

Decoding Celebrity's Communication: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Taylor Swift's Speech Using Grice's Cooperative Principle

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Abstract

This research assesses Taylor Swift's speech at the 2019 Billboard Women in Music utilizing the canons of H.P. Grice's Cooperative Principle and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The analysis established seeks to explore whether Swift follows, or breaks Grice's maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner in a bid to passing across her intended message. This study used a qualitative research approach, and the conclusions drawn were based on the original script of Swift's speech for which the technique of theme analysis was employed. According to the speech, Swift follows quantity, relevance, and manner, by presenting enough, relevant and clear information. Nevertheless, she violates the Maxim of Quality intentionally as a tool of irony and sarcastic statement on gender discriminations and expectations regarding women in the music videos. These include the rhetorical choices that amplify the reception of her message and gives her the ability to condemn injustices while keeping her audience interested. Firmer and witty, yet sincere, the language of the speech builds up an honest, unyielding personality of the speaker. This work shows how power relationships and structural gender discrimination operate in the field of music business through CDA methodological framework and in relation to the criticism of Swift's fight for the rights of female musicians and singers. Underpinning of this analysis is to reveal how celebrity communication navigates content, influences discourses, and establishes solidarity for female artists. Therefore, the research findings are relevant and valuable for exploring the nature of language, power dynamics, and celebrity endorsement in the current culture and media contexts.

Keywords: Cooperative Principle, Critical Discourse Analysis, Maxims, Rhetorical Choices, Power dynamics

Introduction

Pop culture plays a remarkable role in shaping today's society all around the globe and its manifestations are traced in not only leisure but also the simplest activities for human existence, including the means of communication and language usage. According to Johnson (2015), pop culture means the set of concepts, beliefs, values, images and other processes, which are within a number of the selected culture. He said that the body, which is manipulated by the mass media, pervades the daily lives of people in society. Teachers advocate for the integration of pop culture in learning. It keeps the learners motivated and also makes learning of the language easy (Ko and Butler 2020). According to Lee (2018), real-life language input by pop culture is a potential means through which learners can be exposed to various lingual

expressions, idiomatic expressions, and sociocultural practices. However pop culture is useful when teaching the language to retain and engage the learners to continue learning the language (Hubbard, 2019).

In today's world, Celebrities have influenced the pop culture. Therefore, in today's world, the celebrity communication has a very powerful impact being pivotal to people's opinion, culture and socializing. In addition to using the potent force of words in her songs, pop sensation Taylor Swift also uses her oratory skills to deliver talks in public. Her communication approach is crucial to her personality development and interactions with her fans, in addition to reaching millions of people globally. From the linguistic analysis of her discourse it is possible to gain more understanding about the elements that define her communicative behavior.

The present research will seek to employ Grice's Cooperative Principle usually used in pragmatics to decipher a speech given by Taylor Swift in "2019 Women in Music Event", after winning "Billboard's Woman of the Decade award". In her speech, she expresses her thoughts and feelings about the Women in music industry and their rights. More specifically, the study uses the critical discourse analysis framework (CDA) to determine how communication pattern of Taylor Swift conforms or violates these maxims and how typical patterns affect reception. This research aims to find out the hidden patterns and power relations in celebrity communication through an analysis of the manifest and latent content in speeches delivered by the celebrity in question.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze Taylor Swift's speech, paying particular attention to Grice's Cooperative principles of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner.
2. To determine whether Taylor Swift follows or deviates from these rules and evaluate the impact of these variations on communication.
3. To investigate the effects of Swift's communication tactics on her public persona and audience participation.
4. To offer a critical discourse analysis that emphasizes how language shapes public perception and conversation about celebrities.

Research Questions

1. Which of Grice's maxims of the Cooperative Principle is Taylor Swift's speech conformant to or violating?
2. What are the potential communicative consequences of adherence to or violation of the rules be with regard to these maxims?
3. How these speech patterns play out in the construction of Taylor Swift's public personality?
4. What knowledge critical discourse analysis can offer about power relations in celebrity conversations?

Significance of Study

By concentrating on Taylor Swift's communication methods and audience engagement, the current study aims to offer a significant and insightful contribution to the fields of linguistics, media studies, and celebrity culture. In understanding the use of language by celebrities particularly through social media, this research utilizes Grice's Cooperative

Principle within a CDA approach through which it reveals how celebrities influence perceptions, construct their image and respond to fans. Knowledge of these strategies aids in translating how opinion leaders operate within social contexts, operate their actuality, and re-assert their persona brands. Moreover, this work can be useful for studying modern celebrity communication since it identifies the key concept of linguistic pragmatics; thus, the present work may serve as a basis for further investigations of other celebrities' communication.

This study contributes to knowledge of how language and power dynamics play out with regards to media and cultural productions in the world today. Linguists, media experts, communication strategists, and fans who want to understand the dynamics of celebrity power may find the results helpful.

Literature Review

The current research tends to do critical discourse analysis on Taylor swift's "billboard woman of the year" speech through Grice's cooperative principle. Pragmatic competence is important in communication. Many researchers argued on the definition of pragmatics. Crystal (2010) argued that there was no universally agreed definition of pragmatics because it falls at the center of most linguistic sub fields and is multi-faceted, so when defining it, people tend to do so according to their specialty and objective of study. Kasper & Rose (2001) agreed that the definition of pragmatics was a relative one based upon the theoretical viewpoint or audience of the author as in hundreds of articles on the subject, pragmatics could not arrive at a precise definition.

Pragmatics had been defined as how context defined meaning other than the expressed word. It was on how the speaker employ language in order to elicit a desired impact and how these are interpreted by the listener. Pragmatics research involved study on the use of language and speaker purpose as well as the assumptions that a listener makes. Moreover, a linguistic approach to pragmatics was interested in how the language forms and their users are related to such factors as social and cultural norms and situational context (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000).

Speech Acts

Speech Act Theory is a fundamental concept in linguistics, philosophy, and communication sciences. It is a conceptual contribution to understanding language and communication, in an effort to clarify how a language is more than just a means of conveying information (Austin, 1962). According to this notion, people are doing things in addition to expressing ideas or information when they communicate. According to him, every utterance has three acts.

1. Locutionary act

The fundamental act of making sounds or words is called a locutionary act. It means the literal meaning that is conveyed by the words in a sentence.

2. Illocutionary act

An illocutionary act is the utterance's objective or aim. It's what the speaker hopes to achieve with their words. It is the additional meaning of the utterance that is conveyed on the basis of its literal meaning.

3. Perlocutionary act

A perlocutionary act means the act that takes place in the hearer's mind once she or he has listened to the uttered words.

Cooperative Principle by Grice

The organization of speech act will be run well if the speaker and speaking partner then adhere the cooperative principle. The cooperative principle was first given by the philosopher, H. Paul Grice, in a series of his Lectures on the Logic of Assertion, published in 1967. This principle gives grounds for why humans can share with each other. According to Grice (1975), "Make your conversational contribution such as it is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged". The following are the four maxims listed by Grice on his view of what defines the cooperative principle.

1. Maxim of Quality

The maxim of quality deals with truth. It means that make contribution in the conversation with something that is true, do not say something that you think is not true and do not say something for which you lack evidence.

2. Maxim of Quantity

It means to give only the required information in any conversation and do not contribute more than it is required.

3. Maxim of Relation

This maxim helps to keep the conversation on track. This maxim also helps to understand the part of conversation which was not obvious at first and make your contribution in conversation with relevant information.

4. Maxim of Manner

The maxim of manner includes to be formal, be orderly, avoid vagueness and ambiguity, avoid obscurity of expression, be brief and try to be clear. Uncertainty and obscurity are undesirable (Grice, 1975).

These maxims are familiar to the speakers and hearers, but due to the fact that these rules are essential, they are not self-reflexively perceived. However in our day to day conversation, people do not follow maxims meant for language usage. According to Grice (1975), "A participant in a talk exchange may fail to fulfill a maxim in various ways". The speaker fails a maxim by violating it, flouting it or by opting out.

If a maxim is flouted in the utterance, the speaker assumes that the hearer must know the unspoken implication rather than the words in their literal sense. In other words, the experience that the speaker has prevents him or her from misleading the hearer. As described by Thomas (1995), "A speaker blatantly fails to observe a maxim, not with any intention of deceiving or misleading, but because the speaker wishes to prompt the hearer to look for a meaning which is different from, or in addition to, the expressed meaning". Compared to flouting, when a speaker violates a maxim, his/her intention is to deceive the hearer. The speaker makes a true utterance but the presupposition that comes with the utterance is false. Comparative, to opt out of maxim means that the person does not want to cooperate and include in the conversation. When a person is unwilling to reply. In the case of celebrity communication, such deviations may positively add a sense of the real, introduce uncertainty, or alleviate blame.

Critical discourse analysis

CDA was introduced as a research approach by Fairclough (1992) and Van Dijk (1993) in order to investigate the connection between language and power and social context. CDA attempts to identify how and why language use serves to represent power relations, ideologies

and structures. Therefore, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) can be regarded as a theoretical framework for the description, interpretation, analysis and evaluation of text mediated social life. CDA is interested in identifying patterns that connect text, talk and power to other discursive practices and events and at the same time to broader social and cultural formations, relations and processes. Slight and accurate analyses and descriptions of the materiality of language are things that are somehow constantly elements of CDA. It seeks to understand the way those relationships are nontransparent in obtaining and maintaining power and domination; it is pointing toward power differentials, social inequalities, non-democratic mechanisms, and other forms of injustice with the view to mobilizing people into actionable reforms (Fairclough, 1992).

Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Framework (1992) is used in this research. This framework helps to analyze

- **Textual Analysis:** In textual analysis, using vocabulary, figures of speech, the overall attitude, and specific stylistic features.
- **Discursive Practices:** Analyzing the speech in terms of production, diffusion and reception.
- **Social Practices:** Exploring the re-scription of the social, cultural, and gender dynamics within her speech.

In applying CDA to analysis of Taylor Swift's communication, proliferated in her speech, the underlying meaning of her words and phrases helps to understand how she reproduces the image of a successful celebrity, respond to sensitive issues, and engage in construction of gendered roles and expectations in the show business.

Previous Researches

Lazar (2005) in her research, *"Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Gender, Power, and Ideology in Discourse"* worked on postmodern brew gendered approach to CDA indicates how/that discourse serves to contest or perpetuate gendered power relations. She claims about the way in which language can both represent and challenge ideologies in the sphere of media and public dissemination. Marshall (2014), in *"Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture"* discusses the roles of celebrities in developing and maintaining their images via communication. He describes how celebrities' speeches are also performative to build the message with the aid of fans as well as to protect the image.

Research Methodology

This research utilized qualitative research method with a special emphasis on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The objective was to find out how Taylor Swift conveys some important matters about women in the music business and how her speech conforms to or violates Grice's Cooperative Principle. In this respect, the analysis explores the linguistic and structural dimensions together with the presumed connotations that she gave to her words. As pointed out by Brink (1993), the qualitative method is devoid of calculation, statistical data and numerical values. This research will adopt the qualitative approach since student interviews are used in the analysis of this research, Further, this method will be utilized where there is need to establish a problem then explore it (Creswell and Poth 2016).

Data Collection

The source of data includes a speech by Taylor Swift, at the 2019 Billboard Women in Music Event on the 12th of December at the Hollywood Palladium in Los Angeles, Taylor

Swift became the first ever receiver of Billboard's "Woman of the Decade" award. After receiving this award, she gave a speech on the topic "Women in Music Industry". The speech is of 15 minutes and 16 seconds. The video was captured from the YouTube channel of Billboard and the Bolt application was used to download the video to avoid repetition of the inaccurate content available online this was due to the many fakes existing online. The video was transcribed manually for the purpose of excluding none such parameters as intonation, pauses, and emphasis which are very important for discourse analysis.

Sampling Technique

This study employs purposive sampling since the subject of analysis is the presidential speech by Taylor Swift, which has been selected based on relevance to the research question. The speech was delivered at the 2019 Billboard Women in Music Event when Swift was honored with 'Woman of the Decade' award and hence it can be well used to examine communication about gender problems in the field of music. This video was obtained from the official channel of Billboard on You Tube to warrant its authenticity. That is why critical discourse analyzing the fragment from Taylor Swift's song has to take into consideration such aspects as context, content and cultural relevance of the sample.

Data Analysis

After the transcription of the speech, it is divided into themes for the analysis. The data analysis used in this paper will involve the analysis of Taylor Swift's speech with the aid of Grice's Cooperative Principle and through the identification of whether or not Taylor exceeds, meets or violates the quantity, quality, relevance, and manner maxims. In each case where a maxim is obeyed or violated, the text is examined in order to determine its higher order implications. This is coupled with a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) especially with Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Framework due to which, it is possible to understand how the language choice of Swift fits the stereotype or subverts societal expectation of women in music. It is primarily based upon the within text linguistic variables or reflected textual variables which include the aspect of word choice, flow and the mastery of the rhetorician with strategies of persuasion, in addition to the external contextual and discursive factors.

Findings

Analysis Based on Grice's Cooperative Principle

Grice's Cooperative Principle comprises four maxims: Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Manner. Taylor Swift's speech illustrates both explicit and selective actualization of the following Maxims, in order to express genuinely, to empower and to offer social injustice of gender discrimination perspectives.

1. Maxim of Quantity

The Maxim of Quantity regulates the flow of how much information should be given in order neither to overstep the bounds of the necessary amount, nor state just the minimum of the necessary information. That is why, all the information which is necessary to understand the topics in question, is given in a sufficient amount throughout this speech by Swift and does not flood the audience with redundant details. She employs narratives of her own live performances to buttress her issues that are relevant to the struggles of most women in this field.

For example, Swift talks on the criticism she received after the success of her Fearless

album:

"When Fearless did win Album of the Year at the Grammys, and I did become the youngest solo artist to ever win the award, with that win, came criticism and backlash in 2010 that I'd never experienced before as a young, new artist."

Here, she does not linger on details that might be irrelevant, providing simply the background information required to understand the cause of the backlash. They add that the audience may get her point of view without any hindrance thanks to her succinct explanation.

When referencing certain songs that demonstrate Swift's responses to criticism, she also strikes a careful balance between detail and context

"The best lyrical examples I can think of are songs like "Mean," "Shake It Off," and "Blank Space"."

It is a perfect way of providing evidence without having to enumerate so many and end up making the audience lose interest.

2. Maxim of Quality

The Maxim of Quality is to do with telling the truth and not to lie. Swift does not ham it up at any point and speaks with genuine passion about her personal experience as well as some problems the entire industry is facing.

Regarding the gendered scrutiny that she experienced, she says:

"And I saw that as a female in this industry, some people will always have slight reservations about you. Whether you deserve to be there. Whether your male producer or co-writer is the reason for your success."

Still and all, Swift does not deter from harsh realities when singing about the injustices that women face in an industry that discriminates against female musicians. She still tells the truth of what is heading her way and wins the social sanction of the audience as they decode these issues too.

She also talks about the potential for private investors to buy her music catalog:

"After I was denied the chance to purchase my music outright, my entire catalogue was sold to Scooter Braun's Ithaca Holdings in a deal that I'm told was funded by the Soros family, 23 Capital and the Carlyle Group."

In my experience this factual statement is view of her as a driven, and ambitious individual that proved that her goal is to stand truthful in front of powerful entities.

3. Maxim of Relation

The Maxim of Relation mandates that a participant does not introduce information that is not relevant to the talk-in-interaction. Swift guarantees that every word she says serves to reiterate her theme of the suffering and strength of women in the music business.

She relates the greater issue of female empowerment to her personal hardships and thoughts on societal expectations:

"In the last ten years, I have watched as women in this industry are criticized, and measured up to each other, and picked at for their bodies, their romantic lives, their fashion."

The idea of gender-specific analysis in this statement contradicts the unity and strength of female artists, even though it is relevant to the speech.

She also stays relevant by bringing up more recent musicians:

"And I see that fire in the newer faces in our music industry, whose work I absolutely love. I see it in Lizzo, Rosalía, Tayla Parx, Hayley Kiyoko, King Princess, Camila Cabello, Halsey, Megan Thee Stallion, Princess Nokia, Nina Nesbitt, Sigrid, Normani, H.E.R., Maggie Rogers, Becky G, Dua Lipa, Ella Mai, Billie Eilish, and so many other amazing women who are making music right now."

These references link her biography to the present day fight and successes of a fresh

wave of woman artists.

4. Maxim of Manner

According to the Maxim of Manner, one should speak clearly and avoid being evasive, unclear, or disorganized. Swift's use of formal, understandable language is evident in the speaker's pauses, the narration's tempo, and the frequent usage of rhetorical strategies that highlight her arguments.

She highlights the pattern of critiques she has received using a repeated structure:

"They're saying I'm dating too much in my twenties? Okay, I'll stop. I'll just be single... for years. Now they're saying my album Red is filled with too many break-up songs? Okay, I'll make one about moving to New York, and deciding that really my life is more fun with just my friends."

This style again is very clear and clearly rhythmic thus reflecting flexibility on her part while at the same time her message is easy to follow though powerful.

Swift also engages the audience and makes her thoughts clear with humor:

"Now I'm being cast as a villain to you? Okay, here's an album called reputation and there are lots of snakes everywhere."

This statement carries humor, but no vagueness, thus, her criticism of the public image is not hard to decipher.

Flouting the Maxim of Quality

She significantly exaggerates the details as she amusingly enumerates several criticisms in order to highlight how ridiculous these inferences are:

"Now it's that I'm showing you too many pictures of me with my friends. Okay, I can stop doing that, too. Now I'm actually a calculated, manipulator rather than a smart businesswoman? Okay, I'll disappear from public view... for years."

This exaggeration means that women are expected to meet unrealistic and ever shifting goals, making her critique even more potent.

Analysis Based on Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Framework

Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Framework has three types. Each dimension shows us other levels of meaning and satire of society inscribed in Swift's speech.

1. Textual Analysis

Swift uses a lot of tone changes, rhetorical strategies, and clever word choice in his speech:

- **Irony and Sarcasm:**

"Alright, okay, here's an entire genre shift, and a pop album called 1989. Oh, you heard it? Sick!"

This mild sarcasm brings assurance and rebellion, with an added feature of rejection to any comment made about her.

Another example is

"I believe a popular headline back then was 'A Swift Backlash,' which is clever, you gotta give it to them".

She used the word "Clever" for the headline who criticized her.

- **Metaphors**

"It seems like the pressure that could've crushed us made us into diamonds instead."

In the case of female artists then, the metaphor of pressure creating diamonds shows how women art producers can be strong and even transformed despite influential scrutiny.

Another example is

"This was the decade when I became a mirror for my detractors."

She compares herself with a mirror.

- **Repetition and Parallelism**

The whole speech is filled with the example of Repetition, Parallelism and its different types. Taylor swift used the parallelism in her speech to make it more attractive and unique. Her practice of enumerating critiques and answers highlights the circular nature of criticism directed at women is shown in the form of repetition

"They're saying... Okay, I'll..."

- ***Tone shifts and Word choice***

There is humor, penetration into the emotions associated with pride, and the occasional assertiveness that helps sustain the viewers' attention and repetition of the key ideas.

The words that Taylor swift used in her speech are quite **fancy**, such as she used the words like Manipulator, Scrutiny, Vast frontier, Diligence, Unrecupable, and Magnificent etc.

Her speech contains complex words more because she used Standard English dialect in her speech. She gives inspiration to young females who want to be a part of music industry in future through this speech and she also expressed her joy, so the words she used were lively, exciting, vivid and quite formal as well, for example she used Magnificent, Happy, Free, Honored, Thank you so much and so on. But she used a bit of colloquial language, e.g. she used the word "gotta".

Moreover, she did not use any shocking and taboo language in her speech because it was a formal event so most of the words used by her were formal and technical. She pile on the details very well because in her speech, she talked about her past experiences, difficulties women are facing in the music industry followed by her efforts to make the role of women more prominent.

Taylor swift is so confident and clever in the word choices and we can see it in her speech clearly. She has chosen the words of her speech very wisely. This speech seems more inspirational rather than the celebration of her winning of "Woman of the Decade", and it became possible due to her clever choice of diction. Her continuous use of the phrase "Women in industry" specifies the role of women in making art and this is the evidence that her message is understood by the audience properly.

2. **Discursive Practice**

Swift's statement is a prime example of her purposeful use of public forums to influence discussions about gender and artistic integrity

- **Production and Distribution:**

When the speech is given at an event of such stature and is aired through Billboard's platforms, it means that her message is out there for many people.

- **Intertextuality:**

Her critical viewpoint and joyful embrace of women are supported by ties to other artists, such as Lana Del Rey and Billie Eilish, as well as to her own songs, such as "Mean," "Shake It Off," and "Blank Space." The clever connection between the two shows intertextuality.

3. **Social Practice**

Swift's speech is filled with social issues which of them are as follows;

- **Gender Inequality:**

"In the last ten years, I have watched as women in this industry are criticized, and measured up to each other."

This has to do with some of the current issues that women in music have encountered regarding equality and acknowledgment.

- **Power Dynamics:**

Her analysis of private equity and music ownership reveals the ways in which powerful corporations take advantage of musicians:

"I feel the need to bring it up: And that is the unregulated world of private equity coming in, and buying up our music, as if it is real estate. As if it's an app, or a shoe line."

This critique is aiming at sociopolitical changes for enhancing the protection of artists' rights.

- **Empowerment and Solidarity:**

By supporting the rights and portrayal of future generations, recognizing and embracing her female peers, and other actions, Swift generally empowers and brings people together.

Conclusion

This study critically examined Taylor Swift's 2019 Billboard Women in Music speech using Grice's Cooperative Principle and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The study revealed that Swift affirms the four maxims of Quantity, Relevance, Manner and Quality, in offering adequate, pertinently formulating and presenting information in her writings, though negates the maxim of Quality in one instance where she used irony and exaggeration at the behest of her activism on behalf of the marginalized fair sex. All these communicative choices increase her message and make the arguments which she makes very powerful. She is a strong voice and role model for women in the music industry because of her speech patterns, which combine assertiveness with genuine humor and honesty. She is clever enough to know that what makes her words powerful that is why she uses Metaphors, Irony, Sarcasm, and types of deviation and parallelism and so on in her speech.

We can say that her careful use of figurative language and her style made her speech worth remembering. This gives her a public face of strength and self-acknowledgment. In addition, the CDA framework discloses power relations and relations of domination; it also underlines Swift's claim to fairness and justice, and it encourages both her peers and other generations of female singers. To sum up, her discourse demonstrates how celebrity communication affects society and draws attention to the structural issues that already exist.

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