Violations to Observe Grice’s Conversational Maxims in TV Cellular Operator Advertisements

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Abstract
Grice’s conversational implicatures have aroused far more attention in advertisements. The basic idea is that language-activity, most typically, is a kind of irrational (and purposive) social interaction governed by the principle of co-operation. It describes the violence of maxims in XL advertisements as one of Indonesian cellular phone providers. The aim of the research is to investigate the maxim mostly violated in XL advertisements and the evidences of those violations issued by Excelcomindo. The findings of the research show that the maxim mostly violated by XL cell phone provider. Moreover, the evidence of those violations is the use of uninformative and obscure utterances. It occurs because the cellular phones’ copywriters use indirect comparison. It means, in comparing their products with competitors, they do not directly mention the competitors’ product but they only use implicit utterances to refer to competitors’ products.

Key words: Advertisements, principle co-operation, violations

Introduction
Today’s modern world has forced the producer to display the product they want to sell as attractive as possible through advertisement. Many of the tycoon companies set a very huge budget for their product’s advertising every year just to reach their aim as the key players in their respective industries. Advertisement is designed for one main purpose, that is, to sell something. In their attempts to reach this goal, advertisers oftentimes will do anything, even if it is manipulating the truth to persuade and convince people to purchase their products. For that reason, they strive to make the most attractive advertisements possible, in order to gain the attention of potential buyers. Some advertisements are mostly audio visual (video and verbal), some other are print advertisements which are mostly
only visual (pictures with some words). However, most advertisements combine video, picture and words, to achieve the most powerful impact.

Advertisement’s language is a specially designed language for a specific purpose. It is presented in the most persuasive way anyone might take possible as they are meant to persuade people to buy the products. Advertisers try to tell the viewers something they initially do not want to know, or at first are not interested in, or to make them do something that they do not usually do. Brasoveanu (2006) states that the advertisements’ claim as follows: Parity products, unfinished claim, “better” vs “best”, generalized comparisons, weasel words, uniqueness claims, the “so what” claim, and rhetorical questions. On the other hand, viewers interpret the sentences in the belief that the advertisers are trying to tell the truth, tell the readers all they need to know, say things that are relevant, and use sentences clearly and unambiguously. Unfortunately, what often occurs in the very well-structured sentences of advertisement’s language is usually manipulative.

Readers might think that the utterances of advertisers, visual and verbal, would carefully follow Grice’s Cooperative Principle. In fact, they do just the opposite. In other words, they violate the principle in their attempt to make readers interpret the advertisement as the advertisers intended on TV operator cellular advertisements; some utterances are found violating one or several maxims so that maximum persuasive effect for the operator cellular advertisements are achieved in and by the advertisements. In this case, Grice’s theory of Implicature provides a comprehensive explanation for this study. In addition, the findings of this research are expected to help the readers recognize the manipulative situation in advertising and stimulate them to be more critical in analyzing the language of advertisement.

**Theoretical Base**

**The Cooperative Principles**

In order to explain how hearers interpret the utterance, Grice introduces the cooperative principles i.e, “make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged” (Grundy, 2008:95). Both speaker and hearer have a will to
deliver and interpret a message. The speaker and hearer cooperate to have an efficient communication (Thomas, 1995)

We may wonder how language succeeds at communication because every other person could have a thousand different interpretations of an utterance. However, in general people tend to understand utterances as they were intended. Communicators normally trust that interlocutors will not give them wrong information, lie or deceive them.

In order to solve the problem of how we understand speakers to mean things that they do not actually say, H. Paul Grice comes up with the cooperative principle. He believes there is an unspoken pact that people will cooperate in communicating with each other. This principle has proven to be one of the most influential theories in pragmatics field.

In addition to Cooperative Principles, Grice presents four conversational maxims. These maxims lead the ways to have an efficient communication. Due to Grice’s maxims, people can interpret and understand the implications of an utterance (Thomas, 1995).

a. The maxim of Quantity

The maxim of quantity requires the speaker to give the right amount of information when she or he speaks. It means that it is not to be too brief or to give more information than the situation requires.

b. The maxim of Quality

The maxim of quality is a matter of giving the right information. The speaker says nothing that she/he knows to be false or for which she lacks sufficient evidence (Thomas, 1995). The other maxims depend on this maxim because if a speaker does not say the truth then the utterance is false, even if the right amount of information is given or the speaker is clear and orderly when speaking (Finegan, 1994).

c. The maxim of Relation

The maxim of Relation requires the speaker to be relevant to the context and situation in which the utterance occurs (Thomas, 1995) for instance, a speaker should not say, “I am at the office” when someone asks if she/he
invites to come to a birthday party. The utterance meaning is irrelevant and the speaker fails to observe the maxim.

d. The maxim of Manner

The maxim of manner is a matter of being clear and orderly conversing. The speaker describes things in the order in which they occur and avoids ambiguity and obscurity (Thomas, 1995).

Violating the Maxim

People sometimes violate the maxims of the cooperative principle because not all are speakers totally truthful at all time or not all are people capable of the efficiency that is desired in conversational interaction. At some other times, people are forced to violate one of more maxims by cultural norms or several external factors. People’s need to hold on to social conventions of community, politeness commonly triggers them to do such cooperative principles violation.

Grice himself defines ‘violation’ as the unostentatious non-observance of a maxim. That is, if a speaker violates a maxim, he will be liable to give misleading information or messages. Floating a maxim occurs when the speakers fail to observe the maxim, not with any intention of deceiving or misleading, but because the speakers wish to prompt the hearers to look for meaning which is different from, or in addition to, the expressed meaning. A float occurs when a speaker blatantly fails to observe a maxim at the level of what is said, with the deliberate intention of generating an implicature (Thomas, 1995)

Implicature in Advertisements

Implicature is an implication of an utterance which is not directly stated by a speaker but it needs to be interpreted bddiy a hearer (Dorneus, 2005). Grice proposed two different types of implicatures: the conventional and the conversational implicatures have the same implication no matter what the context is (Thomas, 1995:57). “It is conventional in the sense that (1) it does not derive from knowing the rules for talk (therefore it is not conversational) and (2) it is
almost always associated with the particular lexical items (a kind of natural meaning)” (Grundy, 2008:107)

On the other hand, conversational implicature is generated directly by the speaker depending on the context. This implicature may or may not be understood by the hearer (Thomas, 1995). The same express meaning can have different implications on different occasions.

Advertising can take a number of different forms, including advocacy, comparative, cooperative, direct-mail, informational, institutional, outdoor, persuasive, product, reminder, point-of-purchase, and specialty advertising. A company that advertises usually strives to achieve one of four advertising objectives, trial, continuity, brand switching, and or switchback. In general, based on Wikipedia there are four types of advertisement, as follows:

1. Media advertisement,
   This kind of media can include wall paintings, billboards, street furniture components, printed flyers and rack cards, radio, cinema and television ads, web banners, mobile telephone screens, shopping carts, web pop-ups, skywriting, bus stop benches, human directional, magazines, and newspapers.

2. Covert Advertisement,
   Covert advertisement is when a product or brand is clearly displayed in entertainment and media. For instance, in a film the main character can use an item, a service or other of a definite brand, as the use of EBay in Transformer the movie.

3. Television Commercials,
   This type of advertisement is widely known as commercial break during television programs.

4. New-Age Media.
   This kind of advertisement includes internet ads, spam or bulk mail, viral campaign or word of mouth advertisement, mobile ads (for example: short message service, MMS) and social network advertisement.

While advertising can be successful at boosting the selling rate, however according to Business Encyclopedia, advertising has several limitations, among others
it cannot (1) focus on an individual consumer's specific needs, (2) provide in-depth information about a product, or (3) be cost-effective for small companies. In line with this statement the copywriters synthesize language in order to persuade the consumer, but a language has also categorized consumers: the right language is for the product, and the right product is for the right consumer (Fenichel, 2004)

From all these analysis made, it was identified that there were flouts in TV cellular operator advertisements. The floats made by the copywriters had a purpose, which is to convince the cellular phones users to use their operator, not others. The flouts include four types of maxims: Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner. In other words, the copywriters of TV cellular operator advertisements used various strategies by manipulating language in order to attract and persuade the users of cellular phones to use their operators.

**Research Methodology**

**Method of Investigation**

In this research, the materials studied are the utterance from the cellular operators’ advertisement. Therefore, this method involves a qualitative approach so that the reason, description, analysis, and the inferences are formulated in a written or essay form. The data gained from the investigation were described based on the related literature. It answers the questions about how copywriters create an interesting cellular operator advertisement based on Grice’s maxims. The subjects of this study were TV operator cellular advertisements. Cellular advertisements were selected because they made intensive and interesting appearance on TV.

**Data Source and Technique of Collecting Data**

This research focuses on TV cellular operator advertisements as main objects. The main objective of using TV media was that TV has big numbers of viewers than other media. Its advertisements got lots of attention from people. Moreover, cellular operator advertisements were selected because nowadays there are many cellular operators and the competition among others operators is
interesting. In fact, those encouraged copywriters to create various concepts of advertisements which included language manipulation.

There were two advertisements as data sources in this study from XL (PT. Excelcomindo). The advertisements were selected as the data since the advertisements contained conversation which fitted the framework, Grice’s conversational maxims. Therefore, the data chosen were through purposive sampling.

In collecting the data, there were two techniques used to obtain natural data and information in order to support this research. Firstly, the sources of cellular advertisements were from advertisements on TV. The data were not difficult to obtain because they were collected through downloading from YouTube video which fitted the purpose considering the overwhelming number of advertisements daily televised. Secondly, the oral data gained were transcribed. The transcription was used to make analysis process easier. In accordance with Edward and Lampert (1993) in Apriyantini (2001), it is possible to get incredibly detailed speech records that include small pauses, slight hesitation, and suitable changes in sound, pitch, rate, and loudness, as well as synchronizations of overlaps between speakers. Those detailed records represent a pure, natural, and objective speech.

**Technique of Analyzing Data**

The two XL ads were analyzed by using the framework of Grice’s Theory of Conversational Maxims through the following steps:

1. The data was downloaded from YouTube.
2. The data was identified according to whether or not it violates the Cooperative Principle.
3. The data was classified based on Grice’s theory of Conversational Maxims: Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner.
4. The data was analyzed according to the theory of Implicatures. The analysis began with observing the background description and followed by describing the data. Lastly, data interpretation was conducted in order to explain the effect of violation on the readers.
5. Conclusions were drawn based on the analyzed data.

Findings and Discussions

The three advertisements that were analyzed are divided into two topics, *Kawin kambing* and *Kisah Conny dan kucing spesial*

1. **XL Bebas ‘Kawin Kambing’ advertisement**

   **A. Data Description**

   Adi is talking to Mario about the cheapest call tariff while watching television in a family room.

   Adi: *Eh, tariff nelepon sekarang ada yang lebih murah* [while drinking a cup of coffee served by monkey]

   Mario: *Alaah... ikut-ikutan, nolnya aja yang dibanyakin tapi tetep pake itung-itungan waktu, basi. Ga ada yang sampe puas*

   Adi: *Sampe puas.*

   Mario: [Suddenly, in the TV there is XL’s advertisement] *Kalo ada yang nawarin telepon sampe puas, gue kawin lagi sama kambing*

   Narrator: “*Pake XL ga jaman lagi itung-itungan waktu. Mau telepon semenit sepuluh menit sejam Cuma 600 rupiah sampe puas*”

   Adi: *Ha...ha...ha...* (Laughing) [The monkey is angry while throw the plates in the kitchen when it sees its husband with a goat]

   In one of XL advertisements, the version taken is “kawin sama kambing,” the copywriters took a setting in a family room. In the first scene, Mario who is the owner of the house and his friend Adi Nugroho were talking about the cheapest tariff. Adi tells Mario that right now there is a cheaper call tariff. However, Mario disagreed with him. He states that this call tariff is only following other products’ call tariff. It only adds many “zeros” and it works based on terms and conditions. He promised that if there is a provider that offers “sampe puas” call tariff, he will marry a goat. Suddenly, by using the sound and visual effects, the TV presented XL bebas’s advertisement that offers a call tariff of “sampe puas” Rp 600.
Seeing this fact, Adi laughed, whereas Mario was sad because he has to marry a goat. Then, the monkey was jealous while throwing the plates in the kitchen because it saw its husband with a goat. It showed that besides using celebrity appeal, the copywriters also used humorous appeals.

Data Interpretation

Adi: *Eh, tariff nelepon sekarang ada yang lebih murah* (Hey, there is a cheaper call tariff, isn’t it?) [while drinking a cup of coffee served by monkey]

{1}Mario: *Alaah… ikut-ikutan, nolnya aja yang dibanyakin tapi tetep pake itung-itungan waktu, basi. Ga ada yang sampe puas* (I don’t think so… this call tariff is only following other products’ call tariff. It only adds many “zeros” and it works based on terms and conditions. There are not any cellular providers provide call tariff till satisfied)

The violation of maxims in this advertisement is quantity. The violation of maxim quality occurs in Mario’s utterance. He supposes to respond by agreeing and disagreeing Adi’s opinion. But he responds more than the information needed. He comments more on the tariff and compares to one provider. However, the message that wants to be conveyed by the copywriter in this utterance was to imply to audiences that it refers to one cellular provider’s call tariff offers a call tariff of Rp 0,0000001/second that is based on terms and condition. The information given by the copywriters about one cellular provider is very little. They only mention the call tariff without directly mentioning its product. It may confuse the audiences if there is no more information about it. Therefore this utterance violate maxim of quantity because the utterance gives uninformative to the hearer as informative a required.

The second is the violation of the maxim manner. The evidence of this violation is the use of obscure utterance. The meaning of implicit utterance that refers to one cellular provider gives a little information and it has broad meaning.
Mario: [Suddenly, in the TV there is XL’s advertisement] _Kalo ada yang nawarin telepon sampe puas, gue kawin lagi sama kambing_ (If there is a provider that offers a call tariff of sampai puas, I will marry a goat)

The utterance is violation of maxim quantity. Speaker does not respond in a right amount information which is required. The utterance implies that speaker wants to convince the audience that his disbelief to all operators which could provide the tariff until satisfied is impossible by saying he will marry a goat if he finds the operator with a call tariff sampai puas.

Narrator: “_Pake XL ga jaman lagi itung-itungan waktu. Mau telepon semenit sepuluh menit sejam Cuma 600 rupiah sampai puas._” [XL’s call tariff is not based on time duration and the call tariff is only Rp 600 till satisfied]

The violation occurs in the utterances of telling sampai puas by the narrator. The utterances are not informative and clear to be understood by the audiences. They only mention the call tariff is satisfied. It may confuse the audiences if there is no more information about it. The narrator should have clearly explained the aim of saying sampai puas. The words sampai puas may be inferred that the customer feels satisfied until his/her cell phone low battery or he feels satisfied only for two, three, or thirty minutes, or he feels satisfied because the tariff is really cheap (RP600) to call many times. Therefore this utterance violate maxim of quantity because the utterance gives uninformative to the hearer as informative a required.

Narrator: “_Pake XL ga jaman lagi itung-itungan waktu. Mau telepon semenit sepuluh menit sejam Cuma 600 rupiah sampai puas._” [XL’s call tariff is not based on time duration and the call tariff is only Rp 600 till satisfied]

The violation in these utterances is also violated maxim of quality. In those utterances, the copy writers want to tell to audiences that XL’s call tariff is not based on time duration and the call tariff is only Rp600 till satisfied. In fact, this
call tariff is worked based on conditions. The tariff Rp600 “Sampe puas” means that XL’s call tariff promotion package which offers a call tariff of Rp10 per second in the first sixty minutes (Rp600). However, it only works from 23:00 pm to 10:59 am. The time for calling is limited to only 12 hours. The evidence in this violation is the utterances are not supported by adequate evidences and blatantly untrue, according to Grice in observing maxim of quality the speakers should be truthful. They should not say what is false, or make statements for which they have no evidences.

2. XL Bebas ‘kisah Conny dan kucing special’ advertisement

A. Data Description

Luna Maya: Sinyal Bagus XL nyambung terus, percaya gak? [Do you believe that XL’s signal connect all time?]

Conny: Percaya [I do]

[She is in the saloon, suddenly there is a phone call and she is picking up the phone]

Di basement? Ok, ku tunggu ya babe [In the basement? Ok, I’ll wait for you babe]

Pacarku hobi naik gunung, karena pake XL aku masih bisa telepon dia. Hari ini dia pulang bawa kucing special buat aku. [My boyfriend likes to go climbing, I could communicate with him. Today, he’s coming and bringing a special cat for me (while she is touching her white cat). Tau banget yang aku mau [He knows exactly what I really want]

Man :Hi baby (he came into the saloon)

Conny: mana kucingnya? [Where is the cat?]

Man : (he went back outside)

Coony: benerkan sinyal baru XL emang nyambung terus [It’s true that the signal connects all the time]. (She is showing the printed XL’S poster)

Man : (he’s getting in the saloon and pulling a rope heavily, suddenly there’s a lion’s roar. It makes Conny and people in the saloon shout and scare)
B. Data Interpretation

{1} Luna Maya: *Sinyal Bagus XL nyambung terus, percaya gak?*

The violation of maxim in this utterance is maxim of manner. It is related to a matter of being clear and orderly. It means that the question given were obscure, the speaker does not give a clear description and use ambiguous language to the target.

{2} Conny: *Percaya [I do]*

[She is in the saloon, suddenly there is a phone call and she is picking up the phone]

*Di basement? Ok, ku tunggu ya babe*

*Pacarku hobi naik gunung, karena pake XL aku masih bisa telepon dia. Hari ini dia pulang bawa kucing special buat aku. Tau banget yang aku mau*

The second is violation maxim of quantity. The evidence of this violation is the use of more information than the situation requires because according to Grice in observing of maxim quantity the speaker adds information which is not needed by the hearer. It occurs in the utterances {2}. The message that wants to be conveyed by the copywriters in this utterance was to imply to audiences that an understanding boyfriend is using XL provider and communicating wherever he is without any limits. This shows the speaker adds more information needed to the audience and the information does not give contribution more informative about the product than is required.

{3} Coony: *Mana kucingnya?*

Man : (he went back outside. Suddenly, he’s getting in the salon and pulling a rope heavily, surprisingly there’s a lion’s roar. It makes Conny and people in the salon shout and scare)

It shows in utterances {3} the message that wants to be conveyed is to imply to the audiences that using XL she could communicate well wherever he boyfriend
was. It inferred that Conny expected a special cat when she met with her boyfriend. Unfortunately, she did not get a special cat because her boyfriend doesn’t know what Conny really wants, because he brought a lion from where he went climbing. It can be implied that the speaker violates maxim of quality because she says something that is believed to be false and her utterances are not supported by adequate evidence.

\{4\} Conny: \textit{mana kucingnya?} [Where is the cat?]

\begin{center}
\textbf{Man} : \textit{(He went back outside without saying anything to the girl)}
\end{center}

The third is the violation of the maxim of manner. A man does not provide a clear answer when Conny asked where the cat is. The answer is obscure. It is not expected to answer actually. The answer should be the presence of a special cat. In contrast, the man does not give straight information. Therefore, Conny is expected to get a response but he goes back outside to bring something that he might forget, miss, or he actually does not want to show it, but suddenly the man comes in pulling something really heavy to the room and it has a sound of lion. The sound is also not clear whether it is a real sound of lion or other fierce animals because the animas is not shown.

The last violation in the utterance \{4\} is the maxim of relation. It occurs when Conny’s boyfriend did not bring a special cat as what she expected, but he brought a lion, tiger, or other fierce animals to the room, therefore it makes Conny and people in the room shouted and scared.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Four maxims have been discussed in conversational implicature for successful communication in this paper. In XL advertisement, violation of the conversational maxims is dominated by the violation of the maxims of Quantity, Quality and Manner. In fact, the violation to Grice’s maxims is deliberately done by the copy writers because there is a regulation that prohibits them to directly mention the competitors’ products in their advertisements. However, this type of advertisements also has disadvantages that can be seen in each violation of the
maxims such as the use of uninformative and obscure utterances. Moreover, the copywriters also expected these ads to be memorable so that subconsciously this resulted in creating brand images which differentiate XL ads from others.

References


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http://www.youtube.com