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A Forensic Linguistics Analysis of Senate Investigations on the Matter of People's Initiative in the Philippines: Language Crimes in Focus

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ABSTRACT

This critical discourse analysis aims to expose the violations of the standards and guidelines of conversation specifically in the context of senate investigations on the matter of People's Initiative in the Philippines. Moreover, this study delved into the violations of maxims within the premise of cooperative principle conceptualized by Grice. This study utilized a qualitative research design using forensic linguistics through critical discourse analysis, with corpus linguistics of two 4-hour length senate investigation videos which focus on spoken legal language. The findings revealed the frequency of violations of the four maxims within the analyzed corpora as follows: 23% on the maxim of quality, 23% on the maxim of quantity, 34% on the maxim of relevance, and 20% on the maxim of manner. This finding signifies the complexities of linguistic behavior within the analyzed corpora and offers insights into the discourse surrounding People's Initiative in the Philippines.

INTRODUCTION

Language crime refers to acts or behaviors that violate societal standards or rules governing language (Dewi & La'biran, 2023). It often occurs when speakers use words for malicious or unethical intent, when someone uses harsh or degrading language, when someone intimidates or threatens another or insults or belittles another person which may compromise the victim's sense of security and comfort and jeopardize their mental and emotional health (Dewi & La'biran, 2023; Dewi & Rukuk, 2022; Suryani *et al.*, 2021; La'biran *et al.*, 2019). All crimes committed by language are related to the illegal speech act (Tiersma & Solan, 2012). Speech acts include asking questions, making threats, lying, agreeing, and promising; under certain conditions, some of these can be criminal (Tiersma & Solan, 2012).

Meanwhile, investigations and hearings allow legislators to obtain information, explore ideas, and evaluate support for proposed legislative stance (Perna *et al.*, 2019; Reisigl & Wodak, 2016; Birkland, 2016; Deimer & Feddersen, 2000). They are held to gather data and feedback, to carry out investigations, or to assess the operations of government agencies. According to Reisigl and Wodak (2016), legislative hearings are a genre of discourse with a specific purpose in a specific social context and set standards and guidelines that control all facets of communication. Hence, in order to fulfill the goal of these proceedings, speakers are expected to participate in a discourse by providing a clear and appropriate responses. It is therefore expected that every speaker will present only pertinent and clear information to serve its purpose.

With the recognized standards established on senate investigations, there are still observable instances where

speakers in these proceedings commit language crime by providing irrelevant, ambiguous, insufficient, and false responses leading to unsuccessful discourse. Hence, Forensic linguistics is used to analyze the language crimes committed by these speakers (Dewi & La'biran, 2023; Hendrokumoro *et al.*, 2019; Rusdiansyah, 2021). Forensic Linguistics (FL) is a subfield of applied linguistics that studies and ties law to legal procedures (Hassan, 2020). In other words, it is the application of linguistics to three major areas: written legal texts, spoken legal practices (interactions), and the presentation of evidence in civil and criminal investigations and judicial procedures (Coulthard *et al.*, 2011). With the use of FL, experts in languages will study the language and speech used by offenders of language crimes. The language patterns, phrase structures, word choices, and language styles employed by those who commit language crimes will be examined.

In the conduct of senate proceedings in the Philippines, there are still evident violation that flag the discourses as malicious and irrelevant which entails to be committing a language crime. Some statements misdirect the flow of the discourses to provide ambiguous answers and alter the course of the discussion.

In order to expose the violation of the standards and guidelines of conversation specifically in the context of senate investigations on the matter of People's Initiative in the Philippines, this study delved into the violations of maxims within the premise of cooperative principle conceptualized by Grice. By analyzing the discourse of these hearings, this study revealed how speakers during the senate investigation violated the maxims and what potential language crime they committed brought by imposing an idea, providing a response, misdirecting

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a point and framing statements. This study revealed the ways in which the speakers cooperate and express themselves in conversation while breaching the theory of Cooperative Principle. According to Monemi (2012), the violations of language theories, such as the cooperative principle, can help analyze crime. The main objective of this research is to explore the violated maxims in Senate hearings using Critical Discourse Analysis and analyze whether these violations lead to a potential language crime.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the violations committed by the speakers in the premise of Cooperative Principle of Grice?
2. What are the implicatures of the violations committed during the senate investigations and hearing?
3. What language crimes are potentially committed by the speakers during the senate hearings of people's initiative?

Theoretical Lens

This paper is grounded upon Grice's Cooperative Principles (1975) which supported the comprehensive discussion of the study. Cooperative principle states that participants in a discussion are required to make conversational contributions as needed based on the established purpose of the conversation. The cooperative principle's main premise is that interlocutors cooperate when they are having conversation (Al-Zubeiry, 2020). Conversation only works when both speakers produce proper utterances (Grice, 1975).

Establishing rules to follow, Grice proposes four conversational maxims for speakers in order to assure effective interaction. To successfully create a conversation, participants in the discussion would be required to abide by the four maxims; maxim of quantity where a speaker should provide as much information as necessary, and should never provide more information that is not necessary; maxim of quality, where a speaker should make an effort to contribute something honest and do not mention something that is untrue; maxim of manner, where a speaker should refrain from being ambiguous; and maxim of relation, where a speaker should be relevant). He asserted that considering the cooperative principle and the maxims is reasonable in the sense that anyone who is concerned with the main purpose of communication such as sharing and receiving information should be expected to be interested in taking part in the productive conversation. He further stressed that a speaker may mislead if he violates a maxim.

Additionally, Grice stressed that a conversation with people who is uncooperative would be unproductive since they will not add anything relevant to the topic. According to him, there are situations in which interlocutors deviate from the conversational maxims. They deliberately violate the maxim in order to convey more information

or infer meaning. Any maxim that is violated leads to conversational implicatures, and it is up to the listener to deduce the additional meaning that is suggested. Using Grice's four conversational maxims, this research will examine how particular legislators' statements breached the cooperative principle, leading to ambiguity, new ideas and gaps in the discourse.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This research study utilized the qualitative research method and employed a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). According to Creswell (2018), qualitative research is a method for discovering and comprehending the meaning that individuals or groups assign to a social or human situation. The research process involves emergent questions and processes, data collection in the participant's environment, inductive data analysis building from specifics to general themes, and the researcher's interpretations of the data's significance. This type of inquiry is supported by those who value an inductive method of inquiry, an emphasis on personal meaning, and the significance of reporting situational complexity.

On the other hand, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary qualitative method used for examining spoken or written language in connection to social and actual contexts (Dewan, 2023). CDA is an effective analytical method for comprehending the phenomena of crime and criminal justice systems. Its most essential element is the investigation of text and speech structures, as well as their interactions with public and social situations (Cruz, 2013). It analyzes language as a tool for social behavior, power abuse, domination, inequality, and many other issues that are played out and repeated in texts and conversations. It also critically examines, interprets, and explains language discourses. With CDA, this study identified the violations committed by the speakers in the senate hearings in the area of Cooperative Principle of Grice. After determining the violations, the researcher then examined how these violations imply meaning and/or mislead the conversation. This also revealed language crimes that were potentially committed by the speakers during the senate hearings.

In this research, CDA is the suitable design because the study aimed to identify the violations committed by the speakers in the premise of Cooperative Principle of Grice, the implicatures of the violations committed during the senate investigations and hearing and the language crimes are committed during senate hearings and investigations.

Data Source

The research corpora were sourced from the senate hearings and investigations made by politicians, witnesses and other interlocutors. Specifically, the discourses analyzed pertain to the current topic of People's Initiative as a means to amend the Philippine Constitution. These speeches were sourced from official You-tube and social media channels affiliated with the country's prominent

media outlets. Adhering to these criteria enabled the researchers to gather authentic and substantial speeches for rigorous analysis.

The researchers applied the purposive sampling method in gathering the videos of senate hearings regarding People’s Initiative since data sources were selected according to pre-selected criteria relevant to the topic being investigated. With a specific purpose, two existing videos on senate investigation on People’s Initiative with four hours and more length were chosen. These videos were readily available on the internet.

Analysis

Since the study used Critical Discourse Analysis, the selected videos were analyzed thoroughly. The corpora were listened to several times with adequate comprehension to offer critically comprehensive criticism and analysis.

Furthermore, in compliance with analysis framework of Colaizzi (1978), the seven-step analysis framework technique were utilized. Initially, the researchers closely examined the speech transcript to become acquainted

with it. Secondly, the researchers recognized the significant claims associated with the research questions. Third, in order to prevent misreading the corpus, they employed bracketing to make use of the elements of each theoretical framework. Fourth, they assigned an initial code to the identified speeches, which allowed them to group the themes. Fifth, they described the speakers’ responses and based on the research question. Sixth, in order to contextualize the study’s emphasis, they developed a simple explanation for every code. Finally, a corpus check was conducted to provide ultimate confirmation of the initial results and final outcome.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Violations committed by the speakers in the premise of Cooperative Principle of Grice

This part presents the analysis and interpretations of the data based on the posed research questions. It includes the violations of the maxims, and the implicatures of the violations committed during the senate investigations and hearing.

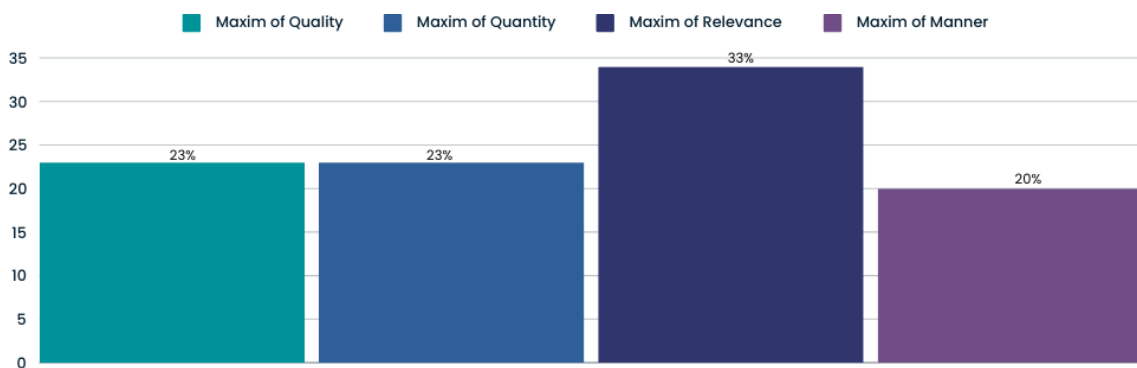


Figure 1: Frequency of Violations of Maxims During the Senate Hearings on People’s Initiative

Figure 1 shows that the frequency of violations of the four maxims based on the corpora used are as follows: 23% on the maxim of quality, 23% on the maxim of quantity, 34% on the maxim of relevance, and 20% on the maxim of way. Moreover, sample transcripts of violations falling under each of the maxims are explained below.

The Implicatures of the violations committed during the senate investigations and hearing

This part discussed the implicatures of the violations committed during the senate investigations and hearing. The concept of implicature is that it explains what could be understood, implied, or intended by speakers that differ from what is actually spoken by them (Ramdan, 2020). An indirect or implicit statement that conveys a different meaning than intended is an implicature (Shardimgaliev, 2019).

Violating maxim of quality

According to Grice (1975), speakers should contribute

only truthful information in a conversation under the maxim of quality. The speakers must give accurate and factual information connected to reality and facts. The information to be presented by the speakers must be supported by concrete proof. It is forbidden for speakers to state anything in this maxim that they feel is incorrect. This implies that it is seen as a non-observant of the maxim when they provide information that lacks evidence or a doubtful information (Yulianti, 2022).

“Sen. Imee: I received this photo and I believe it was one of the meetings that you alleged Mr. Oñate. Can you identify the people in the photograph? We’re trying to enlarge the picture to share it with everyone in the room. People’s initiative for charter change staff meeting, January 08. Can you tell us who are in the picture, Mr. Oñate please? Mr. Oñate: That was the time that I coordinated with the speaker

Sen. Imee: You said you never met the speaker nor Mr. Zaldy Co, you’re under oath, sir.

Mr. Oñate: Yes, that was the time that I met with the speaker to”

In this conversation, Mr. Oñate’s response violates the maxim of quality by providing misleading or untruthful

information. Mr. Oñate attempts to imply that his previous statement about not meeting the speaker was inaccurate or incomplete. By introducing the idea of meeting with the speaker to discuss logistics, he suggests that while he may not have formally met the speaker in the context originally described, there was indeed a meeting involving the speaker for a different purpose. This implicature could be an attempt to reconcile his conflicting statements or to downplay the significance of the meeting in question. However, it still skirts the truthfulness required by the maxim of quality. Ramdan (2020) asserted that a speaker may be trying to mislead the listener if they fail to observe or violate the maxim. He further stressed that these kinds of violation are frequently observed in court, at parties, or during contentious discussions.

Sen. Imee: Kasasabi mo lang na hindi naman kayo nagkita eh sabi mo sina Congressman Garbin lang [You just said that you two haven't even met, that you only met Congressman Garbin]

Mr. Oñate: Yeab, because it slipped my mind. It slipped my mind, madam senator

In this follow up interrogation, the conversation revealed another instance where the maxim of quality is violated through the provision of misleading or untruthful information. In the exchange between Sen. Imee and Mr. Oñate, Mr. Oñate initially fails to name the individuals in a photograph as asked by the senator, claiming it slipped his mind that he had previously met with the speaker. This attempt to attribute forgetfulness to his prior statement suggests an evasion of accountability and a lack of commitment to truthfulness (Awwad et al., 2019; Christoffersen, 2005; Obenza et al., 2024). By providing inconsistent information about his interactions with the speaker, Mr. Oñate undermines the reliability of his testimony and violates the principle of honesty in communication.

Imee: So, you work closely with Mr. Red Tuazon and perhaps hired him in the past, is that correct?

Oñate: Yes. We talk every now and then

Imee: I'm very confused Mr. Oñate during the last hearing in January 30 when I read out his name you said very clearly that you did not know Atty. Red Tuazon. Now, he is not only your employee but a close collaborator and organizer of PIRMA. Can you please confirm or deny.

Oñate: Yes, because at the time, we were in the process of getting people to help us in the field

Mr. Oñate's admission of previously not knowing Atty. Red Tuazon, followed by acknowledging him as a close collaborator and organizer of PIRMA, suggests inconsistency and raises doubts about the truthfulness of his statements. This implicature implies that Mr. Oñate may have provided misleading or incomplete information during the previous hearing, violating the maxim of quality by failing to provide truthful and accurate responses. Although, it can be observed that the response stirs the accuracy of the details given to the question asked, Poggi (2020) simplified her understanding to Grice's intention to implicate which stated that the meaning of what someone says is what they intend to

convey. So, if a speaker says something (x) but does not intend for the listener to understand a specific meaning (S), then the speaker did not mean S, and S is not the message conveyed by x.

We may be acknowledging the point, it is still evident that the responses of Mr. Oñate regarding the organizational structure of PIRMA and his relationship with Atty. Red Tuazon demonstrate inconsistencies and evasive tactics. Initially denying knowledge of Atty. Tuazon, Mr. Oñate later acknowledges their close collaboration, raising doubts about the credibility of his testimony. By providing conflicting information and shifting narratives, Mr. Oñate undermines the trustworthiness of his statements and violates the maxim of quality by failing to uphold principles of truthfulness and accuracy in communication. Overall, the conversation highlights the importance of maintaining honesty and transparency in a dialogue, and the detrimental effects of violating the maxim of quality on trust and credibility in communicative interactions.

Imee: Yes, but does Mr. Oñate know Atty Tuazon or he doesn't know atty Tuazon, so I need to understand. I mean January 30, he never heard of him and today he is a close associate.

Oñate: Yea. He was introduced to me about a week and a half ago Imee: And you organize PIRMA nationwide to undertake an entire people's initiative in the past week and a half. Is that correct?

Oñate: Yes

Imee: We are all dumbfounded. Bato: Samantalang tumatakbo na itong PI disyembre pa lang nag break na tayo. Ibig sabihin na una munang tumakbo bago nabuo yong magpapatakbo. Nauna ang karwabe nahuli yung kabayo.

[While this PI operates since December when we had a break. Meaning, it operated first before the creation of the operators. The carriage runs first before the horse itself.]

Mr. Oñate's claim of being introduced to Atty. Tuazon only a week and a half ago, followed by confirming their close association and immediate involvement in organizing PIRMA's nationwide initiatives, suggests inconsistency and raises doubts about the credibility of his statements. This implicature implies that Mr. Oñate may have provided misleading or incomplete information during the previous hearing, violating the maxim of quality by failing to provide truthful and accurate responses. Based on Grice's concept on maxims, Poggi (2020) asserted that the speaker's intentions determine what is said. Hence, in this context, it can be observed that Mr. Oñate may have intended to confuse or mislead an idea. Additionally, Senator Bato's metaphorical statement about the sequence of events ("Nauna ang karwabe nahuli yung kabayo") underscores the perceived illogicality or incongruity of the situation, further emphasizing the implicature of inconsistency in Mr. Oñate's statements.

Violating maxim of quantity

The rule under maxim of quantity is that speakers should make the contribution to a discourse as informative as possible (Grice, 1975). Apparently, there the conversations during the senate hearing on the matter of people's initiative that showcased numerous instances where the

maxim of quantity, as proposed by Paul Grice, is violated through insufficient or excessive information exchange.

Imee: Pwede ninyong sagutin, bat kayo nakamaskara? Bat kayo nagkukubli? Anong kinatakatatan ninyo, babalikan kayo?

[Can you answer why you are wearing a mask? Why are hiding? What are you afraid of? That someone may come back at you?]

Witness: pwede po. [That is possible]

Senator Imee's question implies that she seeks specific information about why the witness is wearing a mask and hiding their identity. However, the witness's response, "pwede po," while complying with the request to answer, lacks the level of detail expected to address Imee's concerns adequately. The implicature here is that the witness's response does not fulfill the quantity requirement and is expected by the interlocutor. It suggests that the witness either chooses not to disclose the full extent of their reasons for wearing a mask or is deliberately providing minimal information, raising suspicions about their intentions or the significance of their actions.

Sen. Imee: Sina congressman Zaldy Co, kasama? At si speaker Romualdez?

Mr. Oñate: Salde Co, no I didn't talk to Salde.

This conversation showed another violation on the maxim of quantity by responding only to the inquiry about Congressman Zaldy Co and omitting any mention of Speaker Romualdez, Mr. Oñate avoids directly answering Sen. Imee's question. This evasion tactic can be seen as an attempt to sidestep potentially sensitive or incriminating information. Consequently, it obstructs the flow of the conversation and hinders the attainment of clarity and transparency regarding the involvement of Speaker Romualdez. This is consistent with similar research by Mentari (2018), who asserted that Obama violated the maxim of quantity by declining to respond to a question because he was being extremely cautious to avoid providing an incorrect response that would implicate a concept.

Imee: So Atty Red Tuazon was hired when? You did not know him in January 30 is that correct?

Oñate: Yes, that's correct. I got to know him two weeks ago

Oñate's response only addresses the timeframe of when he got to know Atty Red Tuazon, stating that it was "two weeks ago." However, he evades directly answering Imee's question about when Atty Tuazon was hired. By omitting this crucial detail, Oñate may be attempting to conceal information about the timeline of Atty Tuazon's employment, which could have implications for the credibility or legality of their collaboration. This selective response undermines transparency and impedes the pursuit of a comprehensive understanding of the situation.

Imee: Yes Usec Dimaporo, did you request for this project? Was it in the NAP, was it not?

Usec. Dimaporo: No.

Additionally, in the interaction between Sen. Imee and Usec. Dimaporo regarding the AKAP program showed a violation on the maxim of quantity. By only answering the last question posed by Sen. Imee ("Was it in the

NAP, was it not?") and neglecting to respond to the first part ("Did you request for this project?"), the DSWD representative leaves critical information unaddressed. This selective response could be interpreted as an attempt to avoid providing potentially incriminating or uncomfortable details. As a result, it obstructs the flow of the conversation and impedes the pursuit of comprehensive understanding and transparency regarding the matter at hand.

Violating maxim of relevance

Yulianti (2022) stressed that when a speaker tries to divert their speech partner by changing the topic of discussion, it may be seen a violation of the relevance principle. He further added that it usually happens when a speaker feels uneasy about the subject matter being discussed or when they are trying to keep the conversation from going too far in one direction by hiding anything relevant. In the example conversation, several instances arise where the maxim of relevance proposed by Paul Grice is violated, leading to a lack of focus and coherence in the discourse. One such instance occurs during Sen. Escudero's inquiry about the congressmen contacted regarding assistance in obtaining the three percent required for a specific endeavor.

Sen. Escudero: Sino po yong mga congressman na kinontact po ninyo na umo-o po sa inyo na tutulongan kayo na makuba yong tatlong porsyento? [Who are the congressmen that you contacted who agreed to help you get]

Mr. Oñate: Kaya naman naming naisip na lumapit sa mga congressmen is [The reason we thought of approaching congressmen is...]

The violation of the maxim of relevance in this context leads to ambiguity and a lack of clarity in communication. Instead of directly answering the senator's question, Mr. Oñate's incomplete response disrupts the flow of the conversation and fails to contribute meaningfully to the discussion. It leaves the listener uncertain about the intended message and requires further clarification to understand the speaker's intended meaning. By saying "Kaya naman naming naisip na lumapit sa mga congressmen is," Mr. Oñate leaves the sentence unfinished, failing to provide the necessary information that would address Sen. Escudero's inquiry.

Sen. Imee: Saan ginanap ang party na ito? Para lang malaman naming [Where was this party held? Just for us to know.]

Mr. Oñate: Sa ano po yan, sa townhouse sa forbes. Sa forbes park malapit [It was held at, uh, the townhouse in Forbes. Near Forbes Park.]

Sen. Imee: Kanino nga, kaninong lugar? Ipalivanag. Wala naming masama mag tipon-tipon sa babay ng maski sino. [Whose townhouse, whose place? Explain. There's nothing wrong with gathering at anyone's house.]

Mr. Oñate: Ano ho yan, dalawang townhouse [Uh, it's two townhouses.]

Mr. Oñate's response diverts from the question by discussing the location of a party, which does not directly address Sen. Escudero's query. This diversion steers the

conversation away from its intended topic, violating the maxim of relevance by introducing irrelevant information. When Sen. Imee asks where the party took place, Mr. Oñate initially provides some relevant information by mentioning it was held in a townhouse in Forbes Park. However, when Sen. Imee seeks further clarification by asking whose place it was, Mr. Oñate's response becomes evasive. Instead of directly addressing Sen. Imee's question and providing the name or identity of the owner of the townhouse, he responds vaguely by saying "Ano ho yan, dalawang townhouse," which doesn't directly answer Sen. Imee's inquiry. By not addressing Sen. Imee's specific inquiry about the ownership of the townhouse, Mr. Oñate's response violates the maxim of relevance. It deflects from the topic at hand and fails to contribute meaningfully to the conversation.

Sen. Imee: Kanino po? Kaninong lugar? Inyo? Babay mo? Babay nyo po?

Mr. Oñate: It's a meeting place. It's our meeting place.

Sen. Imee is seeking specific information about the ownership or identity of the place where the meeting occurred, asking if it belonged to Mr. Oñate or someone else. However, Mr. Oñate's response does not directly address Sen. Imee's questions. Instead, he vaguely refers to it as a "meeting place" without confirming or denying ownership or providing further details. Ceballos and Sosas (2018) also identified this type of response as a violation of the maxim. When a question requires a simple yes or no answer, providing a lengthy statement without directly answering yes or no constitutes a violation. According to Grice's maxims, specifically the maxim of relevance, a speaker is expected to provide information that is pertinent to the conversational context (Grice, 1975). By not directly addressing Sen. Imee's questions about the ownership of the meeting place, Mr. Oñate might be intentionally withholding information or avoiding the topic. This suggests an implicature that he either does not wish to disclose the owner or that revealing this information might cause incrimination.

Oñate: So the reason why they zeroed in it was explained to me. I'm not a lawyer ok. It was explained to me.

Sen. Binay: Who explained to you? Who explained to you?

Oñate: Jointing votely... Voting jointly

Sen. Binay: Sir Noel, who explained to you? Hindi nga, sino hong nagpalivanag sa inyo? [Sir Noel, who explained it to you? No, who explained it to you?]

Oñate: That the senate and the house will be combined in the constituent assembly and then the senators and the congressmen will no longer be senators and congressmen they will be constituent assemblymen

Sen Binay: Sino hong nagturo sa inyo nyan, si Atty abad po ba ang nagpalivanag sa inyo na ganyan? [Who taught you that, was it Atty. Abad who explained to you like that?]

Oñate: no. Some of the other proponents of People's Initiative. [No. Some of the other proponents of People's Initiative.]

Senator Binay is pressing Mr. Oñate to reveal who specifically explained the details of the proposal to him. Despite Oñate's attempt to provide a general

explanation, Binay insists on knowing the individual or individuals responsible for clarifying the matter to him. Mr. Oñate's response does not directly address Senator Binay's specific question about who explained the details of the proposal to him. Instead of providing a relevant and specific answer, Mr. Oñate offers a vague response that does not address the central point of Senator Binay's inquiry. By failing to provide a direct response that aligns with the context of the conversation, Mr. Oñate violates the maxim of relevance (Awwad et. al, 2019, Obenza & Baradillo, 2023). This lack of relevance impedes the flow of the conversation and inhibits a clear understanding of the matters under discussion.

Violating maxim of manner

Yulianti (2022) discussed that a violation on maxim of manner happens when an inquiry is left unanswered because the speaker provides ambiguous information and verbose response that is immaterial to the topic. The speaker needs to be succinct, organized, and free of ambiguity (Hidayati & Lukman, 2019). In the example conversations, the maxim of manner proposed by Paul Grice is frequently violated, leading to confusion and inefficiency in communication. One notable instance occurs during Sen. Escudero's questioning of Mr. Oñate about his involvement the printing of forms:

Sen. Escudero: Matanong ko po kayo, so kayo yong nagpaprint nang form na atty Abad? Yes or no?

Mr. Oñate: No, no, yea, well, Sen. Escudero: Yes or no sir

Mr. Oñate: I didn't have the hand in the printing of the forms

Mr. Oñate's response implies that he was not directly involved in the printing of the forms but may have had some indirect involvement or knowledge about it. He initially responds with "No, no, yea, well," which indicates uncertainty or hesitancy. This lack of clarity makes it difficult for the listener to understand his actual response to the question. The follow up question of Senator Escudero establishing a yes-no answer indicated that Mr. Oñate is giving an ambiguous response, hence, violating the maxim of manner. This is in congruent to the claim of Awwad et. al (2019) that some people are unable to talk clearly due to anxiety or a deliberate tendency to lie.

Sen. Escudero: Mr. Oñate when did you meet cong. Garbin?

Oñate: I meet Cong. Garbin about a month ago

Sen. Escudero: A month ago. So prior to a month ago, you never thought of People's Initiative? Because he was the one who was spearheading it according to him.

Oñate: We launched PIRMA in 1996

Sen. Escudero: No no, this particular initiative

Oñate: We've been talking about it in some party, and some gathering Sen. Escudero: It's okay to talk about it but in terms of initiating, you only met congressman Garbin a month ago. You said.

Oñate: Yeab. About a month ago. Yes.

Sen. Escudero: I guess it was only a month ago that you also discussed this current initiative because based on his comment earlier he's very active in this.

In this conversation, Oñate's responses indicate a lack of clarity regarding the timeline and specifics of his

involvement in the current initiative, suggesting that his participation may not have been as extensive or longstanding as implied. Oñate's statements about launching PIRMA in 1996 and discussing the initiative at parties and gatherings create ambiguity about whether these discussions specifically pertain to the current initiative or are more general in nature. This ambiguity leads to confusion about the context of his involvement. Ceballos and Sosas (2018) further believed that the maxim of manner is violated not only when a statement is overly long, but also when the statement is unclear or not precisely articulated.

Imee: and he has become your close collaborator since then?

Oñate: Pardon me?

Imee: But Since January 30 when you denied any knowledge or familiarity with Atty Tuazon, since then you have become a close associate and organizer of this Atty Tuazon?

Oñate: Yea. We text each other non. Imee: So kakilala pa lang kayo Oñate: Because we are beefing up our ranks

Imee: Nalilito po ako kasi humihingi si sen. Binay kanina ng organizational chart which I assume wasn't made over the last two weeks Oñate: Yeah. We have

Atty Avisado: Madam chair if I may, Atty Red Tuazon is closely working with the group of atty Alfredo Garbin, that's the connection your honor unfortunately Atty Garbin is not around

Mr. Oñate again violated the maxim of manner as shown above. His subsequent responses do not follow a logical sequence or provide a coherent explanation of his relationship with Atty Tuazon. He mentions texting each other and beefing up their ranks, but these statements do not directly address Sen. Imee's question. Instead of directly addressing Sen. Imee's inquiry, Oñate's responses seem evasive and deflective. He does not offer a clear explanation of how his relationship with Atty Tuazon evolved since January 30, which raises doubts about the credibility of his statements.

Sen Binay: Hind nga, tinatanong ko lang ho kase don sa billing statement sa inyo ng network you need to raise 211M, kung natuloy tong pag place nyo ng ad [No, I'm just asking because in your network's billing statement, you need to raise 211M, if your ad placement pushed through.]

Oñate: the 211M was supposed to be an eight-week ad

Sen Binay: Ano bang billing sa inyo ng network weekly? Ano billing sa inyo ng network, weekly? [What's your network billing weekly? What's your network billing weekly?]

Avisado: For eight weeks na po yung billing na pinadala sa amin and to answer also your question, yong nilabas po is the first phase, marami po sanang kasunod yan which would address yong messaging, yong communications ng PIRMA on people's initiative. [The billing sent to us was for eight weeks, and to also answer your question, what was released is the first phase. There were supposed to be many more following phases which would address the messaging and communications regarding the signature drive on people's initiative.]

In Sen. Binay's questioning about the financial aspects of a project, Mr. Oñate's responses lack specificity and clarity. When asked about the billing statement from the network, Mr. Oñate's response about an eight-week

ad and the subsequent explanation from Atty Avisado further complicates the discussion. Avisado's statement about the billing being for "eight weeks" is ambiguous because it does not specify whether this refers to the total billing amount or the duration of the ad campaign. This ambiguity can lead to confusion and misunderstanding about the financial arrangements between the parties involved. This lack of clarity and specificity violates the maxim of manner by failing to provide clear and concise information, making it difficult for the participants to understand the financial aspects of the project. Violation of the maxim of manner typically occurs when speakers respond vaguely to a question or provide a lengthy, drawn-out answer instead of a straightforward one. According to Ceballos and Sosas (2018), there can be an overlap between the maxims of quantity and manner, particularly regarding the length of a response.

Potential Language Crimes Based on the Violations

Violations of Grice's maxims in this context could imply several potential language crimes or unethical behaviors, such as:

Obstruction of Justice

One element of the obstruction of justice is providing false testimony. Making misleading claims or denying knowledge of facts before a grand jury might be considered obstructing justice (Decker, 2004). By impeding the pursuit of truth and hindering the effectiveness of the committee's inquiry, individuals may be obstructing the administration of justice.

An instance during the senate hearing manifested a potential obstruction of justice. By responding only to the inquiry about Congressman Zaldy Co and omitting any mention of Speaker Romualdez, Mr. Oñate avoids directly answering Sen. Imee's question. This evasion tactic can be seen as an attempt to sidestep potentially sensitive or incriminating information. Consequently, it obstructs the flow of the conversation and hinders the attainment of clarity and transparency regarding the involvement of Speaker Romualdez. Ceballos and Sosas (2018) emphasized that the maxim of quantity is violated when someone gives more or less information than is necessary, consequently, Mr. Onate may have obstructed justice in this instance due to his breach of this principle. According to Decker (2004), deliberate attempts to obstruct the investigation or legal process by employing communicative strategies aimed at evading questions, providing misleading information, or withholding relevant details could be considered obstruction of justice.

Similarly, in conversation between Abad and the interlocutors, Abad's response provides sufficient information regarding his role in the organization but fails to directly address the discrepancy highlighted by Senator Imee regarding Mr. Oñate's claim about Abad's involvement with PIRMA. The potential language crime committed by this violation of the maxim of quantity is

obstruction of justice. Despite explaining his advisory role within PIRMA, Abad does not directly confirm or deny Mr. Oñate's previous statement about his affiliation with the organization. This evasion of directly addressing the contradiction between his statement and Mr. Oñate's claim implies a deliberate attempt to avoid providing a clear answer, which undermines transparency and hinders the progress of the conversation. By deflecting the question, Abad may be attempting to obfuscate his true level of involvement with PIRMA or avoid potential consequences associated with conflicting statements. According to Mnisi (2009), in modern English law, altering or hiding potential evidence is considered a perversion of the process of justice.

Likewise, about the ownership or identity of the place where a meeting occurred, asking if it belonged to Mr. Oñate or someone else, however, Mr. Oñate's response does not directly address Sen. Imee's questions. Instead, he vaguely refers to it as a "meeting place" without confirming or denying ownership or providing further details. When Mr. Oñate was asked about the ownership or identity of the place where the meeting occurred, Mr. Oñate avoids providing relevant information that could contribute to the understanding of the situation.

Mr. Oñate's responses to questions about his interactions with Speaker Romualdez and other individuals could be considered misleading. Initially denying knowledge of these interactions and then later admitting to them could lead to confusion and misdirection of the committee's investigation. Violating Grice's maxims by providing unclear information could be a strategy to mislead or confuse the committee about the actual facts. This could be considered a form of deception aimed at obscuring the truth or diverting attention from pertinent issues. As stressed in the study of Ceballos and Sosas (2018), maxims are broken

for a variety of reasons, including hiding information, shifting the topic, denying and more others. Furthermore, Hemel and Posner (2018) stressed that obstruction cases involve charges of changing, hiding, or destroying subpoenaed documents, as well as encouraging or giving false evidence.

Perjury

Perjury involves lying while testifying. A person is guilty of perjury if, contrary to an oath, they knowingly say or subscribe to any substantial fact that they do not believe to be true. This is sometimes referred to as the false statement requirement (Tiersma & Solan, 2012). While perjury typically involves making false statements under oath, systematic evasion or intentional ambiguity in statements during a formal hearing could also suggest a willingness to bend the truth or not fully disclose information. If these actions are found to be deliberate and aimed at misleading the committee, they could be considered perjury or providing false testimony. Typically, A conversation was found to have concerns about potential perjury, particularly regarding Mr. Oñate's

inconsistent statements about his relationship with Atty. Red Tuazon and his involvement in organizing the PIRMA initiative. If Mr. Oñate knowingly provides false or misleading information to the committee about these matters, it could constitute perjury or providing false testimony.

In a related case involving perjury, *Bronston v. United States*, where the issue was whether a witness may be found guilty of perjury for providing an oath that was literally truthful but did not address the subject posed and would have been misleading by negative inference, Samuel Bronston was questioned if he had any bank accounts with Swiss banks, he categorically denied having any. As a matter of truth, Bronston used to own a sizable personal Swiss bank account, was convicted of perjury. While Bronston's response to the second question was accurate in its literal sense, the prosecution seemed to persuade the jury that he had never held a personal Swiss bank account. The Supreme Court acknowledged that Bronston's response may lead one to believe that he had never had a personal account in Switzerland. However, Bronston never made this clear. The Court clarified that the perjury law only applies to the witness's explicit statements—not to his implication (Tiersma & Solan, 2012).

Fraud

According to Momeni (2012), fraud is a linguistic crime when a swindler utilizes words to deceive others, regardless of the instruments used. Fraud occurs when the following conditions are met: dishonest instruments used to defraud others, victim's lack of information about the tools, and loss of possession a victim (Shambayati, 1375/1998). In the context of discussing organizational statuses, misrepresentations about the legal standing or actions of entities like PIRMA could potentially be linked to fraudulent activities, especially if these misrepresentations are made to secure benefits or avoid penalties.

A conversation about the involvement of individuals in the PIRMA initiative and their connections to certain lawmakers. If individuals like Atty. Abad are found to have misrepresented their involvement or affiliations with PIRMA, particularly if it involves securing benefits or avoiding penalties, it could potentially constitute fraudulent behavior. Linguistic elements such as subject shift and violation of cooperative principles, particularly maxim of relevance, in the statements of the perpetrator and accused may contribute to the formation of a crime (Momeni, 2012).

CONCLUSION

This paper shed light to the implications of violating Grice's maxims during senate investigations and hearings, focusing on potential language crimes such as obstruction of justice, perjury, and fraud. This study is crucial as it sheds light on how breaches of communication principles can undermine the integrity and effectiveness

of legal proceedings, ultimately jeopardizing the pursuit of justice and truth. Throughout the analysis, instances of individuals evading questions, providing misleading information, or withholding crucial details emerged, highlighting the pervasiveness of unethical behaviors that hinder transparency and obstruct the administration of justice. It is evident that adherence to Grice's maxims is paramount in ensuring clear, honest, and cooperative communication within legal contexts.

Furthermore, the analysis of Grice's maxims and their violations in the provided conversations opens avenues for further research in several areas of communication studies. Further research could focus on developing interventions and strategies to mitigate maxim violations and promote ethical communication practices. By drawing on insights from psychology, linguistics, and communication theory, researchers can design and implement interventions aimed at raising awareness of Grice's maxims, enhancing communication skills, and fostering ethical communication behaviors.

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