

CONVERSATIONAL ANALYSIS IN A MOVIE ENTITLED “*LIFE OF PI*” WRITTEN BY DAVID MAGEE: A CONTEXT SITUATION AND GRICEAN MAXIM’S PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRAK

Studi ini berjudul “Conversational Analysis in A Movie Entitled Life of Pi Written by David Magee: A Context Situation and Gricean Maxim’s Perspective.” Data dari studi ini diambil dari naskah film “Life of Pi” yang ditulis ulang oleh David Magee berdasarkan novel dengan judul yang sama karya dari Yann Martel. Film ini dipilih karena ia adalah film yang sangat menarik dan sukses sehingga menimbulkan banyak kritik dan pujian dari banyak pihak. Dan lagi film ini berhasil masuk nominasi untuk beberapa penghargaan film internasional sekaligus menang dalam beberapa kategori. Ruang lingkup pembahasan studi ini dibatasi dengan dua teori yang berbeda, yaitu teori “Context of Situation” yang dikemukakan oleh Halliday dan Hassan (1985), teori selanjutnya adalah teori “Gricean Maxim” yang dikemukakan oleh Grice (1989). Data yang telah diseleksi selanjutnya dianalisa dengan metode kualitatif. Beberapa elemen dari kedua teori terkait adalah “Field,” “Tenor,” “Mode,” “Maxim of Quantity,” “Maxim of Quality,” “Maxim of Relation,” dan “Maxim of Manner.” Ulasan dari setiap elemen berhasil mengungkap maksud dari percakapan yang telah diseleksi sebelumnya. Temuan dari hasil studi ini adalah makna yang tersirat di dalam ujaran-ujaran dari percakapan-percakapan di dalam film yang terkait.

Kata kunci: Sastra, Sociolinguistik, Percakapan,

1. Background of the Study

The viewpoint of a conversation is based on human as social individual that always interact to one and another. Interaction is the act of two or more individuals and, however, it is the cause of conversation. The tool used to transfer the information in the conversation is language. Language is a part of society. People do different things with their language. They make an act such as interaction through their language in written or spoken form (Schiffrin, 1994:31).

According to Gee (1999:11), language has a magical property: when we speak or write we craft what we have to say to fit the situation or context in which we are communicating. But, at the same time, how we speak or write creates that very situation or context. It seems, then, that we fit our language to a situation or context that our language, in turn, helped to create in the first place. In line with that utterance, language in my opinion is a tool for interacting and communicating between people, moreover, it is requiring a comprehension, agreement, and individual perspective to do the meaningful conversation. Grice in his “Logic and Conversation” (1975) stated a cooperative principle which is a basic underlying assumption we make when we speak to one another is that we are trying to cooperate with one another to construct meaningful conversations.

Further, this study has the interest of interactional sociolinguistic. Interactional sociolinguistics is an approach to discourse analysis, or what in general is called

conversational analysis that has its origin in the search for replicable methods of qualitative analysis that account for our ability to interpret what participants intend to convey in everyday communicative practice. The interactional analysis of discourse is, then, at the intersection of our analyses of human understandings of the world, of the conditions which produce those understandings, and of their role in the construction of the social order (Gumperz, 2001:261).

The problem of this writing was inspired by a thesis written by Sarastin (2013) entitled “Conversational Analysis in Percy Jackson the Lightning Thief movie by Rick Riordan”. This thesis is very helpful in conducting the study since the Grice’s maxims become the ground theory of its analysis. The study is an extension of the previous related studies about the topic of conversational analysis. Through Halliday and Hassan’s theory of context and situation this study categorized the indications of the data into contexts. Moreover, with the Grice’s theory of maxims of conversation, the contexts become the point of view in analyzing the texts or discourses which was derived from the selected conversations in the movie. Why this study used movie as the data source, it is because, nowadays, movie becomes a huge reference either for entertainment or education. Movies, also known as films are a type of visual communications which use moving pictures and sound to tell stories or inform (help people to learn). Types of movies can be divided into Fiction and Non-Fiction, however, it has the same types as literature. Indirectly, movies contain culture, language, and information. The movie that being used in this study is a movie entitled “Life of Pi,” it is based on the true story which is elaborated by the sense of religious view and culture, framed in a wonderful touch of digital imaging and hilarious movie scenes.

2. Problems of the Study

In line with the background above, the research problems can be formulated as follows:

- 1) What specification of the context of situation based on Halliday and Hassan’s theory is applied in conveying messages of the conversation in “Life of PI” movie written by David Magee?
- 2) What type of Gricean maxims based on Grice’s theories are applied in the conversation in “Life of Pi” movie by David Magee?

3. Aim of the Study

In accordance to the problems above, the aims of this study are:

- 1) To reach a deep comprehension by analyzing the context of situation based on Halliday and Hassan’s theory which are applied in conversations of the related movie.
- 2) To describe the type of Gricean maxims based on Grice’s theories which are applied in the conversation in “Life of Pi” movie by David Magee.

4. Research Method

Research method is the methodology that is used in analyzing a data; contains of data source, method and technique of collecting data, and method and technique of analyzing data

4.1 Data Source

The data source of the current study was taken by watching the movie and reading specifically from the movie scripts. The primary data was taken from the movie scripts entitled “Life of PI” and the secondary data was taken from some theories and explanations by related books, review of the movie, and dictionary

.In line with the statements above, there are some reasons why the primary data was using the movie scripts rather than live conversations. There are, however, first because this movie has very interesting story which was adopted from the worldwide best-seller

novel, moreover it had won many Oscar and others movie awards. Further, it contains sufficient data for the inquiry of conversational analysis. Finally, the most important is it has a different point view and analysis with other undergraduate thesis which have the similar topic.

4.2 Method and Technique of Collecting Data

The data of this study was collected by observing the script of the movie as well as watching and listening to the movie clearly. Furthermore, it was important to take a note of the linguistic features found in the movie. Generally, there were three steps in collecting the data, they are:

- 1) Reading the script of the movie thoroughly to find out the sentences which considered as the keywords.
- 2) Watching the movie to get clear description about the context of situation.
- 3) Selecting the conversations which are related to the theory that will be used.

4.3 Method and Technique of Analyzing Data

The collected data was analyzed based on the theories of qualitative research with inductive analysis; particularly, define the meaning beneath the story and its relation with the sociolinguistic study. There are some steps of analyzing the data. First, each conversation was grouped and analyzed by Halliday and Hassan's theory which describes field, tenor, and mode of the discourses. The second step was analyzing the discourses of selected conversation with Grice's prominent theory of maxims which consisted of maxims of quality, maxims of quantity, maxims of relevance, and maxims of manner. Finally, the result of analysis will be interpretive in line with the characteristic of qualitative research stated by Creswell (2007:175).

5. Conversational Analysis in A Movie Entitled "Life of Pi" Written by David Magee: A Context Situation and Gricean Maxim's Perspective

5.1 Introduction

The movie entitled "Life of Pi" is a remarkable work written by David Magee who has adopted the story based on the novel of Yann Martel. The story itself is terrific and had visualized by astounding motion pictures that probably the best digital imaging in recent years. The movie had its worldwide premiere as the opening in 50th New York Film Festival on September 28, 2012. It is emerged critical and commercial success in its presenting. It was nominated for three Golden Globe Awards including the Best Picture Drama, Best Director, and Best Original Score. Moreover, at the 85th Academy Awards it had eleven nominations and won four the most precious awards.

This chapter presents the analysis of five selected conversations from the related movie. These five conversations was analyzed based on the preceding theoretical framework. A context of situation by Halliday and Hassan was the first theory used in this study, it provides Field, Tenor, and Mode. This theory applied in order to collect as much information which latter used to convey the messages of every selected conversation, moreover, as the selected conversations represented the whole story generally. The second theory is Grice's Maxim of Conversation is later well known as Gricean Maxim. There are four prominent maxims being proposed by Grice, they are maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation and maxim of manner. The advance analysis of those maxims is executed in order to know how the maxims are being implicated and which type of maxims is playing important role to make a meaningful conversation.

The analysis of both theories is attached after the selected conversation. The selected utterances are marked by the related theory. Context of Situation references are shown by the underlined texts, Gricean Maxim references are shown by the dash-underlined texts, and if both of theories are implicit in same utterances they are shown by the double underlined texts.

5.2 Specification of Context of Situation and Types of Gricean Maxim in Selected Conversations

Following analysis are two instances of the five selected conversations that were taken as the data of this study.

5.2.1 Analysis of Conversation I

This conversation is between Pi and the Writer whose name is not stated in the story, probably the real writer of the novel wants to present man's viewpoint on the world as the reason for not naming the Writer. This conversation is one of important scenes that refers to an introduction or cause of whole story.

- Writer : Um, Mamaji tells me you're a legend among sailors, too. Out there, all alone.
- Pi : Oh, I don't even know how to sail. And I wasn't alone out there. Richard Parker was with me.
- Writer : Richard Parker? Mamaji didn't tell me everything. He just said I should look you up when I got back to Montreal.
- Pi : So, what were you doing in Pondicherry?
- Writer : Writing a novel.
- Pi : By the way, I enjoyed your first book. So, this new one is it set in India?
- Writer : No, Portugal, actually. But it's cheaper living in India.
- Pi : Ah, well, I look forward to reading it.
- Writer : You can't. I threw it out. Two years trying to bring this thing to life and then one day, it sputtered, coughed and died.
- Pi : Oh, I'm sorry.
- Writer : Uh, I was sitting in this coffee house in Pondicherry one afternoon, mourning my loss, when this old man at the table next to me struck up a conversation.
- Pi : Yeah, Mamaji he does that.
- Writer : When I told him about my abandoned book, he said (imitating Mamaji) "So, a Canadian who's come to French India in search of a story. Well, my friend, I know an Indian in French Canada with the most incredible story to tell. It must be fate that the two of you should meet."
- Pi : Well, I haven't spoken about Richard Parker in so many years. So what has Mamaji already told you?
- Writer : He said you had a story that would make me believe in God.
- Pi : (Pi Laughs) He would say that about a nice meal. As for God, I can only tell you my story. You will decide for yourself what you believe.
- Writer : Fair enough.
- Pi : Let's see, then. Where to begin?

Note:

- : Gricean Maxims
 _____: Context of Situation
 =====: Both Theories

i. Context of Situation Analysis

a. Field

This first conversation showing an introduction of the plot, the cause of the event and the characters of the story. According to the movie scripts, this conversation is taking place at Montreal, a French Canadian city which is the place where both Pi and the Writer live at the moment. It is specifically in line with the utterance from Writer which says “*Richard Parker? Mamaji didn't tell me everything. He just said I should look you up when I got back to Montreal.*” Specifically, the conversation is taking place at Pi's dining room and it has a warm atmosphere that showing a good relation between both characters.

However, they are also discussing Mamaji, the one who makes them be able to meet. Mamaji is a relative of Pi and who was coincidentally met with the Writer earlier in Pondicherry, India, which is actually Pi's hometown. Writer failed for his previous novel and comes to meet Pi at his house for the incredible story that he had in his adolescence. So this meeting is actually showing a perfect collision and more than a story telling but healing process of two human being.

b. Tenor

The participants of the first conversation are Pi and the Writer. Writer here is actually one of the characters whose name was never stated in the story but he takes an important role in the story. He is the supporting character who acts as the cause of the whole story. Indirectly, he induced Pi to tell the unbelievable story and he also represents the real people that probably do not believe in God. What so ever, from his viewpoint the real writer of this novel could imply his sense of uncertainty which develops into strong feelings that make people believe in the story. In this conversation, both of participants are talking about Mamaji, one of the character which seems important for the whole story. First, because he is the reference of Pi's father who gives name to Pi as Piscine Molitor Patel. Second, he is Pi relative who teaches him how to swim, meanwhile the rest of Pi's family could not swim. Further, he is the reference of Writer who finally could meet Pi in Montreal. According to the utterances above, from one to another participants this conversation uses an informal language and indicates an informal situation or a close relationship between both participants. Actually, the whole conversation is almost using an informal style, some instances are shown as Pi says “*Well, I haven't spoken about Richard Parker in so many years. So what has Mamaji already told you?*” and “*Let's see, then. Where to begin?*” They are showing an incomplete sentence, moreover the words “*well,*” “*haven't,*” “*so,*” and “*let's*” refer to contracted forms of the informal language.

c. Mode

The conversation is selected by reading the scripts and listening to the oral conversation while watching the movie. The way language is being used in this speech reaction is the participants were communicating face to face in spoken conversation. The conversation has an expository mode, in other words it has an educative theme implicit in its utterances. It is in accordance with utterances from Writer which is trying to explain what the reason he meets Pi at his house, as it is clearly shown on the scripts. At the first utterances Writer says “*Um, Mamaji tells me you're a legend among sailors, too. Out there, all alone.*” This utterances, however, indicate an expository rhetorical mode by its explanation of who is Pi regarding to what is being told by Mamaji. Another instance explains expository mode in the conversation later shown as Writer says “*When I told him about my abandoned book, he said So, a Canadian who's come to French India in search of a story. Well, my friend, I know an Indian in French Canada with the most incredible story to tell. It must be fate that the two of you should meet.*” This utterance clearly shows the rhetorical mode of the conversation. It describes the occurrence of what was happening before both of participants could possibly meet, moreover, it is supported by the quotes of Mamaji's utterance within the happening utterances.

ii. Gricean Maxim Analysis

a. Maxim of Quantity

It seems Gricean maxim is well implicated in this conversation. It is indicated by some conversational fragments. Maxim of quantity is clearly shown as Pi asks “*So, what were you doing in Pondicherry?*” and the Writer answers “*Writing a novel.*” It is, however, informative answer as required. In a case like this, it is often discovered misunderstanding between politeness and precision of the language use. In some languages, precision of the answer is not a custom. Sometimes it refers to an arrogant or bluff characteristic. But precision of the answer is actually better than rambling speech in order to have an efficient and effective conversation.

The second instance is shown in the conversation as Pi says “*He would say that about a nice meal. As for God, I can only tell you my story. You will decide for yourself what you believe.*” and Writer says “*Fair enough.*” Writer’s utterance is a good example of implication of the quantity. His utterance informatively explains that he agrees to the preceding utterance. Moreover, it points out Pi’s neutral expression of not going to be persuasive for his advance story.

b. Maxim of Quality

The implication of maxim of quality in the conversation is shown as the Writer says “*Um, Mamaji tells me you’re a legend among sailors, too. Out there, all alone.*” and Pi rejects the statements by saying “*Oh, I don’t even know how to sail. And I wasn’t alone out there. Richard Parker was with me.*” It seems that Pi tries to correct the previous statements and he gives answers based on the true events that is actually his own story and experience. It is also pointing out Richard Parker that makes this utterances informative to the Writer. Pi’s utterances acknowledge the Writer with true information about the story and even makes the conversation real and truthful.

c. Maxim of Relation

Maxim of relation is also referred to relevance. It seems the most important thing in a conversation is how to be relevant to the topic or theme. Therefore, by this conversation maxim of relation is shown as the Writer says “*Uh, I was sitting in this coffee house in Pondicherry one afternoon, mourning my loss, when this old man at the table next to me struck up a conversation.*” And it is followed by the utterance of Pi which says “*Yeah, Mamaji he does that.*” Pi’s utterance seems to have a relevance to what the Writer has said. Even actually Pi does not know what was happening between Mamaji and the Writer, but he knows that his relative, Mamaji, would do the same thing to everyone else as his characteristic is already observed by both of the participants of this conversation.

Further, the second instance of the maxims is shown as Pi says “*Well, I haven’t spoken about Richard Parker in so many years. So what has Mamaji already told you?*” and Writer says “*He said you had a story that would make me believe in God.*” Writer’s answer is relevant according to the previous utterances. The expressed relevance is shown by the subject which still refers to Mamaji and the predicate “told” in the first utterance is pertinent to “said” in the second utterance. However, the implied meaning in the conversation is Writer came to Pi’s house and talk about Mamaji because he wants to hear the story from Pi that would make him believe in God.

d. Maxim of Manner

In this conversation, maxim of manner is not well implicated in accordance with The Writer’s utterances that say “*Uh, I was sitting in this coffee house in Pondicherry one afternoon, mourning my loss, when this old man at the table next to me struck up a conversation.*” It is showing an ambiguity and disorder of the sentences in forming the whole statement. Briefly, it is supposed to be “*One afternoon at coffee house in Pondicherry, I was mourning my loss and just in time an old man next to my table struck up a conversation.*” The maxim of manner is actually the most difficult one to be well implicated either in a prepared speech or in a spontaneous conversation. It is very important to apply the rules of maxim of manner in order to deliver a state of mind firmly from the speaker to the listener. However, the scripts written by David Magee are

supposed to have a point, probably the violation of the maxim itself intends to make a sense of natural speech and act in this movie, because with or without the maxim of manner these utterances, more or less, point out an implicit expression of the writer by two prominent predicates; “mourning” and “struck” sequentially indicated he was disappointed, then surprised. The predicate “sitting” is not actually necessary to point out the meaning that implied in the whole utterances.

5.2.2 Analysis of Conversation II

Father sits at the dinner table with his family. The servant offers a dish of lamb to Father only. Father pops a bite into his mouth, savoring it.

Appa : This lamb is exquisite. It's the best dish on the table. You are all missing out...

As he chews, Appa notices Pi completing a blessing.

Appa : You only need to convert to three more religions, Piscine, and you will spend your life on holiday.

Ravi : (Laughing) Are you going to Mecca this year, Swami Jesus? Or to Rome, for your coronation as Pope Pi-us?

Amma : You stay out of this, Ravi. Just as you like cricket, Pi has his own interests.

Appa : No Gita, Ravi has a point, no? You cannot follow three different religions at the same time, Piscine.

Pi : Why not?

Appa : Because believing in everything at the same time is the same as not believing in anything at all.

Amma : He's young Santosh. He's still finding his way.

Appa : And how can he find his way if he does not choose a path? (To Pi:) Listen, instead of leaping from one religion to the next, why not start with reason? In a few hundred years, science has taken us farther in understanding the universe than religion has in ten thousand.

Amma : That is true. Your father is right. Science can teach us more about what's out there, (with a hand to her heart) but not what is in here.

Appa : Some eat meat, some eat vegetable. I do not expect us all to agree about everything. But I would much rather have you believe in something I don't agree with than to accept everything blindly. And that begins with thinking rationally. Do you understand?

Pi nods.

Appa : Good.

Pause.

Pi : I would like to be baptized.

Father and Mother react. Ravi stifles a laugh.

Note:

____: Gricean Maxims

____: Context of Situation

____: Both Theories

i. Context of Situation Analysis

a. Field

This conversation is taking place at the dining room while having a dinner. It is shown as the scenes description before the conversation. Further, it is also shown on the beginning of conversation as Appa said “*This lamb is exquisite. It's the best dish on the*

table. You are all missing out...” The utterance which becomes the indicator of place is *“It’s the best dish on the table.”* All of the participants are a family, sitting on the same table. There are differences for what they believe however, the situation is warm and respectful. Each participant is playing his role and function properly as a family, they are discussing things with open minded and liberally. For instance, the “lamb” in this conversation is a symbol indicates that Appa is a rationalist or non-believer. Meanwhile others were having vegetarian food, Appa seems the only one who was having the lamb.

b. Tenor

There are four participants in the conversation. Each character belongs to a member of Patel family, they are Santosh, Gita, Ravi, and Piscine Molitor Patel. Santosh is known as Appa and Gita is known as Amma, father and mother in Hindi language. Ravi is Pi’s older brother. They have a permanent relationship, therefore this conversation tends to be the informal one, in which language used in form of daily conversation. However, there is a formal language used whenever the children utter to their parents, which is showing a respect. It is shown at the end of the conversation as Pi says *“I would like to be baptized.”* He rather said *“would like”* than he said *“wants”* while referring his parents.

Further, there is actually one more character shown in the motion picture, she is the servant who gives the lamb to only Appa’s plate. This symbol probably means that Appa is the leader of the family and he is also the only one who is not a vegetarian in the family. This is according to Appa which has no interest with religion. He is rationalist, who more believe science than religion. However, this family is very open minded and conservative. It is indicated as Appa says *“Some eat meat, some eat vegetable. I do not expect us all to agree about everything. But I would much rather have you believe in something I don’t agree with than to accept everything blindly. And that begins with thinking rationally. Do you understand?”* This utterances is pointed to Pi which seems to believe in three religion at the same time in his childhood.

c. Mode

The language that being used are spoken conversation. This conversation was set on a dining table and all the participants were filling sides one across another. The data sources are taken from reading a scripts and followed by watching the movie, however the elaboration of what has been done is very helpful for this study. From the beginning of the conversation it shows a persuasive rhetorical mode. It is indicated as Appa says *“This lamb is exquisite. It’s the best dish on the table. You are all missing out...”* Further the conversation develops to a didactic rhetorical mode. It is a channel of speech that has an educative characteristic. The way Appa utters his statement to Pi seems to be acknowledgement for his child. He says *“And how can he find his way if he does not choose a path? (To Pi:) Listen, instead of leaping from one religion to the next, why not start with reason? In a few hundred years, science has taken us farther in understanding the universe than religion has in ten thousand.”* Moreover it becomes certainly shown as Appa continues to say *“Some eat meat, some eat vegetable. I do not expect us all to agree about everything. But I would much rather have you believe in something I don’t agree with than to accept everything blindly. And that begins with thinking rationally. Do you understand?”* The question at the end of the utterances indicating didactic conversation.

ii. Gricean Maxim Analysis

a. Maxim of Quantity

In this conversation there is no indication of short utterance as the implementation of quantity. There is an utterance *“Good”* as said by Appa, which seems that it is not an informative utterance but is more likely expressive one. Quantity is unusually shown in the conversation by a long precise utterance as Appa says *“No Gita, Ravi has a point, no? You cannot follow three different religions at the same time, Piscine.”* Further Pi asks *“Why not?”* and Appa answers *“Because believing in*

everything at the same time is the same as not believing in anything at all." The last utterance is showing an implication of maxim of quantity because it is as informative as it is required. The information is precisely uttered and it is not more or less than what is needed by the questioner.

b. Maxim of Quality

The implication of maxim of quality in the conversation is shown by the utterances as Appa (to Pi) says "*Because believing in everything at the same time is the same as not believing in anything at all.*" While Pi is listening to his father, Amma hold a brief for him and says "*He's young Santosh. He's still finding his way.*" Her justification of what Appa have said, is showing the maxim of quality. In fact, Pi is too young to understand the topic and his mother knew it, however, she is trying to be truthful even though it seems both, Appa and Amma, is telling true things but in this case Amma has more agreeable statements than what Appa has said previously.

c. Maxim of Relation

This conversation contains some examples of maxim of relation, because the conversation is based on a topic that is being discussed by all the participants. The main topic is belief, in how it is stranded to science and the family was discussing in open minded way. Maxim of relation is implicated when Appa was giving instructive utterances to Pi which is represented on the conversation as "*And how can he find his way if he does not choose a path? (To Pi:) Listen, instead of leaping from one religion to the next, why not start with reason? In a few hundred years, science has taken us farther in understanding the universe than religion has in ten thousand.*" And then it is followed by Amma with her utterances "*That is true. Your father is right. Science can teach us more about what's out there, (with a hand to her heart) but not what is in here.*" These utterances are showing relevance to the previous utterances. Indicator of the relevance is the word "science" which is shown in both utterances. Moreover the supporting utterances like "*That is true.*" and "*Your father is right.*" make the relation between both utterances is pertinent because they are dependent utterances, or in other words are reactions of preceding utterances.

d. Maxim of Manner

From the conversation above, maxim of manner is shown as Appa says "*You only need to convert to three more religions, Piscine, and you will spend your life on holiday.*" This utterances are neither didactic nor persuasive, however, it has been uttered in order to quip Pi. Therefore, maxim of manner that is implicated on this utterance is suitable to the context. The manner takes an important role to show the aim of the speaker and it helps him or her to deliver the messages out of an utterance clearly and is understood by the listener. There are three important fragments of utterances above, which are separated by comas, what so ever it is in a proper manner. The manner will be shown as violation if the order is changed, for examples "*You will spend your life on holiday, and you only need to convert to three more religions, Piscine*" or "*Piscine, you only need to convert to three more religions and you will spend your life on holiday.*" Two of those disordered examples are showing obscurity because none of them has same meaning with the real utterances which implied the maxim of manner properly. The first example is totally far from the speaker's aim, even more the phrases have no point and relation between one to the others. The second example is close to the real utterances but it changes the context, specifically the rhetorical mode of the utterances. It becomes a didactic and does not have the sense of quipping.

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