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# **Conversational Impicatures of Pojok Mang Usil in Kompas Newspaper**

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## **Abstract**

This study aims to provide an analysis of conversational implicatures found in a discourse corner *Pojok Mang Usil*, *Kompas* Newspaper . The descriptive qualitative approach was used to analyze the data. Grice's cooperative principles were applied as the theory to analyze the data which were taken from two articles of *Pojok Mang Usil* in *Kompas* Newspaper published on May 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013. The results show that the flouting maxims of relevance and manner mostly occur than the flouting maxims of quality and quantity. This means that the flouting maxims is used to convey social criticisms and emphasize the implied meaning of the utterances which are found in the discourse corner.

**Keywords:** conversational implicatures, flouting maxim, discourse corner

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## **Introduction**

Nowadays daily newspapers are intended for certain readers (Reah, 2002). This indicates that the way they inform readers is different between one newspaper and others. One of the newspapers distributing in Indonesia is *Kompas*. Nielsen in Media Research (2007) identifies that its total readers reaches 1.664.000 people. In 2010, it also achieved the runner up position for using Indonesian language after *Koran Tempo* ([www.nasional.kompas.com](http://www.nasional.kompas.com)). This indicates that *Kompas* newspaper uses a formal language style.

*Kompas* provides several columns on its pages which consist of headlines, international news, domestic news, opinion, education and culture, science and technology, sports, advertisement and entertainment. Commonly, it also appears that the newspaper has particular small columns which are parts of bigger columns. The small columns in the newspaper are usually easy and light reading, such as discourse corners, job vacancies, caricature, and advertisement. Focusing on the discourse corner, this is one of the small columns which are possibly ignored by the readers. In fact, they criticize actual issues. According to Wijana (2009), discourse corner is a particular discourse column in which it is located on one of the corner pages of the newspaper. In general, it consists of two parts namely situation and criticism. The first part is the explanation about the phenomenon, the booming issue, the opinion or the policy of the institution or government. Meanwhile the latter is about the comments toward the situation.

One of the small columns in *Kompas* is a discourse corner namely *Pojok Mang Usil*. This column is usually located in the right bottom side of *Opini* headlines. According to KBBI (2008), the word *Mang* means men whose age is close to an uncle. Then the meaning of *Usil* in English is 'annoying'. In one edition, *Kompas* has one *Mang Usil* column which is published from Monday to Saturday. One edition this discourse corner consists of four different discourses. Focusing on this column, *Mang Usil* pursues readers to think about serious problems, such as politics, economy, culture and technology. However, most of the topics of this column are about politics. Hence, the utterances show thoughtfulness, sympathy, empathy, agreement, disagreement or suggestion. Therefore, the sharpness of the utterances is softened to avoid their directness against the target (Wijana, 2009). In other words, the utterances are not obvious for whom they are aimed for.

In *Pojok Mang Usil* discourse corner, the sharpness of the utterances is softened by the polite and humorous gambit. Since the language style used in *Kompas* is formal, the language used in the comment of *Mang Usil* is polite, logically hard to understand and forces the readers to think first before they get the comprehension. Nevertheless, the readers of the discourse will understand to whom the utterances are directed to by reading and keeping abreast of the news. For this reason, its comment cannot be understood literally which means that this is implicature (Reah, 2002, p. 107). In this case, when listeners hear the expression, they first have to assume that they are being cooperated and intended to communicate something. Somehow, when an utterance contains an implied meaning and it should be treated as a pair of sentence and a context (Levinson, 1983, p. 104).

In this study, the writers analyze conversational implicatures found in *Mang Usil* discourse corner on the basis of cooperative principle by Grice. Grice (in Levinson, 1983) classifies four basic maxims of conversation, which express a general co-operative principle. These principles are: maxim of quality, maxim of quantity, maxim of relevance and maxim of manner (Grice, 1989, p. 26). Conversations may follow or flout Grice's principles.

Based on the background of the study above, the writer intends to analyze flouting of maxim of *Pojok Mang Usil* in *Kompas* newspaper and its implicature. Therefore, there are two problems which need to be analyzed, namely what maxims are flouted and what implied meanings are found in *Pojok Mang Usil* discourse corner.

There are previous studies conducted to analyze the implicatures. One of them is done by Novariyanto (2009). In his study "The Study of Implicature on Creatips as one of A Mild Cigarette Advertisements", he employs Mild Cigarette Advertisement as his data source. He applies Grice's theory of implicature. The results show that the tips of a mild cigarette follow a certain types of implicature.

Another study in analyzing the implicature which is used in the written text is done by Primajaya (2012) in his undergraduate thesis entitled "A Study of Implicature in Cartoon Books entitled *Dari Presiden ke Presiden*". In his study, he identifies the characters' utterances in cartoon books. He uses Grice's theory of implicature to analyze the implied meaning. Moreover, he adapts Goatly's (1997) theory of metaphor and Boutonnet (2006) theory of irony as his related theory. In his study, he finds that there are some flouting maxims.

Related to those two studies, the object of this study which is newspaper texts are analyzed in different ways. In this study, the writer analyzes the conversational implicatures by using Grice's theory of implicature and cooperative principle. It looks similar with the study conducted by Novariyanto (2009) and Primajaya (2012) which are also intended to look for the implied meaning. However, there are some differences among the studies. Novariyanto (2009) analyzes the types of conversational implicatures that are found in twelve tips of A Mild Creatips advertisements while Primajaya (2012) analyzes the characters' utterances in cartoon books. However, this study focuses on the implied meanings in a discourse corner of a newspaper.

## Theoretical Framework

People, when communicating, have something to tell each other. The speakers often try to contribute something meaningful in a conversation, while the listeners, as conversational partners are doing same way. Grice (1975) argues that in producing the utterances, speakers are expected to follow the general principle.

Grice (1975) has formulated the general principles that are called Cooperative Principle which is expressed as follow:

Make your conversational contribution such is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engage. (Cited in Mey, 2002)

Cooperative principle is divided into a set of four maxims. They are:

- The maxim of Quality : Try to make your contribution one that is true, particularly:

- Do not say what you believe to be false
- Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence
- o The maxim of Quantity
  - Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purpose of exchange
  - Do not make your contribution more informative than is required
- o The maxim of Relevance: Make your contribution relevant
- o The maxim of Manner : Be perspicuous, particularly:
  - Avoid obscurity
  - Avoid ambiguity
  - Be brief
  - Be orderly (Cited in Mey, 2002)

Grice (1975) states that the principles are not only applicable in spoken communication which involved speaker and hearer. They are also applicable in written communication involving a writer and readers. In other word, Grice believes that both of spoken communication and written communication are similar.

Implicature is something that must be more than just what the words mean (Yule, 1996, p. 35). In this case, when the listeners hear the expression, they first have to assume that the speaker is being cooperated and intends to communicate something. Somehow, when an utterance contains implicatures, it should be treated as a pair of sentence and a context (Levinson, 1983, p. 104). It means that the utterance meanings of implicatures depend on the context (Reah, 2002).

According to Grice (Levinson, 1983), he divided implicature into two types. These are conventional implicatures and conversational implicatures. Conventional implicatures are not based on the cooperative principles, they do not have to take place in conversation. In addition, conventional implicatures do not depend on the social contexts for their explanations. Conversational implicatures are inferences that depend on the existence of norms for the use of language, such as the widespread agreement that communicators should aim to tell the truth (Griffiths, 2006, p. 134). They concern with the way we understand an utterance in conversation in accordance with what we expect to hear.

To comprehend the existence of conversational implicatures, according to Grice, 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 cooperative principle and its maxims; (3) the context and utterance; (4) other items of background knowledge; and (5) the fact that point 1 to 5 are available to both participants and both participants know or assume this to be the case (cited in Stainton, 1964, p. 279).

Newspaper does not only offer various news but also articles, caricatures, corner column and letter of readers. These columns are available in opinion page and partly written by non editorial staff and the rest is written by editorial staff (Barus, 2010). These kinds of column are necessary because newspapers also are responsible for canalizing public's aspiration and opinion.

Focusing on discourse corner, Barus (2010) defines that discourse corner is a column utilizing humor sense to deliver criticism, protest, warning, suggestion, comment and interpretation . At least it can make readers nod and smile. However, discourse columns are always delivered in brief sentences to satirize or offend the readers. Wijana (2009) explains that a discourse corner is located on the corner page of the newspaper. In general, this discourse consists of two parts namely situation and criticism. The situation part is the explanation about the phenomenon, the booming issue, the opinion or the policy of the institution or government. Meanwhile the criticism part is the comment toward the situation.

## Methods

In this study, the writer used the descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the data. It was conducted to analyze the conversational implicatures of *Pojok Mang Usil* discourse corner in *Kompas*

newspaper. The reason why the writer took *Kompas* newspaper as the source of the data is because this newspaper achieved the runner up position in using a formal language after *Koran Tempo*.

The *Pojok Mang Usil* column has about four discourses which are published from Monday to Saturday. From this population of data, the writer took six editions of *Kompas* on May 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 as the sample. These data were taken since they were match with the criterion needed in the study namely the utterances should flout the maxim(s) of cooperative principle

There were some steps in collecting the data. Firstly, the writer searched the printed *Kompas* newspaper because the discourse corner of *Pojok Mang Usil* is only available in the printed version. The newspaper has two versions namely printed and online versions. Then, the writer had to read the discourse corners and the related news in order to understand the data comprehensively. Thirdly, the writer selected the data in which the topics of the discourse were booming in that day, so that the related news were attached on the headline of the newspaper.

After collecting and selecting the data, the writer used some steps to analyze them. Firstly, the writer focused on the selected data and described the general information in order to illustrate the context of the data. After that, the writer identified the utterances in each discourse of *Pojok Mang Usil* which flouted the maxims of quality, quantity, manner or relevance. Thirdly, the writer analyzed the implied meaning or implicature in the utterances of *Pojok Mang Usil* by using Grice's theory. Finally, the interpretation of was made.

### **Analysis of Conversational Implicatures in *Pojok Mang Usil* Discourse Corner**

In dealing with the utterance containing implicature, it should be observed as a pairing of a sentences and a context (Grice, as cited in Levinson, 1983). Thus the description of the context is necessary. The analysis of the data in each discourse corner is elaborated as follow:

#### **Discourse corner 1**

The first discourse corner was taken on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013. In the discourse, the flouting of maxims occurs three times. The flouting maxim of quantity occurs one time. The flouting maxim of manner occurs one time and then the flouting maxim of relation occurs one time. However, the flouting maxim of quality does not occur. The analysis can be seen as follow:

(1) Susno Duaji "raib", tapi tampil di Youtube.  
*Tiru-tiru Muhammad Nazaruddin, Jenderal?*

Context:

It was about Susno Duaji's case. Susno Duaji is a former head of criminal investigation Bureau of Police Department. The case is about corruption of securing fund in election of West java's governor in 2008. He is defined as a fugitive because he refuses to be executed. Since the Attorney General fails to execute him, the General cannot trace his existence. Therefore, he cannot execute him yet. In this case, the General asks the Police in order to help find him. However, Susno appeared on Youtube uploaded by Yohana Celia. In the video, he talks in 15 minutes 34 seconds. He intends to inform the public about his existence, opposition and suggestion. (Taken from *Kompas*, 30 April 2013)

Based on the context above, the comment of *Mang Usil* flouts maxim of relevance as it apparently produces an irrelevant commentary between Susno Duaji and Muhammad Nazaruddin. The situation informs the readers about Susno Duaji on Youtube while the comment is about Muhammad Nazaruddin. In fact that both of them are different people. Susno Duaji is former head of criminal investigation Bureau of Police Department, while Muhammad Nazaruddin is an entrepreneur and also a politician. In other word, *Mang Usil* provides an unrelated context to tease Susno Duaji.

From the transcription of the data, the writer finds that the comment also flouts maxim of quantity which says do not make your contribution less informative than is required. The comment gives a less informative statement, it can be seen in the word *Jenderal*, if the readers were not reading and

keeping abreast the context, they would not understand what means. They also possibly do not know who Susno Duaji and Muhammad Nazaruddin are and what they had done. However, if the readers kept abreast and read the related news, they definitely would understand that Muhammad Nazaruddin has also appeared on Youtube in relation with his case about the corruption of athlete's homestay. In this case, *Mang Usil* compares between Susno Duaji and Muhammad Nazaruddin.

The comment also flouts maxim of manner which can be indicated from the word *raib*. In the comment, it is an ambiguous word. which means loss or passes away in Indonesian. Thus, the word has two possible meanings. Based on the context, Susno disappears from public. Focusing on his disappearance, he should not come out to the public considering his case of being a fugitive. However, he comes out on Youtube, social media which can be accessed by people around the world. Literally, this is contradictive because he disappears in society but appears in Youtube. Thus, it produces an ambiguity since the complete situation is *Susno Duaji 'raib' tampil di Youtube*.

The implied meaning of the comment can be seen from the related feature of the word referring to something sarcastic. *Mang Usil* wants to tease Susno Duaji that he imitates what Muhammad Nazaruddin does. It can be inferred that the use of flouting maxim in this data is to emphasize the intended meanings of the criticism.

## Discourse corner 2

In order to comprehend the process of conveying the implied meaning the writer has to explain the contextual information of the data. The second excerpt is a discourse corner that was published on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2013.

In this discourse, flouting maxim occurs 2 times. Flouting maxims of quality and relevance occur one time, while flouting maxims of quantity and manner does not occur. Flouting maxims are analyzed as follow.

(2) Hari buruh sedunia diperingati dengan unjuk rasa.

*Tidak zaman lagi buruh hanya sekrup!*

Context:

The context of this discourse is about labor strike. The labors of PT Aerowisata Catering Service (henceforth PT ACS) in Sukarno-Hatta Airport, Jakarta, do strike actions. The company is a subsidiary of PT Garuda Indonesia Airlines that supplies foods for the passengers. The strike actions make the service of 100 flights interrupted. In a day, PT ACS sets about 35.000 food packages aside, but in this moment PT ACS does not. Therefore, the service of the flight was disturbed and the passengers do not get the food. The reason of labors doing this action is because they demand restoration of their few-year-ago rights toward the management. They insist the management to restore their period of employment subsidy. (Taken from *Kompas*, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013)

The complete comment, *Tidak zaman lagi buruh hanya sekrup!* 'it is not the era of labors are treated like screws' is unnatural. In fact labors are humans, and screws are tools. Both of them have distinct features. *Mang Usil* discourse corner comments something that the readers believe to be false since labors are not tools. However, it flouts the comment by giving comparison of the utterance. Therefore it contributes to flout maxim of quality which states 'do not say what you believe to be false'. In spite of representing an aspiration, what the comment proposes in the discourse corner to the readers is in contradiction with the real expectation about the role of labors. In addition, *Mang Usil* knows that the comment is false and that the readers have already known about it. Thus, it can be regarded as flouting the maxim of quality.

Furthermore, the comment also flouts maxim of relevance. The flouting can be explained from the relation between labors and screws. The setting informs the readers that the labor's day is commemorated by demo. The following comment does not give any clear comparasion between the labor and screw. Based on the context, the labors actually do a demo because their management subjects them as a tool and take their right.

The implied meaning of the comment is to criticize toward the labors' managerial leaders. The comment shows that labors are tools, so that their management uses them for personal interest and is

not willing to give them prosperity. Hence, the comment has a purpose to criticize the labors' managerial leaders to treat them as appropriately based on their rights.

## **Conclusion**

From the elaboration of flouting maxims of cooperative principle and the conversational implicatures, the writers of the study are able to infer the reasons why the flouting maxim of cooperative principles are applied in the *Mang Usil* discourse corner of *Kompas* newspaper. According to Grice, they are applied in order to emphasize or give stress to the intended meaning.

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