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Conversational Maxims of Cooperation in Jordanian Newspaper Socio-Political Interviews

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Abstract:

This paper investigates the status of Grice's (1975) conversational maxims of cooperation in Jordanian socio-political newspapers interviews. It also discusses the fundamental norms and conventions that shape conduct in these kinds of interviews and recurrent practices through which journalists balance competing professional demands for both objective and an adversarial treatment of public figures - in the present case two former Jordanian Prime Ministers (PMs). The paper also explores how, in the face of aggressive questioning, the PMs struggle to stay "on message", so to speak, and pursue their own agenda. Through a pragma-linguistic analysis of these interviews, the study reveals that the reasons behind the MPs' flouting of Grice's conversational maxims, and, consequently, the ensuing conversational implicatures, are products of one of the following:

1. Absolute loyalty
2. Lack of democratic freedom of expression.

The paper also reveals that Grice's principle of conversation and its accompanying maxims have a cross-cultural validity when tested against a language like Arabic. In fact, when we look at these conversational maxims from an Arab-Islamic moral and socio-political perspective (and whether the maxims are Grice's or those of Arab-Islamic scholars) we find that they are, almost identical and constitute the corner stone of Arab society's moral, socio-cultural, and religious values. Thus, it makes a lot of difference for both audience and readership if interviewed public figures 'observe' these conversational maxims.

Keywords: Conversational Maxims, Newspapers Interview, pragma-linguistic analysis

وضع قواعد التعاون في الحوار في المقابلات ذات الطابع السياسي والإجتماعي في الصحف الأردنية

نواف عبيدات

مستخلص:

تبحث هذه الورقة وتناقش وضع قواعد التعاون في الحوار التي أوردها اللغوي بول جرايس في مقالته التي نشرت عام ١٩٧٥ ومدى تطبيقها على المقابلات ذات الطابع الإجتماعي والسياسي في المجتمع الأردني والتي تجريها الصحف الأردنية، آخذين بعين الإعتبار وضع هذه القواعد في تلك الحوارات. كما تناقش هذه الورقة الممارسات المتكررة الخاصة والتي يستطيع الصحفيون من خلالها موازنة المعايير المهنية التنافسية التي تشجع على كل من التعامل الإيجابي والسلبي للشخصيات الحكومية كرؤساء الوزارات السابقين (كما هو الحال في هذه الورقة). إضافة الى ذلك، تستكشف هذه الورقة كيف يستطيع رؤساء الوزارات من المقاومة والإبقاء على الحوار في نفس الموضوع ومتابعة أجنداتهم الخاصة فيه، وذلك في حال توجيه أسئلة جريئة وهجومية اليهم من قبل الصحفيين. فمن خلال تحليل لغوي- براغماتي لهذه المقابلات، أظهرت هذه الدراسة بأن الأسباب الكامنه وراء المرواغة لقواعد جرايس في التعاون أثناء الحوار وما يمكن إستنباطه من وراء هذه المرواغة مردهما واحد من سببين أثنيين:

١. الولاء المطلق.

٢. ضعف حرية التعبير الشخصي.

كما أظهرت هذه الدراسة أيضا بأن مبدأ جرايس (١٩٧٥) في الحوار وما يرافقه من قواعد لهما أهمية بالغة عبر الثقافات، وذلك عندما يتم تطبيقها على لغات كاللغة العربية. ففي واقع الأمر، وعند النظر الى هذه القواعد الحوارية من وجهة نظر أخلاقية واجتماعية وسياسية، سواء أكانت تلك التي جاء بها جرايس عام ١٩٧٥ أو تلك التي جاء بها العلماء العرب والمسلمون، فإننا نجد بأنهما متشابهتان تماما، وأنهما يشكلان حجر الزاوية للقيم الأخلاقية والثقافية والإجتماعية، إضافة الى القيم الإسلامية. لذا، فإن هناك فارق كبير للمستمع والقارئ العربي إذا ما أخذ مسؤولو الشعوب العربية بعين الإعتبار مبادئ الحوار عندما تتم مقابلاتهم.

الكلمات الدالة: قواعد التعاون في الحوار، المقابلات الصحفية، تحليل لغوي- براغماتي

1. Introduction

1-1. Theoretical Linguistic Background

In any interview there are times when interviewers (IR's) and interviewees (IE's) say exactly what they mean. But there are other times when are not very explicit, managing to convey far more than their words mean, or something quite different from the meaning of the words they utter. In the latter case, a question may arise: how do we know what the speaker, whether IR or IE, really means? (Yule, 1998).

This question is answered by Grice's (1975) theory of conversational principles (CP), which has proved to be one of the most influential theories in the development of pragmatics (Thomas, 1996). This theory attempts to explain how a hearer/reader gets what is intended from what has been said or written - from the level of expressed meaning (i.e. semantics) to the level of implied/intended meaning (i.e. pragmatics). Hence the present paper tries to discover what two former Jordanian Prime Ministers are trying to convey to their listeners during a particular newspaper interview.

1-2. Grice's CP and its Accompanying Conversational Maxims

In order to explain the mechanisms by which interlocutors during an interview interpret what is implied/intended by what is said/written, Grice's (1975) paper, "Logic and Conversation," introduced the concept of CP. This says: "Make your contribution such as required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice, 1975: 45).

Using the imperative mood, Grice here tells the interlocutors how they ought to act and behave during an interview. In fact, he was merely suggesting that during a conversation interlocutors should assume that a certain set of rules are in operation. Thus, in any community, when people talk, they operate according to a set of assumptions, and, on the whole, get by. However, there may be times when the interlocutors' assumptions are wrong, or when

they may deliberately mislead each other, which results in mistakes and misunderstanding.

Grice was not suggesting that the interlocutors will always be cooperative in every sense of the word. He was simply noting that, on the whole, interlocutors observe certain regulations in the interaction, and his aim was to explain one particular set of regularities which govern the generation and interpretation of what he called the "conversational implicature", as in the following:

1. Zaid: Do you want a coat?

Amr: No! I really want to stand out here in the freezing cold with no clothes on.

On the face of it, Amr's answer is untrue and uncooperative. But in fact this is the sort of sarcastic reply we daily encounter and have no problem in interpreting. But how do we interpret it? According to Grice (1975), if Zaid assumes that, in spite of all appearances, Amr is observing the CP and has made an appropriate response to the question, Zaid will look for an alternative interpretation, which could be "it is none of your business - I am free to wear whatever I like." Grice argues that, without the assumption that the speaker is operating according to the CP, there is no mechanism to prompt someone to seek another level of interpretation. The observation that the speaker has said something which is manifestly untrue, combined with the assumption that the CP is in operation and is manifested, sets in motion the search for an implicature. Hence, as will be shown below, Grice (1975) established conversational maxims (CMs), which help listeners/readers to establish what that implicature might be. He argues that participants in a conversation can assume of each other that they are obeying the following:

1. Quantity: Make your contribution as informative as is required

(for the current purpose of the exchange).

Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

2. Quality: Do not say what you believe is false.

Do not say that for which you lack adequate

evidence.

Relation: Be relevant.

Manner: Avoid obscurity of expression.

Avoid ambiguity.

Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).

Be orderly.

1-2-1. The Nature of Conversational Maxims

Two main points need to be made about the nature of these maxims. First, they are not rules like those of grammar. They are much more flexible and more like guidelines. Infringing a rule of grammar leads to an ill-formed utterance, whereas these maxims are to be followed in general and to the best of the interlocutors' ability and knowledge.

The second point is that Grice (1975) is actually at pains to emphasize that these maxims are not culture-bound conventions like manners, but are rationally based and would, hence, be expected to be seen in any human society (cf. section-2 below). However, this does not mean that there are no cultural differences to be observed. One way in which cultures can differ is in the relative importance allotted to maxims. For instance, strict adherence to the quality maxim may lead to no information at all being given. In some cultures, this may come across as rudeness, and to avoid such a result it may be preferable, sometimes, to provide factitious information in order to make up a response, and, consequently, to act socially.

1-2-2. Non-observance of Conversational Maxims

Grice (1975) listed three ways in which a participant in a conversation, debate or dialogue may fail to observe and fulfill a maxim. He said a speaker may flout, violate or opt out of observing a certain maxim. Later in the same article, he added a fourth category of non-observance, which is infringing a maxim. However, other linguists since Grice have argued the need for a fifth category, and that is suspending a maxim (cf. Thomas, 1996). Thomas pointed out that it is extremely irritating to note that Grice himself does not consistently use the above terms of non-observance, though it seems

that they are important for a full understanding of his theory.

Generally speaking, people may fail to observe a maxim because they are perhaps incapable of speaking clearly or because they deliberately choose to lie. In this study, emphasis will be placed on flouting a maxim, since this is what generates a conversational implicature (cf. section-4).

1-2-3. Flouting a Maxim

1-2-4. The situations which chiefly interested Grice most, with regard to non-observing a maxim, are those in which the speaker "blatantly" and openly fails to observe a maxim. This happened when the speaker/ writer, with no intention to deceive or mislead the listeners/ readers simply wants to encourage them to look for a meaning different from, or in addition to, the one expressed, i.e. the semantic meaning. This extra unexpressed meaning was termed by Grice (1975) 'conversational implicature', and he called the process by which it is generated 'flouting a maxim.'

Thus, flouting a maxim occurs when a speaker/ writer blatantly fails to observe a maxim at the level of what is being said/written with the deliberate intention of generating an implicature.

1-2-3-1. Flouts Necessitated by a Clash between Maxims

This flouting of maxims happens when speakers/ writers have to observe two or three maxims at the same time and lack the ability to do so. For instance, if they find themselves unable to observe the maxims of quantity and quality at the same time (signaled by their flagrantly failing to give the required and correct amount of information) their interlocutor(s) will be prompted to look for an implicature, as in the following:

2. Zaid: Is Ali a nice man?

Amr: Salma seems to like him.

Here, Amr gives less information than the situation demands. In this context, he could simply have said 'Yes/No', which would have provided the

maximum amount of information possible in the situation. Instead, he gives a much weaker and less informative response. It would be possible to argue here that his failure to do so stems from a clash between the maxims of quantity and quality (Amr cannot say for sure whether the new boyfriend, Ali, is nice or not, and speaks only on the basis of the evidence he has).

1-2-3-2. Flouts Which Exploit a Maxim

According to Grice (1975), interlocutors operate on the assumption that, as a rule, the maxims will be observed. When this expectation is confounded and the listeners are confronted with the blatant non-observance of a maxim, (i.e. they have discounted the possibility that the speaker may be trying to deceive or is incapable of speaking more clearly and succinctly), they are again prompted to look for an implicature. Most of Grice's own examples of flouts, as will be demonstrated below, involve this type of response.

A. Flouts Exploiting the Maxim of Quantity

As indicated earlier, flouting the maxim of quantity occurs when the speaker/writer blatantly gives more or less information than the situation requires, as in the following:

3. Zaid: How are we getting there?

Amr: Well, we are getting there in Ali's car.

Here, Amr blatantly gives less information than Zaid needs, thereby generating the implicature that, while Amr and his friends have a lift arranged, Zaid will not be traveling with them.

B. Flouts Exploiting the Maxim of Quality

These types of flouts occur when the speaker says something which is blatantly untrue or which lacks adequate evidence. The following is an example borrowed from Thomas (1996), where a drunk man from Newcastle vomits on the clothes of an ambulance driver who is taking him to hospital:

4. The ambulance driver: "Great, that's really great! That's made my Christmas!"

Here, the implicature generated by the hearer/reader is not that the ambulance driver is very pleased because the drunkard had vomited all over his clothes, but, on the contrary, that he is

extremely annoyed.

C. Flouts Exploiting the Maxim of Relevance

This maxim is exploited by making a response/observation which is obviously irrelevant to the topic at hand (e.g. by abruptly changing the subject or by overtly failing to address the other person's goal in asking a question). However, exploitations of this maxim are, as Grice (1975) notes, a little harder to find, if only because it is hard to construct responses that must be interpreted as irrelevant. Here is an example:

5. Zaid: I do not think Ali is an old windbag, do you?

Amr: Huh, lovely weather for March, isn't it?

Here, the maxim of relation is flouted by a response/observation that is very obviously irrelevant to the topic at hand. Thus, in this example, Amr's utterance might implicate, in the appropriate circumstances, 'Hey, watch out, his son is standing right behind us.'

According to Cruse (2000), this maxim is implicated in the Maxim of Quantity, which was reformulated by Levinson (1983:106), who says: "[Make] the strongest statement claim that can be relevantly true." Here, the 'strongest statement claim' is not materially different from Grice's (1975: 45) statement which mentions the words "as much information as required". This close relationship between the three maxims of Quantity, Quality and Relation has led some linguists to combine them into one single maxim. Hence, Cruse (2000: 356) pointed out that Levinson's (1983) version could easily be extended to read: "Make the strongest statement that can be relevantly made justifiable by your evidence". In this quotation, the phrase 'justifiable by your evidence' corresponds to Grice's (1975) Maxim of Quality.

D. Flouts Exploiting the Maxim of Manner.

This maxim may be exploited by flouting one of its four sub-maxims: (1) avoid obscurity of expression, (2) ambiguity, (3) be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity) and (4) be orderly, as in:

6. Zaid: Did the United States' Administration play any role regarding who, among the Arab leaders, should and should not attend the latest Arab

summit held in Damascus/Syria?

Amr: I would not steer you away from the conclusion.

Here, Amr could simply have replied 'yes' or 'no'. His actual response is extremely long-winded and convoluted, and it is obviously no accident, nor any inability to speak clearly, that he has failed to observe the Maxim of Manner. There is, however, no reason to believe that Amr is being deliberately unhelpful. He could, after all, have simply refused to answer at all, or said: 'No comment'.

In the above example, it is not a clash of maxims which has caused Amr to flout the Maxim of Manner in this way. Rather, it is occasioned by a clash of goals: the desire to claim credit for what Amr sees a desirable outcome, while, at the same time, avoiding putting on record the fact that the USA has intervened in the internal or external affairs of the Arab nation.

1-3. The Conversational Implicature

When interlocutors engage in conversation, they can assume that they are cooperating to sustain their joint activity, or, more specifically, to adhere to the above CMs, as in:

7. Zaid: Ali does not seem to have a girlfriend these days.

Amr: He has been paying a lot of visits to Amman. Here, Zaid and Amr work under the assumption that each one of them is observing the CP and its maxims. If this is the case, then it must be assumed that Amr's remark is, somehow, relevant to what Zaid has uttered. In order to preserve this assumption, we infer the proposition: 'Ali has, or may have, a girlfriend in Amman.'

Grice (1975) calls this kind of inference a conversational implicature. Hence, we can say that Amr implicates, in example 7, the proposition just mentioned. An implicature, therefore, is an inference generated in the course of a conversation in order to preserve the assumptions that the participants are observing the conversational maxims. Thus, conversational implicatures are produced and interpreted over and against the overriding assumption that the interlocutors are trying to speak the truth and avoid obscurity. Grice

(1989) points out that conversational implicatures must be capable of being worked out in a specific way from the conversational principle involved by using particular facts about the meaning of the sentence being uttered. Grice (1989: 31) says:

To work out that a particular conversational implicature is present, the hearer will rely on the following data: (1) the conventional meaning of the words used, together with the identity of any references that may be involved; (2) the conversational principle and its maxims; (3) the context, linguistic or otherwise, of the utterance; (4) other items of background knowledge; and (5) the fact (or the supposed fact) that all relevant items falling under the previous points are available to both participants and both participants know or assume this to be the case.

Furthermore, Grice (1975) distinguishes two major types of implicature: conventional and conversational. These have in common the property of conveying an additional level of meaning beyond the semantic meaning of the words being uttered. However, they differ in that, in the case of conventional implicature, the same implicature is always conveyed, regardless of the context; whereas, in conversational implicature, what is implied by the speaker varies according to the context of the utterance. Thus, Levinson (1983: 127) lists a group of words and examples that indicate the existence of a conventional implicature. The words include: 'for, but, even, therefore, yet', among many others that can be found in utterances such as:

8. She plays chess well, for a girl,

According to Levinson (1983: 127) the conventional implicature is no more than a non-truth conditional inference that is not derived from a superordinate pragmatic principle like the maxims, but is simply attached to that underlined particular lexical item or expression.

As for conversational implicature, and following in the footsteps of Grice (1975), Levinson (1983) and Yule (1998), among others, identified two major sub-types: generalized and particularized.

1-3-1. Generalized Conversational Implicature

In this type of implicature, Yule (1998) points out that no special background knowledge of the context of the utterance is required in order to make the necessary inference, i.e. implicature, as in:

9. Zaid: Did you invite Omar and Ali?

Amr: I invited Omar.

Here, no special background knowledge of the context of utterance is required in order to make the necessary inference, i.e. that Amr did not invite Ali.

A common example of generalized conversational implicature in English involves any phrase with an indefinite article of the type 'a/an X', such as 'a garden' and 'a child', as in 10 below. These phrases are typically interpreted according to the generalized conversational implicature, as in:

10. Zaid was sitting in a garden one day. A child looked over the fence.

The implicatures in 10 above, where the underlined words indicate that neither of them belongs to Zaid, are calculated on the principle that if the speaker is capable of being more specific (i.e. more informative, following the quantity maxim), then she/he would have said 'my garden', and 'my' child'.

A number of other generalized conversational implicatures are commonly communicated on the basis of a scale of values and are, consequently, known as scalar implicatures.

1-3-1-1. Scalar Implicature

This type of implicature is inferred when certain information is communicated by choosing a word which expresses one value from a scale of values. This is particularly obvious in terms expressing quantity, as shown in a scale like: all, most, many, some, a few, few, where the terms are listed from the highest to the lowest value.

Therefore, when producing an utterance like 11 below, the speaker selects the word from the scale, which is the most informative and truthful (i.e. quantity and quality maxims) in the circumstances, as in:

11. Zaid is studying linguistics, and he has

completed some required courses.

By choosing 'some' in 11 above, the speaker creates an implicature (not all). This is one scalar implicature of uttering the words in example 11. Thus, the basis of scalar implicature is that, when any form of the scale is asserted, the negative of all forms is implicated, whether they are higher or lower on that scale.

Given the definition of scalar implicature, it should follow that, in saying 'some of the required courses' in example 11, the speaker also created other implicatures (e.g. 'not most' and 'not many'). In this respect, the basis of scalar implicature is that, when any form on a scale is asserted, the negative of all forms, higher or lower on that scale, is implicated.

One noticeable feature of scalar implicature occurs when the speaker corrects her/himself on some detail, as in:

12. Zaid bought 'some' of his wife's jewelry from Amman - um actually I think he bought 'most' of it from Damascus.

Here, the speaker initially implicates 'not most' by saying 'some', but then corrects himself by actually asserting 'most'. This final assertion is still likely to be interpreted, however, with scalar implicature, i.e. 'not all'.

1-3-2. Particularized Conversational Implicature

This type of implicature is context-tied because, most of the time, conversations (debates/dialogues) take place in very specific contexts in which locally recognized implicatures are assumed. Such implicatures are required to work out the conveyed meanings which result from this type of implicature, as in:

13. Zaid: Hey, coming to the wild party tonight?

Amr: My parents are visiting me.

Here, Amr's response does not appear, on the surface, to keep to the maxim of relevance because a simply relevant answer would be 'yes/no'. In this respect, and in order to make Amr's response relevant, Zaid has to draw on some assumed knowledge that one college student in this setting expects another to have a visitor. Amr, in this example, will be spending that evening

with his parents, and the time spent with parents will be quiet, which implicates that Amr will spend a quiet night with his parents rather than going to a 'wild' party.

In short, because this particularized type of implicature is the most common, most linguists who discuss its nature and properties give it the name conversational implicature. It will reappear below in the study's discussion of Jordanian-Arabic interviews (cf. Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1998; Thomas, 1996; Cruze, 2000; among others).

2.The Conversational Principle and its Accompanying Maxims in Arab-Islamic Culture
As mentioned in section 1-2-1, Grice (1975) says that the CP and its accompanying maxims do not constitute culture-bound conventions. Thus, in a language like Arabic, which carries both Arab-Islamic cultural and semiotic values, Grice's (1975) CP and its maxims exist and apply to conversational Arabic.

The Arab-Islamic equivalent of Grice's CP and its maxims has been treated by scholars as part of the general principles or maxims for carrying out an interview. For example, Al-Heeti (2004) has pointed out that, whoever is taking part in a debate/ dialogue, the IR or the IE should be aware of and familiar with the subject matter of what is going to be discussed.

2-1.The General Maxims for Carrying out an Interview

Under this title, Al-Heeti (2004) lists a number of maxims, each of which has its own sub-maxims.

2-1-1. Depend on Mind and Logic

This means in Arab-Islamic culture that the two parties to the interview (the IR and IE) should keep to logical means of convincing each other during the interview. The major points of this adherence can be summarized as follows:

1. The IE should provide correct and proven evidence for each of the hypotheses or claims presented to the IR and, consequently, to the audience/readership.

- 2.The IE should provide the exact wording (quoted

or reported) of those being quoted or reported in order to add additional support to what the audience/ readership is being convinced about. Thus, when considering the above two points, one can easily find a similarity between them and Grice's (1975) Maxim of Quality (cf. section 1-2-3-2).

2-1-2. Avoid Contradiction

What this amounts to is that the IE should not provide contradictory answers to the IR's questions because she/he will not only lose face, respect and the IR's attention, but also that of the audience/readership. This contradiction will also make the IE an easy target for the IR and the audience/readership, who can easily condemn contradictory ideas, points of view and thinking. In support of this principle, Allah the Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an: "And in Moses (0= was another sign): Behold, We sent him to Pharaoh with authority Manifest, but (the Pharaoh) turned back with his chiefs and said 'a sorcerer or One possessed.'" Looking at this sub-rule from Grice's perspective, it is the same as his Maxim of Manner (cf. section 1-2-3-2).

2-1-3. Clarify the Objectives of the Interview

A major and basic rule of debate/dialogue is to make clear, right from the start, the objective(s) of the interview. This is one of the conditions that the IR should fulfill by pointing out the purpose(s) for which the interview is being carried out. Failing this, the IE will feel free to simply talk about anything in order to attract the audience/readership. Thus, if the interview's objective is not made clear immediately, almost all Grice's maxims will be flouted and especially those of quantity and relevance (cf. 1.2.3.1).

2-1-4. Avoid Ambiguity

Ambiguity results from the IE resorting to unclear answers in order to make the audience/readership feel and believe that the idea or point of view to be spelt out is important and critical - and to show how 'well-informed and educated' the IE is. This in some way recalls a practice in section 2-2-

3, where the IE is not willing to give truthful and relevant answers to the questions being asked. Al-Heeti (2004) divides ambiguity into two major categories - real and fabricated. The first results from the complexity of a given idea or point of view that needs much discussion and analysis before delivery to the audience/readership. The second is resorted to by uneducated and uninformed IE's who, believing they are in fact educated and informed, want to cover up their ignorance by pretence, i.e. ambiguously answering the IR's questions.

2-1-5. Prepare a Practical Path for the Interview

What this amounts to is setting down an orderly plan which will control the conduct of the interview and ensure it will not proceed offhandedly and arbitrarily, especially if conducted by individuals who belong to different schools of thought and ideology.

Under this general rule, Arab-Islamic scholars have suggested that, in order to prepare and carry out a proper interview, the following sub-maxims should be taken into account:

1. Specify the topic to be discussed and debated.
2. Specify the meaning of the terms and concepts that will be used throughout the interview.
3. Specify the interview's objective(s).
4. Specify the interview's mechanisms, which include the regulating procedure for helping with achieving objectives. These include:
 - A. The necessity of making sure that presented information is right and correct (cf. Grice's Maxim of Quality).
 - B. The necessity of discussing all the topics presented in the interview without having in mind a prior judgment, decision or position. (cf. Grice's Maxim of Quantity above).
 - C. The necessity of quoting the views of experts

and specialists in the field under discussion (cf. Grice's Maxims of Quality and Relevance).

D. The necessity of following a scientific and logical approach during the interview when thinking, analyzing and concluding in order to have a rational interview (cf. Grice's Maxim of manner above).

When looking at these five items, the reader will notice that they are close in content, meaning and function to Grice's (1975) CMs, although the naming is not the same in English. This should perhaps convince the reader that Grice was right when he said that his CMs have a cross-cultural validity (cf. section 1-2-1 above).

3. Analysis of the Data

3-1. The corpus

The interviews selected for analysis and discussion in this study consisted of two interviews carried out by a Jordanian daily newspaper, Al-Arab Alyoum, with two former Jordanian Prime Ministers (PM1& PM2), whose names, for academic reasons, are not spelled out.

3-2. Method of Analysis

For the purpose of the corpus analysis of the interviews, the unit selected involved the IR's question and IE's response, while taking into account the IE's response to the IR's former question.

To analyze the flouting of Grice's (1975) maxims of conversation, quantitative corpus analysis was adopted and carried out by going over the data (in this case the interviews) more than once and recording what needed to be discussed.

To analyze the corpus, five data revisions were carried out – with the first four to discover how often Grice's (1975) four maxims of conversation had been flouted (cf. table-1 below).

Table-1: Flouting the Maxims of Conversation

Interviewees	No. of Questions	Maxim of Quantity		Maxim of Quality		Maxim of Relevance		Maxim of Manner	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
PM1	98	19	19.4	07	7.1	14	14.3	03	3.1
PM2	41	06	14.6	01	2.4	07	17.1	03	7.3

In the fifth and final revision, the conversational implicature of each flouted maxim was identified on the basis of the contexts of utterance and the readership's background knowledge. In addition, the real reasons for each flouting were identified. These will be discussed in the next section.

4. Analysis / Discussion

Before applying Grice's conversational maxims to the conversational rules discussed above, it is important to point out, following Grice, that there are no moral implications involved in setting them. Furthermore, the reader has also to bear in mind that no claim is made that the interviewees (in this case former Jordanian PMs) always adhere to these maxims, which, with their Arabic counterparts, are merely descriptive, and thus derive their justification not from their moral value but rather from their empirically testable usefulness in understanding and interpreting language used in an actual situation.

It is also important to realize that the situations which chiefly interested Grice (1975) were those in which a speaker (in our case one of the former Jordanian PMs) "blatantly" fails to observe a maxim, not with any intention of deceiving or misleading, but, rather, because the PMs, spontaneously following Grice's theory, wish to prompt the audience/readership to look for a meaning different from, or in addition to, the expressed one - which Grice (1975), as noted above, calls conversational implicature and the process by which it is generated flouting a maxim.

4-1. Flouting the Maxim of Quantity

As indicated above, this maxim is considered as the basis for the exchange of utterances in conversation. As Grice suggested, the participants in a conversation, i.e. the IRs and the IEs, are expected to make their utterances as informative as is required by the exchange in process. As it stands, this maxim is not helpful, for it can never be violated/ flouted. However, Grice's phrase 'required by the exchange' can be stretched to justify the kind or amount of information in each

case. For example, the IE may provide information that intentionally confuses or misleads the IR, but one could include the IE's intention to deceive as part of the exchange. Furthermore, the IE, conforming to the requirement of the particular exchange, would not be flouting the maxim "Be Informative".

What follows discusses and demonstrates the way in which this maxim is flouted in Jordanian-Arabic socio-political interviews by providing Arabic examples of questions and replies, with their English translation.

14A. alsahafi-1. b'da husuli hukwmatika 'ala thiqatin min majlisi annowab fi dawratih ghayr l'adyah wa llati 'ugidat lihadha l-gharad, fujea' al-muragibuna biqarari taghyyiri alhukumah. Hal fuj'ta antamithlahum?

Rayis al-wozara-1: lam ufaja' abadan. Kuntu daiman ma' Inas allathyna yudrikina a'nna almawqa laysa mulkan lihad, wa kuntu a'rifu shakhsa alraiyees alqadim.

wa 'ala l' umwmi, taghyyiru alhukunati haqun dustwryun Lijalalati Imalik. wabiamanah aqwlu lak, kuntu arghabu ba'da arba'ina (40) shahran min tahamumuli Imaswliyati fi zurwfin balighati addigati wa lta'qydi an astarih.

qarau tashkyli alhukumati althatlithati kana ihtiraman limajlisi Inuwwab. famin haqqi almajlisi an yash'ura a'nna hunaka hukwmatun tatlubu thiqathah. Wa fi nafsi lwaqti, tahamlan fi lhukwmati mas'wlyatin kabirah, wa kan 'alayna muwajahati istihqaqati Imwazanti li'ami 2003 wa lqawanyina lmo'aqatah. walithalik, kannt alhajatu masatan lihukumatin jadydatin tata'malu ma'a majlisi nuwwabin jadydin wa alladhi qama bidawrihi bilfi'l wa raja'a siyasati lhukumati wa manaha ba'da dhalika thiqatan 'alyatan laha ba'da muhakamatin tawylatin lqararatiha wa tawajuhtiha, wa tamma tahwyli mu'dam alqawanni lmuaqatati ila lijan almukhtasah.

ma awadu qawlah anna ihukumata 'ala rughmi min qisari 'umrirha illa anna injazatiha kant kabyratan wa muhimah. wa 'nda tilka llahzah bada lwaqtu munasiban libadi' marhalatin jadidatin ba'da an 'staqarat almantiqha wa khafat attahadiyat wa

asbahat alzorwfu assiyasyati min hawlina afdal.

14E. Journalist-1. After your government had won the Parliamentary vote of confidence in its emergency session which was held for this purpose,

observers were shocked by the change of government. Were you shocked like them?

PM-1. I was not shocked at all. I was always with the people who realize that the public/general position is not owned by anyone. And I knew, prior to the resignation, that the time for change had become close, and I knew who the next prime minister would be.

Generally speaking, a change of government is the constitutional right of His Majesty the King, and, honestly speaking, I was hoping, after 40 months of bearing the responsibility in absolutely very minute circumstances, to take a rest.

The decision to organize the third government came as a form of respect to the Parliament, because it is the right of Parliament to feel that there is a new government that requires its vote of confidence. At the same time, we bore, in forming the new government, high responsibility, and we had to face the requirement of the year 2003's budget, and the temporary laws. Therefore, there was a need for a new government to deal with a new Parliament, which, in turn, actually started reviewing government policies and then gave the government a major vote of confidence after a long judgment of its decisions and orientations and after transferring the temporary laws to specialized committees.

All I would like to say, in this respect, is that, despite the short duration of its organization, the government's accomplishments were very big and important. At that stage, the time had become suitable to start a new stage, after the area had settled down, the challengers had grown less, and the political circumstances around us had become better.

15A.alsahafi-2: hal tuayid aliniftah fi manhi wa 'itai alfilistynyyna albitaqati assafra' allati ta'ni aljinsiyyati alordunyah?

Rayis al-wozara-2: hadhi lgadyatu hassastun wa

ta'tamidu 'ala naw' Ltafsyr. Fsidha kunta turid an tufasira anna hadha tadhwybun Lilgadyati lfastinyah fahadha amrun khatyr. Wa itha aradta an tufasirahu bi'tibarihi mawdw'an insaniyan fahuwa amrun muhabab.

15E. Journalist-2. Do you support the idea of giving Palestinians the yellow card, which means Jordanian citizenship?

PM-2: This is a sensitive issue, and depends upon the type of explanation. If you want to interpret this action as a type of liquidation of the Palestinian cause, it will be very dangerous, and if you want to interpret it as a human issue, then that is a good thing to do.

In Example 14 above, PM-1 is only required to say yes/no in answer to the question from by the journalist regarding the frequent changes in the Jordanian governments. Yet he provided a lot of information that was not required. The implicature behind giving too much information is to show the readership that the PM is a respected person whom His Majesty the King trusts a lot and who thus lets him form three consecutive governments. Furthermore, he is implicitly telling the readership that he is a practical prime minister, and that he has planned and accomplished many projects. His reference to the fact that he was selected to form three governments is intended to tell the readers that he is very loyal to His Majesty and will, consequently, carry out any tasks His Majesty or parliament asks him to undertake.

Question 15 above also requires a yes/no answer by PM-2. Yet he gave two optional answers and did not indicate which one he preferred, although he was responsible for offering those yellow cards. The implicature behind this is the fact that he wants to say: "It is none of my business; it is the Palestinians who decide their future government". Of course, one can argue that the prime minister cannot say what has been implicated due to a lack of freedom of expression, even if he is a prime minister.

4-2. Flouting the Maxim of Quality

A culture lacking this maxim would be easy to

identify, if it ever existed. Briefly, there could be no exchange of information and no learning through language. That is, if there were no expectation that some relation existed between one's beliefs and utterance, no notion of truth or untruth, one would never assume that any utterance reflected any belief between, say, a parrot's utterance and its belief. More specifically, such a culture would have no standard use of question-answer sequences, as in interviews, and of course there could be no inferences based on the maxim of quality.

Following Grice (1975), it is clear that such a culture does not exist. Thus, flouting the maxim of quality in a language like Arabic is not easy to find. However, the analysis of data showed a few examples of such flouting (cf. table-1, above.)

In what follows, Arabic examples of questions and replies (with their English translation) are provided, where the interviewees (the former PMs) flouted this maxim, with reasons that may lie behind this tendency in Arabic socio-political interviews.

16A. alsahafi-1: na'wdu ila lbidayah alan dawlata alrayis ila watahdydan ila al'am athany min 'umri hukumatik. fab'da sanatin min 'umri hukumatik tamma hal majlis annwab wa ghabt asultah attachry'yah sanatyn. Hal kana dhalika lghyabu mubararan?

Rayis alwzara-1: yajibu alisharatu awalan anna hukwmaty fy ssanati alwula ta'ayasht ma'a majlisi annwab limudati thamanyati ashhur wa hulla majlisi annwab wa hulla majlis annwab tamma fi ssanati llati kana mugararan dustwryan an tajryi fyha alintikhabat wa kama huwa alhal fi almajalisi assabigah

16E. Journalist-1. Now, Mr. Prime Minister, let us go back to the beginning, and, specifically, to the second year of your government. After a year of your government had passed, the Parliament was dissolved, and the legislative authority was absent for two years. Was that absence justifiable?

P.M.-1. First of all, let us indicate that, in its first year, my government had lived with the Parliament for eight (8) months, and the Parliament was

dissolved in the year in which, constitutionally, the elections were supposed to take place, just like the case of former parliaments.

17A.alsahafi-2: kunta rayisan lilwzara maratyn. hal kanat alajhizati alamnyyah tatadakhlu biqararati hukwmatik?

Rayis alwzara-2: addustwr wadih. iqra addustwr. fasultati attanfydhya manwtatin bilmalik, wa yu'yyanu rayis alwzara wa lwzara. wa awamiru almaliki ashshafawyati wa lkhatyyati la t'afi alwzara min lmaswlayh. fafi Misr wa Swriya wa Lubnan hunaka raysun limajlisi alwzara, ay anna alrayis yudiru aljalsah. Amma fi alurdun farayis tanfythy.

17E.Journalist-2. You were appointed prime minister twice. Did the security institutions generally interfere with the decisions of your government?

P.M.-2: The constitution is clear. Do read it! The executive authority is dependent on the King, and His Majesty appoints the prime minister and ministers, and His Majesty's oral and written orders do not release the ministers from responsibility. So, things are clear. In Egypt, Syria and Lebanon, there are prime ministers who control the session, whereas in Jordan, the prime minister is an executive.

According to Grice (1975), flouting this maxim is not very common. In Arabic, for example, very few examples were found when analyzing the data (cf. the table above). In example 16, the journalist's question required a yes/no answer by P.M.-1, but he provided an erroneous and illogical one. He did not say NO, because there is no way, in a 'democratic' country like Jordan, that a government can rule the country and make its own decisions without consulting parliament. Yet the prime minister could not say this because he implicates that, with the non-existence of the parliament, "I will enable my government to take any decision it sees necessary, whether it is accepted or rejected by the individual citizen who does not have a representative parliament."

Furthermore, in example 17, PM-2 avoids giving a direct and correct answer to the question

being asked in order to implicate that he, as a prime minister, has no control over the country's security services, simply because they are part of the executive authority, which he, actually, heads, according to Jordan's constitution.

4-3. Flouting the Maxim of Relevance

As indicated above, Grice (1975) has pointed out, when discussing this maxim, that interlocutors (IRs & IEs), are expected to make their utterances relevant to the topic/direction of the conversational interview in progress. So, when the IE makes a comment or answers a question, he expects his conversational partner, the IR, to attend to that remark and respond to it in a relevant manner, and he draws certain inferences based on that expectation.

Furthermore, this maxim has received various interpretations, some of which see it as "a special kind of informativeness". In this respect, Smith & Wilson (1979) offer an informal definition which reads:

A remark P is relevant to another remark Q if P and Q together with background knowledge yield new information not derivable from either P & Q, together with background knowledge, alone.

In what follows, examples are taken from the analyzed data that shed light on the major reasons behind the PM's deliberate intention to be irrelevant when providing replies to what has been asked by the IR.

18A.alsahafi-1: b'du lqawanini tamma ta'dyluha aktahara min marrah wa ahdatha dhalika irtibakan lib'dhi lmwasasat.

Rayis alwzara-1: ana rajulun brlamany wa ahtarimu kathiran majlisa annwwab. wa bi-amanah, aqulu laka laqad iftaqadutu maglisa annwwab. al-majlisu laysa 'iban 'ala lhukwmah khasatan 'indama takwnu hukwmatan tamliku lmisdaqyah wa wathiqatan min 'amaliha wa baramijiha wa kullu ma qyla bannani la aurydu majlisa annwab hatta a'malu bidwni raqabeh kalamun ghyru sahyh.

18E.Journalist-1: Some laws have been amended more than once, which causes embarrassment to

some institutions.

P.M.-1: I am a parliamentarian, and I respect the parliament too much, and, honestly, I say that we have missed the parliament. Parliament is not a burden on government, especially when government has credibility and has confidence in what it is doing and in its programs. What has been said, that I don't want a parliament, so that I can work without being sponsored, is not true.

19A.alsahafi-2: hal fil ufuqi dawlatun filistynyatun qaimatun 'ala hudwdi 1967?

Rayis alwzara-2:yajibu an natathakara alqwwata al'askaryata alisraylyah. faladayhim qwatun thatyatun hiya ljayshu wa shsha'bu walqwat alhailatu llati kanat tusanidahum fi lgharbi wa amryka wa juzin mina ashraq. wa amma nahnu ka'arab, mutafariqwna, wa man kana yaqifu ila janibina (al-itihad al-swfyati) kana marydan wa mat.

19E. Journalist-2: Is there a Palestinian State on the horizon, to be set up on the 1967 borders?

P.M.-2: We have to remember Israeli military power. The Israelis have their own power which consists of the army, the people and the great powers that usually support them: the West, America and some Eastern countries. As for us, the Arabs, we are disunited and the USSR that used to support us no longer exists.

In example 18 above, the reasonable answer to this question is yes/ no. However, P.M-1 came up with an answer that is irrelevant in order to show that he supports the amendments that have been made and carried out regarding some laws, to point out the credibility of his government, and to make clear he is not against the presence of a parliament. In fact, this is irrelevant to what he has in mind because what he implicates is that, with the absence of parliament, he and his government can take all the decisions and modify laws that do not suit government policy.

In example 19, Prime Minister-2 provides an irrelevant answer to the question. What he implicates in his answer is that due to well-organized Israeli forces, Western and American support for Israel, and disorganization of the

Arabs, who used to be supported by the defunct Soviet Union, there will be no Palestinian state established on the 1967 borders. The Prime Minister cannot directly spell out what he implicates due to the fact that there is no freedom of expression and because of having to show absolute loyalty to the overall policy of the executive authority, which he heads.

4-4. Flouting the Maxim of Manner

According to Leech (1983), this maxim ('Be perspicuous') appears to be the "Cinderella" among Grice's four maxims. Others have followed him in mentioning it last, and it rarely figures in explanations of conversational implicature. Grice himself (1975: 46) sees it as, in some sense, less important than the maxim of quality, and as differing from the other maxims in "relating not . . . to what is said, but, rather, how what is said to be said". This might be taken as a clue that this maxim does not belong to the CP, and, therefore, not to the interpersonal rhetoric of the text.

However, I believe Grice was right to recognize the maxim of manner as one of the elements of his CP and that the charge to 'be clear' is placed on language users as part of interpersonal and textual rhetoric.

From analyzing the two news interviews, the following are examples that the interviewees gave as ambiguous replies to the questions being asked:

20A.alsahafi-1: anta karayis wozara, 'ala lmustawa ashakhsy, hal kunta tataharaju mina l'alaqati ma'a l'israiylyin?

Rayis alwzara-1: ana rajulun bragmaty. ta'ayashtu ma'a l'waq'i wa ma'a wjwdi mu'ahadati salam. Wa fil kulli 'ilaqatin kuntu uqadimu almasaliha lurdinyati 'ala ghyriha mina almasalih.

20E.Journalist-1: At the personal level, as prime minister, did you feel embarrassed because of relations with Israel?

P.M.-1: I am a pragmatic person. So, I lived with the fait accompli, and with the presence of a peace agreement, and in establishing any relations I used to place Jordan's interests before any others.

21A.alsahafi-2: fi zilla hukumati Nitinyaho almutatrifah, hal laka an tajlisa ma'ahum wa tata'awana fi zili azzurwfi alhalyah?

Rayis alwzara-2: min hazina anna hukwmati Nitinyaho kashaft 'an Bitanatihim wa l'alamu taghayyara ila janibina. fawjwdi Nitinyaho afada l'araba wa asbaha lgharbu yaqwlwna anna israyil mu'tadiyah.

21E. Journalist-2: Under Netanyahu's extremist government and current circumstances, do you have to sit down and cooperate with them?

P.M.-2: We are lucky because Netanyahu's government has exposed its reality, and the world has moved to our side. So the presence of Netanyahu has benefited the Arabs, and the West has started to say that Israel is aggressive.

In example 20, the answer of Prime Minister-1 is too ambiguous, and I do not believe it will be understood by the journalist if he does not look deeply into what the speaker exactly wants to implicate. I believe that what the prime minister implicates, through this intentional ambiguity, is that he does not feel embarrassed at all about relations with Israel due to the existence of a signed peace agreement and the fact that he puts Jordan's interests before any others.

In example 21, the answer of Prime Minister-2 is also ambiguous. The straightforward answer required is either yes or no. However, the journalist and readership at large can deduce from this ambiguity that the Jordanian prime minister is not ready to sit down and negotiate any issues with the Israelis, although he is the one who signed the peace agreement with them.

5. Conclusion

This study has shown that Grice's principle of conversation and its accompanying maxims do indeed have a cross-cultural dimension when applied to a language like Arabic. With the exception of different names, the Gricean Maxims of conversation and those spelled by Arab linguists and rhetoricians are identical when it comes to following or flouting them.

However, in the Arab-Jordanian socio-political

interviews that were randomly selected for a study of these maxims, it is clear that there are socio-political reasons lying behind the flouting of these, so to speak, Gricean-Arabian maxims. Among the main ones is the fact that the prime ministers cannot give a direct answer to what they have been asked about because there is no freedom to express themselves openly. What they believe should be a direct and straightforward answer. Instead, they flout the maxims in a way that forces the audience to take different interpretations from what they say, whether these interpretations are positive or negative. In addition, this flouting results from the fact that these men are so loyal to a ruling system which has appointed each of them more than three times as prime ministers that they are not ready to answer any journalist's question that may come close to touching the status of the ruling system. Finally, while using Grice's maxims and their Arabic counterparts, we must remind ourselves that, according to Cruse (2006: 101), these maxims were never intended to be rules of pure convention, but rather "rules of conversational conduct that people do their best to follow". That said, linguists also understand that speakers, even when generally trying to follow the maxims, will find occasions when it makes sense to bend and even flout them.

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