

Grice Maxims Flouting and Stylistic Devices of a Selected Dramatic Text: A Pragma-stylistic Study

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Abstract

This study examines the pragmatic and stylistic elements of M. Crimp's play *Attempts on Her Life*. It focuses on how pragmatic elements and stylistic devices are applied to literary works, particularly dramatic text. This study aims at demonstrating how Grice's cooperative principle is flouted, highlighting the maxims that are most often flouted at both levels of interaction to achieve stylistic effects, and identifying which figures of speech are most frequently employed in the play. The study focuses on Grice's Cooperative Principle and the way it influences the stylistic devices represented by the figures of speech across two levels of interaction. It concludes that the maxims of quantity and manner are flouted more than the other maxims. Repetition and simile are the most dominant figures of speech in the play at the levels of character-character interaction and narrator-reader interaction.

Keywords: pragma-stylistics, cooperative principle, dramatic text, figures of speech

Introduction

The term 'pragma-stylistics' refers to any study that helps describe a piece of literary writing that has taken place in the linguistic and sociocultural settings. Sell (1991: 99; cited in I'Jam and Al-Mamouri, 2019:56) specifies, "it works with literary on one hand and linguistic on the other with a great emphasis on contextualization". Jeffries and McIntyre (2010: 100) affirm, "Overlook the presence of drama in their work, which is due to the lack of resources to handle certain forms of texts or the study of discursive interaction."

In the 1980s, there was some shift in the evolution of conversation analysis, pragmatics and discourse, which provided stylisticians with methods to examine the sense of dialogue and interaction in literary texts, leading to the emergence of pragma-stylistics (pragmatic stylistics) (Norgaard et al., 2010: 45).

Allan (2016: 217) attempts to extend the observations and methodologies related to pragmatics, which tends to handle the language definition of style i.e., the various ways in using both written and spoken language, for instance, the study of the language of literary texts among authors, genres, and periods. Pragma-stylistics, then, is stylistics but with a pragmatic aspect.

Accordingly, this study attempts pragma-stylistically to analyse Martin Crimp's play 'Attempts on Her Life' in order to examine various pragmatic and stylistic elements used in the play and identify their influence of the style. Therefore, the study further adds more to the fields of stylistics and pragmatics in the analysis of drama. This study aims at demonstrating

how Grice's cooperative principle is flouted, highlighting the maxims that are most often flouted at both levels of interaction to achieve stylistic effects, and identifying which figures of speech are most frequently employed in the play.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Literary and Non-literary Discourse

Text discussions are deemed insufficient if the difference between literary and nonliterary texts is not taken into account. Literary discourse is thought to be more complex to understand, even if the fundamental value of literary texts over nonliterary writings is not acknowledged. The complexity and breadth of languages (Alderson, 2000, p. 65). "Literary and non-literary discourse" is what Alderson refers to as "literary and non-literary texts" (Ibid.). The same linguistic resources—syntax, morphology, figures of speech, etc.—can be used in both literary and nonliterary texts in spoken and written language, according to Black (2006, p. 2). Additionally, these strategies could be highly useful in literary.

2.2 Pragma-Stylistics

Linguists are concerned with pragmatics and stylistics, which are fundamentally structural in character (Oden, 1982, p. 242). He asserts that linguists' focus shifts from language form to function due to pragmatics and stylistics. Oden acknowledges the distinctions between stylistics and pragmatics, but they are language-related fields that are connected. The intersection of pragmatics and stylistics is known as pragmatic-stylistics. One way to describe the relationship between pragmatics and stylistics is as a subset of stylistics known as pragmatic stylistics. According to Norgaard et al. (2010, p. 43), pragma-stylistics refers to the relationship between the text of the literary work and its performance, which is directed in the "pragmastylistic analysis of texts."

2.3 Figures of Speech

2.3.1 Metaphor

The definition of metaphor is "referring to something that is connected to something else." The "interaction between a metaphorical expression and the context in which it is used" is the fundamental component of the metaphor principle (Chun, 2005, p. 778).

2.3.2 Simile

Similes are used to draw attention to the similarities between two people in an explicit way. Terence (1972, p. 12) explains the distinction between a simile and a metaphor. He claims that because these two figures of speech constitute comparisons, there is a real but slight difference between these two figures of speech is real but not substantial since the two are forms of comparison.

2.3.3 Irony

Since irony is regarded as "a friendlylike way of being critical and/or offensive," it is said to be a tool (Leech 1983, p. 82).

2.3.4 Rhetorical Questions

"Challenging statement to convey the addresser's commitment to its implicit answer in order to induce the addressee's mental recognition of its obviousness and the acceptance, verbalized or non-verbalized, of its validity" is how Ilie (1994, p. 128) defines a rhetorical inquiry.

2.3.5 Understatement

Understatement serves the purpose of lessening the prominence or importance of anything, which denotes a significant amount (Cruse, 2006, p. 185).

3. Methodology

3.1 The Model of the Study

The model of this study is an eclectic one, which has three models namely, Grice's Cooperative Principle of Maxims (1975), Black's model of the two levels of interaction (2006), and Niazi and Gautam's (2010) use of figures of speech along with the above-mentioned models for achieving stylistic effects. These figures of speech include simile, metaphor, irony, foreshadowing, rhetorical questions, repetition, understatement, and onomatopoeia.

3.2. Attempts on Her Life: Overview and Style

Zimmerman (2003: 75) calls "*Attempts on Her Life*" a postdramatic play. A postdramatic play involves performance by unknown non-impersonating performers who are a group of anonymous speakers. The play "*Attempts on Her Life*" was written by the British playwright Martin Crimp in 1997.

This play involves seventeen scenes, some of which may be interconnected to each other in a direct way. The play is made up of short fragments in contrasting styles and voices, and during the rehearsal process, the company of actors and directors must flesh out the gaps to introduce a finished work. There were only eight texts extracted from the play "*Attempts on Her Life*" to be representative for the selected play.

3.3 Data Analysis

Extract No.1:

"We're saying that we want to be OVERWHELMED by the sheer quantity YES BY THE SHEER QUANTITY of all the things that Anne can be ALL THE THINGS, THAT ANNE CAN BE What's Hecuba to her..."

(Scene 5: p. 25)

Cooperative Principle

Here, the cooperative concept is broken. The speaker uses the same phrases again in the first section of the excerpt, which violates the quantity maxim at the level of narrator-reader interaction. Consequently, recurrence violates the quantity maxim. This flouting has a conversational implications in that the speaker is attempting to validate his speech in relation to their actual talk by repeating the word talking. Once more, the quantity maxim is broken by the use of repetition in the extract's last section: "We are expressing our desire to be overwhelmed by the sheer amount yes, by the sheer quantity of everything Anne is capable of being."

Extract No.2:

*"- She's lying there, isn't she? with the tube in her poor thin arm, looking terribly pale, whiter in fact than I the pillow.
- 'Like a TV screen,' she says, 'where everything from the front looks real and alive, but round the back'"*

(Scene 6: p. 31)

Cooperative Principle

In this excerpt, the line "She's lying there, isn't she?" violates the rule of excellence at the level of character-character interaction. According to the quality maxim, one should only express what one believes to be true. The speaker claims that Annie is lying in this statement, but he then finishes it. concept by requesting a certification for it. Thus, this situation violates the quality maxim. This passage employs both metaphor and simile as figures of speech. In the statement "Like a TV screen," a simile is employed. The speaker clarifies Annie's condition, stating that despite her attractive appearance, she has numerous problems, and she implies that one should not be alarmed. manipulated by looks. The statement, "where everything from the front looks real and alive, but around the back there's just dust and a few wires," employs metaphor.

Extract No.3:

"what? (pause) The world? Hiding from the world, Anne? Come on. Grow up. Grow up, Anne, and pick up the phone. Pause. So what is this then? A cry for help? Don't tell me this is a cry for help. Because what am I supposed to do exactly about your cry for help? Mm? Is that the scenario I'm supposed to?"

(Scene 1: p. 8)

Cooperative Principle

Here, the cooperative concept is broken. The speaker repeatedly poses similar questions in the same scenario in the first section of the excerpt, which violates the quantity maxim in character-character interaction. Thus, the use of repetition violates the quantity maxim. The voice poses the same queries again: "What are you hiding from? The globe? Anne, are you hiding from the world? This flouting has conversational consequences since it shows that the speaker is eager to hear Anne's reaction. The phrase "Pick up the phone" is another example of repeated speech. Come on. Develop adulthood.

The conversational implicature at the level of the narrator-reader interaction is that the speaker is really excited for Anne to grow up and pick up the phone. The phrase "It's no use hiding" is a breach of manners at the level of the narrator-reader interaction because it is not immediately clear to the reader why hiding is pointless. Here, rhetorical queries take the form of: "Are you hiding from the world, Anne? Is that what I'm meant to picture happening? Since the speaker just wants to influence the reader, Anne is not asked for an answer. It means that there is a flouting in the quality maxim.

Extract No.4:

"-We understand that our children will be safe and happy in the back seat of the Anny just as the adults will be relaxed and confident at the wheel

-Happy

- Secure.

- In control.

- The Anny skims the white beaches of the world as easily as she parks outside the halogen-lit shoe"

(Scene 7: p. 37)

Cooperative Principle

This narrator-reader interaction violates the cooperative principle. The quantity maxim is broken in the phrase "Happy, Secure, and In control" since the speaker uses only one word to convey an idea, and the manner maxim is broken due to this strategy (using lone words). Because there are insufficient words to adequately convey the meaning, readers are unable to understand the intention. Since the speaker highlights how comparable it is for adults and children to unwind in the car, a simile is employed in the line "as the adults will be relaxed and confident at the wheel."

Extract No.5:

"- The soldiers are laughing even though these are their own cousins, their own parents, their / mothers and fathers.

- Burning their own parents in the sacred orchard. Burning them alive and laughing. - Or burying them alive. Burying them alive up to their necks in the fertile earth, then smashing their skulls open with a spade.

- 'The flower.'"

(Scene 3: p. 19)

Cooperative Principle

Here, the cooperative concept is broken. The speaker employs several expressions in the first section of the extract, which violates the quantity maxim at the narrator-reader interaction level. This is because the notion is made apparent to the reader right away, therefore there is no need for the speaker to utilize as many phrases as possible. The speech's opening. There is also noncompliance with the narrator-reader interaction level in the second section. First of all, the speaker feels unsure of his own words because the first rule of excellence is being so flagrantly broken: "Burning their own parents in the sacred orchard." smiling while burning them alive. Second, the final metaphorical application violates the rule of manners; it is symbolized by the usage of the phrase "flower," alluding to a deceased person's seeming head.

Extract No.6:

"- It's not a mystery gift, no. She ticks a box, she ticks a box selecting the gift she wants to receive: maybe a handy clock-radio, a camera or a set of / miniature screwdrivers.

-A set of miniature screwdrivers or a handy disposable camera

- She's a non-smoker.

- She's definitely a non-smoker. Although I think it's true to say she may occasionally take cigarettes

from other people."

(Scene 4: p. 23)

Cooperative Principle

The speaker in the first section of the excerpt violates the quantity maxim in the narrator-reader interaction level by repeating the phrase "She ticks a box" twice. Consequently, repetition is used to take advantage of quantity maxims. The statement violates the rule of quality. She does not smoke, that much is clear. While it's true that she might occasionally steal cigarettes from others, the speaker creates a notion that is untrue by claiming that she doesn't smoke before claiming that she steals cigarettes from other people.

Extract No.7:

"-Let's say he grunts, yes, but sensitively. Let's say it's the sensitive grunt of the attractive man of power and authority, not for example the coarse pig-like grunt of a mechanic lying on his back in a confined space trying to loosen a cross-threaded nut with a heavy and inappropriately sized wrench."

(Scene 2: p. 11)

Cooperative Principle

The speaker in this passage employs numerous expressions to highlight the contrast between the wealthy and the impoverished, which violates the quantity maxim in terms of narrator-reader interaction. Once more, the quantity maxim is broken by using certain phrases repeatedly, such as "Let's let's suppose he grunts" and "Let's assume it's the sensitive grunt," the speaker is limited to using only the second utterance to convey the whole meaning. This passage uses metaphor to illustrate the contrast between a wealthy man's luxurious life and a poor man's difficult life. The amount and manner maxims in "Absolutely not," where the speaker fails to provide a sufficient justification, are another example of outright lying.

Extract No.8:

*"-She doesn't seem to care, She has no conscience. She expresses no remorse. She says, 'I do not I recognise your authority.'
- 'I do not recognise your authority.' Just what does she mean by that?"*

(Scene, 9: p. 43)

Cooperative Principle

First of all, this extract violates the rule of quality. According to the speaker, "she doesn't seem to care." When a speaker uses the term "seem," it indicates that they are unsure of the concept being given. Therefore, the quality maxim is broken on both levels (the level of character-to-character contact and reader-narrator interaction degree). This speech's conversational implicature is that the speaker is unsure of himself and expresses his thoughts without providing proof because he fears that she doesn't care about him. The excerpt suggests that rhetorical questions are frequently used. Numerous queries that are not meant to elicit information are posed by the speaker

3.4 Discussing the Results

3.4.1 Grice Maxims Flouting

1. Discussing the Results of Flouting Grice's Maxims in *Attempts on Her Life* at Both Levels

Chart 1: The following chart shows the results of flouting Grice maxims in *Attempts on Her Life* play at the character-character and narrator- reader interaction levels.

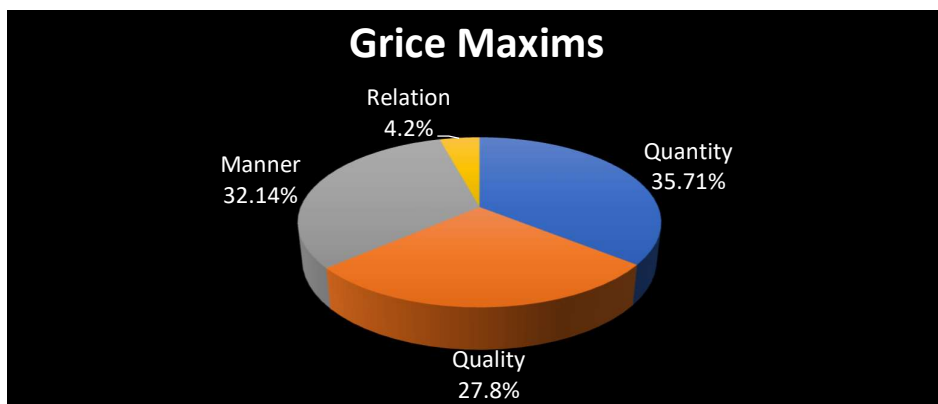


Table 1: The Frequencies and Percentages of Flouting Grice's Maxims in *Attempts on Her Life* at Both Levels

Characters	Flouting							
	Quantity		Quality		Manner		Relation	
	Fr	Pr	Fr	Pr	Fr	Pr	Fr	Pr
Anne	25	12.5	12	7.69	7	3.88	2	8.33
Other characters	90	45	79	50.64	95	52.77	12	50
Narrator	85	42.5	65	41.66	78	43.33	10	41.66
Total	200	100	156	100	180	100	24	100
Total Flouting	560							

As it is clear, the maxim of manner is when someone tries to be clear, brief, and as orderly as possible in what a person or a character says, and when one avoids ambiguity and obscurity. Nevertheless, the characters for being ambiguous and not clear enough exploit or disobey this maxim here.

Finally, the maxim of relation is flouted with low frequencies and that is due to the play subject matter that discusses the things that are relevant and pertinent to the thematic matter of ‘war and violence’ and ‘the horrors and joys of capitalism’. In other words, the characters restrict themselves to talking only in relation to the pertinent topics to the discussions of the play, and they rarely talk of unrelated expressions. Therefore, they do not use digressiveness to add a kind of amusement. Besides, the reason why Crimp exploits the maxim of relation less than the other maxims is that the scenes of the play on the narrator-reader interaction are presented almost in compliance with a chronological order and they are relative to emphasize the theme of the play. Thus, Anne flouts the maxim of relation with a frequency of (2) and a ratio of (8.3%), while other characters with a frequency of (12) and a ratio of (50%) flout it. So, the first three maxims (quantity, quality, and manner) are mostly broken in the play *‘Attempts on Her Life’*.

2. Discussing the Results of Figures of Speech in *Attempts on Her Life* at Both Levels.

Chart (2): The following chart shows the use of figures of speech in *Attempts on Her Life* at character-character interaction and narrator- reader interaction levels.

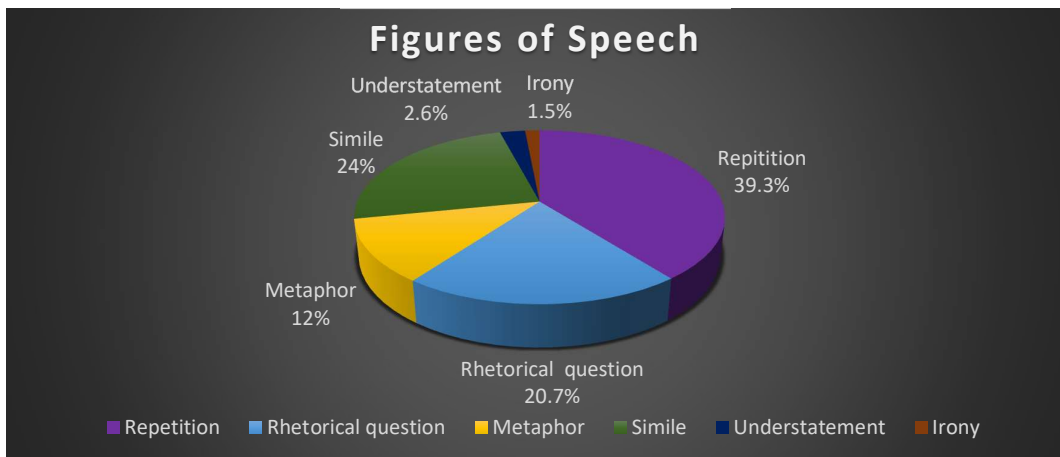


Table (2): The Frequencies and Percentages of Figures of Speech in *Attempts on Her Life* at Both Levels

Characters	Figures of Speech											
	Repetition		Rhetorical question		Metaphor		Simile		Understatement		Irony	
	Fr	Pr	Fr	Pr	Fr	Pr	Fr	Pr	Fr	Pr	Fr	Pr
Anne	10	5.55	30	31.5	4	7.4	10	9.1	2	16.6	1	14.3
Other characters	55	30.55	65	68.5	50	92.6	100	90.9	10	83.4	5	71.4
Narrator	115	63.88	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	14.3
Total	180	100	95	100	54	100	110	100	12	100	7	100
Total Figures of speech	458											

Crimp (the playwright) heavily employs repetition as he uses it with a frequency of (115) and a ratio of (63.88%). He repeats the same sentences more than once in order to attract the reader's attention, as they are very important in having the reader's identification of the unnamed characters. Irony is used only once with a ratio of (14.3%). These are the figures of speech used by the narrator as he leaves most of the rates to his characters to identify themselves.

Going to character-character interaction level, rhetorical question is the most noticeable figure of speech used by *Anne*. She uses it with a frequency of (30) and a ratio of (31.5%) because she always tries to continue talking and communicating with the others through the play while the other characters use it with a frequency of (65) and a ratio of (68.5%) as they try to have the next speaker to continue stating facts.

Anne uses repetition with a frequency of (10) and a ratio of (5.55%). The other characters, on the other hand, use it with a frequency of (55) and a ratio of (30.55%). Thus, the other characters use repetition more than *Anne* does, which are connected with the emphasis or affirming some situations.

Finally, irony gains the lowest rate among others since it carries a sense of amusement and that is incompatible with the play's topic. Thus, *Anne* uses it with a frequency of (1) and a ratio of (14.3%) while other characters use it with a frequency of (5) and a ratio of (71.4%).

4. Conclusions

Based on the analysis, the first aim is achieved since the cooperative principle is heavily exploited to generate conversational implicature. So, the maxims of quantity and manner are flouted more than the other maxims. Crimp depends on exploiting Grice's maxims to clearly produce conversational implicature and convey his messages efficiently through the characters. The second aim is verified as repetition and simile are predominantly used in the play. Repetition may be worthy like to repeat something that has already been said or written to be indisputable or for some purpose or message the speaker wants to convey and emphasize. The heavy use of repetition implies a logical emphasis that mainly aims at attracting the readers or audience's attention on a certain word or phrase of the text; it implies that it is clearly found in Anne's speech and even the other characters to emphasize the reality of Anne and her different personalities. Simile performs an explicit attention to the similarity that is shared by two individuals, and that is shown with the different personalities of Anne when she tries to compare herself to a car, a terrorist, a mother, and a survival, and the other characters make use of simile too. The other figures of speech are found with various uses.

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