

How to Cite:

Tameemi, M. R. J. A., & Ali, H. M. (2022). The adherence to cooperative principle in oral conversation by Iraqi college students. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S6), 355–371. <https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6nS6.9867>

The adherence to cooperative principle in oral conversation by Iraqi college students

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Abstract---Grice's principles of cooperation explain the maxims that underline cooperation among speakers when they converse. However, lack of awareness of these principles can lead to miscommunication. In order to indulge in effective communication, it is necessary to follow the principles of cooperation. Pragmatics is not part of curriculum of EFL college level in Iraq, hence, students are likely to violate the principles. The aim of this study is to identify cases of adherence / violation of each of the maxims of cooperation singly and collectively. Real time natural data was collected from the college campus for the purpose which was tabulated and analysed. Results showed the extent to which the students followed or violated the principles, and the difficulty in identifying and labelling due to the complex nature of natural conversation. A descriptive qualitative method was used. The study emphasizes the need for including pragmatics in the EFL curriculum in Iraq and points at new innovative methods to improve oral communicative competence of EFL Iraqi college students.

Keywords---cooperative principles, conversational implicature, violation, adherence, pragmatics.

Introduction

When people converse with each other, it is taken for granted that they are serious, that they wish to convey something to the listeners and that they are trying to express themselves in the best possible way so that the listeners find it easy to understand them. Talk exchanges are meaningful, connected and successive. They follow logic, without which the listeners would be baffled and at

a loss to get any meaning, which might appear humiliating. Meaningful dialogue is characterized by cooperation. Participants in a conversation follow certain principles. Failing these, the conversation would be meaningless and purposeless. Look at the following example extracted from Lewis Carroll's 'Alice in Wonderland.' 'Have some wine,' the March Hare said in an encouraging tone. Alice looked all-round the table, but there was nothing on it but tea. 'I don't see any wine,' she remarked. 'There isn't any,' said the March Hare. The Hatter opened his eyes very wide on hearing this; but all he said was, 'Why is a raven like a writing-desk?'

'Come, we shall have some fun now!' thought Alice. 'I'm glad they've begun asking riddles.--I believe I can guess that,' she added aloud.

'Do you mean that you think you can find out the answer to it?' said the March Hare ...

'Have you guessed the riddle yet?' the Hatter said, turning to Alice again.

'No, I give it up,' Alice replied: 'what's the answer?'

'I haven't the slightest idea,' said the Hatter.

'Nor I,' said the March Hare.

Alice sighed wearily. 'I think you might do something better with the time,' she said, 'than waste it in asking riddles that have no answers.'

You will be as baffled as poor Alice when you read the above extracts. The speakers just do not seem to follow any principles of conversation. Just imagine what would happen if people involved in such kinds of exchanges all the time! But it does not happen, because, as the linguist Paul Grice states, we follow certain conversational maxims (Grice, 1989). Grice studied the way people derive meaning from language. Hence, the maxims that he states are descriptive in nature. However, they can be used prescriptively, especially by learners who learn to speak a foreign language. According to Grice, speakers intend to cooperate when they talk. So he formulated the principles of cooperation – 'Make your conversational contribution 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' (Grice, 1975, p45).

Importance of the research

English is taught as a second or foreign language in many countries in the world including Iraq. The most difficult language skills encountered by non-native learners are writing and speaking. Speaking and conversations require a strong vocabulary, pragmatic competency and phonetic ability. Hence, learners from foreign countries lack confidence while speaking. Cooperative principles are followed while speaking in all languages, yet, there may be certain variations resulting from culture differences, gender issues and other aspects of language. Hence, if students are aware of the cooperative principles, it will not only help them in conversing aptly in English but also in their mother tongue. This research studies the degree of awareness of Iraqi EFL students and the extent to which they adhere to all the maxims of the cooperative principle while speaking in English.

The results of the study will enable teachers to decide how and how much the students need guidance regarding the cooperative principles. It will also enable curriculum designers to include conversational situations and practical assignments in the curriculum so as to promote the students to adhere to the cooperative principles. This is very important especially while conversing in English because English is considered to be a polite language. Native English speakers might feel offended if a foreigner violates the cooperative principles while speaking.

Pragmatics and pragmatic awareness is important in oral communication. However, it is often neglected in EFL classes. The maxims of cooperation are not given due emphasis because they are intuitive. They come from common sense about the nature of successful conversation. For example, a speaker who wants to convey a serious message must speak relevantly. However, the maxims are frequently violated, sometimes intentionally and sometimes negligently, affecting smooth and effective conversation. In order to converse effectively, fruitfully and impressively, the cooperative principles should be used as guidelines.

Aims and Objectives

- To gather real time data in the form of natural conversation of Iraqi college students
- To analyse the data and identify instances of adherence / violation of cooperative principles by the speakers.
- To find out which principles are commonly followed and which are violated, and the reasons for the same.
- To conclude on the basis of the analysis the extent of adherence to cooperative principles
- To give suggestions and recommendations as arise from the study

Theoretical background

In normal, everyday natural social conversational situations, speakers assume that those involved in the conversation will cooperate in certain ways to make the conversation meaningful and purposeful. For example, a natural response to the question 'What is your name?' would be the name of the listener. However, if someone asks, 'What is your name?' and the listener answers, 'I live in India,' the exchange sounds meaningless and does not serve any purpose. If both the speaker and the listener are serious, the purpose of the conversation is fulfilled. This can happen only if the participants in the conversation follow certain norms. Grice, a linguist and philosopher, noted that all speakers follow certain principles while conversing without which, sensible communication would be impossible. These principles are intuitive and people pick them up just as they pick up the norms of the society in which they live. It is part of the language learning process. Grice identified the four principles, and they are referred to as maxims of cooperation. They are as follows:

Maxim of Quality: This maxim expects the following from the speaker –

Speak that which you believe to be true (Grice 1975, p 44). In other words, do not speak something about which you have no evidence, or you doubt its truth. In case you doubt it, mention a disclaimer.

Example 1:

A: Who is the current Prime Minister of India?

B: Narendra Modi

In the above example, B gives the correct information and is certain about its truth. Hence, the maxim of quality is followed.

Example 2:

A: What is your name?

B: I am the manager here.

In Example 2, the maxim of quality is flouted. A does not wish to reveal his name.

Maxim of Quantity: This maxim tells that one should give as much information as is necessary; not more and not less. According to Finnegan (2004, p 93), a speaker says just enough to convey a message.

Example 3:

A: Can you tell me where is the bus stop?

B: Go straight, take the first left turn. The bus-stop is just there where you turn the corner.

The speaker provides enough information, not more and not less, by giving directions systematically. Hence, the maxim of quantity is followed.

Example 4

A: Can you tell me where is the bus stop?

B: Go straight and take the first left turn. At the corner, you will see a florist. You get the freshest flowers in town there. Continue walking until you see the bus stop. It is on the same road.

The speaker A does not get the proper directions to find the bus stop. Unnecessary information about the florist is added. Hence, the maxim of quantity is flouted.

Maxim of Relation: According to this maxim, every speaker must contribute to the conversation by uttering what is relevant to the topic of discussion. Grundy (2000, p74) says that each utterance of a speaker must be relevant to the topic and must take the conversation forward.

Example 5:

A: How was your holiday?

B: Oh, it was wonderful.

In the above example, B's answer is relevant to A's question, hence, the maxim of relation is followed.

Example 6:

A: (speaking to a co-passenger) Where are you going sir?

B: Well, not very far.

In the above example, A does not wish to reveal the name of his destination. Hence, the maxim of relation is flouted.

Maxim of Manner: The speaker must respond directly, plausibly and clearly, without any ambiguity. The utterance must not be blurred or wordy.

Example 7:

A: What do you think about the speech?

B: The speech was good but too lengthy.

B responds to A in a clear and direct manner when he gives his opinion about the speech. Hence, the maxim of manner is followed.

Example 8:

A: I think I should go for a degree in management. Do you agree?

B: Looking at your passion for music, it would be a better option.

Instead of answering in the positive or negative to a yes/no question, B flouts the maxim of manner by giving an elaborate response.

Flouting of maxims causes implicature. Utterance is what is actually stated in words while implicature indicates what is understood by the listener. When a speaker deliberately flouts a maxim, he means to be indirect. He wants to convey a message but through implication or inference (Grundy 2004, p 78).

Review of Literature

Atefeh Hadi: In his article entitled 'A Critical Appraisal of Grice's Cooperative Principle', the writer has examined critical challenges to Grice's theory. Grice considers only the semantic aspect. Grice takes for granted that every speaker-listener exchange is an ideal situation. The social context is ignored, He points out that the meaning of the word 'cooperating' can be interpreted in a number of ways. Many studies have questioned the universality and feasibility of the Gricean principle. He summarizes the observations of various studies and concludes that Grice's theory is flawed. It has a bias regarding cooperation. Grice's interest was to explain the gap between what is said, what is meant and what is understood. The theory is rigid because human communication is a complicated issue. Sometimes, the participants miscommunicate intentionally (Sarangi and Slembounch, 1992, p 142). There cannot be a fixed rule for effective communication. Grice claimed that human beings communicate rationally and logically, which cannot always be true. Some scholars differentiate between kinds of cooperation.

Chunxia Zhang: In his article titled 'A Study on the Application of the Cooperative Principle in Business English Letters', the researcher has studied the use of cooperative principles in business English letters, as the title suggests. He states the importance of business letters in the modern world in the scenarios of globalization. According to him, the cooperative principles play an important role in formal business written English. Business letters are important in current times from the point of view of effective communication. In his study, the researcher has introduced business English letters and their format in detail, which is useful to EFL students. At the same time, he has analysed the use of

cooperative principles in the letters. The chief aim of business letters is to convey important information to various companies. They are formal in nature. Some have fixed formats like memos and notices. In business letters, the form and content are both important and have to be followed meticulously in order to make the message clear and unambiguous and to prevent misunderstanding. Business letters also help to build and strengthen business relationships. The researcher has given suitable examples of business letters to make his argument clear. He concludes that since business letters play an important role in business communication, the language used must be precise. In business, the writers usually follow the cooperative principles except in some cases when they are compelled to violate them for achieving some special purpose, even in such cases, they take care that they use the politeness principles. Good English business letters help to do good business. They require a good knowledge of English and awareness of pragmatic principles.

Alfin Yousro et al: The writers published an article based on their research study titled 'The Application of Cooperative Principles in EFL Classroom Interaction: The Case of SMAN 4 Pekalongan'. They point out that in EFL classrooms there is often miscommunication between teachers and students. Quoting Grice (1989), they go on to say that violation of conversational principles often lead to miscommunication and uncooperative conversations between students and teachers. A study of the non-cooperative conversations was carried out. The aim of the study was to analyse natural EFL classroom interaction and observe how the cooperative principles are applied. The maxims most violated were identified. The descriptive qualitative method was used for the study. The data was collected from live EFL classrooms and transcribed, the researcher did not intervene while recording the data. The results showed that the maxim of quality was violated the most.

Qun Li studied 'The Application of Cooperative Principle in Oral English Learning'. He points out that English is becoming a universal language and the earth is turning into a small village (Li, Q. 2015, p 39). It is taught in all the countries with an aim to develop all the four language skills. Yet, the teaching of English as a foreign language is far from satisfactory. Particularly, the oral skill is not developing with the same pace as the other skills. He talks about the situation in China. He believes that teaching the cooperative principles in the EFL classrooms will help to improve the students' oral skills because their learning of English heavily depends upon what teachers teach in the classroom. He discusses the principles of cooperation with examples and adds information about the Neo-Gricean principles further developed by Horn and Levinson (Q-Principle, R-Principle and M-principle). He gives reasons why oral English conversation of Chinese EFL students is poor, and emphasizes the value of cooperation. He goes on to discuss the application of every maxim in oral communication. He concludes that applying the cooperative principles in the classroom improves oral communication of students and helps to change the traditional teaching pattern, making learning more active, interesting and harmonious.

Xianjun Tan , Chunyang Wang & Liu Peng (2013) : These three researchers studied 'Application of Cooperative Principle in College English Listening Comprehension'. They expect Chinese EFL students to understand both explicit

and implicit communicative intentions of English speakers, when they listen to oral speech. Generally, pragmatics is not taught as a subject in EFL classrooms in China. They insist that the cooperative principles and theory of relevance must be included in the syllabus (p 28). They conclude that consciously using the theory of pragmatics is actually useful in the college English listening comprehension. It is advisable for the college English teachers to teach their students the relevant knowledge of pragmatics, such as the cooperative principle, principle of relevance, etc.

Methodology

The descriptive qualitative method was used in this research. Real time natural conversational exchanges between/among students were collected randomly from the campus. The maxims of cooperation were listed in a tabular form and instances of adherence /violation were identified. 20 pieces of conversation were selected out of 50 which were noted down for the study. The selection was on the basis of the adherence or otherwise of the maxims of cooperation. The actual data collected for analysis were presented in a tabular form, followed by the analysis. The second part give the responses to the questionnaire. There were ten questions, all yes/no type to be answered by students. 20 students were randomly selected, based on their willingness to participate in the study. A percentage of the instances of adherence / violation of each maxim was calculated. The percentages were compared for analysis and results. The data reflected in the table were analysed to check the extent of adherence to the cooperative principle by Iraqi college students. A separate table was made for each maxim. There were 5 examples in each table.(5X 4= total 20 examples).

Sample

The sample consists of 50 conversational exchanges among students from Baghdad University, College of Education Ibn Rushd/Dept of English in Iraq. They were picked up from various locations in the college campus like canteen, library, hostel, passage, grounds, etc. out of the 50 randomly noted conversations, 20 were selected for analysis.

Data Analysis

A percentage of the instances of adherence / violation of each maxim was calculated. The percentages were compared for analysis and results. The data reflected in the table were analysed to check the extent of adherence to the cooperative principle by Iraqi college students.

Maxim of quality

Table 1
Table showing instances of adherence / violation of maxim of quality

Sr No.	Conversation	Adherence	Violation	Remarks
1	Student A: Excuse me, where is the	Part adherence. The first	Part violation. He	Certain responses are

	library? Student B: Not sure... may be to the left.	utterance is an honest reply.	is not sure, yet he says that it may be to the left.	mixed. They partly adhere to and partly violate the maxim of quality.
2	Teacher: Have you submitted the assignment? Student: I have completed it.	-	The student has violated the maxim of quality. The answer expected was either 'yes' or 'no'.	The teacher asked a yes/no question, but the student's response leads to an implicature.
3.	Student: (Addressing the class representative: what is the last date for filling the Corona vaccine form? Class representative: Will you please check with the head of the department?	-	The maxim of quality is violated. A yes/no question is responded to with another question.	The class representative does not want to commit any date, may be because she does not know it. So politely but indirectly, she avoids giving the answer and directs the student to the department head, by asking a rhetorical question.
4	Student A: Should I carry some warm clothes to the hostel? Student B: Yes, it is very cold here in November.	Student B adheres to the maxim of quality. He answers in the positive.	-	Student B supports his answer with information about the weather in November. He knows the fact.
5	New student: I usually study late at night. Room partner: You have to switch off the lights by 10.30.	Student B adheres to the cooperative principle. He gives valid information.	-	Student B knows the rules in the hostel and he provides necessary information in reaction to the

				new student's mention of his habit of studying late night.
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Observations and analysis

In case of the maxim of quality, out of five responses, the listeners adhere to the maxim in two instances and violates the maxim in 2 instances. In one instance, there is part adherence and part violation. It can be concluded that EFL college students in Iraq are aware of the maxim of quality and adhere to it as far as possible. In some instances, it becomes necessary to violate some other maxim in order to adhere to the quality maxim. In the fourth example, only 'yes' was expected in answer. However, Student B gives extra information about the cold weather in November. Hence, while he adheres to the quality maxim, he flouts the quantity maxim. In example 3, the class representative does not tell the date because she may not know it. In a way, the class representative is very much aware of the quality maxim. That is why, she is compelled to violate it because she does not wish to give a false answer of which she is not sure. She has to violate the maxim because she wants to be faithful to it and follow it. However, in the given circumstances she does what is best. By referring to the coordinator, her answer is not very clear, so she also violates the maxim of manner. When students note the use of such strategies by teachers, they gradually learn and become competent in using them. In example 1, Student B is honest and admits that he is not sure about the true facts. Hence, he adheres to the quality maxim by making it clear. At the same time, he makes a wild guess by saying that the library may be at the left. This is violation.

Maxim of Quantity

Table 2
Table showing adherence / violation of maxim of quantity

Sr No	Conversation	Adherence	Violation	Remarks
1	Student A: I met Fatima on Sunday. She has completed her graduation. Student B: Is she planning to do PG? Student A: She has already completed post-graduation in Mass Media.	-	There is violation of maxim of quantity. It is expected that the speaker gives all and complete information.	Did not give complete information. Hence, B had to pose a question about it.
2	Student A: Have you read 'Pride and Prejudice' by Jane Austen?		There is violation of the maxim of quantity. The answer should	Too much additional information is given by

	Student B: I have read Pride and Prejudice, Emma, Northanger Abbey, Mansfield Park and Sense and Sensibility, all written by Jane Austen.		have been either 'yes' or 'no'.	Student A which Student A had not asked for, and maybe he was not interested in it.
3.	Student A: I have to pay my fees tomorrow. Student B: I have already paid; tomorrow is the last date.		There is violation of the quantity maxim. Perhaps, Student A was speaking aloud and did not expect any response. The first part of the response is acceptable from the point of view of quantity and relevance, but the second part is unnecessary.	
4	Student A: What did you have at the birthday party? Student B: We had biryani, sandwiches and sweets. Also, cold drinks and ice-cream. Student C: We danced and played games.	Student B adheres to the quantity maxim by giving the information necessary. He adds what he had forgotten earlier, so that complete information is given.	There is violation of the quantity maxim by Student C.	Student B adheres to the maxim of quantity. He gives information about what they had eaten. He adds something that he had forgotten to mention earlier, thus giving complete information that was asked for. Student C gives information that was not asked for.

5	<p>Student A: Why have you backed out of the competition?</p> <p>Student B: My parents are coming next week. My cousin is getting married and we all have to attend the wedding. The wife belongs here.</p>		<p>There is violation of the quantity maxim. A shorter answer would have served the purpose.</p>	<p>Student B gives an elaborate answer, which takes the conversation away from the main topic, that is competition.</p>
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Observations and analysis

In 4 out of 5 instances, there is violation of the maxim of quantity. There is a tendency on the part of college students to be elaborate, speak a lot as if afraid of missing any detail or providing more information anticipating more questions from the listener. The list of books mentioned by Student B in the second example may be due to his love for the books by Jane Austen and excitement at the mention of her book. He may be very much aware that he was flouting the maxim of quantity, but was unable to control himself when it came to his favourite author. However, it was harmless and did not create any conversational implicature. This is another possibility, making conversation complex and complicated.

Maxim of Relation

Table 3
Table showing instances of adherence / violation of maxim of relation

Sr No.	Conversation	Adherence	Violation	Remarks
1	<p>Student A: Hi Guys! How was the exam?</p> <p>Student B: It was great. I am sure I will get an A.</p>	<p>Student B adheres to the relation maxim. His response is relevant to the question.</p>	-	<p>The response of Student B is direct and unambiguous. However, the maxim of quantity is flouted by giving extra information. The maxim of quality is also flouted because one cannot vouch regarding grades.</p>
2	<p>Student A: I am hungry. Will you join</p>		<p>There is violation of</p>	<p>Student A does not get</p>

	me for lunch? Student B: There is no place in the canteen.		the maxim of relation. The meaning is not very clear.	an answer to his question. It is not clear whether B cannot join because there is no place in the canteen or because he has no intention of joining.
3	Student A: Which game do you like better, cricket or basket-ball? Student B: Cricket, of course.	The relation maxim is followed. The answer is relevant to the question.		Although the answer is relevant, the expression 'of course' creates an implicature, implying that everyone ought to like cricket.
4	Student A: Can you tell me where to pay the fees? Student B: You take a form from the accountant and pay the fees in the bank.	The relation maxim is followed. The answer is clear and related.		All the four maxims of the cooperative principle are adhered to in this example. Such instances are rare.
5	Student A: Shall we go for a picnic on Sunday? Student B: That's a great idea! Where shall we go? Student C: We have examination next week. Student B: You still have two days to study.	Both responses of Student B to two different speakers adhere to the maxim of relation.	Student C's response does not follow the maxim of relation because it is indirect.	Although Student C's response is indirect, Student B's answer to him is relevant.

Observations and analysis

A sense of logic can be perceived in the sample examples noted above. The students try their best to adhere to the relation maxim. If they are forced to violate it, they are aware of it. In example number 5, we can see how relevant and

related responses help to take a conversation forward. Sometimes, a single expression like 'of course' can affect the clarity and the nature of the relation maxim.

Maxim of Manner

Table 4
Table showing adherence / violation of maxim of Manner

Sr No.	Conversation	Adherence	Violation	Remarks
1	Student A: What is the time now? Student B: I did not hear the bell ringing.		The maxim of manner is violated.	Student B's response is unclear. One cannot understand what he means to say when he says he did not hear the bell.
2	Student A: Shall we have tea or coffee? Student B: I like plain milk.		The maxim of manner is flouted. The answer is relevant but indirect.	By saying that he likes milk, Student B is denying both tea and coffee.
3	Student A: Can you lend me a few bucks for a week? Student: I have to pay my fees.		The maxim of manner is flouted. The response is indirect. Even if he has to pay his fees, he may be in a position to lend money or state yes or no.	Student B is aware of the politeness principle. In order to follow it, he has to be indirect. It is rude to refuse lending money directly.
4	Student A: Samir, why don't you keep your things neatly on the shelf? Student B: Why don't you live in a separate room?		This is an example of deliberate violation of the maxim of manner on the part of Student B.	Student B responds to a question with a question implying a host of things – He will not keep his things neatly. If Student A cannot tolerate him, he can

				live separately in another room. If he wants to share the room, he will have to bear with his habits.
5	<p>Student A: Shall I take Mathematics major for the final year? Do you think it is very difficult?</p> <p>Student B: Well, it depends.</p>		<p>This is violation of the maxim of manner. a yes/no question is not answered directly.</p>	<p>Student B has understood the dilemma faced by Student A. However, it is wrong to ask this kind of a question. A subject can be difficult for one but easy for another. Yet, in the given circumstances, B's answer is neither discouraging nor encouraging. On the contrary, he tries to point at the fact. Although ambiguous, it is polite and appropriate.</p>

Observations and analysis

Every example is an example of violation of the Maxim of Manner. yet, it must be noticed that underlying the responses, one can sense logic and connectivity in the responses. Most of the responses are indirect and deliberately indirect. However, when preference needs to be given to politeness, they know that a little indirectness can be accepted. Following the maxims of cooperation lead to effective communication while violating them causes miscommunication. The four maxims can be violated for several reasons. Conversational implicature is created only when the violation is understood by both, the listener and the speaker. Out of the 20 examples selected for analysis, the relevant maxims are followed in 8 examples (40%) and flouted in the remaining 12 examples (60%). Hence, on the whole it can be concluded that Iraqi EFL college students often violate the maxims of cooperation. Yet, a number of interesting facts about conversational

implicature and adherence to or violation of the various maxims of cooperation have come to light through the analysis of the gathered data.

In case of maxim of quality, there is adherence in three examples and violation in two. Table 1, example 1 shows that the same response can be partly adhering and partly violating. Table 1 example 3 shows that while adhering to one maxim, it might be necessary to flout another. When students note the use of strategies used by competent people to follow the maxims of cooperation in speech, they can improve their speech. More interaction between teachers and students is likely to make students aware of strategies. In 5 out of 5 examples, there is violation of the Maxim of Quantity. In the fourth example, there is violation and also adherence by one student, that is Student B. Iraqi EFL college students show a tendency to take care that they provide sufficient information, rather too much at times, but not less. It is part of their nature to be extra cooperative rather than sound uncooperative. Not a single response is abrupt and short. It has to be noted however, that they do not intend to be uncooperative, their concern is intense and sincere. Sometimes, affinity towards a topic or passion for something can elicit unnecessary additional information in response. At such times however, it is harmless and does not lead to confusion, ambiguity or conversational implicature. This is what makes conversation so complex and complicated that it cannot be labelled as right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable.

The Maxim of Relation is important because irrelevant speech of any kind is sure to cause miscommunication. It is difficult to achieve the aim of conversation without following this maxim. Iraqi college students have followed this maxim in most cases. The only confusing example is the example of flouting, example number 2. Student A does not mention the word 'canteen'. Some far-fetched logic in the mind of Student B must have prompted him to utter this sentence. It cannot be called totally irrelevant. Sometimes, the brain rushes through thoughts which others are unable to know about, leading to such responses. This causes violation of the maxim of relation although the speaker does not mean to be irrelevant. In example number 5, we can see how relevant and related responses help to take a conversation forward. Sometimes, a single expression like 'of course' can affect the clarity and the nature of the relation maxim. There is not a single example of adherence to the maxim of manner. The first two are misleading. In the third example, the violation is deliberate in order to be polite. In the fourth example, the violation is deliberate in order to be impolite. There is logic and connectivity underlying the responses, however, there is an inclination towards indirectness.

Conclusion

The success of any interaction depends upon the approach of the speakers and listeners towards a conversational situation. Only if their approach is sincere and honest, if they want to fulfil the purpose of the conversation, they can be expected to extend cooperation while conversing. On the basis of Grice's theory, the researchers have examined the extent of the adherence of the maxims of the cooperative principles collectively and separately, by Iraqi EFL college students. The findings of this research will be useful to teachers and educators to re-think about the inclusion of pragmatics in the curriculum. It will also lead to new ideas

and innovations about teaching-learning practices for EFL courses to improve the oral communication of students.

Acknowledgment

This study was supported by the Department of English language, College of Education IBN Rushd, University of Baghdad for providing us with all the required facilities to do the recording for the subjects of the study. We are also grateful to two anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments on the earlier version of this paper. Special thanks are further due to Department of English, college of Basic Education, University of Diyala for their staff support in providing up to date references in the field of the study.

Funding

The authors declares that the work was completed without financial support from any person or organisation.

Declaration of interest statement

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare

Data availability statement

The dataset for the current study is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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