



GNITED MINDS
Journals

*Journal of Advances and
Scholarly Researches in
Allied Education*

*Vol. VI, Issue XII, October-
2013, ISSN 2230-7540*

REVIEW ARTICLE

EVALUATION OF USE OF LITERATURE IN LANGUAGE TEACHING WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SHAKESPEARE'S 'HAMLET'

Evaluation of Use of Literature in Language Teaching with Special Reference to Shakespeare's 'Hamlet'

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Language and Literature are two sides of the same coin. They are inseparable. They are complementary to each other. It is also true that when somebody has language knowledge and teaches Literature definitely he infers shades of meaning and enjoys that piece of literature. This research paper is an attempt to show how H.P. Grice's Cooperative Principle particularly flouting of Conversational Maxims can be applied to Hamlet and how because of violation of Conversational Maxims the plot of Hamlet has taken particular shape is shown. This will give a new perspective to the readers of this play.

The main function of language is communication. For communication it requires at least an addresser and an addressee. An addresser is a person who takes the first turn and starts communication. An addressee is a person who listens to the addresser and waits for his turn. There is systematic passing of conversational ball from addresser to addressee and vice versa. The success of communication depends on the way interlocutors exchange their information. If they exchange that much information, which is required, one that is truthful, relevant and in a clear manner, definitely communication will be successful or there will be effective communication. On the other hand, if they exchange information less or more than is required, one that is not truthful, not relevant and ambiguous, definitely this will lead to misunderstandings and as a consequence communication will break down. These ideas are given concrete shape by H. P. Grice, the philosopher of language, in his Cooperative Principle.

A basic underlying assumption is that any discourse, whether written or spoken is a joint effort. Both the addresser and the addressee have to follow certain rules, they have to cooperate in order to communicate effectively. On the basis of this assumption H. P. Grice (1989) formulates the Cooperative principle as: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged."

The Cooperative Principle is just the description of how people normally behave in conversation or

interact with one another. The Cooperative Principle has been classified into four conversational maxims.

I) Maxim of Quantity:

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

II) Maxim of Quality---"Try to make your contribution one that is true."

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

III) Maxim of Relation:

1. Be relevant.

IV) Maxim of Manner---"Be perspicuous."

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

These maxims are nothing but the guidelines for how to communicate effectively. They help to understand the implicit meaning of an utterance. The successful communication or effective communication depends on the observance of these four maxims. On the other hand, communication breaks down, if a speaker violates one or more of these maxims. When misunderstandings occur, one can predict that they are generally due to violations of one or more of these maxims.

SOME FACTS ABOUT PRAGMATICS

In the late fifties and early sixties, linguists made an attempt to make linguistics a science and applied many mathematical methods to the linguistic study. In the mid-fifties, Noam Chomsky developed his generative-transformational grammar and syntax was made the main component of the grammar, completely divorced from the meaning of the language. In his opinion well-formedness of sentence is the ultimate standard to judge a linguistic production. However, there are some sentences which are syntactically correct but there is no meaning.

For example,

Colorless green ideas sleep furiously.

(Chomsky, 1957)

This sentence is syntactically correct but is meaningless. Such problems are left to semantics and that is why semantics was called waste-basket of syntax by Israeli logician-philosopher and linguist Yehoshua Bar-Hillel.

In the early seventies, some linguists turned their back to syntax and paid attention to the study of meaning, i.e., semantics. The main concern of the semantics is the condition under which a sentence could be true or false. When linguists steeped further into the domain of semantics, they found that a lot could not be explained by semantics. Whatever semantics could not explain was left to pragmatics and that is why pragmatics was called waste-basket of semantics. Pragmatics is not interested in the truth value of the sentence. Pragmatists rest their study on the cooperation between language users and as a result pragmatic problems seem to be spread into all the domains of linguistic thinking.

It would be injustice if one says pragmatics is studied by linguists only. When early Pragmatists entered into pragmatic territory, they found an indigenous breed of philosophers of language quietly cultivating the territory for some time. There is a significant impact of these philosophers' reflections on language and on the development of pragmatics. In 1937 William Charles Morris, American philosopher first used the term pragmatics and differentiated it from semantics. According to him pragmatics studies the relations of signs to interpreters whereas semantics studies the relations of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable and syntax studies the formal relations of signs to one another. Grice (1975) distinguished meaning into natural and non-natural meaning and gave emphasis on more practical dimension of meaning, namely the conversational meaning. This shifts Pragmatists' focus on explaining naturally occurring conversations that resulted in the foundation of Cooperative Principle by H. P. Grice (1975) and the Politeness Principle by G. N. Leech (1983). Even, Green (1989) also defines pragmatics as natural language understanding. Blakemore (1990) in her *Understanding Utterances: The Pragmatics of Natural*

Language and Grundy (1995) in his *Doing Pragmatics* just echoed Green's ideas. The influence of pragmatism has led to cross linguistic international studies of language use which resulted in, among other things, Sperber and Wilson's (1986) relevance theory which convincingly tells how people understand and enunciate a communicative act.

Today, Pragmatics is no more a waste-basket of semantics but relatively a new branch of linguistics. Its focal interest is in the process of producing language and in its producers. Language users and context are the central factors for pragmatics. Thus, there is a shift from the paradigm of theoretical grammar to the paradigm of the language user which is called 'pragmatic-turn' in linguistics.

The present paper is an attempt to figure out how the conversational maxims are violated in the play 'Hamlet' written by Shakespeare. It will examine selected conversational pieces and investigate where the maxim is violated, which maxim is violated, why that particular maxim is violated and how the violation of that particular maxim affects interpersonal relations of the characters involved.

ABOUT SHAKESPEARE & THE PLAY 'HAMLET'

The most inspiring writer in all of English literature, William Shakespeare was born in 1564 to a successful middle class glove maker family in Stratford-upon-Avon. He attended grammar school but could not proceed his formal education further. In 1582 he made Anne Hathway, an older woman, his life partner and had three children from her namely daughter Sushma and twins, son Hamnet and daughter Judith. Around 1590 he kept his family behind and traveled to London to work as an actor and playwright. Very soon he got success and publicity and became the most popular playwright in England and part owner of the Globe Theatre. It was the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603) and James-I (1603-1625) and Shakespeare was favorite poet of both the monarchs. Not only this, James-I granted Shakespeare's company the greatest possible compliment by bestowing upon its members the title of King's Men. Such a great personality retired to Stratford and died in 1616 at the age of 52. At that time Ben Jonson described his work as timeless.

Shakespeare wrote 37 plays and 154 sonnets. A number of Shakespeare's plays are translated into all major languages. Shakespeare's works were collected and printed in various editions after his death, and by the early eighteenth century his reputation as the greatest poet ever to write in English was well established.

'Hamlet' is no doubt the most famous play in English literature. In this play Shakespeare mainly demonstrates the difficulty of knowing the truth about other people- their guilt or innocence, their

motivations, their feelings, their relative states of sanity or insanity because people do tell lies, do not provide required information, do not give relevant information and leave the addressee ambiguous. This is nothing but violations of conversational maxims in order to hide their reality. Therefore, the present study will expose how conversational maxims are violated in the play 'Hamlet'. This world is not like as it seems to be and 'Hamlet' is basically a play about the difficulty of living in such superficial world.

Hamlet is the Prince of the late king of Denmark, who died just two months before the start of the play. After King's death, his brother, Claudius, becomes king and marries the late King's widow, Gertrude. Hamlet doubts whether Claudius killed his brother to become the king of Denmark. Marcellus and Barnardo, two guards, convene Hamlet's friend Horatio, and later Hamlet himself to see the late King's ghost appear at midnight. The ghost exposes to Hamlet privately that Claudius had murdered the King by pouring poison into his ear. This makes Hamlet very angry and he decides to revenge his father's death.

From now on, Hamlet puts an antic disposition on, prompting King Claudius, his wife Gertrude and his advisor Polonius to send Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to spy on Hamlet in order to figure out the actual reason behind Hamlet's madness. Hamlet even treats Polonius' daughter very rudely so that Polonius will believe that Hamlet is madly in love with her. Polonius allows his son Laertes to go to France and orders Ophelia not to associate with Hamlet. Claudius fears that Hamlet may try to kill him, so he sends Hamlet to England. Before leaving, Hamlet convinces some actors to enact the King's death before Claudius so that he would catch the conscience of Claudius and is successful in doing so. Hamlet's mother wants to have a talk with Hamlet after the play, while Polonius spied on them from behind a curtain. Hamlet does not know the person behind the curtain and kills him through the curtain, thinking the person is Claudius. Hamlet is sent to England accompanied by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern with sealed letter having an order to kill Hamlet on his arrival.

Hamlet leaves for England and Laertes returns from France and is very angry over his father's death. As a consequence Ophelia in her utter madness falls in a stream and drowns. Hamlet, on his way to England finds the letter and changes the order to kill Rosencrantz and Guildenstern on their arrival. Hamlet is kidnapped by pirates and returned to Claudius. Claudius plans to kill Hamlet and this time he arranges a fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes and makes arrangement for getting Laertes' sword poisoned and poisons the victory cup if the first trick fails. Laertes illegally scratches Hamlet with the poisoned sword and he also gets scratched with the same sword. The queen dies, screaming that she has been poisoned and Laertes exposes Claudius'

treachery. Hamlet stabs Claudius. Laertes is dead. Hamlet in his death speech does not allow Horatio to commit suicide and assigns duty to tell the story of King's death and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's death to all. Hamlet's last desire is to make Fortinbras the new King of Denmark and the wish is fulfilled.

VIOLATION OF QUALITY MAXIM

1] (Act I, Scene II, Line 1-16.)

Claudius is brother of king Hamlet and uncle of Prince Hamlet. King Hamlet is the king of Denmark who loves his queen Gertrude truly and all is well in his state. Claudius should feel proud but he is an ambitious, cunning, lustful, drunkard, treacherous, incestuous, adulterate beast and has ability to manipulate others through his skillful use of language. As Gertrude is his sister in law he should treat her as a sister in law but he does not do it so. He gives traitorous gifts to her and with witchcraft of his wit wins his shameful lust. He himself commits most foul and unnatural murder by pouring juice of cursed hebenon into his brother's ear when he was sleeping in orchid in order to achieve his ambition, his crown and his queen. However, it is given out that king Hamlet died of snake bite when he was sleeping in orchid (Act I, Scene V, Lines 01-91). He knows that if he tells the truth of what he did, people would not support him and he would get nothing. Therefore, he intentionally violates the maxim of quality by not providing truthful information. He tells a lie in order to mislead the people around him by giving false description of how his brother met the death.

All is not over on the part of Claudius and is just successful in committing murder and misleading Denmark and yet he has to get the queen and the crown. On the part of Claudius, there is no question of grief over the death of his brother otherwise he would not have committed murder. Therefore, the above speech of Claudius, addressing people (Gertrude the queen, the members of council, including Voltemand, Cornelius, Polonius and his son Laertes, Hamlet, with others.) that he is sad because of his brother's death and to reduce sadness, he is taking his sometime sister(formerly) as wife is not true, is the violation of maxim of quality. He calls his marriage with Gertrude as a defeated joy, with an auspicious and a dropping eye, with mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage, in equal scale weighing delight and dole. In fact, there is no defeat but only joy, no grief but only delight and no balance between happiness and sadness but only happiness. Here, Claudius deliberately violates the maxim of quality in order to mislead the people and achieve his ambition, his crown and his queen.

2] (Act I, Scene III, Line 88-136.)

Polonius is a counselor and is father of Ophelia (daughter) and Laertes (son). He is a very treacherous person who asks Reynaldo to spy on his own son Laertes to calculate his behaviour and is ready to lose his daughter Ophelia to Hamlet to figure out the cause of Hamlet's madness. This does mean that he is a man of indirect method. In the above exchanges he asks Ophelia about her relationship with Hamlet. She acknowledges that Hamlet has made many tenders of his affection to her in an honourable fashion by taking almost all the holy vows of heaven. Polonius has observed their hot love on the wing before his daughter told him (Act II, Scene II, Line, 132-134). He believes that Hamlet loves Ophelia and therefore he is expected to support their love. However, Polonius calls her daughter a green girl and asks her not to believe in his vows and keep herself away from Hamlet. Here, though Polonius himself observes Hamlet's love, he misleads Ophelia by violating maxim of quality that Hamlet's love for her is just fire of passion lacking real feeling behind it.

Thus, by telling a lie, Polonius becomes succeeds in pursuing Ophelia's mind. This does not mean that he is against their love but perhaps he is waiting for right time otherwise he would not have gone to that extent to call Hamlet's madness as very ecstasy. The consequence of violation of maxim of quality is that Ophelia misunderstands Hamlet's love and as a consequence she denies Hamlet's access and letters. This is the first blow given by Polonius to Ophelia though he understands Hamlet's love and by Ophelia to Hamlet without understanding Hamlet's love.

3] (Act III, Scene I, Lines 130-134)

Polonius gives a religious book to Ophelia and asks her to walk there pretending that she is reading. Then he himself and Claudius behind the arras over hear the dialogue between Hamlet and Ophelia in order to evaluate whether Hamlet's lunacy is in Polonius' term 'very ecstasy of love'. Here, one must keep in mind that Hamlet is very good face reader and as a consequence, he observes a kind of confession in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's look which their modesties have not craft enough to colour and he outwits them. He also finds only fear after the perusal of Ophelia's face and the implicature of his piteous sigh is that she cannot give any comfort to him. Hamlet thinks of whether life is worth living and he unexpectedly sees fair Ophelia reading a book. Ophelia has denied his access and letters but when Hamlet asks her to pray for his sins, she gives immediate response and this makes him to think that Polonius and Claudius are over hearing their conversation. His doubt takes concrete shape when Ophelia prays Hamlet to receive his remembrances because he has proved unkind to her.

Dover Wilson is of the opinion that Hamlet has overheard Polonius saying he will lose his daughter in order to figure out rationale behind Hamlet's madness. In BBC's film on 'HAMLET' it is shown that the

direction of the book which Ophelia pretends to read is opposite and Hamlet changes the direction and places in Ophelia's hand. Therefore, Hamlet is sure that Polonius and Claudius are spying on them and in order to take final test, he asks Ophelia where her father is. Here, Ophelia cannot tell the truth because her father and Claudius are behind the arras and their plan is to find out the cause of Hamlet's madness. Therefore, she intentionally violates the maxim of quality by telling a lie that her father is at home. The effect of this violation is that Hamlet understands that Ophelia is also involved in the plot against him.

4] (Act IV, Scene I, Lines 01-32)

Having not satisfied with ghost's speech, Hamlet succeeds in catching the conscience of the king and is now ready to take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. However, the King is offended by the dramatic performance and Hamlet is called by the Queen. Hamlet is ready to drink hot blood and on the way to his mother's closet gets an opportunity but in his opinion the time is wrong and will wait for right time. In the closet, he speaks daggers to his mother and as a consequence Queen shouts for help. Behind the arras, Polonius is overhearing their conversation and he too shouts for help. Hamlet thrusts his rapier through the arras and kills Polonius thinking it is the King calling it a rat. Hamlet tells his mother that he is not mad and using daggers turns his mother's eyes into her very soul and cracks her heart in twain. Thus, Hamlet wins his mother's heart and there is agreement between the son and the mother. Therefore, she intentionally violates the maxim of quality by telling a lie that Hamlet in his utter madness hearing something stir behind the arras whips out his rapier crying a rat, a rat and kills unseen good old man. Hence, by violating maxim of quality the Queen saves her son from any furious action against her son from the King.

VIOLATION OF QUANTITY MAXIM

1] (Act I, Scene, III, Lines 53-83)

After attending King's coronation, Laertes is ready to go back to France. Before he leaves, he gives brotherly advice to his dear sister Ophelia regarding her relationship with Hamlet. He gives some sound reasons why Hamlet cannot marry with her and becomes successful in persuading her mind. This does mean that Laertes is mature enough to understand the World and his advice to his sister does hold some water. Now, it is Polonius' turn to advise his son Laertes. Polonius expects his son to be a good human being as any father would expect and gives a more detail list of precepts regarding how to behave in France and becomes more informative in his advice. These precepts are nothing but a matter of common sense and not necessary to tell a person who can advise her sister and persuade her mind. Therefore, Polonius violates the maxim of quantity by giving more information than is required

in advising his son. In this case, there is not any special implicature and it can be said that Polonius wastes time becoming more informative, he loves his son very much and from the study of his character it becomes clear that he loves words. It is important to note that Polonius does not practice what he preaches to his son because when he asks Reynaldo to spy on his son, he does not hesitate to ask Reynaldo to lie in order to figure out the behaviour of Laertes in France.

2] (Act II, Scene I, Lines 75)

Polonius' son Laertes is in France and therefore, he sends his servant Reynaldo to give the money and the notes to Laertes. Polonius wants Reynaldo to inquire Laertes' behaviour in France. Polonius does not simply ask his servant to observe Laertes' behaviour but advises him in a great detail about the methods which he can and cannot adopt in order to find out the truth. Therefore, Polonius violates the maxim of quantity by providing information more than is required and it is nothing but the wastage of time. Here, the implicature is that Polonius is a person who likes to find directions by indirections.

3] (Act II, Scene II, Lines 86-158)

Ophelia tells her father how Hamlet behaved with her in her closet and Polonius immediately reaches to the conclusion that it is very ecstasy of love. He calls it love- madness. Polonius decides to inform this to the King and the Queen and tries to make them happy by saying he has found the reason of Hamlet's madness. Polonius does not directly say that Ophelia's rejection of his love has made him mad but goes on giving unnecessary information though the queen asks to give more matter with less art. Therefore, Polonius purposefully violates the maxim of quantity by giving more information than is required in order to persuade the minds of the King and the Queen and to show his loyalty to them.

VIOLATION OF RELATION MAXIM

1] (Act III, Scene II, Lines 364-376)

Hamlet becomes successful in catching the conscience of the King. However, the King is offended by the dramatic performance and Polonius conveys a message to Hamlet that the Queen wants to have a talk with him. Here, Hamlet needs to give either affirmative or negative answer. On the other hand, Hamlet violates the maxim of relation by asking irrelevant questions to Polonius whether he sees cloud over there in the shape of a camel and changes his opinion from camel to weasel and from weasel to whale. The implicature is that Hamlet makes fun of Polonius by not giving direct answer.

2] (Act III, Scene IV, Lines 103-141)

Hamlet speaks daggers to his mother in her closet and he accidentally sees a Ghost. He changes his subject and starts speaking to the Ghost. It is important to note that Hamlet does not violate any maxim because he sees the Ghost and hears the words of the Ghost. However, the Queen sees nothing but just air and hears nothing but only Hamlet's words. Therefore, on the part of the Queen, this is the violation of the maxim of relation because Hamlet stops accusing the King for his father's most foul murder and starts speaking to air. Here, the Queen misunderstands that Hamlet has gone mad.

VIOLATION OF MANNER MAXIM

1] (Act II, Scene II, Lines 171-219)

Hamlet after Ghost's disclosure tells Horatio and Marcellus that he will put an antic disposition on. He tells Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that he is mad at certain time and at other time he knows what is what and also to the Queen in her closet. This does mean that Hamlet's madness is not true. However, Polonius poisons the minds of the King and the Queen that Hamlet's madness is because of Ophelia's refusal of his love. Hamlet is reading a book and Polonius asks Hamlet whether he recognizes Polonius. This is stupid question on the part of Hamlet and doubts some foul plan. Therefore, Hamlet intentionally violates the maxim of manner and gives vague answers. He first calls Polonius a fishmonger and then an honest man. When Polonius asks what he is reading, Hamlet says he is reading words. Polonius does not understand it and asks what matter is. Hamlet instead of giving answer, Hamlet asks the question between whom? Here, Hamlet purposefully gives unclear answers. The implicature is that Hamlet misleads Polonius and Polonius misunderstands Hamlet as a mad though he finds method in it.

2] (Act IV, Scene III, Lines 4-29)

Hamlet kills Polonius, thinking it is Claudius, when Polonius from behind the arras overhears the conversation between Hamlet and the Queen and safely disposes the body of Polonius. Claudius sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to seek Hamlet out and to bring Polonius' body to the chapel. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern ask Hamlet about the body. Hamlet does not tell them where he has concealed the body. On the other hand, he calls Rosencrantz a sponge of the King. They again ask about the body and Hamlet deliberately violates the maxim of manner by giving vague answer that the body is with the King but the King is not with the body and calls the King a thing of nothing. Here, the implicature is that Hamlet does not want to answer them.

3] (Act IV, Scene III, Lines 16-39)

Hamlet does not tell Rosencrantz and Guildenstern where the Polonius' body is and therefore they take him to the King. The King asks Hamlet where the Polonius is and Hamlet gives vague answers that the King does not understand. Hamlet first says that Polonius is at supper and then in the heaven and if King's messenger cannot find Polonius in the heaven, King himself can find in the hell and if they all are unable to find body within month they will be able to smell his corpse when they climb up the stairs into the lobby. Therefore, Hamlet violates the maxim of manner by not giving unambiguous answers. Here, the implicature is that Hamlet wants to mislead the King that he is mad.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the play 'Hamlet', it has been observed that the conversational maxims are violated on a large scale. It can be said that some characters have intentionally violated the maxim of quality in order to mislead other characters and therefore it has become very difficult for other characters to know the truth about such characters. In case of the quantity maxim, some characters have deliberately violated this maxim to persuade the minds of other characters. Polonius can be said as a quintessence of violation of maxim of quantity as everywhere he has violated quantity maxim either to persuade the minds of other characters or just for his love of words.

As compared to the maxims of quality and quantity, the maxims of relation and manner are less violated in the entire play 'Hamlet'. It has been observed that the maxim of relation is violated mostly for the purpose of to make fun of other characters and to produce humor. Sometimes it also seems that the speaker does not violate any maxim but on the part of listener, it is violation of maxim of relation when listener is unable to see and hear something supernatural like ghost and misunderstandings occur. The maxim of manner is more violated than the maxim of relation in order to mislead, to create humor and to make fun of other characters. Teachers can make literature teaching more enjoyable and scientific if they teach their students why particular character speaks more or less, truthful or untruthful, relevant or irrelevant and clear or ambiguous instead just narrating or reading any piece of literature. This kind of method will help to develop the critical thinking of the students.

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