Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi / The Journal of Social Sciences

Akademik Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi, Yıl: 8, Sayı: 50, Şubat 2021, s. 173-189

ISSN: 2149-0821 Doi Number: <http://dx.doi.org/10.29228/SOBIDER.49456>

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Abdulkadir TURGAY

Harran Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili Eğitimi, turgaya@harran.edu.tr

**GRICEAN ANALYSIS OF ELT STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON
DISTANCE LEARNING DURING COVID19 PANDEMIC: A CASE
STUDY**

Abstract

Clear communication is both a crucial need and a strong desire on the part of every human being who famous Greek philosopher Aristotle named “a social animal”. As a natural part of their social nature, human beings are in constant communication with each other to serve their many different needs and wants. However, this does not hold true in some, if not most, cases when it comes to interpersonal communication, including student and lecturer interactions. That is, human interaction continues to suffer from ambiguity and/or obscurity, leading to ineffective communications, which might then result in nothing but unsatisfied needs.

Linguist H. Paul Grice proposed an approach called the Cooperative Principle (CP) to help facilitate clear, effective communication. The CP, along with its four maxims, is intended to help gauge clarity and effectiveness of human interactions. With Grice’s CP and its four maxims in mind, the researcher designed this study to analyze English Language Teaching (ELT) students’ views regarding their own distance learning experiences during the Covid19 pandemic.

Descriptive in its nature, this case study involved 33 ELT students, including 15 males and 18 females, volunteering to be interviewed. In the fall semester of 2020-2021 academic year, the researcher interviewed these interviewees one by one, asking ten specific pre-determined, open-ended

questions all related to distance learning. Each interviewee was asked the same questions in the same order as part of a structured interview. Conducted via zoom, all the interviews were recorded for further detailed analysis to see if the interviewees' responses violated any of Grice's four CP-related maxims.

As part of the study, the researcher analyzed a total of 330 mostly lengthy chunks of speech produced as contributions in the form of responses to the ten questions asked during the interviews (10 questionsX33 interviewees=330). Upon close scrutiny, the researcher spotted and categorized a sizable sum of maxim violations which were then converted into statistical data. The statistics revealed that the interviewees violated all the maxims, but the maxim of quality. The type of interaction and interactional context did not allow for the detection of any flouting of this maxim, which seems to be the hardest to detect any way.

Of the four maxims, the maxim of manner was found to be the one that was mostly violated (75%). No violation of the quality maxim could be detected in interviewee responses. Average count of violations per response was rated at 1.8 for both male and female interviewees. The research findings suggest that both male and female interviewees, at least in this study, can conduct equally productive or unproductive communications, considering the overall maxim observances and/or non-observances.

Keywords: Gricean Analysis, Cooperative Principle, violation, communication, distance learning.

İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLİĞİ ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN COVID19 SALGINI SIRASINDA UZAKTAN EĞİTİME BAKIŞ AÇILARININ GRICE-TARZI ANALİZİ: BİR DURUM ÇALIŞMASI

Özet

Açık iletişim, ünlü Yunan filozof Aristoteles'in "sosyal bir hayvan" olarak adlandırdığı her insan için hem hayatı bir ihtiyaç hem de güçlü bir arzudur. Sosyal doğalarının doğal bir parçası olarak, insanlar pek çok farklı ihtiyaç ve isteklerini karşılamak için birbirleriyle sürekli iletişim halindedir. Ancak, öğrenci ve akademisyen etkileşimleri dahil kişilerarası iletişim söz konusu olduğunda, çoğu durumda değilse de bazı durumlarda, bu geçerli değildir. Yani, insan etkileşimi muğlaklık ve/veya belirsizlikten muzdarip olmaya devam etmekte, bu da etkisiz iletişime yol açmakta ve bu da karşılanmamış ihtiyaçlardan başka hiç bir şeye yol açmayabilmektedir. Dilbilimci H. Paul Grice, açık ve etkili iletişimi kolaylaştırmaya yardımcı olmak için İşbirliği İlkesi (CP) adlı bir yaklaşım önerdi. Dört ilke (nicelik, nitelik, ilişki ve tarz) ile birlikte, CP insan etkileşiminin açıklığını ve etkisini ölçmeye yardımcı olmayı amaçlamaktadır. Grice'in CP ve dört ilkeyi göz önünde bulunduran araştırmacı, bu çalışmayı İngilizce Öğretmenliği (ELT) öğrencilerinin Covid19 salgını sırasında kendi uzaktan eğitim deneyimleriyle ilgili görüşlerini analiz etmek için tasarladı.

Doğası gereği betimleyici olan bu vaka çalışması, mülakata katılmaya gönüllü 15 erkek ve 18 kadından oluşan 33 ELT öğrencisini içeriyordu. Araştırmacı, 2020-2021 güz döneminde, görüşülen bu kişilerle tek tek görüşerek, tamamı uzaktan eğitimle ilgili önceden belirlenmiş, açık uçlu on soru yöneltti. Görüşülen her kişiye, yapılandırılmış bir görüşmenin parçası olarak aynı sırayla aynı sorular sorulmuştur. Zoom üzerinden gerçekleştirilen tüm görüşmeler, görüşülen kişilerin yanıtlarının Grice'in CP ile ilgili dört kuralından herhangi birini ihlal edip etmediğini görmek amacıyla daha ayrıntılı analiz için kaydedildi. Araştırmacı, araştırmanın bir parçası olarak, görüşmeler sırasında yanıtlar şeklinde katkı olarak üretilen toplam 330 adet uzun konuşma öbeğini analiz etti. Yanıtların yakından incelenmesinden sonra araştırmacı, ilke ihlallerini tespit edip kategorize etti ve bunlar daha sonra istatistiksel verilere dönüştürüldü. İstatistikler, görüşmecilerin nitelik ilkesi hariç tüm ilkeleri ihlal ettiğini ortaya koydu. Etkileşim türü ve etkileşimsel bağlam, zaten tespit edilmesi en zor görünen bu ilkenin herhangi bir ihlalinin tespitine izin vermedi. Dört ilkeden en çok ihlal edilenin tavır (açıklık) ilkesi olduğu görülmüştür (%75). Görüşülen kişilerin yanıtlarında kalite ilkesinin ihlali tespit edilememiştir. Yanıt başına ortalama ihlal sayısı hem erkek hem de kadın görüşmeciler için 1,8 olarak derecelendirilmiştir. Araştırma bulguları, genel ilke gözetimleri ve/veya ihlalleri göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, en azından bu çalışmadaki hem erkek hem de kadın görüşmecilerin eşit derecede verimli ya da verimsiz iletişim kurabildikleri anlamına gelecek şekilde yorumlanabilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Grice-tarzı analiz, İşbirliği İlkesi, ihlal, iletişim, uzaktan eğitim.

Introduction

The goal of any language instruction, just as described by Widdowson, is to help learners hone their four basic language skills so they can decode and interpret messages delivered in any form possible (1978). What is described above is what happens among people when they are in contact: communication, which Guirdham characterizes as a "collective and interactive process of generating and interpreting messages," (2005, p. 6). It can be defined, in simpler terms, as a method of sharing information by means of an activity and/or process in which two or more people express ideas and feelings by taking turns. The ultimate goal of human communication is to understand and be understood by others, which if and when fulfilled successfully, can have a therapeutic effect. Samovar et al depicts communication as "... one of the major ways you fulfill a social component within yourself" (2017, p. 25). He goes on to elaborate his argument: "So strong is the need to communicate that one of the cruelest punishments found in nearly every society is solitary confinement" (2017, p. 25). However, no matter how hard one might try, not always is an intended message fully received or understood by the receiver the way it was intended by the sender. Opting to be involved in an act of communication interaction brings participants to a point where they need to make informed choices about how to use language as well as where and why to use it. Interpersonal communication lays responsibility on both

senders and receivers to use language carefully and intelligibly if they expect their interactions to produce the intended meaningful and effective outcome(s). Alberts et al stresses that “becoming an effective communicator involves both understanding the components and processes of communication and putting them into practice” (2019, p. 2). Cutting, on the other hand, claims that “much of the time, what we mean is actually not in the words themselves but in the meaning implied” (2002, p. 19). Trask takes it a step further, defining “communicative competence as the ability to use language appropriately in social situations.

In order to speak a language successfully, you need to have purely linguistic competence in that language: mastery of pronunciation, of grammar and of vocabulary. But you need more than that: you also need sociolinguistic competence, knowledge of such things as how to begin and end conversations, how and when to be polite, and how to address people. In addition, you further need strategic competence, knowledge of how to organize a piece of speech in an effective manner and how to spot and compensate for any misunderstandings or other difficulties.” (2007, p. 43)

Of vital importance in human life, communication is sure a double-edged sword. It can bring so many benefits if performed successfully and deprive one of many others and might even bring damage if carried out unsuccessfully. Socially, communication will bring about two priceless benefits. One is that that it will allow participants to find out (more) about others, which will help them to better interpret the meanings they intend to convey. Next, they will be much better off knowing how to present themselves to their interlocutors as well as all other people (2017, p. 25). Thus, it is helpful to remember that the way we choose to communicate carries with it costs and consequences. Thus, the development of an awareness of the aspects and features of communication will certainly help interlocutors go a long way toward effective communication, which can then prevent a communication breakdown which otherwise might likely cost a job, a friendship, a business agreement or even a marriage. In that vein, improving one’s communication awareness and competence will most likely contribute positively to both personal and professional life.

Reasoning it would not be logical if human conversation trades included a series of garbled, unrelated comments, linguist Herbert Paul Grice, also an ordinary language philosopher, developed the concept of what is widely known today as “the Cooperative Principle (or CP)” in order to help facilitate effective communication (1975). CP mandates that if and when involved in a conversational act, participants are expected to contribute to the ongoing conversation as needed, at the time of occurrence

of the exchange, and in alignment with the (mutually) agreed intent and course of conversation they are part of. As an extension of CP, Grice also proposed four maxims, which are “quantity, quality, relation, and manner” (1989, pp. 26-27).

Let us briefly explain what Grice means by them and why they are important in communication:

1. The Maxim of Quantity calls for the provision of right amount of information and as much detail as the exchange necessitates, without sounding verbose.
2. The Maxim of Quality requires that interlocutors provide information that is both accurate and provable.
3. The Maxim of Relation says that the piece(s) of information exchanged by interlocutors in a conversation must be related to the current topic of discussion.
4. The Maxim of Manner mainly refers to clarity, requiring conversation participants to be clear, concise, neat and tidy to the extent possible (1989, pp. 26-27).

Speaking of CP and the four maxims, Yule notes that when engaged in conversations people will not need to try to specifically refer to them as they are presumably considered in routine conversations. “We assume that people are normally going to provide an appropriate amount of information; we assume they are telling the truth, being relevant, and trying to be as clear as they can,” (Yule, 2014, p. 144; Yule, 1996, p. 37). In addition to CP and its four maxims, speakers must have some further understanding of pragmatics to be able to make sense when they speak but also make sense of what they hear or read. As Thomas pointed out, as an apparent reality of human nature and human interaction, there will be instances in which some speakers will mean exactly what they write or say, others will mean more than they put into words while some others will mean just the opposite of what their words literally express, (2013, p. 55-56). However, all these aspects of syntax and pragmatics fall outside the scope of this research study.

Statement of the Problem

“Nothing would work in the absence of communication.”

Marc D. Hauser

As underlined by Hauser (2000), the entire universe is so designed that everything, animate or inanimate, must communicate one way or the other to cooperate and contribute to the ontology of the wondrously harmonious universe. As barely discerned by some, “communication isn’t something we do *to* others; rather, it is something we do *with* them” (Adler et al, 2015). In any given inter-personal communication situation, the two interlocutors are obligated to make it a success for the both parties. Gumpers defines communication as a social enterprise or movement

into which a minimum of two individuals need to contribute in a collaborative manner (1982, p. 1). The speaker has the responsibility to do all s/he can do to relay his/her message as clearly and vividly as s/he conceives it in his/her own mind while the listener is simultaneously required to make as great an effort as necessary to hear, process and understand the message shared by the speaker as closely to the way in the speaker's mind as possible. Once made public, utterances especially those thrown about recklessly and haphazardly, cannot be reversed, substituted, taken back or wiped out, permanently sticking to the speaker(s) like glue (Adler et al, 2015).

As part of their academic interactions with their lecturers, students, just like others, do not seem to be cognizant of the fact that the success of an act of communication is a two-way endeavor calling for equal involvement, effort and contribution on the part of both interlocutors to arrive at a mutually satisfactory outcome. When generating verbal and/or written messages, they appear to disregard Grice's cooperative principle and its four maxims, which in some cases not only creates ambiguities but also leads to many unforeseen ramifications.

Background of the Study

Obviously, there is room for some, if not constant, communication between lecturers and students on academic matters. As a lecturer, the researcher frequently observed ambiguities in student messages whether they were verbal or written, which necessitated additional decisions and/or follow-up actions in order to clarify to prevent misunderstandings or communication breakdowns.

The excerpt below, for example, is taken from a real conversation that took place between the current researcher, also a lecturer, and one of his freshmen students. At the time of this exchange, the freshman was taking two separate online courses from the lecturer. She initiated this conversation by emailing her lecturer:

Student to lecturer: *"I want to take the make-up exam tomorrow. My average is below CC. Do I need to make an extra application to take the exam or will it automatically appear in the system tomorrow?"*

As is evident from the content of the first email, the student did not behave in the way prescribed by Grice's CP and its four maxims. Let us analyze this attempt to communicate against the four maxims. In her email, the student seems to have violated the maxim of quantity as the information she provided in her email fell short of the required amount because she did not mention which of the two courses she was referring to. Normally, it is not so easy to learn by heart the names of all the students in a crowded, face-to-face class, let alone during campus closures due to the Covid19 pandemic. It is important to note that nearly all the students, who the lecturer never met in person due to campus closures, opted to have their cameras off during online courses, which aggravated the challenge to learn names. Even if the lecturer knew the student by name, there was still no way he could figure out which of the two courses

she was talking about. Giving less than necessary information produced complexity for the reader (the lecturer in this case) to identify the course being talked about without writing back to the writer to clarify if she was talking about the Listening and Pronunciation course.

Additionally, the student did not seem to stick to the maxim of manner, the rule for clarity, as the content of the email contained ambiguity and obscurity and was far from being clear. By the way, the email shared above is just one of the many communication exchanges that were similar with respect to non-observance of CP and the four maxims.

Triggered by this observation, the researcher decided to design the current study to ascertain the extent to which ELT students observed Grice's CP and its four maxims in their utterances.

Research Questions

For reasons explained earlier, the researcher decided to carry out this study to find answers to the following questions:

- 1) Do the participants observe "the cooperative principle" as they converse?
- 2) Which of the four maxims do they violate the most?
- 3) Which of the four maxims do they disregard the least?
- 4) Is there any gender difference between male and female participants with respect to maxim violations?

Method

This study was built around an interview which the researcher conducted via zoom in order to elicit ELT students' views with respect to their distance learning experiences during the Covid19 pandemic. In this section, the researcher provided information about the participants, the research questions he sought answers to as well as the instrument and procedures used.

Instrument

The researcher came up with ten (10) pre-determined, open-ended questions to elicit ELT student perspectives on their distance learning experiences during the Covid19 pandemic that has plagued the entire world for the past year or so. All related to the distance learning process during campus closures, the questions served as a stimulus for the interviewees to produce natural speech in the form of responses. The researcher held a 15-minute zoom interview with each of the 33 ELT students volunteering to be interviewees and asked them to answer the questions in the same order (see Appendix 1).

Participants

A total of 33 ELT students, including 15 males and 18 females, took part in this study. Native speakers of Turkish, all the students are majoring in English Language Teaching (ELT) at Harran University's Faculty of Education. They all volunteered to participate in the study, which offered them an opportunity to both express their views on the overall distance learning process and voice concerns and expectations during a time when they all felt isolated and lonely during the pandemic. It became obvious during the interviews that they needed a pair of ears poised to listen to them as they were just desperate to speak out.

Procedures

During the zoom interviews conducted by the researcher, the interviewees, 33 ELT students at Harran University's Faculty of Education, were asked to answer each of the ten questions one by one. All the interviews were recorded for future referral in order to ascertain to what extent the interviewees observed Grice's cooperative principle and its four maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner.

The researcher had also applied to the University's Ethics Committee for approval in order to implement the current study which used human participants (see Appendix 2). Accordingly, all the collected data were treated with due care, with each interviewee's integrity and confidentiality safeguarded.

Data Analysis

After the interviews were completed, all the interviewee responses were transcribed by the researcher himself into a word document. The researcher then referred to the recorded interviews for a scrutiny of the responses to detect maxim violations, if any. Listening attentively to each of the responses given to answer each of the ten questions one by one, the researcher gauged the responses to the four maxims.

Color codes were used as a means of identification and classification of maxim violations: yellow for quantity, blue for quality, pink for relation and green for manner. Once detection and categorization of maxim violations were completed, the researcher consulted two separate statisticians for feedback on the best way to proceed and obtain a clear account of the collected data. In line with their recommendations, if an interviewee was considered to violate a maxim, his/her response was given a numeric value of one (1). If the maxim in question was not flouted, then the response received the numeric value of zero (0).

All these numbers were then inputted into an excel spreadsheet for conversion into such descriptive statistical values as mean, percentage and frequency. Subsequent to detailed documentation of maxim violations, statistical calculations, including mean, percentage and frequency, were run to interpret the data obtained as in many different

ways as possible in order to arrive at true and insightful interpretations that would help bring to light any speech patterns peculiar to student responses.

Results and Discussion

Based on the outcomes from the analysis of the collected data, the researcher was able to deduce that the interviewees were having problem expressing themselves as clearly and effectively as is required sufficient. The seemed to violate three of the four maxims, averaging 1.8 violation per response (out of 330 sets of responses in total). Obviously, each set of interviewee response included utterances ranging from a single sentence in rare cases to a long paragraph in most cases.

Statistical results are presented below, indicating the extent of violations for each of the four CP maxims.

1. Maxim of Quantity

Findings revealed that there is not a single interviewee who did not violate the maxim of quantity. In other words, each interview disregarded this maxim no less than at least once as they answered the ten open-ended questions regarding their distance learning experiences.

Table 1: Maxim of Quantity violations

Interviewee (Numbers)	Maxim observances (%)	Maxim non-observances (%)
33 ELT students	28	72

Of the 330 interviewee responses, 239 included violations of the quantity maxim, which corresponds to 72% (as can be seen in Table 1 above). From a different perspective though, the interviewees were observed to heed this maxim of quantity by 28% as they were answering the questions.

Compared to the overall maxim violations in responses, this is the second maxim that was most frequently violated. The overall findings illustrate a severe lack of awareness on the part of the interviewees with respect to the maxim of quantity.

2. Maxim of Quality

This maxim points out to accuracy and truthfulness in conversations. In general, identifying violation of this maxim is very hard because interlocutors, as also suggested by Yule, are assumed to be engaged in talk exchanges on the premise that

what they hear is accurate information unless or until proven otherwise. Underscoring that "it is much easier, for example, to tell the truth than to invent lies" (1989, p. 29), Grice himself believes that interlocutors are likely to behave as decreed by CP and its accompanying maxims.

Analyzing all the responses on the same assumptions, the researcher was not able to identify any violations that would signal the information the interviewees shared during their one-on-one interviews was false or inaccurate.

Table 2: Maxim of Quality violations

Interviewee (Numbers)	Maxim observances (%)	Maxim non-observances (%)
33 ELT students	100*	0

Accordingly, as Table 2 above clearly shows the researcher proceeded with the same assumption Grice pointed out to (and seconded by Yule) and assumed all the interviewees observed this maxim of quality (by 100%) in their responses throughout the interviews since there was no reason at all to consider otherwise.

3. Maxim of Relation

Of the 33 interviewees, all, except for student 27, violated this maxim. To put it differently, the maxim of relation was violated at least once by nearly all the interviewees with the overall violation adding up to 31%.

Table 3: Maxim of Relation violations

Interviewee (Numbers)	Maxim observances (%)	Maxim non-observances (%)
33 ELT students	69	31

As can be seen in Table 3 above, the interviewees were mostly able to stick to the topic of discussion (69%) while one third of their contributions (31%) was unrelated. Still, the results can be interpreted that one out of three interviewee utterances had no direct relevance to the subject matter at hand, which points out to a need for heightened awareness of the maxim of relation.

4. Maxim of Manner

There was not even one interviewee who did not violate this maxim. In other words, the maxim of manner was violated by all the interviewees, with the total violations amounting to 75% while they observed the maxim by 25%.

Table 4: Maxim of Manner violations

Interviewee (Numbers)	Maxim observances (%)	Maxim non-observances (%)
33 ELT students	25	75

As Table 4 above indicates three out of four utterances lacked clarity, brevity and orderliness, making the maxim of manner the most frequently violated of all.

This is the rule that mainly accounts for and refers to clarity as well as brevity and orderliness in conversations. Lack of clarity is what human conversation suffers most from as it is one of commonest 'crimes' committed by almost every human being and anywhere in the world. The interviewees in this study were no exception because the violations of this maxim were the highest of all the four maxims (75%).

5. Gender distribution of maxim violations

As mentioned earlier, there were 33 interviewees in total, including 15 male (45%) and 18 female (55%) ELT students. A gender-based analysis of the statistical data indicated that both male and female interviewees averaged 1.8 violations per response. However, when the overall violations were converted into percentages, 45% belonged to males and 55% to females, which is commensurate with the percentage of their representational ratio in the overall population (33 interviewees).

Table 5: Distribution of Maxim Violations by Gender

Interviewee (33 ELT students)	Maxim non-observances (Average per response)
Male (15, corresponding to 45% of the population)	1.8
Female (18, corresponding to 55% of the population)	1.8

Table 5 above clearly indicates that no gender-related difference was observed between male and female interviewees. In other words, the two groups displayed similar performances, considering the overall maxim violations.

Regarding the type(s) of maxim violations, males were observed to mostly violate the maxims of quantity and manner while females disregarded only the maxim of manner most frequently. On the other hand, the fewest number of violations seemed to bunch up around the maxim of relation for both males and females, which, based on these findings, attests to substantial convergence.

6. Distribution of maxim violations by question

Quantity maxim violations ranged from 39% in responses to question 9 to 91% in responses to question 2. No violations of the quality maxim were detected in any responses. As for the maxim of relation, the lowest number of violations was observed in question 9 (9%) and the highest in question 1 (73%). Lastly, regarding the quantity of manner violations, the lowest (61%) was shared by both questions 2 and 9 while the highest (88%) was seen in question 6. Collectively, the number of fewest violations of the four maxims (36%) all together were observed in question 9 while the highest (77%) were detected in question 1.

Regarding the maxim of quantity violations, question 9 was quite short and simple, which was easy for the interviewees to comprehend and deal with. Question 2 contained words unknown to most of the interviewees who asked for repetition and/or clarification. As for violations of the maxim of relation, because question 9 was short and simple it led to fewer violations. Long and complex, question 1 made it difficult for the interviewees to comprehend the first time because most of the interviewers asked the interviewer to repeat it. Questions 2 and 9, both of which are the shortest of all, were easy to comprehend and handle. Question 6, also long and complex, posed difficulty particularly because of the word "course content" during the interview.

As the interviewees had been away from the campus for nearly an entire year, both their listening and speaking skills seemed to deteriorate. Nearly each of the interviewee himself or herself took the time to emphasize that. With some new and complex terms and concepts embedded in the questions, the level of difficulty of the language seemed to challenge them all quite a bit.

The overall findings of the study exposed that the interviewees violated all the maxims, except for the maxim of quality, in varying degrees. The highest number of violations were observed in the maxims of manner (75%) and of quantity (72%), followed by the maxim of relation (31%). The reason no violations of the maxim of quality were identified was because there was no evidence whatsoever to suggest that the interviewees' responses were not accurate or that they did not have any evidence

for their responses. As the linguist and philosopher who developed the concept of CP and the four accompanying maxims, Grice was of the belief that conversation participants were generally acting in accordance with CP and its four maxims unless there were signs or indicators suggesting just the opposite. Following Grice's logic and Yule's assumption, the researcher himself welcomed and treated all the interviewee responses as if they represented absolute truth since there was no particular reason to think otherwise.

Apart from all this, it is a good thing that no violations of the maxim of quality were determined in the interviewee responses because Grice attributed varying degrees of significance to each maxim, attaching the highest level of value to the maxim of quality. Thus, the maxim of quality was the gatekeeper for Grice, who underscored that "other maxims come into operation only on the assumption that this maxim of Quality is satisfied" (1975).

Here is an example for the flouting of the maxim of quantity, which the interviewees violated in 75% of their responses. The utterance below was in response to question 2 asking them to share *how and when they learned about the decision to transition to distance learning*:

Student 7: "I don't know teacher. Sorry, sorry about that."

Student 7 violated both the maxim of quantity as the response provided less than enough information although she complied with CP because she opted to make a contribution, by choosing to answer the question. At the same time, she violated the maxim of manner because the contribution she chose to make was not a clear one. Here, Student 26 shares his contribution in response to question 2 again, violating the maxim of relation, in addition to others (manner and quantity):

Student 26: "I think it is successful I think."

The response has no relevance to the topic of discussion.

Below is the contribution of Student 7 while answering question 6 on *the quality of course content during distance learning*:

Student 7: "Actually, I said when, when face-to-face I like it because
you ask me always, you always ask me what is this,
repeat it, what is it like that but when the distance
education I can.. I'm afraid open the my microphone or
I'm afraid open my camera and I think it's a weard for
me. It is a weard <weird> and I get, I got used to ... yes
but... I, I don't know what I'm say what I should say."

As clear from the response, she violates the maxim of manner, in addition to the maxim of relevance. Based on this and her earlier response, it is clear that her lack of proficiency gets in the way of clear and smooth delivery of her messages.

This is one other example for the violation of the maxim of manner as Student 23 responds to question 9 regarding *the university's overall efforts to manage distance learning*:

Student 23: "University gives the students a good hmm a good.. a

*good evaluation for the students but the students itself
didn't hmm.. hmm.. don't.. don't react to their efforts
and therefore students get evaluate themselves."*

The overall response suffers from ambiguity as well as lucidity.

Lastly, Student 17 answers question 10, which asks for interviewees' opinion regarding the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) announcement that universities would offer their courses online in the fall semester.

Student 17. *Actually I, I don't switch to distance.. distance learning.*

Obviously, the response violates the maxim of manner as the contribution is not one that makes sense; it is ambiguous and obscure.

Conclusion

As the current study revealed, the most serious violation of all is related to the maxim of manner, which accounts for clarity in conversations. This finding is consistent with Martinelli's deduction that "the clearer your message, the easier it gets for the receiver to decode it according to your original intent. While this sounds obvious, most communication pitfalls originate from lack of clarity (2021)."

The fact that no violations of the maxim of quality were observed is an outcome in accordance with the propositions of both Grice and Yule.

Additionally, Martinelli stressed that a solid knowledge of sentence structure and linguistic use will ensure both validity and viability of interactions. On the contrary, mistakes originating from a lack of linguistic competence will negatively impact the lucidity of the meanings shared, resulting in ambiguity and uncertainty. Similarly, absence of this linguistic competence could be clearly seen in the interview responses as one of the reasons, if not *the* underlying reason as to why the maxim of manner was the one mostly violated of the four maxims.

The outcomes of the statistical data suggest that the interviewees need to increase an awareness of CP and the four maxims to help further improve their communicative skills for clearer and more effective communication. This is an outcome which is in harmony with Samovar et al's view of communication "... in the globalized world, effective intercultural communication is an increasingly essential requirement in the critical efforts to ensure world peace, improve relationships between co-cultures and the dominant cultures within each country, assure resource sustainability, and promote ecological viability (2017, p. 3).

The findings of the current study indicated that the interviewees violated the maxim of manner by making unnecessarily long and ambiguous contributions, an outcome that agrees with the finding Soylu came up with in her M.A. thesis focusing on "cross-cultural variation of the cooperative principle..." (1999, p. 57).

Suggestions

As is obvious from the current study, a lack of awareness of CP and its four maxims lead to ambiguity and obscurity as well as various ramifications. This gives us as lecturers a good reason to incorporate Grice's CP and the four maxims into our courses when and where possible. Additionally, diverse examples of real conversations could be used as study materials to help the ELT students who participated in this study as well as others increase their awareness of CP and the four maxims, which would serve as a springboard for enhanced communicative skills. Because communication that is not clear is most likely to have ramifications, unnecessarily creating extra work for the hearers and/or readers and taking up more of the valuable and scarce time they can spare for conversations. Creating time, let alone making extra time available, for communication is harder today in this fast-paced age of information technology where everyone is swamped with large quantities of information made widely available to human beings all around the world. No matter what profession one may end up doing, we all must learn to communicate as effectively as is required of professionals who will have to learn to express themselves succinctly and perspicuously. This is probably truer at present for women than men as they are expected to occupy much of the influential positions of leadership in the near future.

To strike the right note, it would be worthwhile to conclude by seconding English composer John Powell, who said "communication works for those who work at it".

REFERENCES:

- Adler, R. B., Rodman, G., & Pré, A. Du. (2015). *Essential communication*. New York, U.S.A.: Oxford University Press.
- Alberts, J. K., Nakayama, T. K., & Martin, J. N. (2019). *Human communication in society* (fifth edition). Hoboken, New Jersey, U.S.A.: Pearson Education.
- AZ Quotes. Retrieved from https://www.azquotes.com/author/21719-John_Powell
- Cutting, J. (2002). *Pragmatics and discourse: A resource book for students*. New York, U.S.A.: Routledge.
- Grice, H. P. (1975). *Logic and conversation*. In Syntax and Semantics (eds. Peter Cole and Jerry L. Morgan), Vol. 3, Speech Acts, 41-58. New York: Academic Press.
- Grice, H. P. (1989). *Studies in the way of words*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.: Harvard University Press.
- Guirdham, Maureen. (2005). *Communication across cultures at work* (second edition). Hampshire, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gumpers, J. J. (1982). *Discourse strategies*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

- Hauser, M. D. (2000). *The evolution of communication*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.tr/books?hl=en&lr=&id=QbunyscCJBoC&oi=fnd&pg=P_A1&dq=the+evolution+of+communication&ots=QOsm_rPpuj&sig=ThAfZZ_ObtvUw6tJ06_0BbKDqzs&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=the%20evolution%20of%20communication&f=false
- Martelli, A. (2021). *The seven characteristics of effective communication*. Retrieved from <https://alessandramartelli.com/en/freebies/characteristics-effective-communication/>
- Samovar, L. A., Porter, R. E., McDaniel, E. R., & Roy, C. S. (2017). *Communication between cultures* (ninth edition). Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A.: Cengage Learning.
- Soylu, B. (1999). *Cross-cultural variation of the cooperative principle: A case study of native speakers of Turkish and English*. Unpublished MA Thesis. Eskişehir: Anadolu University.
- Thomas, J. (2013). *Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics*. New York, U.S.A.: Routledge.
- Trask, R. L. (edited by Peter Stockwell). (2007). *Language and linguistics: the key concepts* (second edition). Madison Avenue, New York, U.S.A.: Routledge.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1978). *Teaching language as communication*. Oxford, New York, U.S.A.: Oxford University Press.
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford, New York, U.S.A.: Oxford University Press.
- Yule, G. (2014). *The study of language*. (Fifth edition). Cambridge, New York, U.S.A.: Cambridge University Press.

Appendix 1

This interview is about your views and impressions on your distance learning (DL) experiences in the fall semester of 2020-2021 academic year.

1. Please tell me about your daily routines, especially things like what you are busy with these days as opposed to the pre-distance learning period.
2. How and when did you learn our university was going to switch to DL for the fall semester?
3. How well were you prepared for DL, esp. with respect to all the technical and technological equipment that you would need for your courses (e.g. PC, iPad, smartphone, robust internet connection, etc.)?
4. What is your view regarding Harran University's dissemination of information and other (help desk) services to help students familiarize themselves with the new DL system and overcome any problems they may face?
5. Please tell me about a time when you encountered a specific online challenge and what you did to overcome that difficulty.
6. Compared to your previous face-to-face classes, how do you like the quality of the course content provided these days?
7. How do you like the measurement and evaluation methods used in distance learning today (to assess student performance)?
8. Please explain how your DL experience has impacted you in general – has it been useful in helping you improve your existing skills or develop some new skills which you did not have before.
9. How do you evaluate the university's overall efforts to manage the DL process?
10. As you will remember, it was the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) that announced universities would offer their courses online in the fall semester. What is your overall opinion regarding YÖK's decision to switch to DL?

Appendix 2

Harran University Ethics Committee Approval

Date: 12 January 2021

Number: 2021/01