

# Analysis of Ethics in Speech Criticism on Facebook: Grice's Cooperative Principles

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## ABSTRACT

In the theory of linguistic politeness, both in Brown and Levinson's off-record strategy and Leech's irony principle, implicature strategy is considered as a strategy to convey criticism politely. However, in the theory of communication ethics, aspects of truthfulness, relevance, and informativeness of message are ethical aspects emphasized in communication. This suggests that the implicature strategy is inadequate parameter to determine politeness of criticism if it is not endorsed by aspects of truthfulness, relevance, and informativeness. In linguistics field, these aspects have also been proposed in Grice's cooperative principle theory. Therefore, this research study aims to identify the ethical value of criticizing utterances on Facebook status by using Grice's cooperative principle theory as a parameter to determine the ethical value of criticizing utterances. The study used 50 statuses from Rakyat Oposisi account as a research data. This study used qualitative-descriptive approach using pragmatic analysis to identify the contextual meaning of criticizing utterances on those statuses. The results of this study showed that the criticizing utterances on Rakyat Oposisi's account were more dominant indicating violations of quality (truthfulness), relevance, and quantity (informativeness). This suggests that user was more likely to share the incorrect and irrelevant information when criticizing individuals on Facebook.

**Keywords:** cooperative principle, criticism, language ethic, politeness principle

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Social media is a platform for people to share their expression of thoughts and feelings [1]. This expression on social media can be expressed in the form of a criticism against an individual or group. Criticism is regarded as a form of freedom of speech. In the democratic system, every individuals's freedom of speech was guaranteed to express [2],[3]. Today, however, criticism on social media is often viewed as an act of demeaning or slander. This demonstrates that there are ethical issues in the criticism shared on social media.

From a linguistic perspective, implicature strategy is a politeness strategy for conveying criticism or irony, as in off-record strategy proposed by Brown and Levinson [4] and in irony principle proposed by Leech [5]. In other words, polite criticism is a criticism which is delivered implicitly. Operationalization of this strategy can be seen in some previous research studies. For example, Yuliana [6] identified politeness of interruption in political discussion. In that study, off-record strategy became one

of the parameters of politeness for interruption. Interruption delivered implicitly are considered as a polite speech. For example, based on the data, one conveyed his interruption about Ahok's legal case by simply mentioning *kasus itu* (that case) without mentioning clearly *kasus penistaan agama* (the case of blasphemy).

Gani et al [7] identifies the politeness of politicians' criticism of political opponents. Off-record strategy is also used as one of the parameters for determining the politeness of criticism. The results showed that the use of bold-record (direct face threatening act) is more dominant than off-record strategy. This demonstrated that politicians strongly showed their disrespect in criticizing individuals. Peng [8] examines the strategy of teacher's criticism of students using the leech politeness principle [4]. Criticism is delivered indirectly by using the reference of others ("other oriented") to disguise criticism. In this case, a teacher criticized the student's work results without directly addressing the student.

In the perspective of communication ethics, the ethical value of the message conveyed must observe aspects of truthfulness, relevance, and informativeness [9]; [10]; [11]; [12]. In this case, the criticism conveyed must be true, relevant, and informative. Therefore, this suggests that the implicature strategy is inadequate to determine politeness of criticism if it is not endorsed by aspects of truth, relevance, and informativeness. In linguistics, these aspects are also emphasized in Grice's cooperative principle maxims, namely quantity maxim (informativeness), quality maxim (truthfulness), and relation maxim (relevance) [13]; [14]; [15]. However, in linguistic research study, this concept is only widely used as a parameter to achieve communication goals or to achieve interparticent understanding in communication. For example, Aryanti [16] applied Grice's cooperative principle maxims to identify forms of cooperation between police and a suspected drug case though the form of question and answer in drug

investigation; Karasenga et al [17] identified teacher's observance of Grice principle maxims in the English teaching process as one of the success factors of the learning process achievement. Laila [18] identified the violation of the maxims in the 2019 Presidential Debate marked by irrelevant and unclear answers from the debate participants; Chen and Yang [19] also identified violations of the maxims as a part of an advertising strategy to attract consumers.

From those previous research studies, Grice's cooperative principle maxims mostly still operates to identify how the speaker's attitude to achieve cooperation with other participants in communication and to achieve a certain communication purpose. However, in fact, if we refer to the perspective of communication ethics, these aspects operate as parameters to determine the ethical value of a message of utterance. Therefore, in language research, Grice's cooperative principle maxims should not only be used to identify the cooperation in communication between participants, but also as parameters to determine the ethical value of a speech. In other words, Grice's cooperative principle maxims can also be an additional parameter for ethical analysis of the speech of criticism in addition to the concept of Brown and Levinson's manners [4] and Leech [5]. Thus, this research study aims to prove that Grice's cooperative principle can operate in ethical analysis of speech criticism.

**2. METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative-descriptive approach. The data of this research study are taken from the Facebook status of *Rakyat Oposisi* (RO) account. A total of 50 RO account statuses were analyzed using pragmatic analysis. Pragmatic analysis is used to identify contextual meaning of utterances [15]; [2]. With pragmatic analysis, the categories of criticism speech and the ethical

language in the criticism speech will be identified based on contextual meaning.

**3. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS**

The data identification results showed that from 50 Facebook statuses, there were 309 utterances which were criticism. Based on the results of data frequency analysis, violations of the cooperative principle maxims were more dominant than observance of those maxims, which is as much as 63.8% compared to 36.2%. This suggests that the user of *Rakyat Oposisi* (RO) account did not pay attention to the ethical values emphasized in cooperative principle maxims. This can be seen in table 1 below:

**Table 1.** Frequency of Observance and Violation of Cooperative Principle Maxims in *Rakyat Oposisi* Account

Account	Frequency of Criticism	
	Observance of Maxims	Violation of Maxims
RO	112 (36,2%)	197 (63,8%)
Total Data	309 (100%)	

The following is the data of critical speech that shows the violation and compliance with Grice's maxims:

- (1) *Jokowi tepati janjinya buka 3 juta lahan, tapi lahannya buat Taipan* [3-021-01]  
 'Jokowi keeps his promise to open 3 million lands, but the land is for tycoons' [3-021-01]
- (2) *Rakyat Indonesia jadi BABU Taipan ya pak..?* [3-021-03]  
 'Indonesian people become tycoon's SLAVE, sir..?' [3-021-03]

Sentences (1) and (2) are the speaker's criticism of Jokowi regarding tycoon entrepreneurs' control of plantation land. In terms of the maxim of quality, the violation of the maxim is seen in the inappropriateness of the criticism with the objective conditions related to Jokowi's promise, which is intended for tycoon entrepreneurs and the people to become tycoon's slaves/slaves. Regarding relation maxims, the context between Jokowi's campaign promises, the people who work in tycoon companies, and the polemic of land tenure by tycoons are irrelevant to each other. In terms of the maxim of quantity (informativeness), the speaker's negative assumption is not supported by information that proves that the government gives land to tycoon entrepreneurs freely and the people become slaves to tycoons.

- (3) *Bawaslu dan kpu bengong aja??* [3-029-05]  
 ‘Bawaslu and KPU are dumbfounded?’ [3-029-05]

Based on the discourse context, sentence 3 relates to the speaker's criticism of the Jokowi volunteer declaration event. The speaker conveyed insinuations to the KPU and Bawaslu that these institutions were unfair because they allowed campaign violations to occur. In discourse, the declaration of Jokowi's supporters in Jakarta is considered part of a campaign violation. Based on the context of the events behind the discourse, the declaration of Jokowi's volunteers was made before the official determination of the presidential candidate. According to the law, campaigning is an act that conveys the vision, mission and self-image of election contestants.

Meanwhile, a declaration is an act of supporting an individual to advance in a contestation. Therefore, the two things are different. Thus, the speaker's insinuation of the KPU and Bawaslu is not in accordance with the existing factual context and does not show the relevance of what is assumed.

If viewed from the perspective of Grice's maxims, sentence 4 shows a violation of the maxim of quality because it shows a discrepancy between the negative assumptions contained in sentence 4 and the actual conditions that refer to Jokowi's supporting declaration activities. Sentence 4 also shows a violation of relational maxims because the dumb attribute and declaration actions that are the object of criticism are irrelevant. KPU and Bawaslu have no obligation to prohibit supporters from making declarations. In addition, declarations and campaigns are two different things.

- (4) *Sampai Tuhan mereka samakan sebagai konstestan pilpres 2019* [3-026-02]  
 ‘Until God they equate as contestants for the 2019 presidential election’ [3-026-02]

Based on the context of the discourse, sentence 4 refers to a statement by a Jokowi supporter that was conveyed in an interview during the declaration of Jokowi's volunteers. Sentence 4 relates to the speaker's criticism of Jokowi's supporters, who are considered arrogant. The speaker's assessment that the statement by Jokowi's supporters is arrogant refers to the statement *that Only God can defeat Jokowi in 2019*. This statement shows that Jokowi's opponents cannot win the election. Based on Grice's maxims, sentence 4 shows compliance with the maxim of quality. This can be seen based on the suitability of the satire with the statement of Jokowi's supporters in an interview. In addition, sentence 4 also shows compliance with relation maxims. Sentence 4, which indicates that supporters equate God with contestants, is in line with the content of the supporters' statement that Only God can defeat Jokowi in 2019. The supporting statement shows that it is as if God can participate in contesting in the 2019 Election. As for the maxim of quantity (informativeness), criticism is

supported by a video which states that only God can defeat Jokowi in the general election.

- (5). *Fanatisme yang membuat anda dungu..* [3-058-01]  
 ‘Fanaticism that makes you stupid.’ [3-058-01]

Based on the discourse context, sentence 5 is a speaker's criticism of netizens and social media activists who are spreading hoax news to praise the government's achievements in the infrastructure sector. In the discourse, the speaker presents a screenshot from the Facebook status of a figure named AD, which displays a photo of the toll road claimed to be the Trans Papua toll road. In a factual context, the portrait is hoax news. The portrait is the appearance of the Cipularang Km 97 toll road, which he claims is the Trans Papua toll road. The actions of netizens who participated in spreading hoax news on Facebook showed a stupid attitude because they did not do good and rational considerations before spreading the hoax.

If viewed based on the maxim of relation and quality, the stupid attribute used by the speaker fulfils the ethical value. The word stupid in the sentence refers to the factual conditions regarding the spread of hoax news on social media. The word stupid, which is connected with the act of spreading hoaxes, shows a logical thing. In addition, the word stupid in sentence 5 is also relevant to the actions of these netizens and figures. The spread of hoax news is an act that does not prioritize rational action.

- (6). *Pakar keamanan Cyber berkata objektif tentang MCA bahwa penyebar bukan hanya MCA..., tapi di kubu MCA (Mukidi Cebong Army) sebelah juga punya kelompok sekuler klaster pro rezim juga kerap menyebarkan hoax..* [3-005-01]

‘(Cyber security experts say objectively about MCA that the spreaders are not only MCA...), but in the MCA (Mukidi Cebong Army) side, there is also a secular pro-regime cluster group that also often spreads hoaxes.’ [3-005-01]

Based on the context of the events behind the discourse, sentence 6 above refers to the spread of hoax news, which is considered being carried out by one group and by two groups supporting the presidential candidates. Based on the context of the incident, sentence 6 refers to the opinion of a Cyber security expert named IF in an interview on the CNN tv program (electronic media). In the interview, IF presented graphic data on the results of his research related to hoaxes to journalists. Suppose stated that counter-government accounts and pro-government accounts carried out the spread of hoaxes.

Based on Grice's maxims, sentence 6 shows conformity with existing facts and is supported by the opinion of an expert who has conducted scientific research. Thus, sentence 6 used by speakers to convey their criticisms on social media has a scientific fact-based and is relevant to the context of the existing situation.

This shows that sentence 6 obeys the maxim of quality and relation.

(7) *Besok-besok kalau adek kecil BAB ngeluarin cacing, cacingnya jangan di buang, kirim ke bu menteri karena berprotein* [3-016-02]

‘Tomorrow, if your little brother passes out worms, do not throw the worms out. Please send them to the minister because they are protein’ [3-016-02]

Based on Grice's maxims, sentence 7 shows a violation of relational maxims. The polemic of worms in packaged canned food is irrelevant to the type of worms that defecate which is stated in sentence 7 as a criticism of the Minister of Health's answer. Although criticism of the Minister of Health's answer is natural in terms of freedom of expression, the message must show relevance to what is being criticized. The Minister of Health's answer to the polemic of worms in packaged canned food is not related to the worms that originate from within the human body and are excreted through human faeces.

(8) *Ganti semua kabinet koplaknya* [3-016-04]  
‘Replace all the *stupid* cabinets’ [3-016-04]

Sentence 8 shows the violation to the maxim of quantity, the maxim of quality, and the maxim of relation. In terms of the maxim of quantity, the word *all* in sentence 8 shows a hyperbolic meaning. The question of the Minister of Health regarding worms in cans has no connection with all members of the government cabinet. Regarding the maxim of quality, the Minister of Health's answer does not reflect a stupid or cocky attitude. Although the Minister of Health's answer did not satisfy those who took issue with the polemic, the Minister of Health, as a health expert, gave a statement based on his knowledge. As for the maxims of relation, the attributes of *koplak* and the effort to involve the entire cabinet in the polemic of worms in canned food show the discrepancy between the messages and answers of the Minister of Health.

Sentences 7 and 8 are speaker criticisms of the Minister of Health regarding the polemic of worms in packaged canned food. Based on the context of the incident, sentences 7 and 8 relate to the answer of the Minister of Health (Menkes) in an interview regarding canned food containing worms. In the interview, the Minister of Health considered that the worms in the cans are harmless if appropriately processed, and the worms also contain protein. This statement is considered unacceptable as an answer to the polemic of canned food containing worms.

(9) *Negara lain lebih mementingkan pekerja lokal..disini mah pekerja lokal Cuma jadi kernet doank..* [3-004-01]

‘Other countries are more concerned with local workers. here, local workers are just a kernet..’ [3-004-01]

Based on the context of the incident, sentence 9 relates to the polemic of the President Jokowi's policy that wants to make it easier for foreign workers to work in Indonesia. This is considered as a policy that does not prioritize the interests of local workers. Sentence 9 shows a close relationship. The term *other countries prioritizes local workers* is contrasted with the clause *here local workers are just a kernet*. This comparison implies that local workers in other countries get good treatment and fortune from their government, while in Indonesia they do not. A *kernet* only implies that local workers only get jobs in the "kernet" position. The "kernet" job is a driver's assistant who is considered to be included in the category of people with a lower economic class or low income.

Based on Grice's maxims, sentence 9 shows a violation of the maxims of quality and quantity. Regarding the maxim of quality, the clause *here is that local workers are just a kernet* does not fit the actual and factual context. Many local workers occupy a good position in foreign companies. Local workers are not only labourers or “kernet” drivers for company goods transportation. This shows that the idea of sentence 9 is not under the facts. In terms of the maxim of quantity, the expression *Just being a kernet* in sentence 9 shows an attempt to generalize and decrease the social value of local workers in Indonesia. The word *only* in sentence 9 shows an attempt to limit the actual weight of the information. In a factual context, many local workers get job opportunities in foreign companies located in various regions in Indonesia. Local workers even have positions that are considered much better than the “kernet” profession.

(10) *berarti dana cukong besar ditilep sama panitia.* [3-053-01]

‘It means that a tremendous cukong funds are stolen by the committee.’ [3-053-01]

Based on the context of the incident, sentence 10 above relates to the statement of one of the volunteers at the *Pesta Rakyat Untukmu Indonesia* ‘People's Party for You Indonesia’ activity at Monas who thought that the food he received was like dog food. The word *ditilep* ‘stolen’ in sentence 10 refers to the statement of the volunteer quoted in the contents of the online news, namely: *“the committee should be honest so that residents are not disappointed, it gives the impression that we are being manipulated and manipulated by our friends,” said Eliz.* Based on the statement, the speaker understands that the incident experienced by the volunteer occurred because the committee cheated by cutting off the participants' money for food and drinks.

Referring to the statement contained in the news contents, we cannot find evidence that the organizing committee stole the funds for the activity. The statement of one of the participants was just an expression of his disappointment and suspicion towards the committee. In

the contents of the news, no explanation strengthens these suspicions. Logically, the food that the participants complained about could not represent the reality that the event committee had stolen the consumption funds of the participants. The absence of evidence of information as a reference to justify the speaker's assessment shows that the speaker also supports the accusations made by the news against the participants.

If viewed from Grice's maxim, sentence 10 violates the maxim of quality and quantity. The word *ditilap* 'stolen' does not reflect the context of the event, which shows the disappointment of the event committee. The word *ditilap* 'stolen' in sentence 10 is not supported by a proposition that strengthens or explains the act of stealing carried out by the executive committee.

- (11) *masih ingatkan!..kasus pembacokan pakar IT Hermansyah* [3-001-03]  
 'still remember!...the case of stabbing IT expert Hermansyah' [3-001-03]

Based on the context of the incident, sentence 11 refers to the legal process against the perpetrator of stabbing an IT expert named Hermansyah. The *Rakyat Oposisi* account questioned the case on social media about the development of the legal process. Based on the context of the situation, there is no news about the development of the legal process against the perpetrators of the stabbing. This causes speakers to convey their insinuations against law enforcement on social media. Moreover, sentence 11 implies that law enforcement against perpetrators of the stabbing is not open to the public. Based on Grice's maxim, sentence 11 shows compliance with the maxim of quality. The assumption contained in sentence 11 refers to the context of the actual situation regarding the absence of news regarding the development of the legal process for the stabbing perpetrator when the speaker conveyed the insinuation on Facebook. Naturally, a legal process that is not open can raise public suspicion of law enforcement.

12. *pidatonya seolah-olah berapi-api, hobynya seolah-olah macho milenial, takutnya sama kaos koq tidak seolah-olah?* [3-27-01]  
 'His speech seems to be heroic; his hobby is as if he is a millennial macho; but he is really afraid of a t-shirt, why?' [3-27-01]

Based on the context of the incident, sentence 12 refers to the polemic of Jokowi's supporters who reject the 2019 Change President attribute because it is considered a negative campaign. This refusal has become the target of criticism from the participants of the 2019 Change President movement. Sentence 12 shows a contradictory relationship. This can be seen in the first two clauses *his speech seems to be heroic, his hobby is as if he is a millennial macho*, and the final clause *but he is really afraid of a t-shirt, why?* In sentence 12, the word *heroic* refers to JKW's speech style, which is considered

to be delivered with passion. The word *macho* which means 'manly' or 'strong', refers to JKW's boxing. The phrase "afraid of a t-shirt" refers to the context of the discourse situation, which refers to the rejection of JKW support groups against the 2019 Change President hashtag movement. The group's rejection was also interpreted as JKW's fear of the movement.

Based on Grice's maxim, sentence 12 shows a violation of the maxim of quality and relation. In terms of the maxim of quality, the rejection of the hashtag movement did not come from Jokowi but his supporters. Regarding the maxim of relation, the contradictory relationship in sentence 12 does not show relevance to each other.

- (13) *Jokowi inginkan izin tenaga kerja asing dipermudah* [3-004-05]

'Jokowi wants foreign worker permits to be made easier.' [3-004-05]

Based on the context of the incident, sentence 13 refers to the polemic of the presence of foreign workers in Indonesia and Jokowi's appeal before the minister to make it easier for foreign workers to enter to work in Indonesia. This is considered a policy that does not prioritize the interests of local workers. Sentence 13 can give rise to various negative assumptions. Sentence 13 implies that foreign workers are free to enter looking for work without obstacles to invite many foreign workers to work in Indonesia. Thus, local workers will compete for job opportunities in Indonesia. This can reduce job opportunities for local workers.

In terms of Grice's maxim, sentence 13 violates the maxim of quantity. Sentence 13 does not contain complete information regarding Jokowi's policy to make it easier for foreign workers to enter Indonesia. Based on the context of the incident, the appeal refers to the ease at the permit stage for foreign workers who have become part of the collective agreement between the government and foreign investors. In the agreement, foreign investors can use foreign workers from their country to be used in investment activities in Indonesia. Information contained in this context needs to be conveyed to readers on social media to understand the appeal. However, this is ignored by speakers.

- (14) '(CURANG UNTUK MENANG [3-029-01]. (*ini ada protokol, untuk kegiatan kampanye seorang politikus. Namanya jelas ditulis: jokowi* [3-029-01])'

'(CHEAT TO WIN [3-029-01]. (This is a protocol for a politician's campaign activities. His name is written: jokowi' [3-029-01])'

Based on the context of the incident, sentence 14 refers to the declaration of Jokowi's supporters, which

was questioned by Jokowi's political opponents. The declaration was considered a campaign violation, so speakers assumed that Jokowi and his supporters had cheated before the election. The activity is described as an organized activity with a protocol that has been prepared to deliberately reveal Jokowi's self-image. In the context of elections, a declaration is understood as an activity to express support for candidates who will participate in contestation in the general election. At the same time, campaigning is an activity to gain voter support carried out by the candidate and candidate winning team by conveying the vision, mission, and campaign attributes. In Election Regulation Number 23 of 2018 concerning General Election Campaigns, Article 19 states that campaign materials consist of the vision, mission, program, and/or candidate's self-image. Referring to the article, the declaration activities carried out by JKW volunteers are not campaigns. In the activity of the declaration, the vision and mission, the candidate program were not conveyed to the public sphere. It can be concluded that the cheat attribute has no relevance to the actual factual context. Thus, based on Grice's maxim, sentence 14 above violates the maxim of quality and relation because it does not show the compatibility between the idea of the sentence and the facts.

(15) *mereka kepanasan saat bang Fadli Zon mengkritik...* Padahal memang tugas DPR itu adalah mengkritik kebijakan pemerintah yang tidak sesuai dengan keinginan Rakyat.. [3-007-01 ]

'they are overheated when Fadli Zon criticized... Even though it is the DPR's job to criticize government policies that are not in accordance with the wishes of the people. [3-007-01 ]

Based on the contest of events, sentence 15 relates to netizens' attacks on FZ politicians on social media for conveying their criticisms of drug cases that still often occur in Indonesia. In sentence 15, netizens are described as very angry because of the criticism. In addition, the submissive also described that what FZ did was part of his duties as a member of the DPR RI. This shows that netizens do not understand the duties of FZ as a member of the DPR who has the right to criticize the government. Referring to the context of the events behind sentence 15 above, based on Grice's maxim, the sentence shows compliance with the maxim of quality. Criticism submitted by a member of the council against the government is a natural thing and in accordance with its function as a legislator. The speaker's criticism of netizens who attack FZ and implies that netizens do not understand the role of FZ as a member of the Indonesian House of Representatives who criticizes drug cases are

also relevant. Anger and attacks against FZ should not be made because FZ conveys criticism as a member of the legislature.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The results of the data analysis showed that *Rakyat Oposisi* account did not observed ethical guidelines in delivering criticism. Furthermore, based on the the concept of data analysis, aspects of truthfulness, relevance, and informativeness proposed in Grice's cooperative principle maxims can be used as a tool of ethical language analysis in the speech of criticism that is ironic. Based on the rules in the maxims, the assumptions contained in ironic criticism speech. The assumptions in the criticism speech must observe truth condition, relevance, and supporting information. Assumptions that violate these maxims can be considered as prejudice or slander against individuals who were criticized.

#### AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors: Ziyaul Haq and Mukhammad Isnaeni contributed equally as the main contributors. ZH for scripting and MI for translating and proofreading. All authors read and approved the final paper.

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