

A Maxim Violations on The Use of Sarcasm in American TV Series, *Vampire Diaries*

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Abstrak

"*Vampire Diaries*" adalah drama seri yang diadaptasi oleh novel karya L.J Smith seorang penulis wanita Amerika. Drama ini banyak menawarkan sarkasme di dalam ceritanya yang menjadi daya tarik terhadap alur cerita. Ujaran sarkasme dianggap menawarkan alur cerita yang susah ditebak karena sarkasme menghasilkan makna yang ambigu, menyerang dan terkesan tertutup walaupun pada dasarnya Cooperative Principle menjadi pemicu ujaran implisit ini. Tesis ini menggunakan analisa Pragmatics yang erat dengan Cooperative Principle berikut empat maksimnya yang dilanggar, yaitu maksim kualitas, kuantitas, relasi dan cara. Maksim yang dilanggar memunculkan makna implisit yang berujung pada ujaran sarkasme. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian kualitatif yang mengaplikasikan script di dalam film sebagai data utama. Data tersebut dianalisa untuk menunjukkan munculnya sarkasme yang tidak lagi membuat komunikasi terhenti walau maksim telah dilanggar. Selama proses analisa, data menunjukkan bahwa Sarkasme muncul sebagai bentuk ujaran tingkat lanjut. Sebagai hasilnya, Sarkasme merupakan merupakan cara untuk membuat komunikasi tidak monoton. Pada akhirnya Sarkasme menjadi alat untuk mengekspresikan ide menyerang lawan bicara dengan cara yang tidak literal.

Kata kunci: prinsip kooperatif, maksim kualitas, kuantitas, cara dan relasi, implikatur, sarkasme

Abstract

"*Vampire Diaries*" is a drama series adapted from the novel by L.J Smith, an American woman writer. This drama offers a lot of sarcasm in the story which is an attraction to the storyline. Sarcasm is considered to offer unpredictable storyline because of its ambiguous meaning, attacking sayings and covered intentions. However, sarcasm is triggered basically from cooperative principle. This thesis uses a close analysis of pragmatics and it emphasized on the cooperative principle which 4 maxims are violated, namely maxim of quality, quantity, relation and manner. Violated maxims produce implicit meaning and they are resulted into sarcasm. This study uses qualitative research to apply the script in the movie as the main data. The data are analyzed for the emergence of sarcasm and to prove that communication does not stop just because the maxims are violated. During the analysis process, the data indicate that sarcasm is emerged as an advanced form of speech. As a result, Sarcasm is a way to make the communication not monotonous. Sarcasm eventually become a tool to express the idea of attacking the other person in non direct and literal ways.

Keywords: cooperative principle, maxim of quality, quantity, manner and relation, implicature, sarcasm

Introduction

Vampire Diaries is a television show which is produced periodically as series. As a scripted entertainment, the story has strong power in the language used in the movie which appears in each episode of the story.

Many episodes contain extensive crude and intentionally offensive saying wrapped in sarcasm to communicate with each other. Sarcasm in the movies is used as sharp humor to point up the foolishness of a person, institution, or human nature in general .

By this understanding, the viewers are required to understand the meaning of each sarcasm which is somehow hard to interpret without contextual knowledge. In this manner, sarcasm may conceivably define a "higher" or "more decadent" type of culture or personality or at least a geographically and temporally restricted use of language to perform verbal aggression or other kinds of work. This idea has occurred to a number of observers of contemporary American culture. (Haiman, 1998:12). Since sarcasm needs a contextual situation to decipher its meaning, as a linguist, it is interesting to study such phenomenon with particular theory that is pragmatics.

Pragmatics has developed as an important field of research. Pragmatics may be roughly described as "the study of the meaning of linguistic utterances for their users and interpreters" (Leech, and Thomas, 1985: 173).

Pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning. It concerns with the study of meaning as communicated by the speaker or writer and interpreted by the listener or reader (Yule, 2000:3). Pragmatics has a goal to explain how the listener finds the meaning of the speaker's intention, since sometimes the listener's interpretation does not match with the speaker intends to say. This happens a lot on Vampire Diaries, for instance in the episode 1

Elena : (about Matt) He hates me.

Bonnie : That's not hate. That's, "You dumped me but I'm too cool to show it, but secretly I'm listening to Air Supply's greatest hits."

The example above is a sarcasm thrown by Bonnie to say that Matt is not moved on from her past love with Elena. The sentence, "You dumped me but I'm too cool to show it, but secretly I'm listening to Air Supply's greatest hits." The sentence can be translated as sarcasm if the listener has the knowledge of Air Supply, a legendary band which mostly talk about love song. That means, Matt is still in love with Elena.

Background knowledge is a must to make the conversation successful. Since people say something, they do not just say it literally but there is an implicit meaning behind it. Hence, the words or utterances can also lead to a misunderstanding. The speaker cannot be successful in communication because the hearer cannot get what the speaker means to. Therefore, there is a rule namely the Cooperative Principles that regulates a conversation to be a good communication, as Grice in Finegan (1992:310) states, "Make your conversational contribution 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." This principle asks the speaker to give a required contribution when the communication occurs. It should be relevant, true, clear, brief, and informative as is required. However, sarcasm is different story.

For the problem of the object of the study, there are many utterances in the movie rife with sarcasm which demands cultural aspects and knowledge about the environment of both speakers and hearer. Hence, pragmatics are considered to be the theory to analyze the phenomenon of Sarcasm in Vampire Diaries related to Cooperative Principle.

Referring to the background of the study explained above, the research problems are formulated as follows:

1. How are maxim principles applied in the Vampire Diaries conversational sarcasm?
2. What maxims are mostly violated in the use sarcasm in the Vampire Diaries?
3. What are the intended meanings of each sarcasm in the Vampire Diaries?

Method of Analysis

This research is a qualitative research, which is concerned with investigation through observation, interview, documentary analysis or ethnographic study (Grix, 2004: 119). By conducting a qualitative research, the researcher collects as many data as possible from the object of the research which is script.

This thesis is written by conducting qualitative research because data are gathered form text which later can be mixed with the documentary study. The aims is to support more additional literature in accordance with the subject matter. Furthermore, Blaxter et al (1997: 151) describes that library research aims at producing a critical synopsis of an existing area of research writing. Next, library research is done to find a specific theory used for the theoretical framework of research. In fact, the writer of this thesis uses Maxim Principles, Implicature, and Sarcasm.

The data are taken from 12 Conversations from season 1 which are suspected to carry sarcasm value. The data are taken from the subtitles of the series. After sorting the data, the conversations in each dialogue are analyzed using Cooperative Principle by Grice.

The thesis uses descriptive study to explain the data. The data is analyzed using Grice Cooperative principle; the data which follows the maxim will not be taken into account. The data are selected through many categorization of flouted maxim. The utterances will be explained whether or not they share sarcasm. The sarcasm should convey the opposite understanding of the literal saying. The sarcasm is somehow offensive, and it is different from lying because the intention of sarcasm is to make the saying more subtle to attack the speaker. The analysis comes into a more fruitful explanation by the strong assertion of Haiman, 1988 in his Book, Talk is Cheap, Sarcasm, Alienation and the Evolution of Language

Result of Data Analysis

This thesis employs not only the use of Cooperative Principle in the movie script , but also the use of implicature and the sarcasm. First, the analysis of the use of Cooperative Principle in the vampire diaries script is enabled to analyze which maxims are violated to make the implicature emerged between each character. The four conversational maxims, namely maxim quantity, quality, relation and manner, are used but they are mostly violated by the characters to make the sarcasm apparent. Moreover, the violation of the four conversational maxims happens not because they do not know the Maxim but because they are quite aware of that, and this kind of maxim violation is done to take the communication into the higher level of communication. This suggests that all the characters during the conversation process the use the Cooperative Principle as basic understanding. Since the characters violate these principles, a conclusion should be drawn from the context. This use of Cooperative Principle is just the first step to make an implied meaning and moreover a sarcasm.

Discussion

Maxim quantity relates to the quantity of the information given by the speaker. The question to analyze this maxim is whether a sentence contains information as much as it is needed. The sentences which belong to this maxim are as follow:

(a) Men's room, Elena found her brother smoking weed and taking drugs

Jeremy : Stop,all right? You need to chill yourself, all right?

Elena : Chill myself? What is that, stoner talk? Dude, you are so cool. **(M,R)**

Jeremy : Look,stop! I don't have anything on me. Are you crazy?

Elena : You haven't seen crazy,Jeremy! I gave you a summer pass, but I am done watching you destroy yourself. **(QL,QN,R)**

QL : overgeneralization

M : lack of clarity

QN : inadequate information

R : irrelevant to the previous sentence

Jeremy seems to be very certain what he is doing. At first, Jeremy statement requires Elena to answer the question based on maxim quantity. However, Elena is not satisfied with Jeremy's answer due to the ignorance of Maxim of quality which violates the maxim. Thus, Elena simply throws an imply response to Jeremy statement to make her questions stronger 'You haven't seen crazy,Jeremy! I gave you a summer pass, but I am done watching you destroy yourself' The utterance is sarcasm because it has potential offensive meaning. The implied meaning is that Elena has been very patient to him and her rude word is not her final effort to make Jeremy aware of his bad doing. To notice the sarcasm is by the repetition of the word crazy. The word crazy is exaggerated to perform a highlight the deepest meaning than literal meaning than just whether or not Jeremy aware of Elena being crazy

(b) At the bar while Vicky was cleaning up the table.

Jeremy : I mean,summer you act one way and then school starts and you can't be bothered.

Vicky : Look,Jeremy, I really appreciate all the pharmaceuticals, but you can't keep following me around like a lost puppy.

Jeremy : When's the last time you had sex with a puppy? **(R,M,QN)**

Vicky : Hey,keep it down. I don't want to tell the whole world I deflowered Elena's kid brother. **(R)**

Jeremy : Yeah, and deflowered and deflowered.

Vicky : We hooked up a few times in a drug haze. It's over. You gotta back off before you ruin things between me and Tyler.

Jeremy : Oh,come on, the guy's a total douche. He only wants you for your ass.

Vicky : Yeah? What do you want me for?

R : irrelevant to the utterance

M : lack of clarity

QN : inadequate information

R : irrelevant to the sentence and the previous sentence.

In the conversation above, it is very clear that Vicky uses the same word of uttering sentence to ask the same thing to Jeremy. In the script, Vicky does not violate any conversational maxim, but in the middle sentence. She violates maxim quantity by giving Jeremy a very unnecessary long sentence. In dialog, Jeremy is also using sarcasm to reply Vicky's feeling of being tailed. He uses the word puppy again to attack Vicky and to get answer of her ignorance. However, he does not get what he wants. Instead, he gets another sarcasm, which has implied meaning that he is no better than boyfriend Taylor who wants sex only from her. In fact, she replies with irrelevant answer based on the interrogative sentence; however she manages to end the conversation by delivering sarcasm to Jeremy in using the same word and thus, it results in the offensive meanings

(c) At the bar when Bonnie and Matt, Elena's ex boyfriend chatted about Elena

Matt : How's Elena doing?

Bonnie : Her mom and dad died. How do you think? She's putting on a good face, but it's only been four months. **(M)**

Matt : Has she said anything about me?

Bonnie : Oh,no. So not getting in the middle.**(QN)**

You pick up the phone and call her.

Matt : I feel weird calling her. She broke up with me. **(R)**

Bonnie : Give it more time,Matt. (Elena passed with Stefan Salvatore)

Matt : More time,huh?

M : lack of clarity

QN : inadequate information

R : irrelevant to the previous sentence

In the first sentence there is violation in maxim of quality which result in disturbance of clarity. Matt's question is supposed to be answer with clear explanation not a counter interrogative sentence, which indeed a sarcasm. Matt finally realizes that but he still insists to ask more. In contrast, Bonnie refuses to give answers and she rejects by giving imperative sentence. This imperative

sentence has violated the maxim relevant and quantity. In study of implied meaning, it is very necessary for a speaker to make sure that the listener understands the question very well. However, in the context of sarcasm the speaker intend to make the listener draw information when he throws a sarcasm, hence, context is essential. Context should not be neglected to make the listener decide the correct response to the question. Though, the implied meaning most certainly has double assumptions.

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Conclusion

First, Maxim principle applied in the Vampire Diaries are quality, quantity, manner and relations. The maxims are violated to produce sarcasm. The goal is to attack the other character in more subtle way. The other goal is to make the conversations more vary.

The most frequently violated maxims are the maxims of quantity and relation. The goal is to produce sarcasm through implicative sentences. The implied meaning in the sentences is deciphered to have negative meaning which is resulted as sarcasm.

Lastly, the intended meaning is to perform ambiguous meaning which need a contextual environment to draw the meaning. The true intention of being sarcastic in the movie is to throw offensive saying or to give a warning in a more witty way.

Hence, the analysis of this thesis has successfully proven that sarcasm during the conversation is derived from the cooperative principle. The utterances can somehow be perceived through the context. The Cooperative principle being violated always has the potential to throw sarcasm even when the utterance only violates one conversational maxim

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