

AN ANALYSIS OF CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE IN *THE IMPORTANCE OF
BEING EARNEST* DIALOGUE BY OSCAR WILDE

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze the conversational implicature in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research method, the research completed by examining sentences spoken by the speaker and what hearers understand in the dialogue of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. This research has purpose to answer two questions, that are (1) what are the types of conversational implicature, and (2) what are the implied meanings of conversational implicature in the dialogue *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

A. INTRODUCTION

Language is very important thing in life while it has the power that used as a way of thinking, understanding, and expressing thoughts and feeling in the society. As what Kridalaksana said (2007:32) Language is an arbitrary sound symbol system which used by people in every communication that occurs in the community, language is a tool in delivering something. As the tool language plays a very important role in the conversation as a social interaction instrument among people. Communication has main purpose to deliver an information or message from an individual or group to another as a self realization through a process of mutual understanding.

Every people has his own way of delivering information in certain situation or context. The speaker or the person who delivers the speech gives more information than what he said. The intend or information delivered is more indirectly to the listener. To catch that information, the speaker much be understand the context, and the listener must understand what the speaker said. According to Vespoor and Sauter (2000:16) when people communicate to other they do that for a variety reasons, to tell someone about something, to get information from someone, to make someone do something, to express one's attitude about something.

As we know, pragmatics is a linguistic research which refers to the science of interpretation meaning. In this modern era, language has changed, the people used to choose the language that has a different meaning from the utterance. In social interaction, people

usually use something indirect meaning in delivering the words rather than its original meaning which is called as an implicature, Yule (1996:35).

According to Wijana (1996:38), with a lack of semantic connection between a utterance and one that is implied, it is probable that a pronouncement would allow for unlimited implicatures. In general, someone who has a conversation with speech partner is always faced with problems that make the conversation must be understood by both parties, namely the problem of understanding the speech delivered by the speaker indirectly in a particular context and has a specific purpose. The indirect speech, actually called with conversational implicature.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of conversational implicature also occurs in the entertainment industry, like movie, drama performance. Apart from being a form of entertainment, movie or drama performance are also a medium of communication to convey the author's message to audiences both in letters and implied said Parera (2004:223). In the movie or drama performance, most of utterance's characters make the audiences think for a moment to understand what the meaning of the spoken, it is because the characters' utterances sometimes has a meaning or purpose that is different from what is spoken.

The message is not necessarily shown clearly to the audiences, but the message is presented in the form of implied meaning through every conversation between the characters in it. That implied meaning was to deliver positive message or a good commissions for each audiences. The fact is, not everyone can catch the implied meanings intended by others. Likewise in communication, there are implied meanings of speech that are not in harmony with the meaning of the word which a speaker uses to their speech partner. According to Grice (1987:28) explains that the concept of implicatures is used to explain the often differences between what is spoken and what is implicated. This sometimes leads to misconceptions about communication among humans. What the speaker meant was different from what their partner captured.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research focuses on the conversational implicature in drama performance of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. The writer analysis the object of the study by using non-numerical data, using sentences which used by the characters in that dialogue to found the hidden meaning in the context by using conversational implicature, the study approach used qualitative research.

C ANALYSIS

1. Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI)

The data which categorized as GCI is when the data no need special knowledge it means we do not need to analyze deeply what the speaker said, because what the speaker said it is can be understood by the hearer easily.

Data 1

Algernon. [Inspects them, takes two, and sits down on the sofa.] Oh! . . . by the way, Lane, I see from your book that on Thursday night, when Lord Shoreman and Mr. Worthing were dining with me, eight bottles of champagne are entered as having been consumed.

Lane. Yes, sir; eight bottles and a pint. (Page 5-6)

In this conversation above when Algernon said that 8 bottles of champagne had been consumed on Thursday night when Lord Shoreman and Mr. Worthing having dinner with him, he saw it in the Lane's book. The first speaker gives a little information and the second speaker confirms what the first speaker said. So this conversation contains the maxim of relation, because they are talking according to the topic discussed by the first speaker. So this conversation is relevant.

Data 2

Jack. Personally, darling, to speak quite candidly, I don't much care about the name of Ernest . . . I don't think the name suits me at all.

Gwendolen. It suits you perfectly. It is a divine name. It has a music of its own. It produces vibrations. (Page 21)

In the conversation Data 2 between Jack and Gwendolen they talk about what the meaning of the name Ernest, and Gwendolen's answer contains maxim of manner. The Gwendolen said "*It suits you perfectly. It is a divine name. It has a music of its own. It produces vibrations*". She describes the meaning of Ernest without ambiguous or convoluted.

Data 3

Gwendolen. How long do you remain in town?

Jack. Till Monday.

Gwendolen. Good! Algy, you may turn round now.

Algernon. Thanks, I've turned round already. (Page 33)

In the Data 3 is the conversation between Gwendolen, Jack, and Algernon there's no special context there because in this story is only Gwendolen asked Jack and Algernon, and they answer based on the question of Gwendolen. So this conversation follows the maxim of quantity, it shown by Jack and Algernon answer as required.

Data 4

Jack. Oh! he has been talking about Bunbury, has he?

Cecily. Yes, he has told me all about poor Mr. Bunbury, and his terrible state of health. (Page 48)

In the conversation of Data 4 between Jack and Cecily it contains the maxim of relation. it was shown by answered of Cecily that she knows all about “*Mr. Bunbury who is in a terrible state of health*”. Her answer in this conversation relate to the question of Jack. So this conversation is relevant.

Data 5

Gwendolen. Are there many interesting walks in the vicinity, Miss Cardew?

Cecily. Oh! yes! a great many. From the top of one of the hills quite close one can see five counties. (Page 62)

In the conversation Data 5 between Gwendolen and Cecily contains maxim of quantity, it shown when Gwendolen ask Cecily “*Are there many interesting walks in the vicinity?*” and the answer of Cecily is giving detail information more than required with she said “*oh! Yes! A great many. From the top of one the hills quite close one see five countries*”. This conversation there;s no special context because people can know what they are talk about from the question of first speaker.

Data 6

Cecily. [Severely.] Cake or bread and butter?

Gwendolen. [In a bored manner.] Bread and butter, please. Cake is rarely seen at the best houses nowadays. (Page 63)

In the conversation Data 6 between Cecily and Gwendolen, Cecily ask Gwendolen what she want to eat “*cake or bread and butter?*” And the answer of Gwendolen she choose bread and butter. And the last sentence said by Gwendolen contains flouting maxim of relation, it means

she expect that Cecily able to imagine what she said with sentence “*cake is rarely seen at the best houses nowadays*”.

2. Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI)

A kind of conversational implicature that depends on special or local knowledge in very specific context in conversation. The data which categorized as PCI is the utterances not normally carried by sentence used, the conversation need the special context, to get the data.

Data 1

Algernon. Did you hear what I was playing, Lane?

Lane. I didn't think it polite to listen, sir. (Page 5)

In the context of Data 1 is Social Context, in that conversation seen from the participants, between Algernon and Lane have different status and roles. In the drama Algernon is a rich employer, while Lane is a male helper who is paid to take care of all Algernon's household needs. Activity Lane in the context is setting food in the table, and Algernon plays piano. After he stop plays he calls Lane and ask seen from the verbal act “*Did you hear what I was playing, Lane?*” and Lane answer “I didn't think it was polite to listen, sir” which means Lane said very polite words. And seen from the nonverbal act Algernon and Lane's expressions are pleased and non-threatening body language. From the above analysis it can be concluded that the entire conversation between Algernon and Lane is casual. It seems, however that Lane lacked the courage to speak at length because he was working, so he did not have time to answer employer's question. So the sense of speech to the question of Algernon was not answered with certainty. This conversation follows maxim of manner.

Data 2

Algernon. How are you, my dear Ernest? What brings you up to town?

Jack. Oh, pleasure, pleasure! What else should bring one anywhere? Eating as usual, I see, Algy! (Page 7)

In the Data 2 is Physical Context which Jack who is from the village comes to the Algernon house in London wants to propose Gwendolen. Algernon asks Jack “*What brings you up to town?*” But Algernon's question didn't get the right answer, the question of Algernon asked back by Jack “*What else should bring one anywhere?*” so Algernon can't be certain. This conversation follows the flouting maxim of manner.

Data 3

Algernon. What on earth do you do there?

Jack. [Pulling off his gloves.] When one is in town one amuses oneself. When one is in the country one amuses other people. It is excessively boring.

Algernon. And who are the people you amuse?

Jack. [Airily.] Oh, neighbours, neighbours. (Page 7-8)

In the Data 3 is the conversation between Algernon and Jack, seen from the context Algernon asked Jack, in this conversation Jack come to town to visit Algernon. Algernon asked Jack he just want to know what Jack's do in the village if seen from the nonverbal side Algernon's face was very curious but Jack's face show a simple smile with her answer. So in this conversation follows the flouting maxim of manner it shown by Jack's answer which makes Algernon ambiguous and make him curious.

Data 4

Jack. But you don't really mean to say that you couldn't love me if my name wasn't Ernest?

Gwendolen. But your name is Ernest. (Page 21)

In the Data 4 is the conversation between Jack and Gwendolen in their conversations it sees that they have different status and roles, so this conversation contains social context. Jack is the guy from the village while Gwendolen is a rich woman who has luxurious but stubborn life, Jack said to Gwendolen that his name is Ernest. The activity during the conversation was that they were being left by Lady Bracknell and Algernon to the piano room. then Jack ask Gwendolen "*but you don't really mean to say that you couldn't love me if my name wasn't Ernest?*" jack ask sarcastically, hoping he'd get a definitive answer from Gwendolen. But Gwendolen's answer was objection, because she liked a guy named Ernest. Seen from the nonverbal expression of Jack is looks pale, because his name is not Ernest but Jack. The answer of Gwendolen follows maxim of quantity, she only love who named Ernest.

Data 5

Algernon. Well, let us go to the Club?

Jack. Oh, no! I hate talking. (Page 31)

In the Data 5 is the social context when Algernon entered to the room and saw the face of Jack who was angry because of the rejection from Lady Bracknell when he proposed to her daughter named Gwendolen, Lady Bracknell denied it due to unclear social status. Then Algernon was trying to comfort Jack by taking him to the club, Jack answer invitation of Algernon “*oh, no. I hate talking*” with a not polite expression. If seen from the nonverbal act Jack displayed a sullen face and strong eyes that threatened him. This conversation follows the features of conversational implicature which cancelability by adding the reason why Jack decline Algernon’s invitation and this conversation contains maxim of manner. Because Jack explain why he decline Algernon.

Data 6

Cecily. [Sweetly.] Sugar?

Gwendolen. [Superciliously.] No, thank you. Sugar is not fashionable any more. [**Cecily** looks angrily at her, takes up the tongs and puts four lumps of sugar into the cup.] (Page 63)

In the Data 6 is this context the status and roles of the Cecily and Gwendolen are different, Cecily is the adoptive niece of Jack who live in village, while Gwendolen is a woman whose life is luxurious in the town. Gwendolen come to the village which Jack live. Cecily welcomes Gwendolen by making a tea, and offering “*sugar?*” seen from the film version Gwendolen decline it with haughty expression. This conversation follows the maxim of quantity and the features of conversational implicature is cancelability by adding the reason.

Data 7

Gwendolen. An admirable idea! Mr. Worthing, there is just one question I would like to be permitted to put to you. Where is your brother Ernest? We are both engaged to be married to your brother Ernest, so it is a matter of some importance to us to know where your brother Ernest is at present.

Jack. [Slowly and hesitatingly.] Gwendolen—Cecily—it is very painful for me to be forced to speak the truth. It is the first time in my life that I have ever been reduced to such a painful position, and I am really quite inexperienced in doing anything of the kind. However, I will tell you quite frankly that I have no brother Ernest. I have no brother at all. I never had a brother in my life, and I certainly have not the smallest intention of ever having one in the future. (Page 66)

In the conversation between Gwendolen and Jack, if seen from the context there are something absurd before this conversation, that is when Jack lie that his name is Ernest in town and Jack in village and he said to he has brother named Ernest he said it to all the people in the village. So in this conversation if seen from the nonverbal side, Gwendolen’s face shows curious

and disappointment to what she heard about the statement of Jack that there's no name Ernest actually. So the answer of Jack is contains maxim of quality because Jack tells the true and gives the detail information about what the Gwendolen question and if seen from nonverbal side the Jack;s face showing a sorry face.

Data 8

Cecily. Uncle Jack seems strangely agitated.

Chasuble. Your guardian has a very emotional nature. (Page 87)

In the Data 8 in this conversation, it can be seen from the participant between Cecily and Chasuble having different status and role, Cecily is a smart and very agile teenager, while Chasuble is a priest who lives simply. The activity that took place was that all the characters were gathered on the porch of Jack's very magnificent house. Then seen from the verbal action "*uncle jack seems strangely agitated*" Cecily felt that her uncle behaving unnaturally, then Chasuble answer "*your guardian has a very emotional nature*" which means Chasuble amazement and guessing that something wrong with Jack. Seen from the film version the expression of Cecily and Chasuble are astonished and stare at each other. This conversation contains maxim of relation.

Data 9

Lady Bracknell. My nephew, you seem to be displaying signs of triviality.

Jack. On the contrary, Aunt Augusta, I've now realised for the first time in my life the vital Importance of Being Earnest. (Page 91)

In the Data 9 in this conversation of social context , seen from the participant, Lady Bracknell and Jack have different status and the roles. Lady Bracknell's mother of Gwendolen is a middle-aged woman who is very rich and realistic, while Jack is a very mature person who is able to argue with anyone. Activities at that time, all the characters were gathered at Jack's house, there are and incident occurred where the origin of who was Jack and where his origin was responsible. Seen from the verbal action "*my nephew, you seem to be displaying signs of triviality*" she still couldn't believe how much money Jack had. Then Jack answer "*on the contrary, Aunt Augusta, I've now realised for the first time in my life the vital Importance of Being Earnest*" which means he regrets the lie that he has done and he realizes that the importance of being earnest. Seen from the film version the expression of Lady Bracknell and Jack are astonished. The utterance meaning of Lady Bracknell's statement spoken for Jack, gets

a statement of confession, which makes Lady Bracknell wonder. This conversation follows flouting maxim of relation.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis of conversational implicature in the utterances in *The Importance of Being Earnest* there are two types of conversational implicature which use Grice's theory that are generalized conversational implicature and particularized conversational implicature. In the first discussion the researcher determines the utterances belonging to the two types of conversational implicature, where there are 6 data included in the generalized conversational implicature and 9 data included particularized conversational implicature. In the generalized conversational implicature we don't need the special context to find the implied meaning in what the speaker said and what the hearer catch because from their conversation we know what they are talking about. In the particularized conversational implicature we need the special context to find what the speakers said. So the meaning of speech cannot be understood if the context of the situation is not included. We can understand the meaning of utterances because of the context of the situation and the maxims that support it.

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