in the social world. The meanings are expressed in various ways, by various language patterns for various purposes. Thus, language cannot be understood, interpreted, or evaluated unless it is related to the social contexts in which it is spo-

ken (Pappas, et al, 1993). Moreover, Bloomfield (1995) stated that language may cause someone to make a reaction while the other gets stimulus from the reaction. In other words, knowing a language means being able to speak and to be understood by other people who know that language that may cause them to do a reaction as a response toward the stimulus given.

Communication is language in action, by which individuals participate in the affairs of society (Ellis, 1989:30). It is a social interaction where at least two interacting agents share a common set of signs and a common set of semiotic rules, that is, the meaning of the signs used in language (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communication>). In a simple model, information or content, such as message in natural language is sent in some form of spoken language from encoder or the person who send the message to a decoder or the person who receives the message. The decoder, then, will give feedback to the encoder to let the encoder know whether the message is understood or not.

Communication can be in the form of spoken or written language. In spoken language, people directly utter their opinions or feelings about something through the use of speech organ. People would also state their ideas, opinions, or feelings on sheets of papers when they prefer to have written language.

To state ideas through written language can be in various ways, one of them is through literature. Literature is writings that valued as works of art (Hornby, 1995:687). Works of art are pieces of works that have artistic value either it is from its language or form. Literature is a kind of extension and application of certain properties of language (Todorov in Koesnosubroto, 1988:1). Connolly (in Koesnosubroto, 1988:2) stated that literature has three major characteristics. First, literature has power. The use of language in a certain piece work of literature may create a powerful emotional impact in the reader's mind. Second, literature is vivid. Through the power of the written words, the readers can hear, feel, and also see beyond the written words. Third, the language of literature is clear. It is clear that the writer clarifies his definition of a person by showing what he does, why he does it, how he does it, or what he would never do.

One example of literary works is drama. Drama

consists of mainly dialogues between characters. Every single information in the story must be incorporated in the dialogue. Drama gives the reader several characters, distinguished in the text only by their names, talking mostly to each other, intent on their own affairs, entering and leaving the scene in bewildering, or confusing succession (Landy, 593). The elements of drama are the same as in prose fiction. It has theme, characters, plot, scene, and background or setting.

Drama, as other works of art, is also the reflection of society. The characters reveal in their speech information about habits, personalities and way of thinking of the people at the age of the drama was made. "The most basic questions in ninetieth drama are about human existence. The questions of why people are so cruel to one another and the world so unjust, why men and women are called to endure such suffering in their lives?" (Wilson, fourth edition)

One of the most outstanding forms of English drama in ninetieth century is tragedy. Wilson states that tragedy is divided into two kinds, traditional tragedy and modern tragedy. In traditional tragedies, the hero or heroine of the story is an extraordinary person, such as a king, a queen, a princess, or a nobleman. Usually, he or she would be in a very tragic situation. He or she would take all the risks and responsibilities of their actions, even they are eager to suffer as the consequence of what they have done. In addition, the language used in traditional tragedies is verse. Unlike traditional tragedies, the central figures of the modern tragedies are not extraordinary people, and they are written in prose rather than in poetry.

The writers or authors also have an important role in the creation of literary work. They are involved in society. Therefore they reveal what they think of the society or their views about society at their age in the form of literary works, such as drama. In Britain, the writers would criticize about their

society through their masterpiece. This often made those writers become famous as their works caused some controversies in the society.

Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde, or known as Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) was an Irish playwright, novelist, poet, and also author of short stories and drama. He was one of the most successful authors of late Victorian London and one of the greatest celebrities of his day. As a result of a famous trial, he suffered a dramatic downfall and was imprisoned for two years of hard labor after being convicted of the offence of gross indecency, or offending against moral standards, for one of his dramas *Salome* (<http://www.enotes.com/salome>).

Oscar Wilde's *Salome* is one of the most famous tragedies in Western countries since 1894 until today. It has been performed in many versions of plays. At the first time it was published, it had been a controversy because it was illegal to depict Biblical characters on the stage. Regardless of that matter, the drama has become a basis of artistic works ever since.

The story is about a beautiful and seductive princess, *Salome*. She has a mother named *Herodias* and a step father named *Herod*, who actually the brother of *Salome's* real father. *Salome* falls in love with a prophet, named *Jokanan* (John the Baptist). However, she is always denied by *Jokanan*. *Salome* is eager to dance for *Herod* in return for the head of *Jokanan*. At the end, she gets nothing but death.

Those arguments triggered the researcher to investigate the drama entitled *Salome*. In addition, this kind of study had never done before. Thus, the researcher decided to investigate this matter to give a contribution to the world of knowledge. For that reason, this research was intended to find out whether the language in a drama also concerns about the effectiveness of communication since it is also a medium to express ideas about the society at that time. Conversational

maxims proposed by H. P. Grice (1975), namely: maxim of Quality, maxim of Quantity, maxim of Relation and maxim of Manner, was used as the basis to investigate the effectiveness in communication. The researcher would analyze the conversations in the drama through the use of Conversational Maxims. Then, the analysis would be continued by investigating the social factors that might become the reasons in choosing the maxim. In conclusion, the field of this research would be about socio-pragmatics study.

Based on the above explanation, there were two things that were discussed in this research, that is:

1. the kinds of maxims that are expressed in the drama
2. the social factors that affected the choice of the maxim

## KEY TERMS

### a. Conversational Maxims

Grice in his article 'Logic and Conversation' (1975:45) proposed four Conversational Maxims, namely, maxim of Quality, Quantity, Relation and Manner. The four rules state that a speaker is assumed to make a contribution that

- is adequately but not overly informative (Quantity maxim)
- is true (Quality maxim)
- is relevant (maxim of Relation or Relevance), and
- is clear, unambiguous, brief, and orderly (maxim of Manner).

### a. Maxim of Quantity

Quantity maxim relates to the quantity of information to be provided in conversations. This maxim is specified into two maxims as stated by Grice:

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of exchange).
2. Do not make your contribution more infor-

mative than is required.

To make an effective communication, people are required to give information which is not less or over informative. If the contribution is less informative, the implied meaning in implicature will not be clear. If the contribution is over informative, it is said to be wasting time.

#### b. Maxim of Quality

Quality maxim wants the speaker to make contribution one that is true. There are two specific maxims under this maxim.

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say that for which you lack of evidence.

When people engage in conversations, they are required to make contribution that is genuine in order to achieve the Cooperative Principle. Based on this maxim, it is advised that people do not utter something which they are not sure about the utterance.

#### c. Maxim of Relation

Under maxim of Relation, there is a single maxim, that is, be relevant. In conversations, people should make contribution which is relevant to the topic being discussed.

#### d. Maxim of Manner

Grice includes one supermaxim in this category, be perspicuous, and various maxims such as:

1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)
4. Be orderly

To make an effective communication, people have to avoid a kind of expression that is difficult to be understood. The expression or utterance should not be ambiguous that can confuse the hearer in inferring the meaning implied. In addition, unnecessary prolixity, or using too many words, would make the hearer bored in listening to the utterance made by the hearer. The last, a good order in giving information would make contribution is easy to be understood by the hearer.

#### b. Social Factors

In talk exchange, people's utterances are very much affected by the social factors. Social factors are factors that affecting someone to say such utterance. It relates to the users of language, setting, topic and function of the interaction (Holmes, 1992:11).

1. The users of language are the participants who use the language. When talking, people would think of whom they are talking to. The point here is who is speaking and who are they speaking to.
2. The setting relates to the social context or the place in which the conversations take place and also the situation at the time the conversation takes place.
3. The topic is the thing or the matter being talked about.
4. The function is the purpose of the talk exchange or the conversation.

The talk exchange or the conversations in drama also has those factors affecting the characters to utter something. They would think of the participants, the social context, the topic and the function of the interaction. Those social factors would give an explanation whether the social factors also affected someone to obey or to fail fulfilling the conversational maxims.

#### METHOD

The object of this research is a drama entitled *Salome* by Oscar Wilde. The design of this research was qualitative research. The key instrument of this research was the researcher

##### a. Data Collection

There were several steps in collecting the data.

- a. There were three steps to collect the data to support the first research problem, that is,
  1. Identify the subject being studied in order to get a deeper understanding. The identification of the subject gave a starting point for the researcher to proceed to

further analysis.

2. Select the data. After identifying the subject of the study, the researcher selected the data, in this case, the conversations, on the basis of conversational maxims.
3. Classify the data. The data was classified based on conversational maxims.

b. The data for the second research problem was gathered after classifying the data for the first research problem. There were some steps in collecting the second data:

1. Identify the reasons or the social factors behind the choice of maxim.
2. Select the data
3. Classify the data based on the same social factors.

##### b. Data Analysis

There were three steps in analyzing the data.

- a. Data analysis for the first research problem.
  1. Presenting the data.
  2. Analyzing the data. The analysis was done based on Conversational Maxim (Grice, 1975: 45), that is, maxim of Quality, Quantity, Relation and Manner.
  3. Interpreting the data. The data was interpreted through the use of library research that is related to Conversational Maxim (Grice, 1975:45) and also the prior knowledge of the researcher.
  4. Drawing the conclusion. After analyzing and interpreting the data, the conclusion was made. The conclusion would give the answer about kinds of Conversational Maxim (Grice, 1975:45) expressed in drama entitled *Salome* by Oscar Wilde.
- b. Data analysis for the second research problem.
  1. Analyzing the social factors that affected the choice of maxim. After the data for the first research question had been gathered, the analysis was continued to find out the social factors that influenced the characters

in choosing the use of the maxim.

2. Interpreting the data. The data was explained in details through the use of library research on the basis of the social factors affecting the conversations. The prior knowledge of the researcher came in hand to assist this interpretation.
3. Drawing the conclusion. The conclusion of the second question would be about the social factors that influenced the characters in *Salome* in choosing the maxim

#### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the analysis, it was found that 42 conversations from 383 dialogues expressed the maxims and special cases. 20 conversations fulfill the rule of maxim of Quantity, 11 conversations fulfill the rule of maxim of Quality, 2 conversations flout maxim of Quantity, 2 conversations flout maxim of Quality, 4 conversations flout maxim of Manner, and 4 conversations opt out of maxim of Relation as it is seen in the table.

From all of the conversations, except conversations which include in opting out of maxim of Relation, are included in maxim of Relation because it is clear enough that every contribution made by the speakers related to each other.

From all of the conversations, except conversations which included in flouting maxim of Manner, fulfill the rule of maxim of Manner. The information given in every utterance in the conversations is clear and contains no ambiguity and no obscurity of expression. It is presented in order and brief.

In conclusion, the four maxims proposed by Grice that is, Maxim of Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner can be found in this drama and there are also cases in which the contribution made by the speakers flout and opt out of a maxim.

After analyzing the data, it was found that the



main factors that affecting the characters in the drama in giving contribution were the purpose and the setting of the talk exchanges. While the participants and the topic did not affect them in choosing which maxim that they wanted to obey.

The choice of following, flouting, or opting out of a maxim was not affected by the participants, or the users of the language. For examples, in Conversation 2 where the participants were people at the same level of social structure that is the Cappadocian and the First Soldier, in Conversation 11 where the participants were the Soldier and Salome, the princess, they obey the rule of maxim of Quantity. In the other example, conversation 1 where the participants were the First and the Second people from the same level of social structure, conversation 16 where the participants were the Young Syrian and Salome, the captain and the princess, both flout the maxim. In addition in conversation 8 where it opts out of a maxim, the reason would be more appropriate if it relates to the setting of the talk exchanges.

The topic also did not affect the choice of maxim. The topic, whether it is about the existence of God, to show the passion for someone, or talking about the queen or other person, they would follow, flout or opt out of a maxim.

Meanwhile, the setting affects the way how they would express their utterances. For examples, in conversation 8 the setting was the princess was bored being at the party, so she went out to the terrace to enjoy the night. Therefore she ignored the Young Syrian's question and chose to opt out of a maxim.

The purpose also affected the choice of maxim in the conversations. The characters would follow, flout or opt out of a maxim because he wanted to reach a certain goal or purpose, for example to give a more description of the thing being talked, to show their passion of something, to cover that they are scared of something,

or to cover the real feeling that they are sad. In conclusion, the setting and the purpose would affect the characters to fulfill, to flout, or to opt out the maxims.

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

From the analysis, it can be concluded that:

1. Kinds of maxims that expressed in the drama are maxim of Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner. There are also cases in which the maxim is flouted that is flout of maxim of Quantity, Quality and Manner, and the speakers chose to opt out of maxim of Relation.
2. The social factors that affected the choice of maxim are the setting and the purpose of the talk exchanges. These social factors affect them whether to fulfill Maxim of Quality, Quantity, Manner and Relation or to flout, or to opt out of a maxim.

Based on that conclusion, there are some suggestions that can be offered

1. For the writer of drama should also think of effective communication in expressing their ideas through their literary work, one of the way to achieve it is by following the rules of Conversational Maxims.
2. For the researcher or the candidate of are searcher who wants to analysis further about this drama, she or he can relate the analysis of Conversational Maxims with Politeness Principles proposed by Leech.
3. For the researcher or the candidate of a researcher who wants to continue this research, she or he can relate the analysis of implicatures with Speech Act Theory by J.L.Austin.

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