The Power of Implicature in Addressing Covid19 as a Global Pandemic

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ABSTRACT:
        Since Covid19 is a contagious virus when infected, patients should follow the recommended instructions and precautions, the first was to stay isolated from the community as much as possible. (Public Health Agency of Sweden, 2020. Although social distancing has effectively resulted in slowing the virus's spread, there are enormous challenges posed to societies to convince the public, especially in democratic countries, to stay-at-home at the essential outbreak (Engle et al. 2020; Fowler et al. 2020; Bilgin 2020; Abouk and Heydari 2020; Hale et al. 2020; Studdert and Hall 2020; Gostin and Hodge 2020). This study investigates the implied meanings in the speeches declaring COVID-19 a global pandemic and shedding light on associated ambiguity and implied meaning.
        To what extent was the hidden meaning in line with the strength and ambiguity of the Covid-19 epidemic? For the pragmatic analysis, which is qualitative and quantitative, the model is: flouting Grice's maxims (1975) utilizing the off-record strategies of politeness by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), and the data understudy were two political speeches which were: The South African President Ramasopha and the Nigerian President Buhari' speeches addressing Covid19 as a global pandemic. The results reveal the connection between implicature and many other factors that contribute to its existence and which are included in the context.
Keywords: Covid19, South Africa, Nigeria, Grice's maxims, Brown and Levinson, Off-record.

1. The Introduction

1.2. Problem Statement

        The efficient linguistic communication between two or more cooperative agents demands some specific rules such as 'be clear' and 'be polite' which are suggested by Lakoff (1989: 116). However, sometimes some speeches may not be clear, in other words, they involve layers of implied meanings. Therefore, the implicature of political leaders' speeches concerning the outbreak of Covid19 arise some queries as follows:

2. What are the strategies of implicature in the presidents' speeches concerning Covid19?

   3. What are the issues that bring implicature to occur?

   4. Is implicature in those speeches used for responsibility repudiation or it is a means of intimidation for getting complete control of the public?

1.3.   Hypotheses

Through answering the questions addressed in this study, the following conclusions could be drawn as follows:

1. In the political leaders' speeches about Covid19, instead of hiding facts by implicature, some secrets of some countries were revealed.
2. Objectivity characterized the political speeches about Covid19 since the situation is too hard to be dealt with subjectively.

1.4.   Objectives of the Study

Chaer (2010) states that the politicians' willingness to convey vague information to be on the peaceful side in all situations makes them adopt implicature in their speeches. Therefore, the current study aims to reveal the implied meaning in two political speeches and the extent of the hidden meaning in concealing or revealing some issues. It is not a comparison study as much as it sheds light on some of the differences between implicature and its strategies in crises.

1.5.   Methodology

This study is qualitative and quantitative research built on data collected in the form of words and statistics (Thao & Herman, 2020; Sinaga et al., 2020). The data is mainly the speeches of two African political leaders who announced Covid19 as a global pandemic; they are President Ramasopha of South Africa and President BUHARI of Nigeria.

The researchers explored those speeches which were delivered when Covid19 became an international public health concern that had to be announced as a pandemic. All instances of Covid19 initial outbreak speeches are collected from websites. Norwanto (2006) elaborates that by hiding information, introducing false facts, and presenting irrelevant issues to the main topic, the politicians would, in fact, violate the maxims of quantity, quality, and relation. Then, content analysis is used to identify the implicature referring to Grice's (1975) conversational implicature, and off-record strategies in Brown and Levinson politeness (1987).

1.6.   The Study Procedures

In order to achieve the aims of the present study, the following steps have been followed:

1. Presenting a survey of Grice's theory to build a proposed model to be followed in this study.
2. Presenting the off-record strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness (1978, 1987). Whenever there is an off-record strategy, there will be one of Grice's maxims flouted (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 211). Hence, flouted maxims will generate conversational implicature.

3. Using the results of the analysis to answer the questions aroused.

1.7.   Scope and Limitation

The study is purely pragmatic and the model is the flouting of Grice's maxims achieved by off-record strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson in their theory of politeness (1978, 1987). The chosen data to be analyzed pragmatically in this study is only two speeches excluding any body language or facial expressions.

1.8.   Significance of the Study

Political language, pragmatics, and the details of the Covid19 are involved in this study. Thus, those interested in linguistics, political science and the details of the public response to Covid19 in its first and most dangerous stages will find in this study what enriches their interests and orientations.

1.9.   Previous Studies

1.9.1.Marbun, Dumaris E. Silalahi, and Herman Herman (2021)

the research "*Telling People to Change Their Behaviour Through Implications: An Implicature Analysis on Covid-19 Public Service Announcements in Indonesia*" by Marbun, Dumaris E. Silalahi, and Herman Herman (2021), public service announcements (PSAs), which are a governmental official way in Indonesia for providing information, as Covid-19, were analyzed. Thus the data of eleven Covid-19 PSAs which were published from March 2020 to January 2021 was analyzed qualitatively by Grice's implicature theory. The findings of the study proved that in addressing Covid19 issues, the employment of conversational implicature was more frequent than conventional implicature. The results of this study, moreover, illuminated the differences between each type of implicature and contributed to the lack of studies of PSAs' implied meanings, and the dearth of implicature studies in a non-classroom context.

Although it seems that there is an agreement between the mentioned study and the current one, the diversity between them has arisen in some aspects. the data understudy are eleven announcements of public service (PSAs), the objectives of this study figured out the types of implicature arisen in (PSAs) which indicates the importance of highlighting data itself to be the focus of futuristic researches. Moreover, the data belongs to one source and one nationality. However, in our study there is a focus on the production of implicature by investigating the strategies that contribute in producing implicature instead of concentrating on its types which demonstrates following the roots of implicature.

2.   Literature Review

2.1. Gricean Cooperative Principle

Grice illustrates that the sense of cooperation is the element that could not be absent from conversations. Hence, Grice (1989: 26) pointed out *"make your conversational contributions such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged"*. It could be an idol stereotype of conversation,

According to Grice's analysis, the participant in conversation is directed by a set of assumptions which are encompassed by the cooperative principle which, in turn, include four maxims. The interlocutors in each conversation are supposed to carry out cooperative principles by obeying the four maxims of conversation. These four maxims are as follows:

1. The Maximum of Quantity: it is the control over the quantity of what is said; increase or decrease in what is said is refused.

2. The Maximum of Quality: lack of credibility is refused. Thus, evidence for facts presented should be involved.

3. The Maximum of Relation: only related subjects to the issue discussed should be included in the conversation

4. The maximum of Manner: there should be no ambiguity and vagueness in the information presented.

2.2. Implicatures Arising out of Flouting the Maxims

It is the deliberate breaking of maxims without deception. Bluntly, by the blatant failure of observing the maxims without misleading will result in raising the hearer's attention to look for additional meaning. This additional meaning is called 'conversational implicature' and this way of generating conversational implicature is called "flouting a Maxim" (Grice, 1975:71). The accomplishment of this type of implicature depends on the interlocutors' shared knowledge of interpreting the world (Coulthard, 1985). According to Brown & Levinson (1987: 211-227), violating Grice's maxims to create inference results from the use of off-record politeness as follows:

i. **The Maxim of Quality**

In strategies such as irony, metaphor, rhetorical questions, and patent falsehood, flouting the maxims of quality will be produced clearly with the aid of the type of context. Levinson (1983:109).

The next four strategies violate the quality maxim

Strategy 7: *Use contradictions*.

Strategy 8: *Be Ironic*.

Strategy 9: *Use metaphors.*

Strategy 10: Use rhetorical questions

ii. **The Maxim of Quantity**

Through communication, the tautology strategy is used for conveying a great number of facts and information though it seems a repetition and playing with words.

 (Levinson, 1983:11)

The next three strategies violate the quantity maxim.

Strategy 4: *Understate*

Strategy 5: *Overstate*.

Strategy 6: *Use tautologies*

iii. **The Maxim of Relation**

Unrelated subjects to the issue discussed should be included in the conversation.

This strategy is subdivided into the following strategies, and the first three strategies violate the relevance maxim as follows:

Strategy 1: *Give hints*.
Strategy 2: *Give association clues*.
Strategy 3: *Presupposition*.

iv.   **The Maxim of Manner**

Most of the time, flouting the maxim of manner is done when there is a use of the circumlocutions strategy in communication instead of being brief.

The next five strategies violate the manner maxim as follows:

Strategy 11: *Be ambiguous*.
Strategy 12: *Be vague*.
Strategy 13: *Over-generalize*.
Strategy 14: *Displace H.*
Strategy 15: *Be incomplete, use ellipsis*.

3.   **Data Analysis and Results discussions**

The thorough analysis of the two speeches results in the following outcomes reflected in table (1) and Table (2):

Table (1) The Percentages of Off-Record Strategies and The Resulted Percentages of Flouting Grice's Maxims in the South African President's Speech

Off-Record Strategy	The Percentage	Flouted Grice's Maxim	The Percentage
Vague Strategy	38,2%	Maxim of Manner	57,6%
Over-generalize strategy	16%		
Ambiguous Strategy	3,4%		
Overstate Strategy	16%	Maxim of Quantity	24,9%
Understate Strategy	3,4%		
Tautology Strategy	5,5%		
Metaphor Strategy	9,8%	Maxim of Quality	9,8%
Hint Strategy	4,9%	Maxim of Relation	7,7%
Give Association Clue	2,8%		

● The results of the analysis of the South African President's speech illustrated the excessive amount of vagueness in the speech represented by flouting the maxim of manner with a percentage of (57, 2%). This percentage is the total of the three strategies that required flouting the maxim of manner and the most prominent strategy was the 'vague' strategy. The 'vague' strategy was used by the South African President for achieving some goals such as asking his people not to go to hospitals since infected persons should have the priority in getting the treatment. For example:

  "But there are <u>people</u> who develop severe <u>symptoms</u> and require hospitalization".

● Divided between announcing the fear of the future under such circumstances, and his people's collapse after introducing such facts, the African President's concern was reflected by his use of the 'vague' strategy. For example:

"and as we look to the future – we should remember <u>why</u> we are here"

● It couldn't be recognized as optimism or pessimism but generally, it is a way of declaring that some of his people are about to die. So, the African President's choice of the vague strategy was appropriate in such a situation. For example:

"For some of these people, COVID-19 is fatal".

● Other uses of vague strategy were demonstrated when announcing that Covid19 overwhelmed the whole world with many infected persons. It could be interpreted as either the African President's attempts to present consolation that they are not the only victims of this virus and provides encouragement that they are not alone but there should be some successful attempts to decline this virus by the other countries, or frightens his people in order to obtain their full obedience in following the governmental instructions. For example:

"Across the world, more than 185,000 people have succumbed to the disease"

▪ More uses of vague strategy revealed more of the South African President's fears. The fear is the comparison between his government and others. He did not mention any country specifically. It is always China that will be agreed upon in mentioning in the situation of Covid 19. As for other countries, no one could mention any other country due to the fear of fueling political conflicts.

"This is what has occurred in many countries across the world, and it is precisely what we, as South Africa, have gone to great lengths to prevent".

● Describing the results of Covid19 was presented by vague strategy since such results of a pandemic could not be introduced precisely with all its vague, unknown, optimistic, or pessimistic consequences. For example:

"We have decided on this approach because there is still much that is unknown about the rate and manner of the spread of the virus within our population"

● The way of presenting the instructions of the quarantine at the same time with containing his people made the South African President use vague strategy considering his people's reactions towards stopping specific activities. For example:

"Level 4 means that some activity can be allowed to resume subject to extreme precautions required to limit community transmission and outbreaks"

● In addition to his fear of his people's refusal of the quarantine, it is his fear of any political conflicts that might result from his utterances. He wants to warn his people without mentioning what those countries are as in the following sentence:

We must avoid a rushed re-opening that could risk a spread, which would need to be followed by another <u>hard</u> lockdown, as has happened in <u>other</u> countries

- As regards the 'ambiguous' strategy, the South African President chose to prepare his people to change their lives to accommodate the severity of the situation of Covid19 without mentioning that clearly. For example:

  "Since then, all our lives have succumbed to the disease in fundamental ways".

- By 'over-generalize strategy, there were indications for presenting the government instructions concerning the quarantine. The South African President's focus was to avoide his people's disobedience by presenting frightful facts concerning the reality of Covid 19 and its influences on human race in general. For example:

  "The coronavirus causes the disease known as COVID-19, a respiratory illness for which <u>humans</u> currently have no immunity"

- Flouting the maxim of quantity comes in second by three strategies: 'overstate', 'understate', and 'tautology'. Through 'overstate' strategy, there are some goals to be achieved which include frightening or reminding them of not being alone, or warning them that those infected are not following the instructions of quarantine. For example:

  "The actual number of people infected is likely to be <u>far higher</u>".

- The use of 'overstate' strategy conveys some of the South African President's fears such as being accused of underperformance by his government. Thus, Covid19 was presented as the invisible power that could overwhelm the best health system in the world. For example:

  "Because the coronavirus can spread <u>so rapidly</u> through a population, it can overwhelm even the <u>best-resourced</u> health system within a matter of weeks".

- By 'overstate' strategy, the South African President is introducing the unfavorable consequences of not following the government's instructions regarding the quarantine represented by touching a nerve. No matter how severe the quarantine is, the situation will be more severe if there is no quarantine. For example:

  "We cannot take action today that we will <u>deeply</u> <u>regret</u> tomorrow".

- Showing off in order to avoid any accusations of being in an underperformance position led the South African President to another use of 'overstate' strategy as follows:

  "During the past five weeks, we have demonstrated to the entire world what a nation can achieve with courage, determination and solidarity"

- The other strategy from which the flouting of the maxim of quantity resulted is 'understate' strategy. For fear of being accused to have no respect for others traditions, the South African President illustrated that gatherings were fruitful environment for the spread of Covid19 among people. For example:

> **"We know, for example, that <u>just</u> one funeral in Port St Johns and one religious gathering in Mangaung contributed to a spate of infections in their respective provinces".**

- Another use of 'understate' strategy was when there was an indication that the danger of Covid19 was represented by its ability to be hidden in infected people without visible or noticed symptoms. Thus, every person might be a dangerous source of Covid19 no matter how healthy he or she looks like. Accordingly, the prohibition of gatherings was the best defense against Covid19. For example:

> **"Most infected people exhibit <u>only mild</u> symptoms; some do not show <u>any symptoms</u> at all"**

- Additionally, the use of 'understate' strategy might create an implicature that the South African President's main concern was focused on his people's opinion of him and his government's efficiency in facing Covid19 more than on his people's safety. For example:

> **"Very few health systems across the world – if any – are prepared for a sudden and exponential increase in people requiring treatment for a severe respiratory illness"**

- The third strategy that led to flouting the maxim of quantity is 'tautology'. By 'tautology' strategy, which was used for agitating his people and raising the national spirit though the enemy is an invisible virus, the South African President chose not to forget his position as a political leader with various responsibilities and one of those responsibilities is trying to inspire his nation for being more cautious and responsible. For example:

> **"This is a crucial moment in our struggle against the coronavirus. It is a time for caution. It is a time to act responsibly. It is a time for patience".**

- The maxim of quality was also flouted by the 'metaphor' strategy by which some messages were further delivered by the South African President. One of those messages was to encourage his people to be united under such circumstances. For example:

> **"we have demonstrated to the entire world what a <u>nation</u> can achieve with courage, determination and solidarity"**

- By 'metaphor' strategy, there was another lesson the South African President wanted his people to learn which was adhering to the government instructions concerning the prohibition of travel in such a situation. Simply, instead of indulging in some details, the South African President was satisfied with this utterance:

> **"If people do not travel, the <u>virus does not travel"</u>.**

- The least maxim that was flouted is the maxim of relation. By using both strategies, 'give the association clue' and 'hint' strategies, some facts were uncovered by the South African President, and the most important one was that Covid19 will overwhelm his country sooner or later, and any cautious actions were merely a matter of delaying not stopping the virus.

> **"From the moment we declared the coronavirus pandemic to be a national disaster on Sunday 15 March, our objective was to delay the spread of the virus".**

● Giving some off-topic details might produce some goals. Hence, by 'hint strategy' the hidden political side was conveyed when the South African President mentioned China through addressing Covid19 issue to his people.

> **"The novel coronavirus, which was identified in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December last year, has spread rapidly across the world".**

Table (2) The Percentages of Off-Record Strategies and The Resulted Percentages of Flouting Grice's Maxims in the Nigerian President's Speech

Off-Record Strategy	The Percentage	Flouted Grice's Maxim	The Percentage
Metaphor Strategy	39,4%	Maxim of Quality	40,4%
Contradiction Strategy	1%		
Vague Strategy	17,1	Maxim of Manner	35,2%
over-generalize Strategy	9,6%		
Ambiguous Strategy	8,5%		
Overstate Strategy	14,9	Maxim of Quantity	14,9%
Give Association Clue Strategy	5,3%	Maxim of Relation	9,5%
Presupposition Strategy	3,2%		
Hint Strategy	1%		

● in analyzing the Nigerian President's speech, the results show the frequent use of 'metaphor' strategy which constituents the flouting of the maxim of quality with the largest percentage which is (39,1%). The excessive use of metaphor strategy might indicate enriching the speech with information and facts that lack evidence and substantiation which constituted a large percentage of the Nigerian President's speech. This strategy was the best choice to express sympathy with the victims of the epidemic. For example:

> **"Regrettably, we also had our first fatality, a former employee of PPMC, who died on 23rd March 2020. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family"**

● Like most of the presidents whose speeches were previously analyzed, the Nigerian president used this strategy to describe the handling of the epidemic in a way that shows the Nigerian president's fear that his government will be compared with other governments. As it turns out that most of the Nigerian president's fears are the impression of failure that may spread among his people. For example:

> **For on-lending facilities using capital from international and multilateral development partners, I have directed our development financial <u>institutions</u> to engage these development partners and negotiate concessions to <u>ease the pains</u> of the borrowers.**

- The second maxim that shows a large percentage is the maxim of manner by 'vague', 'over-generalize', and 'ambiguous' strategies. The Nigerian president's speech had to some extent been shrouded in obscurity. The ambiguity has reflected deep fears, and one of these is the fear of the use of force and violence at times and any action to reduce the spread of the epidemic. For example:

> **"We remain committed to do <u>whatever it takes</u> to confront COVID-19 in our country".**

- The president's fear of his people's disrespect of the health guidelines and the rules of quarantine was conveyed by the use of ambiguous strategy when he asked his people to give up their personal comfort without distinguishing what kind of comfort it was. It indicates the existence of harmful comfort in addition to the satisfying comfort as follows:

> **"I will therefore ask all of us affected by this order to put aside our <u>personal comfort</u> to safeguard ourselves and fellow human beings"**

- In addition to the instructions conveyed by 'over-generalize' strategy to create a way of disseminating health procedures and quarantine, this strategy was used to make his people accept responsibility for their behavior and, hence, the principle of burden-sharing should be maintained between the Nigerian President and his people. For example:

> **"As <u>we are all</u> aware, Lagos and Abuja have the majority of confirmed cases in Nigeria"**

- The maxim of quantity was flouted by only overstate strategy with the percentage of (16,4%) to come in the third place among the maxims flouted by the Nigerian President. Considering what overstate strategy could inflate, it is noted that there are various issues to be addressed in an exaggerated way to achieve some goal evolving around Covid 19. So, one of these issues is warning his people of disobeying the governmental guidelines. For example:

> **"Our agencies are currently working hard to identify cases and people these patients have been in contact with".**

- Thinking that his government's efficiency in facing Covid19 is questionable and is accused of being abusive in the procedures of the quarantine, the Nigerian President used 'overstate' strategy for calming his people and avoid any possible refusal of his system as follows:

> **"Many other countries have taken <u>far stricter</u> measures in a bid to control the spread of the virus with positive results".**

- The maxim of relation was flouted by the Nigerian President with 'presupposition', 'give association clue', and 'hint' strategies. When emphasizing his government's seriousness in facing Covid19, the Nigerian President referred to one of the Nigerian personalities who are known by his people. for example:

    "I am personally very proud of Dr Ihekweazu for doing this on behalf of all Nigerians".

- Warning his people against being in some cities within the same country may cause division and a rift in the national affiliation of the people of the same country. So, the Nigerian president decided to use the 'hint' and 'give association clue' in anticipation of any accusation of inciting sedition and divisions within the same country as follows:

    "This restriction will also apply to Ogun State due to its <u>close proximity to Lagos</u> and <u>the high traffic</u> between the two States".

4. Conclusions

- The most flouted maxim among Grice's maxims in the two speeches was the maxim of manner. The flouting of this maxim is, as mentioned previously, the adoption of ambiguity and vagueness in introducing statements. The ambiguity and vagueness that characterized the two political speeches had not been hidden as much as they attracted attention to evaluate the truthfulness and validity of some facts and information introduced in the speeches. In other words, this vagueness shed light on so many fears and secrets which, consequently, corresponds to the hypothesis number (1).
- The repetition of mentioning the source of Covid19 in most of the political speeches that have been analyzed, the repetition of showing off on some achievements without accompanying these statements with efficient evidence, and the existence of contradictions in some of the political speeches analyzed, all of this had nothing to do with objectivity and credibility. Although the Covid19 pandemic is a disease that falls under the category of health and medical issues, it is clear that the Covid19 pandemic has been politicized to become a political issue which was used to achieve some political goals. Hence, subjectivity still functions very well in political speeches which, consequently, refute hypothesis number (2).

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قوة التضمين الموجهة لكوفيد –١٩ باعتباره جائحة عالمية

الباحثة اجيال منصور حسن

الاكاديمية العليا للدراسات العلمية والانسانية

المشرف

أ.م.د. علي صباح جميل

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المستخلص

نظـرًا لأن *Covid*–١٩ يعـد فيروسًـا معـديًا عنـد الإصـابة بـه، يجـب علـى المرضـى اتبـاع التعليمـات والاحتياطـات الموصـى بهـا، وأولهـا البقـاء معـزولين عـن المجتمـع قـدر الإمكـان. (وكالـة الصـحة العامـة فـي السـويد، ٢٠٢٠). علـى الـرغم مـن أن التباعـد الجسـدي أدى بشـكل فعـال إلـى إبطـاء انتشـار الفيـروس، إلا أن هنـاك تحـديات هائلـة تواجـه المجتمعـات لإقنـاع الجمهـور، وخاصـة فـي البلـدان الديمقراطيـة، بالبقاء في المنزل في حالة التفشي الأساسي (*Engle et al. 2020; Fowler et al. 2020; Bilgin 2020; Abouk and Heydari 2020; Hale et al. 2020; Studdert and Hall 2020; Gostin and Hodge 2020*). تبحث هـذه الدراسـة فـي المعـاني الضـمنية فـي الخطابـات التـي تعلـن أن *COVID*–١٩ جائحـة عـالمي وتسـلط الضـوء علـى الغمـوض المـرتبط بهـا والمعنـى الضـمني. وتجيـب عن التسـاؤل الاتـي: إلـى أي مـدى كـان المعنـى الخفـي يتماشـى مـع قـوة وغمـوض وبـاء كوفيـد –١٩؟ بالنسـبة للتحليـل البراغمـاتي، النـوعي والكمـي، فـإن النمـوذج هـو: *flouting Grice's maxims* (١٩٧٥) باسـتخدام اسـتراتيجيات الأدب غيـر المسـجلة مـن قبـل بـراون وليفينسـون (١٩٧٨، ١٩٨٧) ، وكانـت دراسـة البيانـات عبـارة عـن خطـابين سياسـيين كانـا: خطـاب رئـيس جنـوب إفريقيـا راماسـوفا والـرئيس النيجيـري بخـاري يخاطبـان *Covid* ١٩ باعتبـاره وبـاءً عالميًـا. كشـفت النتـائج عـن العلاقـة بـين التضـمين والعديـد مـن العوامـل الأخـرى التـي تسـاهم فـي وجودهـا والتـي يتم تضمينها في السياق.

الكلمات المفتاحية: جائحة كورونا ، جنوب إفريقيا ، نيجيريا ، أقوال *Grice* ، *Brown and Levinson*، *Off-Record*.