

Original Research Article

Implicatures Used to Communicate Meanings in Sermons: A Study of Pentecostal Churches in Eldoret, Kenya

Oluoch, Monica Oloo

Lecturer, Department of Languages and Literature, Africa Nazarene University, Nairobi, Kenya

Corresponding Author: Oluoch, Monica Oloo, E-mail: monyjoy25@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Implicatures are taken to be the meanings that arise due to the flouting of any of the maxims of the Cooperative Principle. The maxims are flouted in order to communicate a meaning beyond the literal meaning of the words used. This paper examines the implicatures used to convey meanings in sermons from selected Pentecostal churches in Eldoret town, Kenya. The research assumed that preachers perform various speech acts but at times they do not get the desired response. It was guided by the Speech Acts theory and the Cooperative Principle. Data for the study was collected using camcorder video recording and participant observation. The data from the camcorder was transcribed word-for-word and then analysed at the level of speech acts and implicatures. The relevant texts were extracted from the selected sermons to illustrate the speech acts and implicatures identified. It was revealed that preachers flout the maxims in order to communicate implied meanings. Preachers use repetition of words and phrases to flout the quantity maxim. In this way, they are able to communicate and reinforce messages to their congregations. Preachers also flout the quality maxim to underscore some of the weaknesses of Christians that make them prone to mistakes or sin. They emphasize these implicatures by making references to examples of characters in the Bible who were not careful in their spiritual walk and who subsequently ended up in a bad place. The relevance maxim is flouted through reference to contextual information in order to strengthen the main message in the sermon. Lastly, the manner maxim is flouted through the use of obscurities in communication, which in themselves represent a lack of spiritual steadiness. It is recommended that the examination of implicatures should be replicated in other Christian denominations and other major world religions to illustrate the communicative strategies used in religious discourse.

Introduction

Preaching is inherently persuasive, and biblical references to preaching encompass both the content of the message and the act of proclamation. The preacher's goal is to elicit an appropriate response from the audience and, in order to do so, he has to carefully choose the words he uses to convey his intentions. As Leith and Myerson (1989) state:

Religious utterances are not uniform but diverse in function. Many have what the ancient rhetoricians would call an 'epideictic' function, that of praising or celebrating; few make novel assertions of referential values but serve to remind congregations of what they are already supposed to know. Some of them function as declarations as in 'with this ring I thee wed' where the uttering of the words actually performs the act of

marrying. And many can be said to exhort the people to do things, often in ways which are a permanent reminder of the gap between the ideal and the practice.

An example of this is found in an utterance such as “Love your neighbour as yourself”, which makes the action sound so straightforward and so easy to accomplish until people actually try to live it. The wording, however, must be tough so that it carries the illocutionary force of a command in order to prevent all sorts of mitigating excuses and justifications for making an exception. The word ‘neighbour’ literally means someone who lives next to or near you but used in the context of preaching it means anyone in need. The utterance thus performs the illocutionary act of exhorting the audience. These illocutionary acts are the linguistic aspects that this paper set out to analyse.

Asher and Simpson (1994) further add thus:

Pentecostals also place great value on impassioned discourse as evidence that the speaker is being moved by the Spirit, a feature that may result in disordered sentence structure. Repetition, both between the preacher and congregation and within the preacher’s own discourse is also typical as well as gestures and movements.

An example of this from the data collected can be seen in an utterance such as: “We need to cast our burdens (Amen) – Everybody say cast – (cast). We need to cast our burdens...”. Here, the speaker is talking about the need for Christians to apply the word of God in their lives and hence read the verse that talks about casting one’s cares upon God. He is affirming what the verse says. The speaker repeats the clause “we need to cast our burdens” and instructs the audience to say the word ‘cast’. He performs the illocutionary acts of emphasizing, eliciting response from the audience thus affirming group solidarity and also reminding the audience about what they already know; that problems should be taken to the lord for solutions. Repetition is also a strategy used by the preachers to ensure that the audiences participate in the sermon. The congregation, which is the audience, is expected to recognize the kind of speech acts that the speaker performs in order to communicate his intentions.

In addition, the speaker does not always express his intentions explicitly and may mean more than he says. The audience, therefore, has to get the *contextual* or *other* message to be able to understand the sermon fully. These are the implicatures. There are conventional implicatures, which are, according to Grice (1975, as cited in Brown & Yule, 1983), determined by the ‘conventional meaning of the words used’ (p. 31). For example, ‘He is a Christian so he is good,’ conventionally implicates that the virtue of being good follows from being a Christian. However, in this paper, the notion of conversational implicature is of greater interest. This is derived from a general principle of conversation: Grice’s Cooperative Principle and its maxims. The Cooperative Principle and its attendant maxims can be realized in sermons because preachers may sometimes make utterances that mean more than the literal meaning. This can be done through the use of figures of speech or idiomatic expressions and this entails the flouting of certain maxims in order to convey a meaning beyond what is expected literally. Implicatures concern themselves with knowledge shared, and which can only be shared if the audience makes the correct inferences while interpreting the speaker’s communicative intents. Grice (1975, as cited in Brown & Yule, 1983) used the term ‘implicature’ to account for what a speaker can imply, suggest or mean as distinct from what he literally says.

In analysing communication in sermons, therefore, it is important to identify the speech acts and implicatures used by the speakers to achieve their communicative intents. This is because the sermon as a speech event involves the sharing of meaning between the preacher and the audience and the preacher’s intentions are conveyed through the utterances he makes.

Statement of the Problem

The sermon as a speech event involves communication between the preacher and audience. Subsequently, there is understanding and sharing of meaning that takes place. The sermon is a monologue as it involves one speaker addressing many people with a view to influencing them. As such, the speaker may employ certain strategies to ensure audience participation. Although other studies have been carried out in the area of pulpit discourse, the implicatures in sermons have not been adequately described. This is the gap this paper sought to fill by identifying and describing the implicatures used in sermons. Therefore, the paper sought to address the following research question: What implicatures are used by the selected preachers to convey meaning in their sermons?

Literature Review

Crystal and Davy (1969) identified different shades of the language of religion: the language of liturgy, sermon, theological discourse and biblical translation. They concluded that the linguistic features that uniquely identify texts as belonging to the single variety of religious English are concentrated on the vocabulary and in certain parts of the grammar. There were no

details given of methodology or context of the study but their conclusion is relevant to this paper on pulpit discourse in that the speech acts and implicatures are interpreted by analysing their linguistic features.

Mar (1998) demonstrated how language use reveals, expresses and constructs the unique coding from various orientations of a social group. She reveals this by focusing on a variety of prayers, and how the prayers from various Christian groups reveal the differences in the way the adherents relate to God. Although the focus of this paper is not prayers but sermons in Pentecostal churches, this information is relevant because the language used in the sermons also reveals the shared beliefs of the social groups. Some of these beliefs differ from those of other denominations, for example the belief in being filled with the Holy Spirit that is held by Pentecostal churches. The preachers use language to elicit verbal response and this can be said to be unique to Pentecostal churches where there is active listener response.

Uhunmwangho (2000) summarized the general characteristics of the language of religion thus: "it employs a deliberate, evocative use of terminology and phraseology which we must be alert to in order to appraise the primary purpose and meaning of the language." This paper, in examining the speech acts and implicatures in sermons, identifies the words, phrases and clauses that signal these communicative acts. These acts are the ones that convey meaning in sermons.

Keane (1997) undertook a theoretical study of religious language. Keane's study addresses the highly marked uses of linguistic resources in religious language, which is taken to include practices such as "magic" and divination (which some definitions of religion exclude). The study focused on the interaction of religious adherents with spiritual and invisible participants in such speech situations as prayers and other ritualistic practices. A major thesis of this work is the indeterminate nature of the relationship between the linguistic forms and functions of religious language. This lends credit to this paper in the interpretation of implicatures in the sermons because the implicatures go beyond the literal meaning of the words used. Such issues as identity, agency, authorship and even the very presence of the participants are seen as problematic in religious discourse. Keane concludes by showing that the adherents of each specific religious group determine the linguistic practices and pragmatic properties in religions.

The forms and functions of language used in religious practices vary according to the beliefs of the adherents. The language could vary from highly structured forms to totally unpredictable ones, from voluble expressions to silent and meditative ones, from tightly structured unison responses to spontaneous loudness (Crystal, 1995, p. 371).

Taiwo (2005) examined the general style of interrogation in charismatic Christian pulpit discourse. Interrogation is seen as a common approach to discourse control and sustenance. The author looked at the peculiar use of interrogatives by charismatic Christian preachers. Such interrogatives include polar interrogatives, *wh*-interrogatives, and rhetorical questions. He observes that although pulpit discourse appears rather like a monologue, it still makes use of interrogations, thereby seeking responses from the listeners. Taiwo adds that although most sermons are typically full of declarative sentences, charismatic Christian preachers use interrogative forms for specific purposes in their messages. This applies to this paper because it also sought to determine the strategies preachers use to ensure audience participation and response elicitation is one of them. This replicates Taiwo's study in the Kenyan setting to establish whether his findings can be generalized to Pentecostal churches in Kenya and thus expand experience.

Taiwo's (2005) study made use of audio and video recorded data as well as personal observations of pulpit messages given by charismatic Christian preachers in South Western Nigeria. This paper made use of camcorder recorded data and personal observation of sermons presented by Pentecostal preachers. However, this paper sought to identify the implicatures used as communicative acts in sermons while Taiwo's study was based on Response Elicitation in sermons.

Taiwo (2005) also observes that a close observation of the linguistic behaviour in charismatic movements shows that it differs a lot from that of orthodox Christian bodies. Charismatic services are generally known to have a boisterous atmosphere. For instance, the usual graveyard silence one usually notices during sermons in orthodox Christian services is not a feature of charismatic services. Charismatic preachers are more flexible and less formal in the delivery of their messages. They often carry the listeners along by encouraging their participation. It is not unusual to often have messages being interjected by unsolicited comments from the congregation. Such comments include phrases such as "oh yeah", "hallelujah", "ride on pastor", and so forth. Interjections may also be in form of a rapturous noise or an applause (which sometimes drown the message) expressing approval of something said by the preacher. There are also non-verbal behaviour such as clapping and waving hands to show an approval of the message. The preacher may solicit responses such as a repetition of something he has just said, making the congregation to fill a gap in his statement and so forth. All these are strategies employed by

charismatic Christian preachers to ensure the attentiveness of their listeners. This information lends credit to this paper, which sought to identify strategies used by preachers to ensure audience participation.

Taiwo (2005) also adds that the most active use of language in charismatic worship service occurs during sermons. Sermons are messages given for the purpose of transforming the lives of the listeners. Preachers appeal to the faith of their listeners by encouraging them to pursue righteousness and hope for the best. They also use the message to warn, chastise, and challenge the listeners to tap into their potentials. The preacher controls the discourse and only allows the congregation to participate at his will in the course of the discourse. The use of interrogation is one of the features of a charismatic sermon and they are used with the purpose of achieving the intentions of the speaker. This is of benefit to this paper, which sought to identify the implicatures used in sermons to convey intentions such as to warn, advice, forbid among others.

Taiwo (2006) undertook another investigation into the general pattern of discourse in English-medium Christian Pulpit Discourse (ECPD). The expression "ECPD" is used to embrace every situation of language use when a message is given in English from the pulpit in any Christian religious practice. The study focused on the various ways pulpit preachers in ECPD elicit responses from their congregation. In ECPD, the preacher controls the discourse and the congregation shares in the process of the text as it unfolds. Three major methods of response elicitation were identified in the data: the use of interrogative, declaratives and imperatives. The responses elicited can come in form of speech, i.e., vocal utterances. This is typical of many speech situations, so it is an unmarked response. The response could also come as mental behaviour. This is done when preachers make statements or ask questions, which demand no verbal response or physical action. The context helps the hearers to interpret the expressions as ones that require them to respond by reflecting on what they have heard. Responses may also be physical actions whereby the speaker makes the hearer to act or behave in a particular way. These responses are relevant to this paper because they contribute to the interpretation of preachers' intentions in the data analysed.

The analysis of data in Taiwo's (2006) study revealed that Christian pulpit preachers elicit more spoken responses and this follows the most natural tendency in spoken discourse where a spoken form is used to elicit another. The modes of eliciting responses revealed were: Conventional answer (Praise the Lord – Hallelujah); Repeated statement (say 'I am blessed' – 'I am blessed.');

Gap filling (Jesus is... – Lord); Correct statement (The bible says 'those who will live a righteous life will be loved by all men' – No/ 'will be persecuted'), and Response to prayer -I am a winner – Amen).

The Cooperative Principle

The notion of conversational implicatures as briefly mentioned in the background section was also incorporated into the study. Conversational implicatures was postulated as a theory of discourse. Brown and Yule (1983, p. 31) state that the notion of conversational implicature is derived from a general principle of conversation plus a number of maxims which speakers will normally obey. Grice (as cited in Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 31) states the Cooperative Principle in the following terms: Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the state at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

Grice (as cited in Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 31-32) speaks of the four maxims that support the above principle. The four maxims are the ideals that participants in a conversation conventionally adhere to in communication. The first is the quantity maxim, which states that one must make their contribution as informative as required (for the current purposes of the exchange). One should not make their contribution more informative than is required. The second is the quality maxim, which urges the speaker to try to make their contribution to be one that is true. One should not say what they believe to be false. Moreover, one should not say that for which they lack evidence. The third is the relation maxim. This maxim simply urges the speaker to be relevant. The fourth is the manner maxim, which urges the speaker to be perspicuous. In other words, one should avoid obscurity of expression, avoid ambiguity, be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity), and be orderly.

According to Grice (as cited in Hatim & Mason, 1990, p. 62), certain aspects of conversational behaviour cannot be accounted for unless we assume that people are cooperative in conversation. When people are indirect in conveying what they mean, the results are the conversational implicatures. Implicatures arise due to the flouting of these maxims in conversation. Preachers at times flout these maxims and convey more than is literally meant by their utterances. This flouting of the maxims results in ambiguities which can only be interpreted based on the assumption that preachers are communicating according to the Cooperative Principle.

Brown and Yule (1983, p. 32) further claim that the description of the norms speakers operate with in conversation makes it possible to describe what types of meaning a speaker can convey by 'flouting' one of these maxims. This is true because there

are norms speakers follow in conversation which help in inferring meaning. The utterance below can be considered as an example:

“Your husband doesn’t need to be an angel for you to give him full confidence.”

The word ‘angel’ has been used metaphorically and this creates a meaning beyond the literal one. The speaker was talking about a man called Nabal in the Bible, who was so foolish but had a wise and beautiful wife. The word ‘angel’ has the semantic meaning of a spiritual being, but this is not what the speaker was referring to because she stated the obvious fact since no human being is an angel. The speaker would be said to be flouting the maxim of quality if she was using the utterance to state a fact about the world via the literal meaning of the words used. The implicature derived from the utterance with the assumption that the speaker is cooperating is that married women should know that their husbands are human and since no human being is perfect, they should not despise their husbands due to the imperfections they see in them.

Brown and Yule (1983, p. 33) also state that implicatures are pragmatic aspects of meaning and have certain identifiable characteristics, which they identify as follows: Partially derived from the conventional or literal meaning of an utterance; produced in a specific context which is shared by the speaker and hearer, and depend on the recognition by the speaker and hearer of the Cooperative Principle and its maxims.

The church setting is a context where discourse obtains, and, as Tracy and Coupland (1990, p. 21) observe, discourse is inherently indeterminate and messages become ambiguous and intentionally misleading. Implicatures are the ambiguities referred to and therefore the Cooperative Principle will show how a hearer recognizes the intention of the speaker. The Cooperative Principle is relevant in the interpretation of implicatures because the hearer always makes inferences with the assumption that the speaker is being cooperative. This paper categorized the implicatures of the study on the basis of the maxims of the Cooperative Principle, which were flouted or exploited in order to convey the speaker’s intentions.

Materials and Methods

The research targeted speakers and audiences in Pentecostal churches in Eldoret town, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. Pentecostal churches refer to those in which “the central focus is the Holy Spirit and the manifestations of the spirit through speaking in tongues, healing, prophecy and discernment of spirits. They also believe in the casting out of demons, loud prayers, clapping and shouting, usually characterize their worship” (Taiwo, 2005).

The author selected those churches that use English only or English and Kiswahili in conducting their services. The recordings were done in six churches and a total of ten sermons were collected. The researcher used purposive sampling method to sample sermons that she found relevant to the study. Five sermons were selected for data analysis and three of these were sermons preached by the pastors of the churches and two by visiting speakers who are in Christian ministry. The author also sought the opinion of other preachers and pastors who had interacted for a longer period with the subjects. This was to avoid bias and so establish validity and reliability of the data collected. In addition, the researcher chose these subjects because they had theological training.

The churches visited included those that were located 5-7 kms from the Eldoret town centre. The churches considered include Deliverance Church, Eldoret Happy Church-Town Centre, International Vision Centre (IVC), Christian Growth Centre, Sirikwa Pentecostal Fellowship-Central, and Sirikwa Pentecostal Fellowship-Mission Centre. The audiences in the churches visited ranged in number from 200 to 500 people. They consisted of youth (13-20 yrs) and adults (21-yrs and above).

The sermons were transcribed word-for-word and then typed out for analysis. At the level of implicatures, the data was analysed by identifying the maxims of the Cooperative Principle that are flouted or exploited. The maxims, which are: quality, quantity, relevance and manner. The implicatures were interpreted partly based on the literal meaning of the utterance, the context of utterance which is shared by the speaker and hearer and the assumption that the speaker is observing the Cooperative Principle, as observed by Brown and Yule (1983, p. 33).

Results and Discussion

Implicatures are taken to be the meanings that arise due to the flouting of any of the maxims of the Cooperative Principle. The maxims are flouted in order to communicate a meaning beyond the literal meaning of the words used. For purposes of presentation, the author categorized the implicatures under the four maxims of the Cooperative Principle. These maxims are quantity, quality, relevance and manner. Each category begins with a statement of the maxim, the context of the utterance, the appropriate text and the discussion of the data.

Quantity Maxim

The statement relating to the quantity maxim states thus: Make your contribution as informative as required (for the current purpose of the exchange). Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Text 1 is an extract in which the speaker is talking about the importance of grace and up to this point he has not defined it because it is a religious jargon which the audience understand in the setting. He makes the utterances in order to explain the subject in relation to his sermon.

Text 1: "I want you to realize this morning that it takes the grace of God for you to be where you are- to do what you are doing and to achieve what you have achieved + There is nothing you can do without the grace of God + **Grace – grace + Grace is defined as a kindness granted or desired + It's defined as a benefit – can be looked at as unmerited favour + God gives you a favour that you don't deserve + You don't qualify for it but it takes God himself to give it to you. Grace is a favour done without expectations in return + the kind of favour done to you without expectations in return.**"

The preacher repeats the word 'grace' four times in the highlighted utterances. He says '**grace – grace + Grace is a...**' He also refers to the word three times using the pronoun 'it.' Repetition is also exemplified in the clauses '**...favour done without expectations in return + favour done to you without expectations in return.**'

The preacher can be said to be flouting the maxim of quantity by giving more information (through the repetitions pointed out above) than is required if all he wants to communicate is the literal meaning of the word 'grace.' The implicatures derived from the assumption that the preacher is adhering to the Cooperative Principle is that grace is not just any kind of favour but is unmerited and freely given. The utterance '**...favour done without expectations in return**' further implies that there are other favours that one has to work for and so they require expectations in return but God's grace is not in that category. The speaker therefore flouts the maxim of quality by giving more information in order to define the subject of his sermon. In order to arrive at the implicatures we have to know certain facts about the world, that there are other kinds of favour and that these others have to be earned as opposed to the one God grants. We have to interpret the preacher's utterances as creating a yearning for this favour that is freely given if one asks for it.

Text 2 is also another example of an utterance that flouts the maxim of quantity. It is taken from the ending part of the sermon. The speaker was thus closing the sermon and wanted the audience to stand up for the closing prayer.

Text 2: Stand on your feet" (audience stands).

The preacher can be said to be flouting the maxim of quantity by adding the phrase '**on your feet**' to the imperative '**stand.**' This is because the imperative alone is informative enough to yield the intended response from the audience. He flouts the maxim by stating the obvious because people stand on their feet only, under normal circumstances. The implicatures is that people can stand on other parts of their bodies which is not true in the context of the study.

Quality Maxim

The quality maxim states thus: Try to make your contribution one that is true. Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack evidence.

The utterances in Text 3 were made by the preacher after she had given an example of Nabal, a man in the Bible who had ignored a servant of God called David. The preacher wanted to communicate the fact that Christians sometimes fail to be sensitive to servants of God. The phrase 'servant of God' is a religious term used in the Christian circles to refer to preachers, bishops, pastors or other people in fulltime Christian work.

Text 3: "**Sometimes we're blinded to what God does in the lives of his servants + we turn a blind eye to God's servants whom he has raise for a season and a time + We are not in God's scheme of things and we act in foolishness like Nabal did"** +

The preacher uses the metaphorical expression '**...we're blindfold to what God does in the lives of his servants**' in the context of the sermon to make it applicable to the audience. The audience is composed of different people some of whom may be ignoring the servants of God around them or people who go to them for certain needs. The implicatures derived from this utterance is that Christians are at times insensitive to the needs of people around them especially servants of God. The preacher could be said to flout the maxim of quality if she meant to state a fact using the literal meaning of the word 'blind.' The implicatures is interpreted based on the knowledge that the indefinite adverb 'sometimes' means occasionally and the

literal meaning of 'blind' does not include 'occasionally' because a blind person does not see at all. The clause '**we're blinded...**' means to be made unable to see. The speaker therefore flouts the maxim to communicate the idea of insensitivity to the needs of others. The audience is able to derive the implicatures based on the shared background knowledge that the metaphor refers to insensitivity and not physical blindness in the context of use. The phrase '**...raised for a season and a time**' is used by the preacher to imply that God's servants may be brought to a Christian by God for a particular period and so Christians should be sensitive in order not to miss out on God's purposes.

Text 4 is a story told by the preacher to illustrate the fact that God's grace makes one see solutions to problems or answers to prayer.

Text 4: "One day I was in a prayer meeting where at one corner a sister was praying for a husband and a brother at another corner was praying for a wife + I heard this because we were praying and walking around the church + And I asked God – 'can I just tell her the answer is right here?' (Laughter from audience) + I almost told them the answer was right there + the solutions are not far. **Open your eyes as you pray**" + (laughter).

The speaker used a story about a prayer meeting to illustrate the fact that God answers prayer. He flouts the maxim of quality when he tells the audience to open their eyes as they pray, because he does not literally mean that they should do that. The interpretation calls for contextual meaning which creates the implicatures that people should pray with an open mind and know that the answers could be right where they are. He also implies that when people pray with a set mind they may fail to notice the answer God gives because they are not expecting it. This is because God answers prayers in His own way. The implicated message is that Christians should be sensitive to God as they pray so that they see the solutions he offers. The speaker used a story that amused the audience in order to let them know that God does not always answer prayer in a way the individual expects.

The utterances in Text 5 were made by the preacher when he was urging the audience to live lives that make a difference for God. He had talked about the past and said that one cannot change his past but should not let the unpleasant past determine the future.

Text 5: "Stop crying over spilt milk + in every cloud – there is a silver lining + God can use the cloud of your past to bring out a wonderful silver lining if you allow him to."

The expression '**Stop crying over spilt milk**' is an idiom which literally means to stop shedding tears because milk has poured and the preacher would be said to be flouting the maxim '*Try to make your contribution one that is true*' if that is what he meant. However, the context in which it is said and the assumption that the preacher is cooperating lead to the implicatures that one should not waste time feeling sad about the unpleasant past since it cannot be changed. 'Crying' refers to feeling sad and 'spilt milk' refers to the unpleasant past experience which cannot be changed. In other words it implies the past should not be used as an excuse not to be better. The contextual information that leads to this implicatures is that we know there are people in the world who would just want to live in the past and the preacher intended to tell such people that they should leave their past behind and move on. The speaker said it in line with the theme of his sermon 'living lives that make a difference for God.'

+ In every cloud – there is a silver lining – this is another idiom which means there is always a comforting side to a sad or difficult situation. The preacher flouts the maxim of quality since literally, a cloud does not have a silver lining. The preacher, however, used it to imply that even something unpleasant has a positive side to it. He was conveying the meaning that someone's past may have been unpleasant but there is some good that can come out of that. This meaning is far removed from the semantic meaning and is based on contextual interpretation. The implicatures is also conveyed in the utterance '**God can use the cloud of your past to bring out a wonderful silver lining...**' this means God can change unpleasant past experiences to good ones. The 'cloud' here refers to the unpleasant situation while the 'silver lining' refer to the good side of the unpleasant situation. The preacher thus flouts the maxim of quality in order to communicate more meaning than the literal one based on the theme of his sermon.

Relevance Maxim

The maxim of relevance states thus: Be relevant.

This maxim is flouted when the speaker includes material that may appear to be irrelevant in the context of the sermon. Text 6 is taken from the introductory part of the sermon where the speaker was quoting the scripture reference.

Text 6: "I want you to turn to the book of James 1:22 + This morning we want to talk about applying the word of God in our lives + I read from the Amplified Bible – **which I have come to like and appreciate + It works to**

me like a commentary and brings out the concepts very powerfully + and in amplifying the word of God it makes the word of god so rich.”

The preacher flouts the maxim of relevance in the highlighted phrases and clauses because the information he gives about his Bible is not relevant to the conversational goal at that point in the sermon. He intends to make the audience aware of the version he is using and this is achieved by the phrase ‘the Amplified Bible.’ The additional information is thus irrelevant and the implicatures derived is that there are other versions of the Bible but he prefers the Amplified Bible. The contextual information leads to the explanation that the preacher flouted the maxim of relevance in order to give the audience time to open their Bibles. This is because he gave the additional information about his Bible when pages could be heard turning and stopped when he felt the audience was ready for the reading to begin.

Manner Maxim

The maxim of manner states as follows: Be perspicuous. Avoid obscurity of expression. Avoid ambiguity. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity). Be orderly.

This maxim is flouted when information is presented in an obscure or vague way. The motivation for this could be politeness in the expression of opinion and attitudes. Text 7 is taken from the introductory part of the sermon and the speaker is talking about herself briefly.

Text 7: “I came to know the Lord in 1976 – **some of you could not have been thought of** + poor you.”

The preacher flouts the maxim of manner ‘*avoid obscurity of expression*’ using the clause ‘**some of you could not have been thought of**’ if she means to communicate literally. However, if she is observing the Cooperative Principle there is an implicatures that arises from the contextual information. She has just stated the year in which she came to know the Lord and so when she adds this clause, the implicatures is that some people in the audience had not been born yet. She means to communicate that she is older than some people in the audience but does so in obscure way.

Just before the preacher made the utterances in Text 8 below, he had been talking about the importance of having trustworthy people one can confide in. The sermon was based on authentic devotion and the preacher had said that being open about one’s struggles was one of way of seeking help so that there is no pretence.

Text 8: “Most of us don’t go to community because the last time I shared with so an so – **my problem was heard in the prayer meeting – on BBC Radio so now I am not going to share with nobody.**”

The speaker flouts the maxim of manner ‘*Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)*’ because he uses too many words in the utterances ‘**...my problem was heard in the prayer meeting – on BBC Radio so now I am not going to share with nobody**’ +. This interpretation is based on what Bach (1994) says concerning implicatures: ‘In the case of nonliteral utterances, we do not mean what our words mean but something else instead. With no literality the illocutionary act we are performing is not the one that would be predicted just from the meanings of the words being used.’ The implied message is that most people do not want to talk about their problems for fear of being exposed by those who do not keep the information confidential. When he refers to BBC Radio, there are certain facts we know about the world which enable us to arrive at the implicatures, that a radio broadcasts information widely. The implicatures is that some people keep their problems to themselves for fear of being exposed when the information is spread to many people. His intention is to urge people to be trustworthy and avoid gossiping about others. The maxim of manner is said to be flouted because the speaker is not brief and to the point. He flouts the maxim in order to communicate vividly how people get hurt when confidence is betrayed.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper examined the implicatures that arose due to the flouting of the maxims of the Cooperative Principle. The four maxims were all found to have been flouted. The preachers flout the maxims in order to communicate implied meanings. Preachers use repetition of words and phrases to flout the quantity maxim. In this way, they are able to communicate and reinforce messages to their congregations. Preachers also flout the quality maxim to underscore some of the weaknesses of Christians that make them prone to mistakes or sin. They emphasize these implicatures by making references to examples of characters in the Bible who were not careful in their spiritual walk and who subsequently ended up in a bad place. The relevance maxim is flouted through reference to contextual information in order to strengthen the main message in the sermon. Lastly, the manner maxim is flouted through the use of obscurities in communication, which in themselves represent a lack of spiritual steadiness. It is recommended that the study of implicatures can be replicated in other Christian

denominations and other major world religions to illustrate the communicative strategies used in religious discourse. A related study can also examine the accuracy of translation/interpretation in sermons.

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