

BREAKING THE MAXIMS OF GRICE'S COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE IN LITERARY TEXTS

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The article analyses how breaking the maxims of Grice's Cooperative Principle is exploited in literary texts. The distinction is drawn between two types of maxim non-observance: flouting, i.e. overt breaking of maxims with an intention that the hearer recognises that, and violation, i.e. covert breaking of maxims when the speaker breaks them secretly or not realising he is doing that. By flouting, different implicatures and figurative meanings are created that enhance expressiveness and thus are commonly met in literary texts. Violation of maxims, which usually creates misunderstanding and hinders communication, is more rarely met in literary texts, and the author explores how humour, ambiguity, nonsense and other linguistic fun is created by violating the four maxims of Grice's cooperative principle in Lewis Carroll's works.

Introduction

The English language philosopher Paul Grice introduced an important principle underlying conversation, which he termed the cooperative principle. When people speak, they are assumed to follow the principle, i.e. to be informative. The principle subsumes four maxims of conversation (quantity, quality, relation and manner) that underlie the efficient co-operative use of language. However these maxims can often be broken in conversation, which creates implicatures or other effects. The maxims are also broken in literary texts to create different rhetorical devices and figurative language. The aim of the study is to explore how the maxims of Grice's cooperative principle are broken in literary texts and what special effects this creates.

1. Grice's Cooperative Principle and its Four Maxims

Paul Grice proposes that in ordinary conversation, speakers and hearers share a cooperative principle. Speakers shape their utterances to be understood by hearers. He formulated this principle as follows:

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 (Grice, 1989, 26).

Or, to put it in other words – act in conversation so that you are mutually engaged with your listener in an activity, which is of benefit to both of you. Thus, the cooperative principle could be seen as a tacit agreement by speaker and hearer to cooperate in communication. This principle consists of four sub-principles, or 'maxims':

- *The Maxim of Quality* (Make your contribution that is true, i.e. (a) do not say what you believe is false; (b) do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence).
- *The Maxim of Quantity* (Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange (i.e. not more or less informative).
- *The Maxim of Relation* (Make your contributions relevant).
- *The Maxim of Manner* (Be perspicuous, and specifically: (a) avoid ambiguity; (b) avoid obscurity (c); be brief; (d) be orderly).

Although maxims are formulated in imperative: *Do thus!*, in fact they are not a manual of etiquette, nor are they moral principles. A maxim *Do X!* should be understood that the listener seems to assume that the speaker is doing X in communicating, i.e. the listener assumes that the speaker will tell the truth, that he will give enough information, that his utterance will be relevant to the current topic and that he will try to present it clearly and concisely. As Mey explains, 'the language user is supposed to use rational means for conducting co-operative exchanges, and is not supposed to be virtuous in the *moral* sense' (Mey 1993, 67). Grice argues that observing the cooperative principle and maxims is reasonable (rational) behaviour, because it tends to benefit the speaker's interest.

This does not suggest however that speakers always behave exactly according to these principles. Although they do seem to bear these maxims in mind and tacitly recognise their role as an orientation within which actual utterance can be judged. If the speaker makes a remark that seems to flout these maxims, the listener instinctively looks for ways to make sense of what has been said instead of criticizing the speaker at once for breaking the maxims of the cooperative principle. So, these are assumptions the listener starts out, which helps him to work out the complete message when speaker means more than he says. As Grundy says, 'knowing these principles (maxims) enables the listener to draw inferences as to the implied meaning (implicatures) of utterances' (Grundy 1995, 40). The listener's assumption that the speaker is obeying the maxims gives rise to certain implicatures, i.e. implied, additional meaning. Saeed gives the following examples (Saeed 1997, 192–195):

Relation

(1) *A: Can I borrow 5 dollars?*

B: My purse is in the hall. (Implicature: Yes.)

Here A assumes that B's reply is intended to be relevant (follows the maxim of Relation) so it allows A to derive the implicature: yes. But in fact, this meaning is only implied and nowhere explicitly stated.

Quantity

(2) *A: Did you do the reading for this week's seminar?*

B: I intended to. (Implicature: No.)

Here, if B intended to do the reading and did it, his answer would of course be true, but then it would violate the maxim of Quantity since he will be saying more than required. So A, assuming that B is observing the maxim of Quantity in his answer, is likely to infer the answer: no.

As these implicatures arise out of the observance of what Grice called the conversational maxims, he has termed them conversational implicatures. They have at least two characteristics. Firstly, their meaning is implicit, i.e. nowhere explicitly stated, but conveyed indirectly or through hints. Secondly, they are cancellable, or defeasible, without causing contradictions. (Yule 1996, 44; Grundy 1995, 43; Hancher 1978). For example:

(3) A: *Can I borrow 5 dollars?*

B: *My purse is in the hall. But don't you dare touch it. I'm not lending you any more money.*

Thus, by the addition of extra clauses the previous implicature 'Yes' can be cancelled.

2. Breaking the Maxims of the Cooperative Principle

As mentioned above, these maxims are basic assumptions, not rules, and they can be broken. Hancher in his article 'Grice's Implicature and Literary Interpretation' lists several types of breaking the maxims.

Firstly (1), the speaker is deliberately and secretly subverting the maxim and the cooperative principle for some usually selfish purpose. Lying (covertly violating the first maxim of Quality) is one example of this. Secondly (2), the speaker means to observe the cooperative principle, but fails to fulfil a particular maxim through ineptitude. For example, he may ineptly use words that are too technical for the audience and occasion, inadvertently violating the maxim of Manner. And finally (3), the speaker presumably means to observe the cooperative principle, and yet he obviously is violating a maxim; if he is not inept, he must mean something additional to what he is merely saying. For example, when asked what she thinks of a new restaurant, a woman who replies, *'They have handsome carpets'* would appear to be flouting the maxim of Quantity. If there is no reason in her case to doubt that she means to be observing the cooperative principle and is capable of doing so, then her remark must mean something else than what it literally asserts, for example, that the food there is not the best, or does not even deserve to be discussed.

Grice indifferently uses the term 'violate' to characterize, in particular, the breaking of the maxim described in (1) and (2) above, and also, in general, any failure to fulfil a maxim. In this paper we reserve the term 'violate' to refer solely to the first two types of maxim non-observance, and the term 'breaking' for any non-observance of the maxims in general. The last type of maxim breaking (3), which conveys an unstated but meant meaning, is what Grice calls 'conversational implicature' or 'floutings': implicatures that come out by overtly not following a maxim, so as to exploit it for communicative purposes (Grice 1989, 49–52). By flouting the maxims the speakers often succeed in communicating, by 'implicating', more than what they say and achieving a desired effect. As Mey explains, 'the general concept of flouting presupposes a desired effect of the violation of a maxim' (Mey 1993, 76). Maxim floutings explain irony, metaphor, rhetorical questions (flouting Quality), and obvious tautologies (flouting Quantity), which will be discussed later in the paper.

3. Evaluation and Outcome of Grice's Theory

Grice's theory of conversational implicature has been variously attacked, defended and revised by others. Brown and Levinson (1978, 298–99) argue that Grice's conversational maxims are universal, whereas Keenan (1974), citing anthropological data, claims that they are parochial since most cultures have types of language use where obscurity and ambiguity are expected to be valued (discussed in Hancher 1978). Mey notices the roundabout formulation of the maxims and suggests that they can be simplified, e.g. in the case of maxim of Quality, the second half 'Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence' might entail the first half 'Do not say what you believe to be false' (Mey 1993, 77). Green, for example, mentions her doubts about

the maxim of Quantity 'Make your contribution as informative as required' and suggests including it under the maxim of Relation 'Be relevant' (as cited in Mey 1993, 77).

Despite the criticism, Grice's theory gave rise to other cooperative principles suggested by different scholars. Brown and Levinson (1978) have identified a politeness principle, which places Grice's theory within sociolinguistics. Grice's cooperative principle and maxims have been much developed by Horn (1985) and in Sperber and Wilson's (1995) Relevance Theory, discussed in Blakemore (1992), which makes relevance the cornerstone to communication and cognition.

4. Breaking the Maxims in Literary Texts

Grice's theory has been also applied to literary and rhetorical theory. Breaking the maxims, and especially flouting them can be exploited in many ways by the authors of literary texts to implicate different meanings and non-literal interpretations. Flouting is usually related to rhetorical devices; as Grice himself notices, exploitative implicatures involve 'something of the nature of a figure of speech' (Grice 1989, 53). Thus breaking the conversational maxims could be seen as a feature of literary style, which can distinguish one literary genre from another and one literary work from another. Furthermore, as van Dijk asserts, literature itself can be defined 'as discourse that systematically subverts Grice's Cooperative Principle and all its maxims' (van Dijk 1976, 44–49, as cited in Hancher).

The subsequent parts of the paper will analyse how breaking the maxims are exploited in literary texts: firstly, maxim flouting (4.1.), and next, maxim violation (4.2.).

4.1. Flouting the Maxims in Literary Texts

Flouting is the overt breaking of the maxims for some linguistic effect, with the intention that the listener recognises that a maxim is being deliberately disobeyed. It gives rise to various implicatures to save the utterance from simply appearing to be a faulty contribution to a conversation. Flouting a maxim on the literal level invokes the same maxim at a figurative level creating various expressive means or rhetorical devices. Therefore flouted maxims are widely employed in literary texts. According to Saeed, the cooperative principle often forms an important part of the literal language theory. In this theory, the principle is often viewed as the engine which drives the interpretation of non-literal utterances. The explanation goes like this: if a listener interprets an utterance as literally untrue, or nonsensical, the principle may lead him to search for a further level of meaning, figurative language, which preserves the maxim (Saeed 1997, 195).

4.1.1. Flouting the Quality Maxim

Flouting the Quality maxim gives rise to metaphorical language. When the speaker says something in untrue or impossible way, he flouts the maxim of Quality 'be truthful'. The listener knows that the literal truth is not relevant, which prompts him to derive a non-literal interpretation of what has been said, e.g.:

- (4) *In the slanting beams that streamed through the open window the dust danced and was golden.*
(Wilde)

In the literal sense, the dust cannot dance, which leads us to look for a figurative meaning that the movement of dust particles seem to the eye of the writer to be regular and orderly like the movements in dancing.

Flouting the Quality can be found in such rhetoric devices as hyperbole (5) *'I've read this millions of times'*, metonymy (6) *'Her face was a single grin'*, simile (7) *'The champagne hit him like a fist'*, and others. It is also widely employed in irony, as a deliberate falsehood, when the speaker actually intends the meaning quite opposite to the one that is stated, e.g.: (8) *'It must be delightful to find oneself in a foreign country without a penny in one's pocket'*.

Flouted maxims of Quality in the guise of metaphors and other figurative devices are ubiquitous in literary texts, and their presence makes the communication between the writer and the reader more vivid and expressive by adding more communicative value.

4.1.2. Flouting the Quantity Maxim

Flouting the Quantity maxim can be exploited in two ways in literary texts. Firstly, by giving more information than needed, and secondly, by giving less information than needed. In the first case, tautologies are created, which may have aesthetic, humorous or other functions. Saying less than required is a particularly productive way to give rise to implicatures. Finegan et al. (1997, 349–351) give an example of the famous one-line book review:

(9) *This volume is well-bound, and free of typographical errors.*

It obviously flouts the maxims of Quantity by saying less than is normal for a book review, and therefore leads the reader to certain implicatures, probably that there is nothing else to say about the book, that this is the only good point that can be mentioned. This flouts the maxim of Relation as well, since binding and typographical errors are less significant to potential readers than the book contents, and are irrelevant in book reviews. The effect of such flouts is humour, sarcasm.

4.1.3. Flouting the Relation Maxim

Flouting the Relation maxim is found in at first glance non-relevant remarks, which are often used to change the subject, to indicate that the conversation cannot be continued, or simply to ignore the other person, e.g.:

(10) *Estelle: 'One mustn't stand in a person's way. That's one thing I know'.
Timmy: It's a good cake. It is.'* (Tremain)

It is also used in answering a question with another question that initially appears to be irrelevant. Yule gives the following example:

(11) *Bert: Do you like ice-cream?
Ernie: Is the Pope Catholic?*

Here Bert gets the answer by considering Ernie's question, the answer to which is 'yes'. Then it means that the answer to his question about ice-cream is also 'yes'. Actually, 'obviously, yes', 'of course', 'sure' (Yule 1996, 43).

4.1.4. Flouting the Manner Maxim

Flouting the maxim of Manner can be exploited in different ways in literary texts. Flouting the principle 'avoid ambiguity' may be used to create intentional ambiguities, puns and plays on words. For example, in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*:

(12) *Romeo: I dreamt a dream to-night.*

Mercutio: And so did I.

Romeo: Well, what was yours?

Mercutio: That dreamers often lie.

Romeo: In bed asleep, while they do dream things true. (I, iv, 50-54)

Here, the word "lie" is meant to mean one thing by Mercutio and taken to mean another by Romeo. Mercutio means that dreamers tell things that aren't true. Romeo thinks Mercutio is saying that they lie in bed. Thus the use of word is ambiguous, but the ambiguity is intentional for humorous effect.

Flouting the principle 'be brief' creates such rhetorical devices as circumlocution or periphrasis – a roundabout way of speaking about common things, using a longer phrasing in place of a possible shorter and plainer form of expression. These are very common in Dickens, e.g.:

(13) *The lamp-lighter made his nightly failure in attempting to brighten up the street with gas (= lit the street lamps) (Dickens). Or:*

(14) *I have a child who will soon call Walter by the name by which I call you.* (Dickens)

These are obvious redundancies of expression, however they have certain aesthetic value and denote a specific style of the writer. Extreme uses of circumlocution are a fault of style, yet they can be employed for humorous effect.

Flouting the principle 'avoid obscurity' is also common in literary texts. It gives rise to seemingly contradictory expressions such as oxymorons. The following example is from O. Henry's story 'The Duel' in which one of the heroes thus describes his attitude towards New York:

(15) *I despise its very vastness and power. It has the poorest millionaires, the littlest great men, the haughtiest beggars, the plainest beauties, the lowest skyscrapers, the dolefullest pleasures of any town I ever saw.* (Henry)

These are apparent contradictions, yet they show the attitude of the speaker and reinforce his feelings.

A certain obscurity of expression can be found in paradoxes, which seem to be self-contradictory and absurd statements, like in:

(16) *Women are a decorative sex. They never have anything to say, but they say it charmingly.* (Wilde)

On the surface level the statement seems self-contradictory and obscure, however on the deeper level it aims at some specific implication, which is however true.

4.2. Violation of Maxims in Literary Texts: Carroll's ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND AND THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

In contrast to maxim flouts, maxim violation occurs for selfish purposes or through ineptitude. This means that they are present in those situations when the speaker secretly breaks a maxim and does not want the listener to recognise that the maxim is being disobeyed, e.g. by lying. Or he may fail to observe the maxims without realising, simply because of incompetence or communicative inexperience. There are conventional names for people who violate the maxims of the cooperative principle. Someone who violates the maxim of Quantity is said to be a blabber, the one who violates the maxim of Quality is simply a liar or habitually deceitful, someone who violates the maxim of Manner is vague or obtuse, and someone who violates the maxim of Relation is considered to say the first thing that comes into his head.

Violation of maxims is much rarer in literary texts than flouting. This is because flouting usually leads the reader to some covert, implied meaning, thus enhancing the communication, whereas violation of maxim usually hinders communication, creates misunderstanding and often kills the conversation altogether.

The unrivalled master of the art of maxims violation is Lewis Carroll. His two volumes of Alice books, i.e. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (subsequently AAW) and *Through the Looking Glass* (subsequently TLG), are the most popular children's books in England and among the most popular and famous in the world. They are full of riddles, satire, humour, ambiguity, nonsense and other linguistic fun. Much of the joking and humour involve playing with the four maxims of Grice's cooperative principle. Carroll works are unique in a way that their artistic value is achieved through maxim violation rather than flouting which is more usual in other literary texts. The rest of the paper is meant to illustrate this.

4.2.1. Violating Quantity

Firstly, Carroll's characters often violate the maxim of Quantity. This is used for humour, puzzling, ambiguity or to create suspense.

When Alice claims she can find the answer to the Hatter's question (*'Why is a raven like a writing-desk?'*), the March Hare says:

- (17) *'Then you should say what you mean,'*
'I do,' Alice hastily replied; 'at least – at least I mean what I say – that's the same thing you know.'
(AAW 82)

Here, Alice violates the maxim of Quantity since she does not provide as much information as required for the purpose of the current conversation – she does not answer why the two are similar. She violates the maxim of Manner as well, because her answer is very vague, and circumlocutory.

The Quantity is also violated in the following example:

- (18) *'Have you seen the Mock Turtle yet?'*
'No,' said Alice. 'I don't even know what a Mock Turtle is.'
'It's the thing Mock Turtle Soup is made from,' said the Queen. (AAW 110)

Here the queen gives less information than is required. Her definition of Mock Turtle is circular, i.e. it includes the term being defined as a part of definition, which is insufficiently informative for Alice to realise what the Mock Turtle is. The example can also be seen as violating the maxim of Manner since it lacks clarity as well. Another example of broken Quantity is the dialogue between Alice and the White Knight:

- (19) *'Let me sing you a song to comfort you.'*
'Is it very long?' Alice asked, for she had heard a good deal of poetry that day.
'It's long,' said the Knight, 'but it's very, very beautiful. Everybody that hears me sing it – either it brings the tears into their eyes, or else –'
'Or else what?' said Alice, for the Knight had made a sudden pause.
'Or else it doesn't, you know.' (TLG 305–306)

The White Knight violates the maxim of Quantity since he is not informative enough. He sets the alternative 'either...or' and says that the song either brings tears, but he does not provide the other term of this alternative. Thus he explicitly does not observe the Quantity maxim, which makes Alice and the reader to inquire further and ask 'or else what?' The White Knight's

response 'or else it doesn't' recovers the maxim of Quantity on the formal level, however from the point of view of information the violation still persists since a description of a song as causing some emotion or not causing any emotion at all does not provide any useful information.

4.2.2. Violating Manner

An example of violating the Manner maxim could be found in a humorous dialogue from *Through the Looking-Glass*. The White Knight's suggestion to sing a song to Alice gives rise to the following logical imbroglio:

- (20) *'Let me sing you a song to comfort you.' [...] 'The name of the song is called "Haddock's Eyes!'*
'Oh, that's the name of the song is it?' Alice said, trying to feel interested.
'No, you don't understand,' the Knight said, looking a little vexed. 'That's what the name is called.
The name really is "The Aged Aged Man!'
'Then I ought to have said "that's what the song is called?'" Alice corrected herself.
'No, you oughtn't; that's quite another thing! The song is called "Ways And Means": but that's only
what it's called, you know!'
'Well, what is the song, then?' said Alice, who was by this time completely bewildered.
'I was coming to that,' the Knight said. 'The song really is "A-sitting On A Gate": and the tune's my
own invention.' (TLG 305–306)

There is no doubt that the White Knight violates the maxim of Manner by not being as clear and brief as he can. First of all, he complicates conversation by saying *'The name of the song is called "Haddock's Eyes'* instead of *'The name of the song is "Haddocks' Eyes'*, but he points out that he did not make a mistake and that he knows the difference between the name of the song and the name of the name of the song. Actually he is trying to distinguish between the level of language and metalanguage (the name of the name), which is unnecessary and irrelevant complication to the present communicative purpose. The example also well illustrates how non-observance of conversational maxims affects the communication. Alice is trying to be cooperative and to understand what is being said to her, whereas the White Knight goes on violating the maxim of Manner and with each new statement, which is supposedly meant to be an explanation, he complicates the things even more. This is reflected in the growing puzzlement of Alice's reactions:

- (20a) *'...'* Alice said, trying to feel interested.
(20b) *'...'* Alice corrected herself.
(20c) *'...?'* said Alice, who was by this time completely bewildered.

From trying to be interested and to contribute to the conversation, Alice's attempts end up in a complete frustration because her partner is not following the cooperative principle.

The maxim of Manner is also undermined in the following Duchess' answer to Alice:

- (21) *'...and the moral of that is – "Be what you would seem to be" – or if you'd like it put more simply –*
"Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that what you
were or might have been was not otherwise than what you had been would have appeared to them
to be otherwise"'. (AAW 108)

The Duchess here gives an extremely extended and complicated answer, which is far beyond comprehension, and thus obviously not in concord with the maxim of Manner 'be brief', 'be clear' as you can. This humorously reflects the Duchess' way thinking and self-expression. The example also proves how difficult it is to maintain conversation when the maxims are disregarded. Alice's response supports that:

- (22) *'I think I should understand that better,' Alice said very polite, 'if I had it written down: but I can't quite follow it as you say it'. (AAW 108)*

Violation of the maxim of Quality can also be observed in this example because the Duchess claims she is putting it more simply, whereas in fact she does quite the opposite – complicates her expression. So, actually what she is saying is not true, and can be interpreted as irony.

4.2.3. Violating Relation

Maxim of Relation, according to Grice, is one of the most important maxims if the speaker wants to be cooperative with the listener, violation of which can be viewed as conversation killing. Although conversation can go on if, for some reasons, any of the other maxims are broken, it can hardly be maintained at the points where the maxim of Relation is broken. The following example illustrates the point:

- (23) *'They were learning to draw,' the Dormouse went on, yawning and rubbing its eyes, for it was getting very sleepy; 'and they drew all manner of things – everything that begins with an M – 'Why with an M?' said Alice. 'Why not?' said the March Hare. Alice was silent. (AAW 89)*

The March Hare's response is not the answer to Alice's question but another question, irrelevant to Alice's inquiry, which actually kills the conversation.

Carroll also exploits the maxims of Relation to create interesting logical connections. The following example is the beginning of 'A Mad Tea-Party':

- (24) *The table was a large one, but the three were all crowded together one at one corner of it: 'No room! No room!' they cried out when they saw Alice coming. 'There's plenty of room!' said Alice indignantly, and she sat down in a large arm-chair at one end of the table. 'Have some wine,' the March Hare said in an encouraging tone. Alice looked all round the table, but there was nothing on it but tea. 'I don't see any wine,' she remarked. 'There isn't any,' said the March Hare. 'Then it wasn't very civil of you to offer it,' said Alice angrily. 'It wasn't very civil of you to sit down without being invited,' said the March Hare. 'I didn't know it was your table,' said Alice; 'it's laid for a great many more than three.' (AAW 80)*

The March Hare's remark 'Have some wine' seems to be completely irrelevant since there is only tea on the table. So, he is obviously violating the maxim of Relation and even Quality. Alice, naturally expecting people to follow the maxims, takes offence, 'Then it wasn't very civil of you to offer it'. Her offence proves that the conversational principles really exist and when not observed destroy the friendly communication. However, the last utterance of the March Hare 'It wasn't very civil of you to sit down without being invited' recovers the relevance of his previous remark – Alice behaved rudely by sitting down at the table without invitation, so the March Hare's offer of wine simply returned her rudeness back. So, he was actually trying to flout the maxim expecting that Alice will draw the right implicature. Yet looking at the situation in a wider context, we see that it was the March Hare who first violated the maxim of Quality by stating that there is no room at the large table, which was obviously a lie. Thus he was behaving not very politely from the very start. The example illustrates how much of the civil conversation depends upon following the conversational maxims and on the listener's understanding of whether the maxims are being broken deliberately or not.

Violating the maxim of Relation allows Carroll to create humour from other logical fallacies. For example, when Alice is afraid that the flamingo might bite, the Duchess says:

- (25) *Very true, flamingoes and mustard both bite. And the moral of that is – "Birds of a feather flock together"*.
'Only mustard isn't a bird,' Alice remarked. (AAW 107)

Here, the Duchess' moral has nothing to do with what has been previously said since mustard is not a bird, as Alice correctly notices. Thus the Duchess' contribution to the conversation is irrelevant, yet humorous, and reveals a funny or stupid nature of the Duchess. This is the case when the speaker (Duchess) thinks that she is relevant to the discussion, but her contribution is not perceived as relevant by the listener (Alice). In such situation the speaker fails to fulfil the maxim through her irrelevance, the result of which is the discrepancy between the speaker's and the listener's perception of relevance.

Another case of exploiting the maxim of Relation can be observed when neither the speaker nor the listener is aware that the maxim is broken, and it is only the reader who realises that. In Alice books the reader is often in an advantageous position, knowing that the maxim is being violated and getting the humour of the misunderstanding and miscommunication between the characters. This is often the case with puns, for example:

- (26) *Here the Red Queen began again. 'Can you answer useful questions?' she said. 'How is bread made?' 'I know that!' Alice cried eagerly. 'You take some flour – ' 'Where do you pick the flower?' the White Queen asked. 'In a garden, or in the hedges?' 'Well, it isn't picked at all,' Alice explained: 'it's ground – ' 'How many acres of ground?' said the White Queen. 'You mustn't leave out so many things.'* (TLG 324).

Here the Queen and Alice are miscommunicating because of the homonymous words 'flour/flower' and 'ground' as a past participle and as a noun. However, neither of them realises that and each continues in their own sense. Yet the reader is aware of the pun and notices that the conversation is not following the maxim of Relation, which is the source of humour for him.

Conclusions

It has been illustrated that breaking conversational maxims in literary texts is extremely frequent and elaborate. Flouting the maxims is mainly used for creating rhetorical devices and figurative language, which is present in every piece of literature. Violation of maxims is not so often met and is usually considered to be of less value and use in literary texts. Carroll's works, however, prove this wrong. The above analysis of some of the examples from his books allows drawing the following conclusions:

- Violating conversational maxims inevitably plays havoc with a conversation, which Carroll exploits deliberately in creating misunderstanding, crazily logical connections, ambiguity, deliberate fooling and disinformation.
- Communication is most affected by breaking the maxim of Relation. It is crucial for the maintenance of cooperative behaviour in conversation, and there may be a breakdown or immediate termination of communication.
- The maxims are interrelated and there is an overlap between maxims; often the violation of one maxim involves the other maxim being violated as well. Usually the maxims of Quantity and Manner are broken together.

Carroll's works are exceptional in a way that they mostly exploit maxim violation, not flouting, following the distinction introduced in Section 2. His characters often break the maxims without any attempt for the listener to understand the violation; on the contrary, they either want to trick Alice, or they are simply unaware of not following the maxims. Often it is the reader, a third part, who judges whether a maxim has been broken. Thus the reader's perception may be, and often is, different from the speaker's and the listener's in conversations of literary works.

Finally, it could be said that the Wonderland, a place where Alice accidentally finds herself to be, from a pragmatic point of view can be seen as a fictitious land where the cooperative principle does not exist, and its inhabitants are not aware of the conversational maxims. This discrepancy between the world of Alice and the Wonderland constitutes a great part of Alice's adventures and fun in these two books.

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GRICE'O KOOPERACINIO PRINCIPO MAKSIMŲ LAUŽYMAS GROŽINĖJE LITERATŪROJE

Eiginta Okunienė

Santrauka

Straipsnyje nagrinėjami Grice'o Kooperacinio Principo maksimų laužymo būdai, sutinkami grožinėje literatūroje. Išskiriami dvejopi maksimų nesilaikymo būdai: nepaisymas (*flouting*) bei pažeidimas (*violation*). Maksimos nepaisymo atveju kalbėtojas tai daro atvirai, taip kad klausytojas suprastų, kad maksimos yra nesilaikoma. Maksimos pažeidimo atveju kalbėtojas tai daro slapčia arba net nesuvokdamas, kad maksimą pažeidžia. Maksimos nepaisymai sukuria įvairias implikacijas bei perkeltines reikšmes, kurios yra naudojamos kaip ekspresyumo priemonės literatūroje. Tuo tarpu maksimos pažeidimai paprastai sukelia nesusipratimus ir ap sunkina bendravimą, tačiau jie taip pat sutinkami literatūroje humorui, dviprasmiškumui bei kitiems kalbiniams efektams kurti, kurių ypač gausu Carroll'io kūrinuose, analizuojamuose šiame straipsnyje.

Įteikta

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