

**ASCERTAINING THE FLOUTED MAXIMS OF THE  
COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES WITHIN NIKE'S ONLINE  
ADVERTISEMENT: PRAGMATICS OVERVIEW**

**ARTICLE**



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Submitted to Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teaching Training to be  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **RATIONALE**

Human needs communication to connect with others. This particular process will always take place within the social context in the daily life. The communication itself will give an opportunity to them to exchange ideas, opinion, or achieve certain purposes. In this particular case, according to Fowler (1979), since communication will at least involve two persons (the speaker and the hearer), it requires the cooperation between them. In other words, both the speaker and the hearer need to understand each other so that the communication (conversation) will take place. Therefore, the communication is basically a cooperative attempt done by the speaker and the hearer which have the same common understanding to be able to reach their own goals.

There are two ways in conveying ideas or opinion within the communication; spoken and written (Xin, 1996). Spoken interaction will be related to the direct interaction between the speaker and the hearer. In this case, the speaker has a full range of ‘voice quality’ effects related to facial expression, postural, as well as gestural systems (Brown and Yule: 1983). Thus, every single thing that the speaker do at the time he/she is speaking, such as smiling, leaning forward and so on, can give certain effect to the hearer (Haryanto, 2014). All of these aspects are going to be considered in interpreting the messages or ideas delivered (Fairclough, 1995). Meanwhile, the written interaction will involve the use of text. It will be the medium in delivering the ideas from the writer and the hearer (Fikri et al., 2014). Just like the spoken interaction, the reader will interpret the messages from the writer, however he/she cannot have any access to identify the paralinguistic cues (gestures, stressed, intonation, etc.).

Moreover, to be able to create such a successful communication, Grice proposed the term ‘cooperative principle’. It was introduced within his article entitled, “Logic and Conversation” (1975). He argues that human being will interact to each other in logical and rational way. In other words, they will cooperate in such a way to reach their goals. The cooperation itself will always be

embedded within the conversation naturally. Furthermore, he argues that the speakers will have ability to deliver implicit meaning which the hearer will be able to infer this embedded meaning within their conversation. Therefore, it can be said that, in communicating their intention both the speaker and the hearer will follow certain pattern. Grice (1975:45) says that making the contribution such it is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged. By applying Cooperative Principle, the speaker allows the hearer to draw the assumptions about the speaker's intentions and the meaning of each utterance. When the participants are able to convey their messages effortlessly, it called as in line maxims. In line maxims is the condition where the participant obey the maxims within the Gricean's maxim.

The cooperative principles consist of four maxims, there are: maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation, and maxim of manner. According to Grice (1975:45) each maxims have the specific characters, the maxims are:

1. Maxim of Quantity. The speaker need to make his/her utterance as informative as it is required. The utterance itself should not be more informative than it is required.

*Example:*

*Church : What are you doing for work?*

*Chris : I started my own business, setting up alarm systems.*

In this conversation, its deals with in line maxim of quantity, because Chris gave complete information about his work that he worked in security alarm system.

2. Maxim of Quality. The speaker need to say the truth. He/she should not say something that in which it lacks adequate evidence

*Example:*

*Sebastian : I remember throwing up on Kate's shoes.*

*Kate : Yeah, I remember, too.*

The conversation between Sebastian and Kate include maxim of quality, because Kate recognized that Sebastian remembered throw up on Kate's shoes therefore Sebastian is saying true about the information.

3. Maxim of Relation. The speaker needs to be relevant.

*Example:*

*Chris : It's good?*

*Briggs : Yeah, yeah.*

This conversation is in line maxim of manner, because when Chris ask to Briggs about the coke, Briggs answers the coke is good. Therefore there is relation in their conversation.

4. Maxim of Manner. The speaker must be perspicuous and avoid obscurity of expression or ambiguity. In other words, he/she should be brief and orderly

*Example:*

*Briggs : I'm going to be perfectly f\*\*\*ing clear. You call your husband and you tell him not to dump it in the water! You tell him that you, Michael and Eddie are all depending on him. Do you understand me?*

*Kate : Stay away from my kids!*

Briggs attacks Kate when Chris did not at home. This conversation is in line maxim of manner, because Briggs wants to Kate talks to his husband to be not dumping the coke into the sea in a clear and brief way.

However, the speaker will not always follow these maxims in interacting with others. There is such a tendency that someone will not obey these maxims for any kind of reason. Grice points out examples of cases in which a maxim is flouted, clashed or violated. The speaker is said to flout the maxim when he/she cannot accomplish the maxim due to certain effect. Meanwhile, the speaker will clash the maxims when he/she is not able to complete the maxim in order to respect the listeners. Whereas, the speaker is said to violate the maxim when he/she has hidden intention which is non-cooperation and it will result to misunderstanding (Grice, 1989: p. 30). In all of these cases, Grice believes that the audience assumes the speaker is cooperating, following and respecting the maxims.

One of the examples of written communication which commonly flout the maxims of cooperative principle is advertisement. Advertisement is an advertising activity. Advertising is a paid, mediated form of communication from an

identifiable source, designed to persuade the receiver to take some action, now or in the future (Richards & Curran in Karimova: 2014). Due to the fact that it was intended to promote people to do something, there will be a high chance that it will flout the maxim.

Therefore, considering the explanation above, this study aims to investigate what maxim that is commonly flouted within an online advertisement of Nike's shoes product. Nike corporation is chosen because it is a multinational corporation which has many consumers around the world.

## **PROBLEM**

From the explanation above, the problems that are going to be discussed in this study are:

1. What is the most flouted maxims of cooperative principle in Nike's online advertisement?

## **OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this study is to give a comprehensible insight on how Nike's online advertisement, for their shoes products, flout the maxims of cooperative principle in attracting customer.



## MAIN TEXT

### METHODS

The research designs used in this study is qualitative research design. By applying this research design, the meaning of the phenomenon was described qualitatively by words (Creswell, 2014). The writer would like to show how Nike flout the Grice's theory of Cooperative Principle in their shoes' online. The type of the data used in this research are in form of the written advertisements which focus on the Nike's shoes' online advertisement. The data were collected by using documentation. There are ten Nike's shoes advertisement that are going to be analyzed.

In the data analysis, the data is analyzed from the following steps:

1. Finding the flouted maxim in the advertisement.
2. Analyzing the data by using the Grice's theory of the Cooperative Principle.
3. Summarizing the analysis by finding the percentage of each exploited maxim to know the most exploited maxim of the Cooperative Principles in the Nike's Shoes online advertisement. The highest percentage of maxim of the Cooperative Principle was calculated by applying Ali's percentage formula, the formula was as follows:

$$E = \frac{n}{N} \times 100\%$$

E = The percentage of maxim of the Cooperative Principles that is flouted.

n = The number of particular flouted maxim (the Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner)

N = The total number of flouted maxim.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

After collecting the data, it was then analyzed to identify which maxims of cooperative principle has been flouted most of the time. The result of the analyzed data from Nike's online advertisements for their shoes product can be seen in the following table:

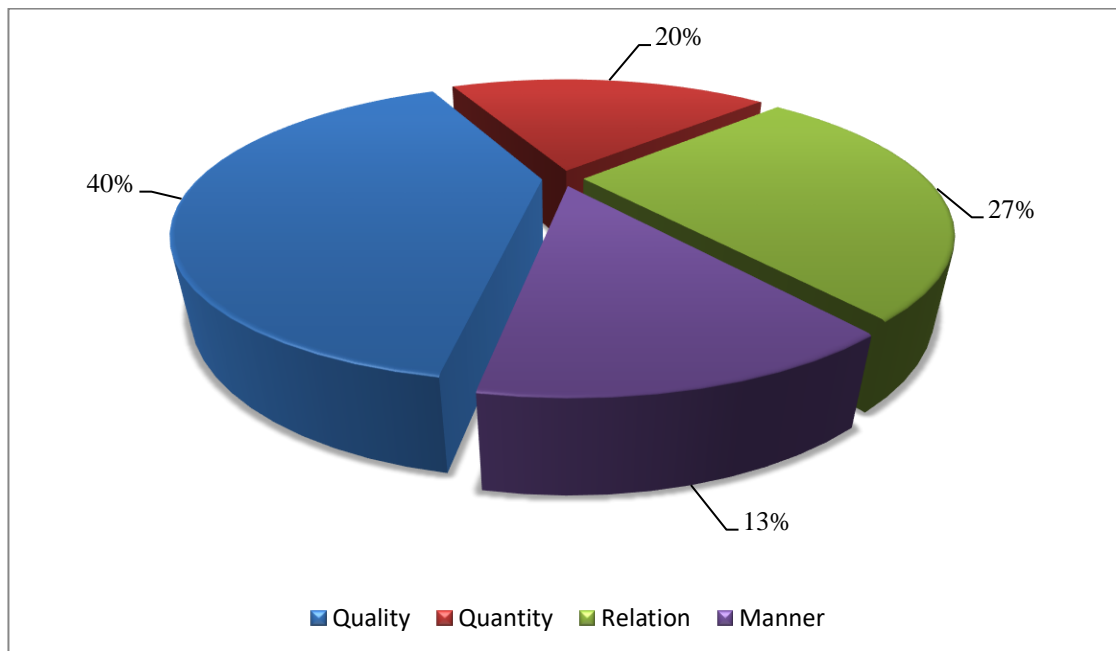
**Table 1.** The Flouted Maxims of Cooperative Principle in Nike's Shoes Online Advertisement

No.	Data	Flouted Maxims				Total
		Quality	Quantity	Relation	Manner	
1.	NSA 1	✓		✓		2
2.	NSA 2	✓			✓	2
3.	NSA 3			✓		1
4.	NSA 4	✓				1
5.	NSA 5				✓	1
6.	NSA 6	✓		✓		2
7.	NSA 7	✓				1
8.	NSA 8		✓			1
9.	NSA 9		✓	✓		2
10.	NSA 10	✓	✓			2
<b>Total</b>		6	3	4	2	<b>15</b>

\*NSA → Nike's Shoes Advertisement

From table 1, it can be said that there are 15 maxims flouted within the Nike's online advertisement for their shoes product. In this case, the maxim of quality seems to be the most flouted maxims identified from the advertisement. Moreover, the interesting fact is that within each advertisement, it seems that in some cases, the maxims flouted is more than one. From the data, it can be seen that one of the online advertisements flout not only the maxim of quality, but also the maxim of

manner. Therefore, the total number of maxims flouted are not equal to the total number of the online advertisements analyzed. In the percentage, maxim of quality has been flouted as much as 40%. The percentage of each flouted maxims can be seen in the following chart:



**Chart 1.** The Percentage of Flouted Maxims of Cooperative Principle in Nike's Shoes Online Advertisement

## Discussion

### 1. Nike Shoe's Advertisement 1

This advertisement promotes a one of the nike's shoes. When readers look at this advertisement for the first time, they would only notice the picture of the shoes on the basketball court without any additional illustration. From this particular matter, it looks boring. However, the headline uses big letters, in fact it almost cover half of the picture. The headline itself is placed on the top position that would direct the readers to look at directly. Zacher, (1961) states that a good layout could focus the readers' attention to read the advertisement. The headline of this advertisement says, "*MELTS IN YOUR HANDS, NOT ON YOUR FEET*", which flouts quality and relation maxim with the product

advertised. The word ‘melt’ means soften or the process of matter transition from solid to liquid. In this way, the readers would think that it does not make sense at all because it is impossible that the shoes will melt down once we wear it. Hence it can be said that it flouts the maxim of quality. Moreover, it also flouts the relation maxim since we will never wear the shoes in our hand. In other words, it has no relation to our hand. Hence, the main purpose of the advertiser flouting the quality and relation maxim, because he/she would like to explain the reader how comfortable the shoes are.

## **2. Nike Shoe’s Advertisement 2**

This advertisement promotes another Nike’s shoes. Overall, from the appearance, it looks simple. It shows the shoes using white background and the headline is very dominant which covers 60% of the advertisement itself. The position of the headline on the top position that which will make the reader directly focus on it. The headline of this advertisement says, “*YOU’RE TRAVELING THROUGH ANOTHER DIMENSION*”, which flouts manner and quality maxim and . The word ‘traveling’ means to move from certain place to another place. Since it is shoe’s advertisement, it is possible to use the shoes to move around or travel to another place. However, the use of the word ‘dimension’ in this case is not clear. There is not any further explanation regarding this matter. Thus, it leads to confusion to the readers about what dimension is being talked about. Furthermore, it also flouts the quality maxim in the sense changing dimension by wearing the shoes being advertised. In other words, it does not make sense at all that we would have certain ability to change dimension just by wearing the shoes.

## **3. Nike Shoe’s Advertisement 3**

The third advertisement shows a shoe which is being bended. In this particular case, it looks interesting because there is nothing that can bend the shoe, but yet the shoe in bended position. The position of the headline itself is under the shoe. From this view, the readers will be more likely to look at the

picture first before reading the headline. In this matter, it attracts the readers because people tend to give their attention more to any kind of picture. The headline used is quite simple, it says, *“NO MORE WIMPY FEET”*. The headline flouts the maxim of relation. The word ‘wimpy’ means of lacking of confidence, being indecisive, or cowardly doing something. In this case, it is not relevant because wimpy is related to the personality and it has nothing to do with the feet. In other words, the act of being wimpy has nothing to do at all by wearing any kind of shoes. It seems that, the advertiser uses the word wimpy to describe that by wearing the shoes advertised, people will be more confident.

#### **4. Nike Shoe’s Advertisement 4**

This advertisement shows a shoe which seems to be glowing. The light comes from the shoe itself is attractive. Just like the third advertisement, the position of the headline is below the shoe. This kind of view will attract the readers because people tend to give their attention more to the picture before reading the text provided. The headline used is very simple, it says, *“RUN ON AIR”*. The headline flouts the maxim of quality. The phrase used within the headline indicates the act of flying. It implicitly says that by wearing the shoes being advertised, people will be able to run on air or flying. However, it is impossible for people to be able to run on air even though they wear the shoes. It is very clear that the advertiser exaggerate the function or the use of it. In other words, he/she uses the phrase ‘run on air’ justify that the shoes are very light so that whoever wears the shoes, it will give flying sensation to the user.

#### **5. Nike Shoe’s Advertisement 5**

This advertisement advertises another nike’s shoes. In this particular advertisement, the advertiser does not only show the appearance of the shoes, but also the picture of someone who looks like in running pose. By using this kind of illustration, it can draw the attention of the readers. The use of words on the headline is also interesting. It uses two different font styles. The headline itself is on the top of the picture and almost covers half of the picture. The

headline says, “*MAKE YOURSELF FIT.*” This particular headline flouts the maxim of manner. The phrase used is somehow ambiguous. It can mean two things, whether by wearing the shoes you are going to be fit, or the shoes will help you to be fit. Hence, the advertiser seemed to try to say these particular shoes will help the reader in such a way to make him/her fit.

#### **6. Nike Shoe’s Advertisement 6**

This advertisement promotes Nike’s shoes called *Nike Air*. The advertisement shows shoes which seems to be flouting in the air as if it is ready to take off. This particular matter case is appealing. The design of the shoes themselves is quite catchy. It will definitely attract the reader attention. Moreover, the headline is not really big. It is below the picture of the shoes. The headline of this advertisement says, “*GRAVITY WILL NEVER BE THE SAME*”. The word ‘Gravity’ here refers to the resultant force on Earth surface caused by the rotation. Knowing this fact, it clearly flouts the maxim of relation because it has nothing to do with the picture of flouting shoes. Moreover, it also does not make sense. The headline seems indicate that gravity itself can be changed just by wearing the shoes. In this case, it is impossible. There is no way that the gravity will change unless the rotation of the Earth changed. Therefore, it is clear that the headline flouts quality maxim also. Particularly, it seems that the advertiser would like to demonstrate that the shoes will enhance the ability to jump, that is why he/she exaggerates and refers to the word ‘gravity’.

#### **7. Nike Shoe’s Advertisement 7**

This advertisement promotes another *Nike Air* shoes. The design of the advertisement itself is very simple. It contains the picture of the shoes and the headline on top of it. The headline seems to have the same proportion with the shoes advertised. It says, “*GET OVER YOUR FEAR OF HEIGHT*” which flouts the maxim of relation and quality. The phrase ‘get over’ means to be done with or recover from. It seems that by wearing these particular shoes we

will be able to overcome our fear of height. It does not make sense at all. There is no record in the history of any evidence to support the claim that wearing certain kind of shoes will make someone be able to overcome his/her fear of height. Therefore, it can be said that the advertiser exaggerates the use of shoes themselves. It seems that he/she would like to explain to the readers that these shoes will help them in such a way to improve their ability to jump as well as to indicate that it is very light.

#### **8. Nike Shoe's Advertisement 8**

This advertisement promotes one of the Nike's shoes. The design of the advertisement itself is quite simple. It contains two different pictures of shoes. Below the shoes; there is the headline of the advertisement. The size of the headline seems to be smaller than the shoes advertised. There are three sentences used within the headline, they say, "*THEY CAME. THEY SAW. THEY KICKED BUTT.*" which flouts quantity maxim. The headline used is not clear. It uses the word 'they' in "*THEY CAME*" which clearly refers to more than one person. However, who came? The same thing happens in the second sentence, "*THEY SAW*". What was being seen actually? The third sentence is not an exception. It says, "*THEY KICKED BUTT.*" In this particular case, whose butt was kicked? Hence, the headline is not really clear.

#### **9. Nike Shoe's Advertisement 9**

This advertisement promotes Nike's running shoes. Overall, from the appearance of the advertisement, it looks simple. There are five different shoes displayed along with the headline under those shoes. The headline itself is short. It says, "EAT OUR DUST", which flouts relation and quantity maxim. The word 'eat' refers to an act of consuming something which is edible through the mouth. In this case, it has nothing to do with shoes or even wearing shoes. Moreover, eating dust is not a common thing. Dust is not considered to be edible. The headline is also not clear in giving information to the reader. It uses the word 'our' which refers to the act of belonging which is not included in the

headline. So, the ones who own the dust is not clear, whether it belongs to the shoes, or to the people wearing the shoes. Therefore, it is possible that the advertiser flouts the maxim of relation and quantity to describe that the shoes are made from light material so that when people use it, it will increase the speed when they are running.

#### **10. Nike Shoe's Advertisement 10**

This advertisement promotes another Nike's running shoes. The design of the advertisement itself is simple. It shows the headline over the shoes advertised. The headline covers half of the advertisement. It says, "THE ULTIMATE QUICK FIX", which flouts the maxim of quality and quantity. It uses the word 'ultimate' which means being the greatest possible. From this point of view, it can be said that the advertiser claims that the shoes is the greatest possible to fix. In this particular case, saying such a strong statement, the advertiser needs to provide the evidence of the shoes being the ultimate or the greatest possible. It will be nonsense to consider that the shoes advertised, or any kind of shoes, are able to fix something ultimately. Moreover, it is also not clear what can be fixed or what kind of problem that can be fixed by the shoes. The headline of the advertisement will raise such a question like, 'if it is related to the user, in what way the shoes will fix the problem?' Therefore, the advertiser flouted the maxim of quality and quantity maxim to strengthen the idea that the shoes advertised are able to help the user to improve their skill or ability in running.



## **CONCLUSION**

### **A. Conclusion**

Bearing in mind that communication is very essential within daily activities, it needs to be as effective as possible, especially when it is related to achieve certain goals or purposes. In this particular case, the communication itself may be delivered in two ways; spoken (spoken discourse) and written (written discourse). Spoken discourse will be more related to face-to-face interaction between the speaker and the hearer. Meanwhile, the written discourse will involve the writer and the reader to interact in such a way through a piece of writing. Talking about an effective communication, both spoken and written, it should associate with the Grice's theory of cooperative principles which should, at least, obey the four maxims; maxim of quality (being as true as possible), maxim of quantity (being as informative as possible), maxim of relation, (being relevant), and maxim of manner (being as clear as possible). However, these four maxims seem to be neglected most of the time within actual communication, particularly in written discourse in form of advertisement. Advertisement itself is commonly used to persuade the reader to do something.

### **B. Suggestion**

From the above explanation, further research related to the implication of the flouted maxims of the cooperative principle within the advertisement is highly suggested, especially within the discussion of how it affects customers' view of the product advertised. Moreover, a study on how the maxims of the cooperative principle can function as the learning material, within a classroom context, needs to be investigated.

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