

FICTIONAL CONVERSATIONS IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S ARROW OF GOD: A PRAGMATICS ANALYSIS.

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Abstract

Conversation is a talk between two or more people in which thoughts, feelings, and ideas are expressed, questions are asked and answered, or news and information is exchanged. Many studies have described Achebe's Arrow of God from diverse theoretical and critical perspectives. But none has explored the possibilities of a pragmatics analysis of the conversations in Chinua Achebe's Arrow of God. This study is going to be based on conversations of the characters in the novel, using Grice's theory of conversational implicature (cooperative principle), which comprises his four maxims: quality, quantity, manner and relation. This research seeks to ascertain the degree to which the characters in this novel violate or adhere to the maxims.

Keywords: Conversational Implicature, Pragmatics, Maxims, Chinua Achebe, Grice's Theory.

Introduction

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics concerned with the use of language in social contexts and the ways in which people produce and comprehend meanings through language. It is also concerned with how people use language within a context in real life situation.

For the purpose of this study, Abaye's (2008) understanding of pragmatics is adopted as a guide. He explains pragmatics thus: The study of language in particular communication context or situation must take cognizance of the message being communicated or the speech act being performed: the participants, involved their intention, knowledge of the world and the impacts of these on their interaction. What they have taken for granted as part of the context (or the presuppositions) the deductions they make on the basis of the context. What is said or left unsaid, the impacts of non-verbal aspect of interactions on meaning.

Conversation is the spoken exchange of ideas, observations, opinions or feelings between people. Samuel Johnson (1952) explains conversation thus: "Everyone endeavours to make himself as agreeable to society as he can, but it often happens that those who most aim at shinning in conversation overshoot their mark". In pragmatics, a speaker's utterance or word can mean different things at different times on different occasions.

In conversations, participants normally mean more than they actually express in words. They often leave certain meanings implicit. This explains why Yule (1985) refers to pragmatics as the study of invisible meaning or how we recognize what is meant even when it is not actually said or written.

The term “implicature” is derived from the verb “to imply” and also presupposes the noun variant “implication”. According to Mey (2001:45).to imply, going by its Latin roots “plicare”, means “to fold” so, that which is implied is “folded in” and needs to be “unfolded”. The term “implicature” is used to refer to the meaning attached to an expression which is over and above what is actually said (that is, richer than what is literally expressed by the conversational sense of the linguistic expression uttered). It is concerned with the various inferences we can make without actually being told, and account for what the speaker can imply, suggest, or intend to mean as distinct from what they literally say. Implicature is otherwise called “pragmatic inference”. According to Grice, conversational implicatures arise because communicating people are expected by their addressees to obey the maxims of conversation and overarching cooperative principle, which basically states that people are expected to communicate in a cooperative, helpful way. He introduced the theory of conversational implicature, which was actually the first to identify and distinguish the phenomenon of implicature. Grice (1975) proposes the twin concepts of the “cooperative principle” and the “universal conversational maxims”. He suggests that there is a general cooperative principle which controls the way in which a conversation may proceed. He defines the cooperative principle as basic shared assumption among participants. This cooperative principle states as follows:

Make your conversational 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.

This principle is enlarged into what he termed the four “conversational maxims” each containing sub maxims as follows:

1. The Maxim of Quality

Super-Maxim: Try to make your contribution one that is true.

Sub – Maxims: (a) Do not say what you believe is false.

(b) Do not say that for which you lack evidence

2. The Maxim of Quantity

Sub – Maxims: (a) Make your contribution as informative as required (for the current purposes of the exchange).

(b) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

The Maxim of relation – be relevant.

The Maxim of manner.

Super – Maxim: Be perspicuous

Sub – Maxims:

(a) Avoid obscurity of expression

- (b) Avoid ambiguity
- (c) Be brief
- (d) Be orderly.

Achebe's *Arrow of God* has enjoyed enormous scholarly attention. Achebe himself has indicated that it is his best work by saying it is the work he may be caught reading time and again. Most studies on *Arrow of God* such as Nnolim (2011), Obiechine (1975), Akwanya (2013) are mainly literary and philosophical analysis. The work has enjoyed only little attention from the pragmatics approach. Alabi's (2009) in linguistic study of Achebe's work does not account for how people used language within a context in a real life situation. This means that a conversation that is encoded in the ideological workings of the linguistic forms that are deployed in the novel is not given any critical consideration.

In the light of the identified gap, this present study investigates the way in which the characters in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* violate or adhere to the maxims of quantity, quality, manner and relation based on Grice theory of "conversational Implicature". To realize this, this study explores, from the perspective of pragmatics, the fictional conversations in the novel, paying particular attention to the use of words by the characters in the context of the novel and in reference to the wider context that the novel portrays.

Theoretical framework.

H. P. Grice (1975) – Conversational Implicature. The thrust of this Grice's influential theory is the concept of conversation implicature. This often regarded as "theory of conversation" starts with a sharp distinction between what someone says and what someone "implicates" by uttering the sentence. This implies that what is said sometimes may not mean what is intended, though the statement must be relevant to the context of use.

Grice (1913 - 1988) was the first to systematically study cases in which what a speaker means differs from what the speaker says as determined by the conventional meaning of the sentence uttered and contextual processes of disambiguation and reference fixing. What the speaker implicates is associated with the existence of some rational principles and maxims governing conversation.

These conversation principles, according to Osisanwo (2003:102), make Grice be regarded as the inventor of the "cooperative principle" in communication. Wardaugh (2010:308) argues that "we are able to converse with one another because we recognize common goals. In any conversation, only certain kinds of "moves" are possible at any particular time. That is, there are certain constraints that operate to govern exchanges. These constraints limit speakers as to what they can say and listeners as to what they can infer". According to Yule (1996), the preoccupation of Grice's contribution to pragmatics theory is his "cooperative principle" through which he posits that people involved in a conversation with each other in order to facilitate meaning negotiation and avoid ambiguity. The four maxims of the cooperative principles as propounded by Grice are:

Quality: Make your contribution true, that is, be truthful. Speakers and writers are expected to say only what they believe to be true and to have evidence for what they say. Again, the

other side of the coin is that speakers are aware of this expectation; they know that hearers expect them to honour the maxim of quality. Without the maxim of quality, the other maxims are of no value or interest. Whether brief or lengthy, relevant or irrelevant, orderly or disorderly, all lies are false (Finegan, 2008: 289). This sentiment is also echoed by Yule (1996), Rommaine (2010) and Wardaugh (2010). In summary, the maxim of quality stresses that one should not convey what you believe to be false, should desist from saying that for which one lacks adequate knowledge.

Quantity: Be as informative as required, that is, do not say more than what is required for the current purpose of exchange. Speakers are expected to give as much information as is necessary for their interlocutors to understand their utterances, but to give no more information than is necessary. According to Finegan (2008: 287), in most Western cultures, listeners expect speakers to abide by this maxim, and speakers know that hearers believe them to be abiding by it.

According to Finegan, it is this unspoken cooperation that creates conversational implicature. In a nutshell, the maxim of quantity emphasizes the need to make one's contribution in a discourse as adequate as needed, not to make the information supplied to be surplus to the requirement.

Relation: Be relevant, that is, do not say anything that is not related or relevant. This stresses the need for logical orderliness of the information to be provided. Speakers are to organize their utterances in such a way that they are relevant to the on-going context. It means one's contribution in any discourse must be in agreement or conformity with the topic of discussion. It must be relevant to the time of the utterance. The concept of timing is very fundamental to the maxim of relevance. Sometimes, delay responses may violate the maxim of relation because events might have overtaken the question(s) earlier asked. In short, maxim of relation is concerned with the usefulness of the information provided to the on-going discourse.

Manner: Be polite or perspicuous, avoid obscurity of expression, and avoid ambiguity. This maxim stresses the need to be orderly and clear in one's expression. It dictates that speakers and writers avoid ambiguity and obscurity and be orderly in their utterances. This means that logical sequential arrangement of information provided is necessary to make the hearers have a good understanding of a discourse. The information that should come first must not be placed last, and the one that is to come last should not come first. When any of the maxims are flouted, there is a conversational implicature which is an additional unspoken meaning conveyed beyond what the words mean (Adedimeji, 2010),(Finegan, 2008).

According to Grice, the "calculation" of conversational implicature is grounded on common knowledge of what the speaker has said, the linguistic and extra linguistic context of utterance, general background information and the consideration of the cooperative principle. The Gricean principles are powerful because they enable a language user to draw inference on the implied meanings (implicature of utterances).

Also, the four maxims proposed by him have been found very useful in explaining indirect speech acts (Mey, 2001; Kepson 2004).

A participant in a talk exchange may fail to fulfill a maxim in a number of ways:

- He or she may violate it, in which case he or she will be likely to mislead
- He or she may opt out of observing a principle by saying things like I don't want to talk about it.
- There may be a conflict of maxims: you cannot be as informative as is required if you do not have adequate evidence.
- He or she may blatantly flout a maxim.

When a maxim is being flouted while it is still clear that the co-operative principle is being observed, the hearer will supply whatever implicature is necessary to reinstate the maxim, and when conversational implicature is generated in this way, Grice says that a maxim is being exploited. Kempson (1977), Verschueren (2003: 30-36) and Malmkjaer (2002:420). Listed the following five characteristics of conversational implicature:

1. It can be cancelled, since it depends on the co-operative principle being observed, and it is possible to opt out of observing it. You can simply add I don't mean to imply...
2. It is non-detachable from what is being said. If the same thing is being said in a different way, then the same implicature will attach to both manners of expressions: the same implicature of having failed to achieve something which attaches to the expression, I tried to do it, will also attach to the para-phrases, I attempted to do it, and I endeavored to do it.
3. It is not part of the meaning of the expression, since if it were, it could not be cancelled, but is, rather, dependent on the prior knowledge of that meaning.
4. It is not carried by what is said-the meaning-but by the saying of what is said-by the speech act, not by the propositional content.
5. It is indeterminate: there are often several possible implicature -though the types data mentioned above will, of course, help hearers determine the most likely implicature.

One obvious weakness of Grice pragmatic principle is that the maxim of manner is perhaps flouted by Grice himself through the use of „perspicuous“ and „proximity“ both of which are bombasts (Adedimeji, 2010: 76). Grice's account of pragmatic inference has also been criticized by Sperber and Wilson (1986), Neale (1992) for serious overlaps in his four maxims which often results into confusion due to lack of clear cut boundaries. They further argue that all Grice's maxims can be replaced by a single principle of relevance – which when suitably elaborated, can handle the full range of data that Grice's maxims were designed to explain (Wilson and Sperber, 1986:381).

In addition, Grice's concept of conversational implicature is the most controversial part of his theory of conversation for many followers, for several reasons. For instance, the category of conversational implicature blurs the distinction between what is said, usually conceived as determined by the semantic convention of language, what is implicated, usually thought of as a matter of inference as to a speaker's intentions in saying what he or she does (Yhosikate, 2007). Finally, Gricean theory is flouted because it places the study of the conventional

meaning of some expressions within the realm of pragmatics (study of implicature), rather than semantic, usually conceived as the home of conventional meaning.

Statement of the problem

Several works have been done by scholars on the study of Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*, especially from literary and philosophical perspectives. But Achebe's *Arrow of God* has not been subjected to a pragmatics analysis of the conversations among the characters, using Grice theory of cooperative principles. The need to fill this gap has led the researchers to embark on the study of the novel with a focus on the analysis based on the theory of conversational implicature.

Objectives

The objective of this study is to undertake a pragmatics analysis of the conversations in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* based on the principles of conversational implicature which is designed to:

1. Examine to the degree to which the characters in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* violate or adhere to the maxims of quantity, quality, manner and relation.
2. In what ways can a pragmatic theory be used for the analysis of conversations in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*.

Literature Reviews

Etymologically, the term "pragmatics" is from the Greek word 'pragma' meaning deed or action Osisanwo (2003) traces the term "pragmatics" to Charles Morris (1938) who describes it as one of the three (with syntax and semantics) component fields of semiotics, which is the study of signs and sign system. Morris regarded syntax as the study of the relationship between signs while semantics as the study of the relationship between signs and the things for which they stand. Akmajian, et al (2010:361), identifies the coverage of pragmatics to the study of language use, and in particular the study of linguistic communication, in relation to the structure of and context of utterance. Thus, instance, pragmatics must identifies central issues of language, it must specify the conditions for linguistics expressions (words, phrases, sentences, discourse) to be used in those ways and it must seek to uncover general principles of language use.

Pragmatics has its domains as speakers' communicative intentions, the use of language that requires such intentions and the ways that hearers employ to infer what these intentions and acts are, so they can understand what the speaker intends to communicate. Pragmatics can also be viewed as a subfield of linguistics which studies the way in which context contribute to meaning.

Quoting Leech and Short (1981), Adegbite (2006:61) defines pragmatics thus:

The pragmatic analysis of language can be broadly understood to be the investigation into that aspect of meaning which is derived not from properties of words and constructions, but from the way in which utterances are used and how they relate to the contexts in which they are uttered.

Notable pragmatic scholars have over the years maintained that pragmatics is an offshoot of syntax and semantics. This means that pragmatics is not another branch of language study such as phonology, syntax and semantics.

The literature review in this study is designed to accommodate the pragmatics analysis of conversations and critical works on Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*. A critical pragmatics analysis of the discursive expression of power and dominance in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* have been done by Omotoshi Moses Melefa and Thomas Michael Emeka Chukwumezie in order to reveal the aspect of power that the ideological discursive practices of the rulers reflect with a view to determining the interpersonal components of linguistic features that instantiate power.

Blaise N. Machila (1981) also works on ambiguity in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*. He submits that the major conflicts in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* developed around the Chief Priest of the god Ulu who is the ritual and religious leader of Umuaro that despite the cloak of ambiguity that surrounds the character of Ezeulu, one central fact is clear: Ezeulu the man cannot be easily separated from Ezeulu the Chief Priest of Ulu – though it is possible to see when the factor of personal character dominant as in Ezeulu's dealings with members of his family, and when the priestly character takes over, as in the consideration of serious affairs of politics and religion.

Florence Indede (2009) attempts a pragmatics analysis of Kiswahili literary political discourse using Grice's cooperative principle. She bases her analysis on the following poetic texts: *Chembe Cha Moyo* by Alamin Mazrui, *Savtiya Dhiki* by Abdilatif Abdala and *Jiho La Ndani* by Said Ahmed Mohamed. She maintains that her article employs the cooperative principle developed by Grice whose conversational implicature is central to her discussion. She argues that the interpretation of meaning requires high level of application of the cooperative principle by both the reader and the author.

The literature review shows that no research has been carried out in pragmatics analysis of the conversations in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*. The researchers seek to ascertain the degree to which the characters in this novel violate or comply with the maxims.

Methodology

The method involves the pragmatics analysis of conversations in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* using Grice's theory of conversational implicature to see how its maxims could be applied to a reading of the novel.

The Analysis of the conversations among the characters in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*, using Grice theory of conversational implicature

In the novel many characters violate while others adhere to the maxims of quality, quantity, manner and relation. Grice's maxim of quality states that: (a) Do not say what you believe to be false. (b) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

In (Achebe, 1974, p.2) Nwafor violates the maxim of quality:

Obiageli: I said does the moon kill people?

Nwafor: It kills little girls.

From what Nwafor said, it is obvious that he lies because the moon does not kill little girls. (Achebe, 1974, p. 9).

Matefi: What do you expect a long to do when his mother cooks soup with locust beans for fish. She saves her money to buy ivory bracelets. But Ezeulu will never see anything wrong in what she does if it is me then he knows what to say.

Matefi violates the maxim of quality which states that do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence. Based on what is evident in the literary text in (Achebe, 1974, p. 190)

No matter what Udoe did Matefi's jealousy never let her rest if she cooked a modest meal in her own hut but Matefi said she was starving her children so that she could buy ivory bracelets; if she killed a cock as she did this evening Matefi said she was seeking favour from her husband.

Ezeulu adheres to the maxims of quality because he tells the men of Umuaro nothing but the truth about you. (Achebe, 1974, p.15)

Ezeulu: He told the men of Umuaro that Ulu would not fight an unjust war, if you choose to fight a man for a piece of farmland that belongs to him, I shall have no hand in it.

Maxim of Quality:

Obika violates the maxim of quality by saying what is not true or what he did not have evidence of

Ezeulu: Stand aside; what do you think is fighting inside.

Obika: Two cocks

In the literary text I observe that it was a python that is inside that box and not two cocks as Obika said.

Maxim of Quality:

Oduche adheres to the principle of cooperative maxim because he said nothing but the truth about what God said in the Holy Bible. (Achebe, 1974, p. 49).

Oduche: It is not true that the Bible did not ask us to kill the serpent. Did not God tell Adam to crush its head after it had deceived his wife?

Maxim of Quality:

Anosi in this literary text adheres to the maxim of quality because he says what is true and he is an eye witness to it. (Achebe, 1974, p. 52).

Anosi: Yes I was there and saw it with my own eyes; he was saying I would not have believe it had somebody else told me I saw the box opened and a python inside it.

Maxim of Quality

Captain Winterbottom adheres to the maxim of quality because he has evidence of what people said against Chief James Ikedi. (Achebe, 1974, p.57).

“Captain Winterbottom began to hear rumours of his high-handedness; He set up an illegal court and a private prison. He took any woman who caught his fiancé without paying the customary bride price. Captain Winterbottom went into the whole business thoroughly and uncovered many more serious scandals. He decided to suspend the fellow for six months, and accordingly withdrew his warrant”.

Maxims of Quality:

Chief James Ikedi violates the maxim which states do not say what is not true. (Achebe, 1974, p.57).

“When some of them reported the matter to their Chief, he told them there was nothing he could do, that the overseer was carrying out the orders of the white man and anyone who had no money to give should borrow from his neighbour or sell his goats or yams”.

Maxims of Quality:

Ezeulu violates the maxims by lying against his wife “Udoye” and thereby causing conversation implicature. (Achebe, 1974, p.60).

Ezeulu: Do not tell me you don’t know where he is because it is a lie, you may call him from where you are hiding him.

In the literary text, it is obvious that Udoye does not hide Oduche or knows where he is but Ezeulu lies against her by accusing her that she is the one that hide Oduche and thereby causing conversational implicature in their conversations.

Maxims of Quality:

Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence. (Achebe, 1974, p. 82).

Moses Unachukwu: I have heard that not one person in your father’s house has a right head. Moses Unachukwu violates this maxim of quality because none of Ezeulu’s family members is mad or was mad before.

Moses Unachukwu also violates the maxim of quality by lying against Mr. Wright. (Achebe, 1974, p. 82).

Mr. Wright: Tell them this bloody work must be finished by June.

Moses Unachukwu: The white man says that unless you finish this work in time you will know the kind of man he is.

Mr Wright: Pardon what? Can’t you understand plain simple English? I said there will be no more late-coming.

Moses Unachukwu: Oho. He says everybody must work hard and stop all this shit-eating.

Maxim of Quality:

Ofoedu violates the maxim because he have not seen Moses Unachukwu where he is licking the white man’s plates in his kitchen. (Achebe, 1974, p.83).

Ofoedu: We have heard that when he left Umuaro he went to cook like a woman in the white man’s kitchen and lick his plates.

Maxim of Quality:

Ezeulu violates the maxim by saying what is not true about Obika. (Achebe, 1974, p.85).

Ezeulu: From what I know of your brother he is likely to have struck the first blow.

Maxim of Quality:

Edogo violates the maxim by lying against Ezeulu his father. (Achebe, 1974, p.126)

Edogo: He tells Akuebue that the reason why Ezeulu sends Oduche to the new religion is to leave the way clear for Nwafor to become Chief Priest.

Maxim of Quality:

Ojiugo violates the maxim by lying against the devotees of the new religion. (Achebe, 1974, p.127).

Ojiugo: She whispered into her ear that devotees of this new cult killed and ate the python.....

Ojiugo: kill me today. You must kill me. Do you hear me, Eater of python? You must kill me.

Matefi also violates the maxim by accusing Oduche that he took her daughter to the stream in order to beat her to death which is not true because in this literary text Oduche did not intend beating Ojiugo let alone taking her to the stream to beat her to death and that causes conversational implicature (Achebe, 1974, p.129).

Matefi: you tell me to shut my mouth when Oduche takes my daughter to the stream and beats her to death.

Maxim of Quality:

Obika adheres to this maxim by saying what is true in (Achebe, 1974, p. 164).

Obika: She has been cooking for us since yesterday and she says that as long as she is alive Ezeulu will not send home for another woman.

Maxim of Quality:

Ezeulu maintains this maxim by telling the truth about what his enemies said especially Nweke.

Ezeulu: Do you know that my enemies at home call me? They say Ezeulu brought the white man to Umuaro they say I betrayed them to the white man.

Maxim of Quality:

Nwafor violates this maxim by lying to his father.

Ezeulu: What were you saying?

Nwafor: Nothing

Ezeulu: Are you deaf? I asked what you were saying?

Nwafor: they said that was how to scare away a python

Ezeulu: I did not ask you, what anybody said. I asked you what you were saying or do you want me to get up from here before you answer?

Nwafor: We were saying python run! There is a Christian here.

The Maxim of Quantity:

(a) Make your contribution as informative as required. (b) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

The kinsmen from Akueke's husband place adhered to this maxim by going straight to the point. (Achebe, 1974, p.12).

Kinsman: We have not come with wisdom but with foolishness because a man does not go to his in-law with wisdom. We want you to say to us you are wrong this is how it is or that is how it is and we shall be satisfied and go home.

Edogo also adheres to this maxim by asking his father the right amount of information that he want without beating around the bush (Achebe, 1974, p.13)

Edogo: Tomorrow is afor and we have come to find out what work you have for us.

Maxim of Quantity:

Onwuzuligbo adheres strictly on this maxim because he is informative in his message. (Achebe, 1974, p.61).

Onwuzuligbo: He tells Ezeulu that his people have sent him to say that they will like to pay a visit to their in-law the following morning.

Maxim of Quantity:

Ukpaka in this novel obeys this maxim by not saying little or too much of which is required from him. (Achebe, 1974, p. 86).

Ukpaka: Anyhow the question which we shall beg Unachukwu to ask him is why we are not paid for working on his road.

Maxim of Manner:

The maxim of manner has four maxims: Be perspectives, avoid obscurity of expression, avoid ambiguity be brief and be orderly. In this literary text, there is evidence that many characters in the novels violates this maxims while others adheres to it. Any character that violates these maxims in their conversations have committed the crime of conversational implicature.

Maxim of Manner (Be Orderly)

Obika and Edogo violated this maxim by flouting the rules of turn taking in their conversations. (Achebe, 1974, p. 13).

Oduche: father, I have a word to say.

Ezeulu: I am listening.

Obika: Perhaps they are forbidden to help their brothers build a barn.

Edogo: Has Oduche not worked as hard as yourself on your homestead?

Ezeulu: It is Oduche I am waiting to hear, not two jealous wives.

Not only that the two violate the maxim of orderliness but Obika also violates the maxim of quality because he lies against Oduche by saying that they are forbidden to help their brothers to build a barn.

Maxim of Manner (Be Brief and orderly)

Nwafor and Nkechi adhere to these maxims even though there is a conversation implicature in their conversations. (Achebe, p.65).

Nwafor: Do not agree, she wants to cheat you because she is bigger than you are.

Nkechi: Nobody has called your name in this, anti-hill nose.

Maxim of Manner (Be Orderly)

There are subtle turn-taking cues which mark when a speaker is about to yield the floor to another. Akuebue and Ezeulu adhered to this maxim in their conversations. (Achebe, 1974, p. 94).

Akuebue: I have seen it.

Ezeulu: Then break it.

Akuebue: No. the king's kolanut returns to his hands.

Ezeulu: If you say so.

Akuebue: Indeed, I say so.

This maxim of orderliness was also obeyed by Ezeulu, Akuebue and Oduche in their conversations. (Achebe, 1974, p. 97).

Ezeulu: When is it you are going to Okpeni?

Oduche: The day after tomorrow.

Ezeulu: For how long?

Oduche: they say for two markets.

Akuebue: What are you going for

Oduche: they want to test our knowledge of the holy book.

Maxim of Manner (Be Orderly)

Akuebue violates this maxim by flouting the cues of turn taking because he interrupted Nwodika son by answering question that is addressed to him. (Achebe, 1974, p.135).

Ezeulu: your friend seems to have come from far.

Nwodika's son: yes we have come from Okpeni

Ezeulu: Do you live in Okpeni then?

Akuebue: Yes replied Akuebue. Have you not heard of one of our young men who lives with the white man in Okpeni?

Maxim of Manner (Be Brief)

The sub-maxim of brevity (be brief) requires that the speaker goes straight to the point. This is similar to the sub-maxim of quantity which requires that the speaker should not say more than is required. The court messenger adheres to this maxim in this novel. (Achebe, 1974, p.137).

The court messenger: Which one of you is called Ezeulu:

Ezeulu: you say you are a man of Umaru? Do you have priests and elders there?

Court messenger: Do not take my question amiss. The white man has his own way of doing things. Before he does anything to you, he will first ask you your name and the answer must come from your own lips.

Even Ezeulu also adheres to this maxim (Be brief). (Achebe, 1974, p. 138).

Ezeulu: You asked me a question.....I shall now answer you. I am that Ezeulu you spoke of. Are you satisfied?

Court Messenger: Thank you.

Maxim of Manner (Be Brief)

Court Messenger: your friend Winterbottom has ordered you to appear before him tomorrow morning.

Ezeulu: you must first return, however and tell your white man that Ezeulu does not leave his hut. If he wants to see me he must come here.

Maxim of Manner (Be Orderly)

Even the mask adheres to the maxim of orderliness by not violating the Grice's cooperative principles. (Achebe, 1974, p. 204).

Mask: Ezeulu de-de-de-de-dia-

Ezeulu: Do you know me.

Mask: How can a man know you who are beyond human knowledge?

Maxim of Manner (Be orderly)

(Achebe, 1974, p. 207)

Ezekwesili: The story we have heard is that there is a little disagreement about the next new yam festival.

Ezeulu: I need not speak in riddles. You all know what our custom is. I only call a new festival when there is only one yam.

OnenyiNnanyelugo: I think that Ezeulu has spoken well.

Maxim of Relation (Be relevant)

Okikpo violates this maxim by saying what is not related in their conversations.

Okikpo: Different people have different customs, in Okpeni it is not our custom to welcome strangers to our market with the Ikolo. (Achebe, 1974, p. 23).

Maxim of Relation (Be relevant)

Both Obika and Ezeulu adhere to this maxim in their conversation. (Achebe, 1974, p. 112).

Obika: father, is it the custom for the diviner to take home the hen brought for the sacrifice?

Ezeulu: No my son. Did Aniegboka do so?

Obika: He did. I want to speak to him but my mother made a sign to me not to talk.

Maxim of Relation (Be relevant)

(Achebe, 1974, p. 129)

Matefi and Oduche violated this maxim by giving wrong answers to what Ezeulu asked them.

Ezeulu: I say shut your mouth! Are you mad?

Matefi: Why should I not shut my mouth? After all Oduche is Ugoye's son. Yes, Matefi must shut her mouth.

Ezeulu: Oduche

Oduche: E-E-e-h

Ezeulu: What is all this noise about?

Oduche: Ask Ojiugo and her mother.

Ezeulu: I am asking you. And don't tell me to ask another or a dog will lick your eyes this morning.

Maxim of Manner

(Sub-maxim – avoid ambiguity)

Ezeulu violates this maxim by using ambiguous words in the novel. (Achebe, 1974, p. 132)

Ezeulu: I can see things where other men are blind. That is why I am known and at the same time I am unknown.

Conclusion

This pragmatics analysis of conversations in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* has revealed that a speaker's utterance or a word can mean different things at different times on different occasions. The application of pragmatics to Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* allows us to see how conversations are used in interesting and social ways. This study also reveals that some characters in the novel violate Grice's cooperative principles whereas others adhere to the maxims in their conversations. The result is that implicatures are triggered by the violations to underscore the authorial intention and achieve literariness of the text.

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