CHAPTER III

VIOLATION OF CONVERSATIONAL MAXIMS IN THE SELECTED PLAYS (I)
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3.1 Introduction

Grice’s theory of Cooperative Principle has been explicitly expressed in the maxims categorized as ‘Quality’, ‘Quantity’, ‘Relation’ and ‘Manner’. According to Grice, under each of the category of the conversational maxims “fall certain more specific maxims and sub-maxims, the following of which will, in general, yield results in accordance with the Cooperative Principle” {Grice in Cole and Morgan (ed), 1975: 45}. The present chapter contains the analysis of violation of conversational maxims in the selected plays of Oscar Wilde. The data collected from a pragmatic reading of the text are analysed in two sections, namely, violation of Quality Maxim in the selected plays, and violation of Quantity Maxim in the selected plays.

3.2 Analysis of Violation of Maxim of Quality in the Selected Plays

Grice’s Theory of Cooperative Principle states that “under the category of Quality falls a super maxim - try to make your contribution one that is true” {Grice in Cole and Morgan (ed), 1975: 46}. which has two sub-maxims.

Maxim of Quality

Super Maxim: Try to make your contribution one that is true.
Sub-Maxims: a) Do not say what you believe to be false.
   b) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

By this maxim, Grice means that speakers should always provide true and valid information.

In the following section, the data collected from the selected plays of Oscar Wilde, namely, *Lady Windermere’s Fan* (1892), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), and *An Ideal Husband* (1895), are analysed against the background of the super-maxim and sub-maxims of the maxim of Quality.

### 3.2.1 Violation of Maxim of Quality in *Lady Windermere’s Fan*

**Example 1**

LADY WINDERMERE: Are all men bad?

DUCHESS OF BERWICK: Oh, all of them, my dear, all of them, without any exception. And they never grow any better. Men become old, but they never become good.

*Act I, p. 22*

The Duchess of Berwick and Lady Windermere are busy in their conversation. Their topic of discussion is the frequent visits of Lord Windermere to Mrs. Erlynne. The duchess tells her that she has come to know from many “that Windermere goes there four and five times a week” (p. 21). Lady Windermere was not willing to believe whatever the duchess tells her but then she began to doubt about her husband, and so she asks her if all men are bad.
The utterance above of the Duchess of Berwick is a reply to Lady Windermere’s question regarding the character of men. Her utterance is a quiet and ostentatious violation of the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quality. Her statement claiming that all men are bad ‘without any exception’ and ‘they never become good’ is an utterance without any evidence to prove the claim. She merely talks on her experience which is not sufficient enough for any kind of generalization. Her expression in the above utterance is hyperbolic as she has extravagantly referred to all men and attributed the quality of being bad to all of them without any exception that too without any evidence. Her utterance is an obvious violation of the maxim of quality.

Example 2

LADY WINDERMERE: It is very kind of you, Duchess, to come and tell me all this. But I can’t believe that my husband is untrue to me.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK: Pretty child! I was like that once. Now I know that all men are monsters.

*Act I, p. 22*

The Duchess of Berwick told Lady Windermere about the visits of Lord Windermere to Mrs. Erlynne and the gossip about them that is going among others. She wants to make Lady Windermere believe that her husband too is ‘bad’. She tries to convince her that all men are bad ‘without any exception’ (p. 22). She tells Lady Windermere about her experience with her husband and claims that Lord Windermere is also ‘bad’. But Lady Windermere does not believe her and chooses to disbelieve that her husband could be ‘bad’ and could be untrue to her. The trust of Lady Windermere on her husband makes Duchess of Berwick utter the above utterance.
The utterance above (‘all men are monster’) is a deliberate violation of the maxim of quality as she knows it well that men cannot be monsters as a man is a human being. Her utterance is metaphorical in nature in which she wants to attribute the qualities of a monster to men. She violates the second sub-maxim of the maxim of quality when she claims that ‘all men are monsters’ as she does this without any evidence. Her utterance is a metaphorical statement which is a declarative statement in which she hints at the implicature that Lady Windermere should not believe her husband or she should not disbelieve the information that she (Duchess) gave her about her husband. Her utterance above is not only metaphorical but also is hyperbolic in expression as she refers to all men without any exception and without any evidence.

Example 3

LORD WINDER MERE: Margaret! Don’t talk like that of Mrs. Erlynne, you don’t know how unjust it is!

LADY WINDER MERE: You are very jealous of Mrs. Erlynne’s honour. I wish you had been as jealous of mine.

Act I, p, 24

On hearing about Lord Windermere’s visits to Mrs. Erlynne from the Duchess of Berwick, Lady Windermere started doubting her husband. She went to check the diaries and bank passbooks of her husband and found that a large sum of money was paid to Mrs. Erlynne by her husband. The details of the passbooks make her believe that “it is true! It is true” (p. 23). When Lord Windermere comes in the house, she wants explanations about his ‘mad infatuation’ and ‘the monstrous sums of money’ (p. 24) given to Mrs. Erlynne. Lord Windermere requests her not to talk of Mrs. Erlynne in such a way as it is unjust.
Lady Windermere’s utterance above is not in accordance with the second sub-maxim of the maxim of quality. She makes the utterance without having any evidence about her husband of being concerned of Mrs. Erlynne’s honour. She states that her husband is jealous of Mrs. Erlynne whereas he has never bothered to show similar concern for his own wife.

Her utterance above is a deliberate violation in which she implicates that she does not approve of his visits and paying money to Mrs. Erlynne. Lord Windermere grasps intuitively (competence of the hearer to workout ‘circumstances’) the implicature arising by the context of the utterance of his wife which is evident from his dialogue that comes in conversation between him and his wife, in the same context, in which he tells her that he has ‘never loved any one in the whole world but’ her (p. 24).

Moreover, the utterance of Lady Windermere proves to be false from the story as it is revealed at the end of the story that he was helping Mrs. Erlynne on the ground that she was the mother of Lady Windermere. Her utterance is a use of Indirect Speech Act in which she indirectly means that her husband should care for her more than Mrs. Erlynne, such expression is an example of meiosis.

Example 4

    LADY WINDERMERE: Who is this woman, then? Why do you take a house for her?
    LORD WINDERMERE: I did not take a house for her.

    *Act I, p.24*
Lady Windermere is full of doubts against her husband after she listens to the Duchess of Berwick. She, in order to confirm her doubts, examines the bank passbooks of her husband and comes to know that he has given large sums of money to Mrs. Erlynne. The bank statements and records showing the large sums of money given to Mrs. Erlynne infuriate her. When Lord Windermere comes into the room she asks him the above questions.

The second question, by Lady Windermere, challenges the second sub-maxim of the maxim of quality. She has asked the question without any evidence and which is merely based on her doubt. Her question is an intentional and deliberate violation of the maxim. She, through the violation, gives rise to an implicature of disbelief against her husband. Further, the nullity of the question is set clear from the rejection of the question by Lord Windermere who clearly states that he does ‘not take a house for her’. Lady Windermere has deliberately violated the maxim of quality in order to establish her doubt which of course she could not as her husband rejects her question by replying in the negative.

Example 5

LADY PLYMDALE: Who is that well-dressed woman talking to Windermere?
DUMBY: Haven’t got the slightest idea! Looks like an édition de luxe of a wicked French novel, meant specially for the English market.

*Act II, p. 35*

There are many guests in the drawing room of Lord Windermere as they (Lord Windermere and Lady Windermere) have given a party. Among the guests are also present Mr Dumby and Lady Plymdale. Lady
Plymdale is curious about a lady who is talking to Lady Windermere and wants to know about her. To get information about the lady she asks Mr Dumby. Mr. Dumby knows the lady, she is Mrs. Erlynne, but he lies to Lady Plymdale that he hasn’t any idea about who she is.

The utterance of Mr. Dumby is a quiet and unostentatious violation of the first sub-maxim of the maxim of quality. He violates the maxim by telling what he believes to be false. He lies to Lady Plymdale that he has not ‘got the slightest idea’ about the lady. His utterance is meant to mislead Lady Plymdale by not providing any information about Mrs. Erlynne. The fact that he is lying to Lady Plymdale is clear from the conversation of Mrs. Erlynne and Mr. Dumby, in the presence of Lady Plymdale, where she tells him that she was sorry she could not visit him on the last three times he has called her.

Further, she invites him to ‘come and lunch on Friday’ (p. 35). Mr. Dumby’s utterance is a deliberate violation of the maxim of quality which he does by way of being metaphorical in his expression. He compares the lady with ‘an édition de luxe of a wicked French novel, meant especially for the English market’.

Example 6

LADY WINDERMERE: Go back to my husband, Mrs. Erlynne. He belongs to you and not to me. I suppose he is afraid of a scandal. Men are such cowards. They outrage every law of the world, and are afraid of the world’s tongue. But he had better prepare himself. He shall have a scandal. He shall have the worst scandal there has been in London for years. He shall see his name in every vile paper, mine on every hideous placard.
Lady Windermere is upset with the intimacy of her husband and Mrs. Erlynne. She decides to leave the house of her husband and go to the house of Lord Darlington who had proposed to her in the party that evening. She goes to Lord Darlington’s house, leaving a letter for her husband, and finds that Lord Darlington is not at home. She then feels that her husband might come to take her home back after reading the letter. But, to her astonishment it is not her husband who comes to Lord Darlington’s house, rather Mrs. Erlynne comes to take her back. Lady Windermere has almost decided to go back home if her husband would have come, but she changes her decision seeing Mrs. Erlynne as she believes that it is her husband who has sent her.

Lady Windermere utters the above utterance without adhering to the second sub-maxim of the maxim of quality. She utters the above utterance without having any evidence for what she was saying and the blame she was putting on Mrs. Erlynne. The utterance above is a violation of the maxim of quality as she asserts, without any evidence, that Mrs. Erlynne has been sent to bring her back home by her husband. Whereas the fact is that Lord Windermere has not received her letter, which was then in possession of Mrs. Erlynne and she comes herself to take her daughter back home so as to save her married life, so that the mistake that she has made twenty years back should not be repeated by her daughter, she is afraid of life repeating its tragedies.
MRS. ERLYNNE: You do, and you know that he loves you.

LADY WINDERMERE: He does not understand what love is. He understands it as little as you do – but I see what you want. It would be a great advantage for you to get me back. Dear Heaven! what a life I would have then! Living at the mercy of a woman who has neither mercy nor pity in her, a woman whom it is an infamy to meet, a degradation to know a vile woman, a woman who comes between husband and wife!

*Act III, p. 48*

Lady Windermere has left her husband’s house and gone to the house of Lord Darlington. While leaving her husband’s house she wrote a letter for him which Mrs. Erlynne reads and, without handing it over to her (Lady Windermere) husband, goes to bring her back to her husband’s home. As Mrs. Erlynne reaches the house of Lord Darlington, Lady Windermere becomes angrier on her husband. She was expecting her husband to come to Lord Darlington’s house if her husband really cared for her and loved her. But the arrival of Mrs. Erlynne makes it clear to her that her husband does not care for her and wants her back at home to save his social status. She blames Mrs. Erlynne for the problems that have cropped up into the relation of husband and wife.

Lady Windermere utters the above utterance without adhering to the second sub-maxim of the maxim of quality. Her utterance is a blame put on Mrs. Erlynne without any proper evidence. Lady Windermere blames Mrs. Erlynne for coming ‘between husband and wife’. She considers her to be a ‘vile woman’ and to know her is ‘infamy’ and ‘degradation’. The
accusation that she puts on Mrs. Erlynne is not only without any evidence and but also without knowing the whole truth of the life of Mrs. Erlynne.

Lady Windermere’s violation of the maxim is a deliberate one as she hints that all the problems that have happened in her life with her husband are because of her. Mrs. Erlynne grasps intuitively the implicature (competence of the hearer to workout ‘circumstances’) and promises her that she would ‘never see him-never to have anything to do with his life or’ hers (p. 48).

Example 8

**LORD WINDERMERE:** Where is she?
**MRS. ERLYNNE:** She is very tired. She has gone to bed. She said she had a headache.

**LORD WINDERMERE:** I must go to her. You’ll excuse me?
**MRS. ERLYNNE:** Oh, no! It’s nothing serious. She’s only very tired, that is all. Besides, there are people still in the supper-room. She wants you to make her apologies to them. She said she didn’t wish to be disturbed. She asked me to tell you!

*Act II, p. 43*

Mrs. Erlynne is about to leave the party when Lord Windermere meets her and asks her if she has said good bye to his wife to which she replies in the affirmative. Lord Windermere, then, wants to know where his wife is. And then occurs the above dialogue between Lord Windermere and Mrs. Erlynne in which Mrs. Erlynne has violated the maxim of quality every time she answered the queries of Lord Windermere.
Mrs. Erlynne’s reply about the whereabouts of Lady Windermere is in violation of the first sub-maxim of the maxim of quality as she tells him what she believes to be false. Her utterance is a lie. She knows it well that Lady Windermere was not in the house then. Lady Windermere has left the house of her husband and gone to Lord Darlington’s house with the intention of accepting his proposal to her. Mrs. Erlynne has come to know about Lady Windermere’s leaving her own house from the letter that she had read which was meant to be read by Lord Windermere.

She further violates the maxim of quality, again by not adhering to the first sub-maxim, by preventing Lord Windermere to see her wife. She not only lies about the health of Lady Windermere but also tells Lord Windermere not to be worried and that his wife has asked that she should not be disturbed. Both the instances of Mrs. Erlynne’s violation are to mislead and misinform Lord Windermere about the whereabouts of his wife and to save the marriage of her daughter.

Example 9

LORD WINDERMERE: You have dropped something.
MRS. ERLYNNE: Oh, yes, thank you, that is mine.
LORD WINDERMERE: But it’s my wife’s handwriting, isn’t it?
MRS. ERLYNNE: Yes, it’s – an address.

*Act II, p. 44*

Lord Windermere is informed by Mrs. Erlynne that his wife is tired and doesn’t want to be disturbed. Mrs. Erlynne is going to take leave of Lord Windermere from the party. As she was leaving, the letter that she had in her possession drops. Lord Windermere points that she has dropped something, she says that it’s hers. Lord Windermere recognizes the
handwriting of his wife, to which Mrs. Erlynne replies that it was an address.

The utterances above by Mrs. Erlynne, in the conversation between Mrs. Erlynne and Lord Windermere, are all violations of the quality maxim. The utterances by Mrs. Erlynne are not true contributions to the act of communication. In the first utterance, Mrs. Erlynne does not adhere to the first sub-maxim as she tells what she believes to be false. She lies that the thing that she dropped belongs to her, whereas it was a letter written by Lady Windermere for her husband, so logically it belongs either to the writer or to the person for whom it was written.

She, further, violates the first sub-maxim of the quality maxim when she states that Lord Windermere’s wife has written an address, whereas the truth is that the letter did not contain any address rather it was written for Lord Windermere stating that his wife had left the house. Both the utterances by Mrs. Erlynne are quiet and unostentatious violations of the maxim of quality which are meant to mislead and misinform Lord Windermere about the truth of the letter that was dropped by Mrs. Erlynne.

Example 10

MRS. ERLYNNE: I am afraid I took your wife’s fan in mistake for my own, when I was leaving your house tonight. I am so sorry.

Act III, p. 57

Mrs. Erlynne is in the house of Lord Darlington to bring back Lady Windermere to her own house, but before they could leave the house, after their conversation, Lord Windermere, Lord Darlington, Mr.
Dumby, Lord Augustus and Cecil Graham enter the room. Lady Windermere hides behind curtain. The men see the fan of Lady Windermere at the house of Lord Darlington that arouses their curiosity. Lord Windermere demands an explanation from Lord Darlington to know how the fan of his wife has come to his house. Lord Windermere wants to search the rooms of Lord Darlington but then Mrs. Erlynne comes out of her hiding place and tells that she has brought Lady Windermere’s fan there.

The utterance of Mrs. Erlynne is not in adherence to the first sub-maxim of the maxim of Quality. She tells what she believes to be a false statement. She has told a lie to the men present at Darlington’s house. The fan actually was brought by Lady Windermere when she left the house of her husband to accept the proposal of Lord Darlington. When the men arrive at the house, in a haste to hide, she (Lady Windermere) forgets to pick it up from the sofa. Mrs. Erlynne’s violation of the maxim is quiet and unostentatious with an intention to mislead the interpretation of the men in the house about the presence of Lady Windermere’s fan at Lord Darlington’s house. Mrs. Erlynne violates the maxim of quality to save Lady Windermere’s reputation and married life.

3.2.2 Violation of Maxim of Quality in *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Example 1

JACK: Well, if you want to know, Cecily happens to be my aunt.
ALGERNON: Your aunt!
JACK: Yes. Charming old lady she is, too. Lives at Tunbridge Wells. Just give it back to me, Algy.

*Act I, p.11*

Algernon is interested about knowing as to who had presented the cigarette case to Jack. Algernon denies the claim of Jack that the cigarette case belongs to him on the ground that the case is a present from someone of the name Cecily and Jack has already said that he doesn’t know any one by that name. Jack insists on getting the cigarette case from him claiming ownership of the case. Algernon demands to know who Cecily is. On Algernon’s persistence Algernon discloses the fact in the dialogue above.

Jack’s utterance ‘Cecily happens to be my aunt’ is a lie. Jack has no aunt of the name Cecily; rather Cecily is his ward who is a young girl. In the utterance Jack violates the maxim of Quality as he tells something that he believes is false with the sole intention to misinform Algernon about the young lady, Cecily. He not only lies but also tries to confirm the lie by supporting his utterance with another utterance ‘Yes. Charming old lady she is, too’. Jack’s violation of the maxim of quality is because he has not been true to contribute to the act of communication. He has provided false information and hence not followed the first sub-maxim of the maxim of Quality to provide true information. He does so, in the dialogue above, because he wants to avoid giving any information about Cecily, his young ward, to his friend Algernon.

Example 2

LADY BRACKNELL: I hope not, Algernon. It would put my table completely out. Your uncle would have to dine upstairs. Fortunately he is accustomed to that.
ALGERNON: It is a great bore, and, I need hardly say, a terrible disappointment to me, but the fact is I have just had a telegram to say that my poor friend Bunbury is very ill again. They seem to think I should be with him.

_Act I, p. 16_

Lady Bracknell, aunt of Algernon, visits the house of Algernon with Gwendolen, daughter of Lady Bracknell. Lady Bracknell wishes to send Algernon to Mary Farquhar for dinner. Algernon is unwilling to go to dine with Mary Farquhar and so he utters the above utterance as an excuse to avoid dining with Mary Faquhar.

The utterance of Algernon is simply a lie. He knows it well that he is lying to Lady Bracknell still he goes on to utter the name of Bunbury. Bunbury actually is the invented non-real character which Algernon has invented to live a life of dual standard or to say to save himself from certain unwanted situation(s) in which he does want to continue to dwell. Bunburying is nothing but an excuse that Algernon uses to mislead or fool others while he himself is fully aware that he is telling a lie. Algernon’s contribution to the conversation is not ‘true’ as he violates the first sub-maxim by telling what he believes to be false. He lies to Lady Bracknell in order to mislead her and to avoid to be sent to dine with Mary Farquhar, which his aunt wants him to do.

Example 3

LADY BRACKNELL: Well, I must say, Algernon, that I think it is high time that Mr. Bunbury made up his mind whether he was going to live or to die... I should be much obliged if you would ask Mr. Bunbury, from me, to be kind enough not to have a relapse on Saturday, for I rely on you
to arrange my music for me. It is my last reception, and one wants something that will encourage conversation, particularly at the end of the season when every one has practically said whatever they had to say, which, in most cases, was probably not much.

ALGERNON: I’ll speak to Bunbury, Aunt Augusta, if he is still conscious, and I think I can promise you he’ll be all right by Saturday. Of course the music is a great difficulty. You see, if one plays good music, people don’t listen, and if one plays bad music people don’t talk. But I’ll run over the programme I’ve drawn out, if you will kindly come into the next room for a moment.

Act I, p.16

The conversation between Algernon and Lady Bracknell continues at the house of Algernon. Lady Bracknell wishes to send Algernon to the house of Mary Faquhar to which Algernon regrettably says that he could not do so as he will have to attend to his friend Bunbury who is ‘very ill again’ (p.16). Lady Bracknell did not like Bunbury always falling ill and so she suggests to Algernon to make it clear from him ‘whether he was going to live or to die.’ (p. 16). She asks Algernon to make a request to Bunbury, on her behalf, ‘to be kind enough not to have a relapse on Saturday’ (p. 16) as she would rely on him to arrange music for her. The above utterance is a part of the continued conversation after the request of Lady Bracknell.

Algernon tells Lady Bracknell that he will speak to Bunbury, provided he should be conscious, about his not relapsing on Saturday. Algernon is not true to his contribution to the act of conversation, at that stage. He violates the first sub-maxim of Quality by telling what he believes to be false. He violates the maxim of Quality quietly with an intention to
mislead Lady Bracknell and avoid any further persuasion from her to attend Mary Farquhar’s dinner.

Example 4

GWENDOLEN: my ideal has always been to love some one of the name of Earnest. There is something in that name that inspires absolute confidence. The moment Algernon first mentioned to me that he had a friend called Earnest, I knew I was destined to love you.

JACK: You really love me, Gwendolen?

Act I, p.17

Gwendolen visits the house of Algernon (her cousin) along with her mother, Lady Bracknell. Jack, friend of Algernon, is also present at the house of Algernon and plans to propose to Gwendolen. He expresses his feelings to Gwendolen and praises her beauty. He tells her that he wishes to propose to her. Gwendolen, on hearing about the feelings of Jack, tells him that she is ‘well aware of the fact’ (p. 17) and she is also in love with him.

The above utterance is a part of Jack’s surprised expression which is an appended question to her. He knows it well that the answer to his question is an obvious ‘yes’ but is still surprised. His question also serves the purpose of an (speech) act of confirmation as he doubts Gwendolen. The doubt of Jack is inherent in the utterance of ‘really’ and ‘me’. Jack is fully aware of the fact that Gwendolen actually is not in love with the physical features of Jack but rather with his name ‘Earnest’, which she supposes is his name, as she herself says ‘the
moment Algernon first mentioned to me that he had a friend called Earnest, I knew I was destined to love you.’ (p. 17).

The utterance of Jack is a violation of maxim of quality as in the utterance he stresses on ‘me’ that is he himself whereas the fact is that Gwendolen loves him only because of the fact that she believes that he is Earnest. Jack’s violation of the maxim is in accordance with the first sub-maxim as the utterance indicates that he knows that his name is not Earnest and has violated the maxim to quietly mislead Gwendolen by not telling her the truth about his original name.

Example 5

GWENDOLEN: But your name is Earnest.
JACK: Yes, I know it is.

Act I, p. 18

Jack proposes to Gwendolen, at Algernon’s residence, and wishes that if he could have a positive response to his romantic proposal to her. Gwendolen not only accepts the proposal of Jack but also expresses her love for him and informs him that she has been waiting for a long time to hear a proposal from Jack. She informs Jack that she loves him ‘passionately’ and that it was her ideal “to love someone of the name of Earnest.” (p. 17). Jack is doubtful about not being loved by her if his name would not have been Earnest and wants to confirm it from her. Instead of clearing away the doubt of Jack, Gwendolen asserts that Jack should not be afraid of anything as his name is Earnest. Jack then claims that his name is Earnest, in the above utterance.

The utterance of Jack in the above dialogue selected is a clear violation of the maxim of quality as he evidently lies to Gwendolen about his
name. Of the super maxim of Quality, Jack violates the first sub-maxim as he tells her something that he knows for himself to be a false statement. His violation of the maxim is quiet and unostentatious as he does not want Gwendolen to know his real name at that particular stage of conversation. Jack provides her wrong information because he knows that Gwendolen only would love the person whose name is Earnest. Jack is very clever in violating the maxim to fulfill his real intention and that is to get the love of Gwendolen, and he succeeds in that.

Example 6

CHASUBLE: And how are we this morning? Miss Prism, you are, I trust, well?

CECILY: Miss Prism has just been complaining of a slight headache. I think it would do her so much good to have a short stroll with you in the park, Dr Chasble.

*Act II, p.30*

Cecily and Miss Prism are in the garden at the Manor House. Miss Prism wants that Cecily should revise her lessons in German, but Cecily does not like German and is unwilling to learn it, further she is unattentive to the lesson and wishes to get free from the lesson hoping to have some romantic thoughts. When she sees Dr. Chasuble coming to the garden she informs him that “Miss Prism has just been complaining of a slight headache” and she suggests to her “to have a short stroll” with Dr. Chasuble.

The utterance of Cecily that serves the purpose of providing information to Dr. Chasuble about Miss Prism’s headache is a violation of maxim of quality as she passes the information to him without having any evidence about it. When Miss Prism tells that she has “not mentioned
about a headache” (p. 30), it is evident that Cecily is lying. Cecily is not truly contributing to the act of conversation. She violates the maxim by not having enough evidence at the stage when she informed Dr. Chasuble about the headache of Miss Prism. Later on, when Miss Prism tells that she has not told anything of a headache, proves that Cecily is lying. Her intention to lie to Dr. Chasuble is to get some time to spend alone with her romantic ideas, and also to get rid of ‘boring’ German lessons on grammar. She has violated the maxim unostentatiously to mislead Dr. Chasuble.

Example 7

ALGERNON: You are my little cousin Cecily, I’m sure.

Act II, p.31

Cecily and Miss Prism are seen in the garden at the Manor House. Dr. Chasuble comes in the garden and Miss Prism goes out for a stroll with him instructing Cecily to read ‘political economy’ in her absence. Algernon comes to the house and is directed to the garden by Merriman, as Jack is not at home. As Algernon meets Cecily he utters the above utterance.

The utterance of Algernon is a lie as he knows it well that Cecily is not his cousin; rather he has come in disguise introducing himself by the name of Earnest (who is an invented brother of Jack). The intention of Algernon is to deceive and mislead the members of the house, particularly, Cecily. The utterance of Algernon is a violation of the first sub-maxim of the category of maxim of Quality. Algernon provides the hearer with false information. His violation of the maxim of Quality is unostentatious. His utterance, which has a clear intention to mislead the speaker, is an obvious violation of maxim of Quality.
Example 8

JACK: Dead!
CHASUBLE: Your brother Earnest dead?
JACK: Quite dead.

*Act II, p. 34*

Jack enters the garden, at the Manor House, ‘dressed in the deepest mourning, with crepe hatband and black gloves’ (p. 34), which make Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble to guess that there might be some problem with Jack’s brother Earnest which may be in the form of ‘more shameful debts and extravagance’ (p. 34). They want to know the reason of Jack ‘dressed in the deepest mourning’. Jack informs them that he is dead.

The utterances of Jack (‘Dead!’ and ‘Quite dead’) are violations of maxim of Quality as it is very obvious that he knows it well that he has no such real brother of the name of Earnest. Further, there do not arise a question of death as the character of Earnest (Jack’s brother) is an invented one. Jack tells a lie to Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble in order to get rid of his invented brother, Earnest. His utterance is a quiet and unostentatious violation of the maxim of Quality as he does so to mislead the hearers about the existence of Earnest and to hide the truth of his invented brother forever. Jack’s utterance is a clear violation of maxim of Quality as he utters such utterances that do not follow the first sub-maxim of the maxim of Quality as he willingly tells what he believes to be false.

Example 9

JACK: Poor Earnest! He had many faults, but it is a sad, sad blow.

CHASUBLE: Very sad indeed. Were you with him at the end?
JACK: No. He died abroad; in Paris, in fact. I had a telegram last night from the manager of the Grand Hotel.
CHASUBLE: Was the cause of death mentioned?
JACK: A severe chill, it seems.

*Act II, p. 34*

Jack informs Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble that his brother Earnest is dead. They offer their condolence to Jack. Chasuble says that Jack has been the ‘most generous and forgiving of brothers’ (p. 34). Jack responds saying that the death of Earnest is a sad blow to him. Chasuble, in order to further condole Jack, asks him where he has been at the time of death of his brother. Jack informs that his brother died abroad in Paris, and the reason for his death has been mentioned as a severe chill.

All of the above utterances by Jack are uttered in violation to the maxim of quality. As for the utterance talking about the faults of Earnest is a lie simply because Jack has no such brother as Earnest and it is just an imaginary name created by Jack to spend some time in London which he uses particularly to visit Gwendolen. As the fact remains that Earnest is an invented brother of Jack and has no real existence for, at least, Jack; the death and the place of death including the reason for death are all lies which Jack tells to Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble in order to mislead them or the make them believe that there was someone named Earnest who is dead. He provides false information to the hearer in spite of the fact that he knows that what he is telling is a lie. His utterances are quiet and unostentatious violation of the maxim of quality. He has violated the maxim by not obeying the first sub-maxim of the category.
Example 10

CHASUBLE: Will the interment take place here?
JACK: No. He seems to have expressed a desire to be buried in Paris.

*Act II, p. 34*

After the information from Jack about the death of his brother, Earnest, Dr. Chasuble wants to know if the interment would take place at the place where Jack lives. Jack could not perform the interment as the death of Earnest was not a real thing to happen, he is an imaginary brother created by Jack and so it becomes of utmost importance that Jack needs to avoid the interment.

Jack’s information to Chasuble about the death of Earnest is nothing but a lie and so he could not perform the interment. Therefore, Jack tells another lie that Earnest ‘expressed a desire to be buried in Paris’. Jack’s utterance is not a ‘true’ contribution to the conversation as he tells what he believes to be false. His utterance is a violation of the first sub-maxim of Quality maxim. Through the violation of Quality maxim, Jack tries to mislead the hearers by making them believe that the death of his brother is real.

Example 11

CHASUBLE: But is there any particular infant in whom you are interested, Mr Worthing? Your brother was, I believe, unmarried, was he not?
JACK: Oh yes.

*Act II, p. 35*
Dr. Chasuble talks about his sermons in the church, particularly about sermon on the meaning of the manna which he has preached at ‘harvest celebrations, christenings, confirmations, on days of humiliation and festal days’ (p. 35). As Chasuble utters the word ‘christening’, Jack asks him if he knows how to christen. Chasuble becomes eager to know who would be christened as, in general, christening is an act that is done for infants and Jack himself is not yet married. So, Chasuble wants to confirm if the brother of Jack was married. Jack confirms it by the above utterance ‘Oh yes’.

The utterance of Jack in the conversation above is a violation of quality maxim as he knows it well that he has what he is telling is a lie. His brother Earnest is an invented brother of Jack and so there is no possibility of his having got married or of begetting a child. The utterance of Jack is a quiet and unostentatious violation of the first-sub maxim of the maxim of Quality. He provided false information to Dr. Chasuble which has no hint of any conversational implicature, and thus Dr. Chasuble believes that Earnest, who is dead, was unmarried and had no child. The violation of Quality maxim has been done intentionally by Jack to mislead Dr. Chasuble about the truth of Earnest. Jack is quite successful in his intention and easily misleads Dr. Chasuble.

Example 12

JACK: Good heavens!

ALGERNON: Brother John, I have come down from town to tell you that I am very sorry for all the trouble I have given you, and that I intend to lead a better life in the future.

*Act II, p. 36-37*
After Jack informs Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble about the loss of his brother, Earnest, he goes into the house. As he enters the house, Cecily informs him that his brother Earnest is waiting for him in the dining room. Jack is shocked to know that his imaginary brother, created by him, has really come to his house and is waiting for him in the dining room. He, in sheer distress, shouts at Cecily saying ‘What nonsense! I haven’t got a brother’ (p. 36). This is what is the real fact but Cecily takes it in a different way and thinks that Jack is saying so because his brother Earnest has behaved badly with him in the past. Cecily runs back into the house and comes out with Algernon, hand in hand.

Algernon, on seeing Jack, at the Manor house utters the above utterance and addresses Jack as his brother. He addresses Jack as his brother in the presence of Miss. Prism, Dr. Chasuble and Cecily. The truth of Algernon as not being Jack’s brother is only known to Jack. Algernon’s utterance, therefore, violates the maxim of quality in two different ways. At the first instance, Algernon’s utterance is a quiet and unostentatious violation of the first sub-maxim of quality as he tells what he believes to be false with the intention to mislead Miss Prism, Dr. Chasuble and Cecily, and to make them believe that he is the brother of Jack. Algernon, in order to convince the other members in the house about his being the brother of Jack, apologizes to Jack ‘for all the trouble’ that he has given to him and promises ‘to lead a better life in the future’.

In the second place, the utterance of Algernon is a deliberate violation of the maxim of quality. He flouts the maxim knowing the fact that he is forging the identity of Earnest and the truth about which is known to no one else except Jack. His deliberate violation of the maxim of quality is done with the sole intention to give Jack the hint that would have the implicature that Jack should not tell the truth to the other listeners and allow him to live at the Manor house as his brother. Jack intuitively
grasps the intention of Algernon (competence of the hearer to workout ‘circumstances’) and responds in the negative by not taking his hand and by telling that ‘his coming down ‘here’ is disgraceful’ (p. 37).

Example 13

JACK: Bunbury! Well, I won’t have him talk to you about Bunbury or about anything else. It is enough to drive one perfectly frantic.

ALGERNON: Of course I admit that the faults were all on my side. But I must say that I think that Brother John’s coldness to me is peculiarly painful. I expected a more enthusiastic welcome especially considering it is the first time I have come here.

_Act II, p.37_

Cecily wants that Jack should forgive his brother for all the faults he has and for the bad ways that he has behaved with him, as she believes that there is some good in every one. She informs Jack that Algernon, who is Earnest in disguise, has told her how he cares for the invalid Bunbury. While they are talking about Earnest or better say Algernon, Algernon utters the above words.

Algernon knows it well that Cecily does not know the truth about Mr. Earnest and so he wants to take the advantage of the situation. Algernon’s utterance is a quiet and unostentatious violation of the first-sub maxim for Cecily as he tries to mislead her by accepting the faults of Jack’s invented brother, Earnest. His utterance above is, again, a deliberate violation of the maxim of quality. He flouts the maxim to make Jack show a more enthusiastic welcome and also to make him to
hide the real fact about Earnest. He wants that the real fact about Earnest should not be disclosed and Jack should allow him to stay in the house.

His utterance has the implicature to Jack (competence of the hearer to workout ‘circumstances’) that he should be allowed to stay in the Manor house and live in the house as Earnest, the invented brother of Jack, which he (Jack) does by forgiving him in the eyes of Cecily and by shaking hands with him as his brother.

Example 14

ALGERNON: I am afraid I can’t stay more than a week this time.
JACK: Merriman, order the dog-cart at once. Mr Earnest has been suddenly called back to town.

*Act II, p.38*

Jack and Algernon (as Earnest) get reconciled as Cecily, Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble think of. They leave Jack and Algernon alone for sometime so that they could talk to each other. As soon as they leave, Jack burst out scolding Algernon for coming to his house as his brother Earnest and is not willing to allow him to stay there. When Merriman comes and informs that he has unpacked and put the luggage of Algernon in the room next to Jack’s room, Jack could not bear it anymore and asks Merriman to ‘order the dog-cart at once’.

The utterance of Jack is a lie to Merriman. But for Merriman, Algernon is the brother of Jack whose name is Earnest and so from his point of view the utterance is an order. Jack’s utterance is a quiet violation of the first sub-maxim of quality in which he utters a false statement that Algernon ‘has been suddenly called back to town’. Whereas the above utterance is also a deliberate violation of the maxim of Quality as Jack is
well aware of the fact that Algernon is not Mr. Earnest but he has introduced himself to the members of the Manor house as Mr. Earnest, invented brother of Jack. Jack does not want that Algernon should stay in the Manor house, and so he deliberately violates the maxim of quality which has an implicature for Algernon to leave the house. Algernon grasps intuitively (competence of the hearer to workout ‘circumstances’) the implicature provided by Jack and denies that he has been called back to town, he even calls Jack ‘a fearful liar’ (p. 38). The act of Algernon calling Jack a liar further proves that Jack has told what he believes to be false and, hence, has violated the maxim of quality.

Example 15

**ALGERNON:** If I am occasionally a little over-dressed, I make up for it by being always immensely over-educated.

**JACK:** Your vanity is ridiculous, your conduct an outrage, and your presence in my garden utterly absurd. However, you have got to catch the four-five, and I hope you will have a pleasant journey back to town. This Bunburying, as you call it, has not been a great success for you.

*Act II, p. 39*

Jack wants that Algernon should leave the house and go back as he could not bear him in the house, particularly when he has come as Earnest. Algernon is not ready to leave and then they come onto the condition that Algernon would leave if Jack changes his mourning dress. While they are conversing, Algernon boasts about his being ‘immensely over-educated’, to which Jack’s reply is in the above utterance.

Jack’s utterance, particularly the later part (‘This Bunburying, as you call it, has not been a great success for you.’) is a violation of the
Quality maxim. His utterance is a violation of the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quality. He violates the maxim by stating about the unsuccessful bunburying of Algernon without any evidence, for he thinks that if he would not allow Algernon to stay in the house then that would make all his (Algernon) plans fail and that he could save his cousin, Cecily, from him.

The violation of the maxim is obvious from the next utterance by Algernon in which Algernon states that ‘it has been a great success’ (p. 39) as his sole purpose to visit as Earnest the Manor house was to meet Cecily and that has been successful as he has fallen in love with her. Moreover the purpose of Algernon and the success of his visit to the Manor house as Earnest have also been proved a great success by the plot of the story, in which at the end Algernon marries Cecily.

Example 16

ALGERNON: Did I give you this? It’s very pretty, isn’t it?

CECILY: Yes, you’ve wonderfully good taste, Earnest. It’s the excuse I’ve always given for your leading such a bad life. And this is the box in which I keep all your dear letters.

Act II, p. 41

Algernon is about to leave the house, as Jack has told him to do, but before leaving he wishes to see Cecily once. Cecily was watering the flowers in the garden when Algernon goes to have a talk with her. As they talk Algernon proposes to Cecily and comes to know that she has been in love with him for the last three months and the engagement was actually settled ‘on the 14th of February last’ (p. 41). She also informs him that she has kept all the letters by Algernon in a particular box which she shows him.
The utterance above by Cecily is a deliberate violation of the maxim of quality as she too knows it well that Algernon has never written any letter to her. Her utterance is a false statement and is against the first sub-maxim of the maxim of Quality. Her deliberate violation of the maxim is meant by her to give rise to the implicature that she has been in love with Earnest (the name) even before she has met him.

The falsity of her utterance about Algernon writing letters to her is obvious from the next utterance by Algernon in which he states ‘I have never written you any letters’ (p. 41). She flouts the maxim because she lives a life which is full of fancy and she very fancifully has written letters to herself in the name of Earnest and has fallen in love with him to satisfy her romantic fancies.

Example 17

ALGERNON: But was our engagement ever broken off?
CECILY: Of course it was. On the 22\textsuperscript{nd} of last March. You can see the entry if you like.

_Act II, p. 41_

Cecily and Algernon are engaged in a conversation about their imaginary romances, particularly the imagination of Cecily who has been engaged to Algernon for three months although she has practically met him on that very day when she was telling him about their engagement. Algernon is surprised to know that he and Cecily have been engaged for the last three months, he is further surprised when Cecily told him that their engagement was broken ‘on 22\textsuperscript{nd} of last March’.
Cecily in the above dialogue tells Algernon that their engagement was broken off and Algernon could confirm it by seeing the entry in her diary. In her utterance she has given false information to Algernon, and by doing so she has gone against the first sub-maxim of Quality maxim. The utterance above by Cecily is a deliberate violation of Quality maxim as she knows it well that whatever she was stating about her engagement with Algernon (as Earnest) has all been created out of her own imagination. She knows it better that in reality she and Algernon have never been engaged to each other and so it is obvious that there arises no question of having the engagement broken off. Her utterance is used as a hint to provide Algernon with the implicature that she has been truly in love with him and she has been living a life of romance with him in her imaginations in which they even had their engagement broken off. The utterance has been a lie on the part of Cecily as she mixes her imaginative romantic life with her real life love. Algernon grasps intuitively (competence of the hearer to workout ‘circumstances’) the implicature of the context of conversation and responds to her feelings, when she tells him that she forgave him, by addressing her as ‘a perfect angel’ (p. 42).

Example 18

ALGERNON: Oh! No! Bunbury doesn’t live here. Bunbury is somewhere else at present. In fact, Bunbury is dead.

LADY BRACKNELL: Dead! When did Mr Bunbury die? His death must have been extremely sudden.

ALGERNON: Oh! I killed Bunbury this afternoon. I mean poor Bunbury died this afternoon.

*Act III, p.57*
Lady Bracknell visits Manor house and comes to know from Jack that he is engaged to be married to Gwendolen to which Lady Bracknell objects and did not approve of the engagement of Jack and Gwendolen. She then asks Algernon about Mr Bunbury and wants to know if he resides at the Manor house. Algernon replies not only in the negative but also states that Mr. Bunbury is dead.

The above utterances by Algernon are quiet and unostentatious violations of the quality maxim. In the first utterance (‘Bunbury doesn’t live here. Bunbury is somewhere else at present. In fact, Bunbury is dead’) Algernon lies to Lady Bracknell thrice. Firstly, Bunbury does not stay at Manor house, then that he stays somewhere else and finally stating that he is dead; whereas the fact is that there is no real human being named Bunbury and it is just an imaginary creation of Algernon to get rid of certain situation(s) in the town or to get excuses to visit country. His utterance is not a true contribution to the conversation between him and Lady Bracknell as he goes against the first sub-maxim of the maxim of Quality. He states what he believes to be false.

The next utterance of Algernon where he states that ‘Bunbury died this afternoon’ is again a quiet violation of the maxim of Quality as the fact that he states is false. Bunbury is an imaginary creation of Algernon and so there could not be a real death to him. He lies to Lady Bracknell about the death of Bunbury to mislead her about the truth of Bunbury.

Example 19

ALGERNON: My dear Aunt Augusta, I mean he was found out!

The doctors found out that Bunbury could not live, that is what I mean-so Bunbury died.

*Act III, p. 57*
When Aunt Augusta enquires about the residence of Mr. Bunbury, then Algernon reveals that Bunbury is dead which surprises the lady. She is interested in knowing the reason of the dead of Bunbury and gets the information from Algernon that ‘he was quite exploded’ (p. 57) which confused Lady Bracknell, and so Algernon stated ‘the doctors found out that he could not live’.

The utterance of Algernon is a violation of maxim of Quality in which he tries to reason the dead of Bunbury. His contribution to the conversation is not ‘true’. He tells that Bunbury died because he could not live which is simply a lie. He violates the first sub-maxim of the maxim of Quality. He tells what is false since there is no one in reality who exists to be called Bunbury. Algernon declares the death of Bunbury all of a sudden and he finds it difficult to settle down to a reason so immediately; therefore, he lies to Lady Bracknell about the reason of his dead to hide the first lie that he told about his (Bunbury’s) death.

3.2.3 Violation of Maxim of Quality in An Ideal Husband

Example 1

LADY CHILTERN: Why did you wish to meet my husband, Mrs. Cheveley?

MRS. CHEVELEY: Oh, I will tell you. I wanted to interest him in this Argentine Canal scheme, of which I dare say you have heard. And I found him most susceptible, – susceptible to reason, I mean. A rare thing in a man. I converted him in ten minutes. He is going to make a speech in the House to-morrow night in favour of the idea.
We must go to the Ladies’ Gallery and hear him! It will be a great occasion!

*Act I, p. 18*

Mrs. Cheveley comes to the party at Sir Robert Chiltern’s house. She visits the house of Sir Robert Chiltern not with the intention to enjoy the party but to execute a serious business purpose and for which she needs the help, or better say blackmail Sir Robert. She makes a proposition to Chiltern to withdraw the report that he is intending to lay before the House the next day. Sir Robert Chiltern denies withdrawing the report about the canal and asks her to leave the house. She warns him about revealing his secret of laying ‘the foundation of his fortune by selling to a Stock Exchange speculator a Cabinet secret’ (p. 15).

Sir Robert agrees to withdraw the report on condition that she should handover him the letter which is the witness of his selling the Cabinet secret. Mrs. Cheveley informs Lady Chiltern about the fact that she wanted her husband to interest in the Argentine Canal scheme and Sir Chiltern has agreed to it.

Mrs. Cheveley states to Lady Chiltern that Sir Robert has agreed to her because he is most ‘susceptible to reason’. Her utterance is not a true one and it is against the first sub-maxim of the maxim of Quality, as she tells Lady Chiltern what she believes to be false. The utterance above is a violation of maxim of Quality by Mrs. Cheveley.

She has violated the maxim of Quality quietly and unostentatiously so as to mislead Lady Chiltern about her fraudulent plan of the Argentine Canal scheme. Mrs. Cheveley has in fact made Sir Robert agree to her conditions and to accept her proposition on the Argentine Canal scheme
by blackmailing him against revealing the secret that laid the foundation of his fortune.

Example 2

    LORD GORING: Oh, why will parents always appear at the wrong time? Some extraordinary mistake in nature, I suppose. Delighted to see you, my dear father.

*Act III, p.47*

Lord Goring is getting ready in his library and having a conversation with Phipps, his servant. He asks for the letters of the day that have come for him, among the letters he finds a letter in pink envelope written by Lady Chiltern in which she has written that she was coming to him. He is expecting Lady Chiltern anytime as it was ‘ten o’clock’. He thinks over what suggestion he should extend to her so that the marriage of Sir Robert and Lady Chiltern should not ‘become a hopeless, one-sided institution’ (p. 47). As he is waiting for Lady Chiltern’s arrival, there comes in his father which he firmly believes is the wrong time for him to enter.

Lord Goring’s utterance above (‘Delighted to see you, my dear father’) is a violation of the maxim of Quality. It is very obvious from the first part of the utterance that he is not at all delighted to see his father at that point of time, but he tells that he is delighted. His utterance does not follow the first sub-maxim of the maxim of Quality. He makes a false statement to his father. He lies to his father about his emotional state on his presence at the library at that particular time when he is eagerly waiting for Lady Chiltern, which is clear from the whole utterance above in which Goring has expressed his view that the entry of his father at that time is ‘wrong time’ entry and ‘some extraordinary
mistake in nature’. His utterance is a misleading statement to his father about his emotional state of being.

Example 3

LORD GORING: During the Season, father, I only talk seriously on the first Tuesday in every month, from four to seven.

LORD CAVERSHAM: Well, make it Tuesday, sir, make it Tuesday.

LORD GORING: But it is after seven, father, and my doctor says I must not have any serious conversation after seven. It makes me talk in my sleep.

*Act III, p.47*

Lord Caversham comes to the library of Lord Goring. Lord Goring is waiting very eagerly for Lady Chiltern who has written to him that she is coming to him. At such a juncture of situations, Lord Goring thinks that his father has arrived at the wrong time into the library. Lord Caversham wants ‘to have a serious conversation’ (p. 47) with him. But Lord Goring wants to avoid any conversation with his father as that would simply make his father stay in the library for a longer duration or at least till the conversation is not over, which he does not want. He wants that his father should leave as early as possible so he would be free to give his time to Lady Chiltern.

Lord Goring’s utterances above are not true contributions to the conversation between him and his father. The first utterance is a lie which he tells instead of the fact that he believes what he is telling is false. The utterance therefore is a violation of the first sub-maxim of maxim of quality wherein Lord Goring gives to his father a very
illogical reason about not having a serious conversation at that point of time. His violation is quiet and unostentatious, by way of which he tries to avoid any serious conversation with his father at that time when he is waiting for Lady Chiltern.

When Lord Caversham urges him to ‘make it Tuesday’, Lord Goring adds another lie to it about the time of having serious conversation with anyone. He tells that his time for having serious conversation, according to his doctor, is from four to seven and the time then was ‘ten o’clock’. So, he could not have a serious conversation and if he violates the suggestion of the doctor then that would make him talk in his sleep. It’s very obvious from the utterance of Goring that he is lying as he is waiting for Lady Chiltern’s arrival with whom he is certainly going to have serious conversation about her and Sir Robert’s marriage. He tells to his father what is truly false, and thus violates the first sub-maxim of the maxim of Quality. The utterance is a violation of maxim of Quality as it is a lie.

Example 4

    LORD GORING: Ah! I guessed as much!
    SIR ROBERT CHILTERN: Really! How?
    LORD GORING: Oh, merely by something in the expression of your face as you came in.

    Act III, p. 52

Lord Goring is at his house and waiting to meet Lady Chiltern, who he thinks has arrived. He is in a haste to get rid of his father’s conversation with him and has ordered his servant that he ‘was not at home to anyone’ (p. 52). Meantime, he has been informed that a lady has arrived and is asked to wait in the drawing room, who, Goring thinks, is Lady
Chiltern where as she is in fact Mrs. Cheveley. Sir Robert Chiltern visits the house of Lord Goring so that he could discuss his problem. As Sir Robert tells him that his ‘wife has discovered everything’ (p.52), Lord Goring replied that he ‘guessed as much’. Sir Robert is surprised and asks him about how he came to know about it. Lord Goring stated that he came to know it from the expression of his face.

The utterance of Lord Goring about knowing the fact that Lady Chiltern has discovered everything of Sir Robert’s life by simply looking at the expression of his face is a lie. Lord Goring is not true to his contribution to the act of conversation. He tells what he believes to be false and thus goes against the first sub-maxim of the maxim of Quality. He lies to Sir Robert, about reading his facial expression, as he has come to know / guessed about Lady Chiltern’s ‘discovering everything’ from the letter she has written to him and because he has received that letter, he was waiting for her. The utterance, therefore, is quiet and unostentatious violation of the maxim of quality where the speaker speaks something that he believes to be false with an intention to mislead the hearer. Lord Goring misleads Sir Robert from getting the fact about how he came to know that Lady Chiltern has come to know the truth.

Example 5

SIR ROBERT CHILTERN: I heard a chair fall in the next room. Some one has been listening.

LORD GORING: No, no; there is no one there.

Act III, p. 54

Sir Robert has arrived at the house of Lord Goring to get his suggestion(s) to save his married life as his ‘wife has discovered everything’ (p. 52). Sir Robert and Lord Goring are busy in their
conversation, whereas Mrs. Cheveley is waiting in the drawing room of Lord Goring. Lord Goring is under the impression, when informed by the servant that a lady has been waiting for him, that Lady Chiltern is there in the waiting room. During the course of conversation between Lord Goring and Sir Robert, Sir Robert hears ‘a chair fall in the next room’. He suspects that there is someone in the room and asks Lord Goring about who is there.

The utterance above by Lord Goring is a reply to Sir Robert’s doubt about being someone’s presence in the next room. He tells that there is no one in the room. He utters the above utterance by completely violating the rule of making his contribution true to the act of communication. His utterance is not in accordance with the first sub-maxim of the maxim of Quality. He knows that a lady is there in the next room, which he thinks is Lady Chiltern. He, therefore, quietly violates the maxim to mislead Sir Robert from going into the room to find the truth about someone being present there. The utterance is a clear violation of maxim of quality.

Example 6

    LORD GORING: Give me Robert Chiltern’s letter.
    MRS. CHEVELEY: I have not got it with me.

    Act III, p. 60

Mrs. Cheveley has come to visit Lord Goring and was waiting for him in drawing room. The servant of Lord Goring informed him that a lady has arrived, without mentioning the name, and is waiting for him in the drawing room. Lord Goring assumed that the lady was Lady Chiltern as she was expected by Lord Goring. When he saw Mrs. Cheveley, he was surprised. Mrs. Cheveley was engaged in conversation with him when
he suddenly asked her to tell the price of the letter of Sir Robert Chiltern, which he believed she has brought to sell, in fact to give it to Lord Goring not for money but against certain other conditions laid down by her. During their course of conversation, Lord Goring comes to know that she has been to the house of Lady Chiltern in search of ‘a diamond snake-brooch with a ruby’ (p. 59). Lord Goring charges her of stealing the brooch ten years ago. He makes her wear the brooch as a bracelet which she did not know how to open. Lord Goring demanded Sir Robert’s letter in order to save her from police against the charge of stealing the brooch.

The utterance above of Mrs. Cheveley is a false statement. She has violated the first sub-maxim by telling what she believes to be false. She knows that she has got the letter with her. She tries to quietly and unostentatiously violate the maxim of Quality without providing any implicature. But Lord Goring knows the true character of Mrs. Cheveley and, therefore, does not believe what she says. She has made the utterance with a view that she could keep the possession of the letter with her, and by help of which she could continue to blackmail Robert Chiltern. Her lying is caught when she ‘pulls the letter out, and hands it to’ (p. 60) Lord Goring.

Example 7

MRS. CHEVELEY: I find that somehow Gertrude Chiltern’s dying speech and confession has strayed into my pocket.

Act III, p. 89

Lord Goring has been visited by Mrs. Cheveley to sell the letter of Robert Chiltern on the conditions laid down by her. But Lord Goring comes to know the fact about the diamond brooch, which he found at
Lady Chiltern’s house, which belongs to Mrs. Cheveley which she has been stolen ten years ago from Lady Berkshire. Lord Goring, with the help of the brooch, by making it wear like a bracelet, threatens Mrs. Cheveley of calling the police if she won’t give him Robert Chiltern’s letter. She gives the letter to him. Then, she ‘catches sight of Lady Chiltern’s letter’ (p. 61) and asks Goring to get a glass of water. While Goring is busy getting water for her, she steals Lady Chiltern’s letter. She, then, informs Lord Goring that she is ‘never going to harm Robert Chiltern again’ (p. 61) but she assures that she is going to inform him that he has been deceived by his wife.

The utterance by Mrs. Cheveley is against the first sub-maxim of the maxim of quality as because the above utterance is a false statement that she makes knowingly. She states that ‘Gertrude Chiltern’s dying speech and confession has strayed into my pocket’ which is unbelievable as a letter cannot move by itself, moreover it was written to Lord Goring. The truth is that she stole the letter from Lord Goring’s table, while he was giving her water, and kept it in her pocket.

The utterance is a deliberate violation on the part of Mrs. Cheveley. Mrs. Chelevey utterance has a hint to provide an implicature that she still could blackmail Sir Robert even though Lord Goring has taken the letter of Sir Robert from her. Lord Goring grasps intuitively (competence of the hearer to workout ‘circumstances’) the fraudulent intention of Mrs. Cheveley but wants to get it clear from her in his next utterance when he asks her what she meant. Mrs. Cheveley ironically tells that she “can’t bear so upright a gentleman, so honourable an English gentleman, being so shamefully deceived” (p. 61). The utterance above is a violation of the maxim of Quality as she tells a lie to Lord Goring about the possession of the letter written by Lady Chiltern to Lord Goring.
Example 8

MRS. CHEVELEY: Lord Goring merely rang that you should show me out.

*Act III, p. 61*

Lord Goring is successful in getting the letter of Robert Chiltern from Mrs. Cheveley which was the instrument of blackmailing Robert Chiltern. He burns the letter in the lamp and feels happy about it; whereas Mrs. Cheveley succeeds in stealing the letter written by Lady Chiltern to Lord Goring and threatens that she would use the letter as a proof to Robert Chiltern and would tell him that his wife has been deceiving him. Lord Goring demands the letter back and objects on Mrs. Cheveley’s going out of the room with Lady Chiltern’s letter. As Lord Goring rushes towards the door to stop her from going out, Mrs. Cheveley succeeds in ringing the electric bell to call the servant, Phipps.

The above utterance occurs when Phipps comes into the room after the electric bell rings. Mrs. Cheveley tells the servant that the bell was rung by Lord Goring to show her out. She has not been true in her contribution to the act of communication. She has violated the first sub-maxim of the maxim of Quality as she has uttered what she believes to be false. She knows it well that the bell was rung by her so that she could escape from the room with the letter of Lady Chiltern. Mrs. Cheveley tells a lie because Lord Goring was going to stop her from going out of the room. She violates the maxim to escape from the situation with the letter of Lady Chiltern so that she could use the letter to further create problems for Sir Robert Chiltern and his wife.
Example 9

LORD CAVERSHAM: Have you been thinking over what I spoke to you about last night?

LORD GORING: I have been thinking about nothing else.

Act IV, p. 64

Lord Goring has visited the house of Sir Robert Chiltern and he is seen in the morning room. Lord Goring is full of latest information and wants to share it with someone at Chiltern’s house, but is informed by the servant that Sir Robert is in the office, and Lady Chiltern has not yet left her room. He is further informed that Lord Caversham is waiting for Sir Robert in the library. He is not willing to meet his father and tells the servant to inform his father that he is gone. But Lord Caversham enters the morning room.

In the dialogue above, Lord Caversham questions his son whether he has thought over the subject that he spoke to him the night before. Lord Goring’s utterance is a clear violation of Quality maxim as it is very obvious from his views that he does not take his father’s talk about getting married so seriously. His contribution is not true to the conversation and he has violated the first sub-maxim by telling his father what he believes to be false. He has actually not at all thought over the subject of his marriage that his father intended him to do.

Lord Goring’s utterance is a quiet and unostentatious violation of the maxim of Quality which he has uttered to mislead his father about the subject of marriage and to give his father the false notion that he has taken his father’s words seriously. It is obvious from the action of the play that Lord Goring has not thought about his marriage at all, as after
his father spoke to him about getting married, he was busy with Mrs.
Cheveley in getting the letter of Robert Chiltern.

3.3 Analysis of Violation of Maxim of Quantity in the Selected
Plays

Grice’s Theory of Cooperative Principle categorizes the second
conversational maxim as the Maxim of Quantity. According to Grice,
“the category of Quantity relates to the quantity of information to be
provided” {Grice in Cole and Morgan (ed), 1975: 46}. It has the
following specific maxims / sub-maxims:

a) Make your contribution as informative as is required.
b) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

In this maxim, Grice means to say that in conversation people should
always check the quantity of information that is required at a particular
stage and in a particular context of communication to be co-operative.

This section analyses the violation of the maxim of Quantity in the
selected plays of Oscar Wilde.

3.3.1 Violation of Maxim of Quantity in Lady Windermere’s Fan

Example 1

    LORD DARLINGTON: … what a wonderful fan! May I look at it?
    LADY WINDERMERE: Do. Pretty, isn’t it! It’s got my name on it, and everything. I have only just seen it myself. It’s my
husband’s birthday present to me. You know today is my birthday?

*Act I, p. 13*

Lord Darlington visits the house of Lord Windermere and sees Lady Windermere arranging flowers for a party. His eyes fall on a wonderful fan and so he appreciates the beauty of the fan. He shows interest in having a look at the fan for which he seeks Lady Windermere’s permission.

The first part of the utterance (‘Do.’) by Lady Windermere is sufficient enough for allowing Lord Darlington to have a look at the fan. But, then she provides him with information that has not been sought for. Her utterance is a violation of the maxim of Quantity as she has provided more information than is required which she does by not following the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity. She not only informs him that the fan is a present to her by her husband but also informs her about her birthday. Her violation of Quantity maxim is a deliberate one as it implicates that she wants that Lord Darlington should know about his birthday being on that day.

Example 2

**LADY WINDERMERE.** Don’t you *want* the world to take you seriously then, Lord Darlington?

**LORD DARLINGTON.** No, not the world. Who are the people the world takes seriously? All the dull people one can think of, from the Bishops down to the bores. I should like *you* to take me very seriously, Lady Windermere, *you* more than any one else in life.

*Act I, p. 15*
Lord Darlington visits the house of Lady Windermere and comes to know that she is preparing for her birthday party. They become engaged in conversation, and from their conversation it becomes clear that Lord Darlington is interested in Lady Windermere. During their conversation Lady Windermere feels that he is not talking seriously about any topic that is being talked by them. She, therefore, asks him if he would not like that the world should take him seriously.

The first part of the utterance, of Lord Darlington, that is a negative reply to the question of Lady Windermere, is sufficient, but he goes on to provide additional information which was more than necessary. He violates the maxim by providing more information to reply the question. His utterance of providing more information goes against the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity. His violation is related to his interest in Lady Windermere and is an indirect way of proposing to the lady by way of employing Indirect Speech Act. The utterance above of Lord Darlington is a violation of the maxim of Quantity. His utterance is a deliberate violation of the maxim of Quantity with the intention to implicate his love for Lady Windermere.

Example 3

LADY WINDERMERE: I think we’re very good friends already, Lord Darlington. We can always remain so as long as you don’t—

LORD DARLINGTON: Don’t what?

LADY WINDERMERE: Don’t spoil it by saying extravagant silly things to me. You think I am a Puritan, I suppose? Well, I have something of the Puritan in me. I was brought up like that. I am glad of it. My mother died when I was a mere child. I lived always with Lady Julia, my father’s
elder sister, you know. She was stern to me, but she taught me what the world is forgetting, the difference that there is between what is right and what is wrong. *She* allowed of no compromise. *I* allow of none.

*Act I, p. 15*

Lord Darlington and Lady Windermere are engaged in a conversation. Lord Darlington proposes to her by way of using indirect speech act and expresses his feeling (of love) for her. He wishes that they might be ‘great friends’. Lady Windermere is of the view that they are already friends and they could be friends as long as he does not ‘spoil it by saying extravagant silly things’ to her. His utterance (‘Don’t spoil it by saying extravagant silly things to me.’) is sufficient enough to stop him from saying ‘silly things’ to her as it serves the purpose of an indirect warning.

Lady Windermere violates the maxim of Quantity in her dialogue above. She knows it well that Lord Darlington does not have a habit of taking people seriously and so she thinks that her indirect warning (employing the theory of Indirect Speech Act) might not be taken as seriously as she wants him to take. She, therefore, violates the maxim by extending her utterance including more information about her upbringing and by mentioning the ‘stern’ quality that her mother has inculcated in her. By doing so, she has not followed the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity and hence been responsible for violating the maxim. Her violation is a deliberate one through which she implicates her strict and stern character. She, by way of violating the maxim, wants to make it very clear to Lord Darlington that she could not compromise with the ‘extravagant silly things’ that he keeps on saying to her and she would ‘allow of none’.
Example 4

DUCHESS OF BERWICK: … How do you do, Lord Darlington? I won’t let you know my daughter, you are far too wicked.

LORD DARLINGTON: Don’t say that, Duchess. As a wicked man I am a complete failure. Why, there are lots of people who say I have never really done anything wrong in the whole course of my life. Of course they only say it behind my back.

_Act I, p. 18_

Lord Darlington is at the house of Lady Windermere. Duchess of Berwick, along with her daughter Agatha, visits the house of Lady Windermere. The Duchess is welcomed by Lady Windermere. When the Duchess sees that Lord Darlington is also present in the house, she tells him that she would not let him know her daughter as she knows him to be a wicked person.

The utterances above by Lord Darlington are in defense of his character as a wicked man. He violates the maxim of Quantity by providing more information which is not in compliance with the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity. His violation of the maxim is a deliberate one and his utterance has the implicature that he has provided more information than required so as to prove that he is not a wicked man as she believes him to be. The above utterances, also serves the implication of Lord Darlington’s attempt to increase his self respect in front of the Duchess and Lady Windermere (whom he actually loved). He, violates the maxim, to inform her that there are a lot people who say behind his back that he has ‘never really done anything wrong in the whole course of’ his life.
Example 5

**Duchess of Berwick:** But it’s quite true, my dear. The whole of London knows it. That is why I felt it was better to come and talk to you, and advise you to take Windermere away at once to Homburg or to Aix, where he’ll have something to amuse him, and where you can watch him all day long.

**Lady Windermere:** Duchess, Duchess, it’s impossible! We are only married two years. Our child is but six months old.

*Act I, p. 21*

Duchess of Berwick visits the house of Lady Windermere to talk to her about Lord Windermere and his visits to Mrs. Erlynne. She informs her that “he goes to see her continually, and stops for hours at a time, and while he is there she is not at home to any one” (p. 20). Lady Windermere is not ready to believe what Duchess of Berwick told her about her husband but, then the Duchess tells her that “it’s quite true…the whole of London knows it” (p. 21). On Duchess of Berwick’s emphasis on the fact whatever she was telling is true, Lady Windermere utters the above.

Lady Windermere’s utterance (‘it’s impossible’) is sufficient enough to mark her disbelief to whatever the Duchess has told her. But she goes on to violate the maxim of quantity by providing additional information. The additional information in her utterance is in violation of the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity. She informs the Duchess that they (she and her husband) are married only for two years and their ‘child is but six months old’. The information provided by her is an act of deliberate violation of the maxim of quantity through which she wants
that the Duchess of Berwick should understand the implicature that she is still not ready to believe what she said. Lady Windermere is not ready to believe that her husband has any relationship with any other woman because she has a belief that they had a relationship for the last two years and they have a baby too. Being a father of a child Windermere never do such things. Lady Windermere utters the above lines to convince Duchess as well as herself.

Example 6

**LADY WINDERMERE:** Windermere and I married for love.

**DUCHESS OF BERWICK:** Yes, we begin like that. It was only Berwick’s brutal and incessant threats of suicide that made me accept him at all, and before the year was out, he was running after all kinds of petticoats, every colour, every shape, every material. In fact, before the honeymoon was over, I caught him winking at my maid, a most pretty, respectable girl. I dismissed her at once without a character.—No, I remember I passed her on to my sister; poor dear Sir George is so short-sighted, I thought it wouldn’t matter. But it did, though—it was most unfortunate. And now, my dear child, I must go, as we are dining out. And mind you don’t take this little aberration of Windermere’s too much to heart. Just take him abroad, and he’ll come back to you all right.

*Act I, p. 22*

Duchess of Berwick tells Lady Windermere that Lord Windermere ‘goes to see her (Mrs. Erlynne) continually, and stops for hours at a time, and while he is there she is not at home to anyone. Lady Windermere does not believe what Duchess of Berwick was saying, she
tells her that they are ‘only married two years’ and have a child who is ‘but six months old’. The talks of Duchess of Berwick have created doubt in the mind of Lady Windermere against her husband, but still she tends to disbelieve that her husband could have any sort of relation with any woman like Mrs. Erlynne. She utters the above dialogue to mark her further disbelieve as they ‘married for love’ so how could it be possible for his husband to have any relation with other woman.

Duchess of Berwick tells her, in the utterance above, that it begins like that. This part of the utterance is sufficient for the Duchess to emphasize her point regarding Lord Windermere. But she provides more information than is required. Her utterance is in non-compliance with the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity. Her example of her own husband, whom she married because of his ‘brutal and incessant threats of suicide’ and ‘before the year was out, he was running after all kinds of petticoats’ (p. 22), in fact she caught him winking at her maid even before their honeymoon was over. She provides all the above information to make Lady Windermere believe what she says and to be cautious about her husband. Her violation of Quantity maxim is a deliberate one where she intends to provide the implicature of warning.

Example 7

LORD WINDERMERE: I think it wrong that a wife should spy on her husband.

LADY WINDERMERE: I did not spy on you. I never knew of this woman’s existence till half an hour ago. Some one who pitied me was kind enough to tell me what every one in London knows already—your daily visits to Curzon Street, your mad infatuation, the monstrous sums of
Lady Windermere wants to clarify her doubts about her husband having any sort of relation with Mrs. Erlynne whom he visits, according to Duchess of Berwick. She remembers that the Duchess of Berwick spoke to her ‘of enormous sums of money paid to this (Mrs. Erlynne) woman’ (p. 23). She decides to check the bank books of her husband and from there to find out if he has given any money to the woman. After having a look at a private bank book it is clear to her that her husband has paid large sums of money to Mrs. Erlynne. When Lord Windermere comes home and sees that she has cut open his bank book, which is not a right thing, according to him, he charges her of spying on him.

The utterances above by Lady Windermere are meant to clarify that she was not spying on him. The first part was sufficient to reject the charge of being a spy. But she adds more information which is actually not required. By adding more information she violates the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity. She goes on to provide more information to assert that she was not spying on him rather his secrets have been revealed to her which everyone in London knew except her. Her violation of the maxim of Quantity is a deliberate one through which she wants to implicate that she has come to know about his secret visits to Mrs. Erlynne and the money he gives to her without informing her (Lady Windermere).

Example 8

LADY WINDERMERE: Oh! I don’t want details about her life!
LORD WINDERMERE: I am not going to give you any details about her life. I tell you simply this—Mrs. Erlynne was
once honoured, loved, respected. She was well born, she had position—she lost everything—threw it away, if you like. That makes it all the more bitter. Misfortunes one can endure—they come from outside, they are accidents. But to suffer for one’s own faults—ah!—there is the sting of life. It was twenty years ago, too. She was little more than a girl then. She had been a wife for even less time than you have.

*Act I, p. 24-25*

Lady Windermere comes to know the truth about her husband giving out large sums of money to Mrs. Erlynne. She wants to know about Mrs. Erlynne and if there is a Mr. Erlynne too. She comes to know from her husband that Mrs. Erlynne has no relations and when Lord Windermere tells her that Mrs. Erlynne ‘has conducted herself well’ (p. 24), she becomes jealous and tells him that she does not ‘want details about her life’ (p. 24).

Lord Windermere’s utterance, particularly the first part, is enough if he does not want to provide her with any details about the life of Mrs. Erlynne. But, then he continues to give her information about Mrs. Erlynne and that makes him violate the maxim of Quantity by not following the second sub-maxim of the maxim. He violates the maxim deliberately to provide his wife with the implicature that she should not doubt him without knowing the whole truth and the life of Mrs. Erlynne. He wants to tell her that she (Mrs. Erlynne) is not a wicked or bad lady as she thinks. His violation is meant to make his wife understand the social condition of Mrs. Erlynne as which is a result of misfortunes of her own.
Example 9

LADY WINDERMERE: As a triumph for her, I suppose?

LORD WINDERMERE: No; but because she knows that you are a good woman—and that if she comes here once she will have a chance of a happier, a surer life than she has had. She will make no further effort to know you. Won’t you help a woman who is trying to get back?

*Act I, p. 25*

Lady Windermere and Lord Windermere are engaged in a conversation which focuses on Mrs. Erlynne. Lady Windermere has come to know that her husband has given large sums of money to her (Mrs. Erlynne), which he intended that his wife should not know about. During their course of conversation, Lord Windermere tells his wife that Mrs. Erlynne is not that kind of a woman as ‘people chatter about her’ because ‘they don’t know anything definite against her’ (p. 25). He asks his wife to ‘send her an invitation for’ the birthday party that night and help her to get back into the society. Lady Windermere thinks that if she invites her then that would be a triumph for her.

The utterance (‘No’) by Lord Windermere is enough to reply to his wife. But he violates the maxim of quantity by adding more information which is against the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity. He violates the maxim to let her know what Mrs. Erlynne thinks of her. He does so with the intention to convince her to invite Mrs. Erlynne to the birthday party.

His violation of the Quantity maxim is a deliberate one where he implicates to make an indirect request (theory of Indirect Speech Act) to her to invite her (Mrs. Erlynne) and help her to get back in society.
Example 10

MRS. ERLYNNE: So pleased to meet you, Lady Jedburgh. Your nephew and I are great friends. I am so much interested in his political career. I think he’s sure to be a wonderful success. He thinks like a Tory, and talks like a Radical, and that’s so important nowadays. He’s such a brilliant talker, too. But we all know from whom he inherits that. Lord Allandale was saying to me only yesterday, in the Park, that Mr. Graham talks almost as well as his aunt.

Act II, p.34-35

Lady Windermere has given a birthday party at her house. It’s a party for a small and select group of invited guests. Mrs. Erlynne is among the guests invited by Lord Windermere. Lady Jedburgh, another guest at the party, is introduced to Mrs. Erlynne by Mr. Graham, yet another guest. Mrs. Erlynne is pleased to meet Lady Jedburgh which is clear from the first part of Mrs. Erlynne’s utterance above.

Mrs. Erlynne, in her dialogue, above violates the maxim of Quantity by giving more information. Her utterance is a violation of the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity. After expressing her happy state of mind on meeting Mrs. Jedburgh, she goes on to inform her that her nephew and she are great friends, and further talks about his interest in political career. She violates the maxim deliberately with an intention to impress Lady Jedburgh by employing Indirect Speech Act (theory of Indirect Speech Act) by way of praising her nephew.

Example 11

LORD WINDERMERE: Won’t to-morrow do as well?
Mrs. Erlynne and Lord Windermere are busy talking. In the course of conversation, Mrs. Erlynne adds the name of Lord Augustus. She tells Lord Windermere that Lord Augustus is going to propose to her the next day, in fact he wanted to propose to her that night, but she told him that she ‘would not give him an answer till’ (p. 41) the next day. And on the issue of Lord Augustus, she wants that Lord Windermere would make her ‘a handsome settlement’ (p. 41). Lord Windermere asks her if he could provide his suggestions on the next day.

Mrs. Erlynne’s reply above is a violation of maxim of Quantity. Her negative reply and the reason given for it that she is going to accept him the next day would have been sufficient and it would have been in adherence to the cooperative principle’s maxim, the maxim of Quantity. But she has violated the second sub-maxim by providing more information than is required for the interrogative utterance of Lord Windermere. She has provided information on the wealth that is left to
her by a third cousin or a second husband. Her violation of the maxim of Quantity is a deliberate one through which she wants to presents her philosophy of life and person.

Example12

MRS. ERLYNNE: Did your father often speak to you of your mother?
LADY WINDERMERE: No, it gave him too much pain. He told me how my mother had died a few months after I was born. His eyes filled with tears as he spoke. Then he begged me never to mention her name to him again. It made him suffer even to hear it. My father—my father really died of a broken heart. His was the most ruined life I know.

*Act IV, p. 67*

Mrs. Erlynne visits the house of Lady Windermere to return her fan and has been asked to get it in the house. As she gets in the house, she and Lady Windermere are very soon engaged in conversation. Mrs. Erlynne is ‘going to live abroad again’ (p. 61). Lady Windermere wants that she should not leave the English forever. Mrs. Erlynne wants to know about Lady Windermere’s father’s views about her mother, in fact Mrs. Erlynne is her mother but the fact is not known to Lady Windermere.

Lady Windermere replies that her father did not speak to her often of her mother. Her reply satisfied the queries of her mother, but she went on to provide more information about why her father did not talk often of her mother. By providing more information, she has gone against the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity and hence violated the maxim of Quantity. She informed that her ‘father died of a broken heart’. Her
violation of the maxim of Quantity is a deliberate one. She felt that if she would not provide the additional information than that would be half or incomplete information for Mrs. Erlynne which would project a poor picture of her father.

3.3.2 Violation of Maxim of Quantity in *The Importance Of Being Earnest*

Example 1

ALGERNON: Why is it that at a bachelor’s establishment the servants invariably drink the champagne? I ask merely for information.

LANE: I attribute it to the superior quality of the wine, sir. I have often observed that in married households the champagne is rarely of a first-rate brand.

*Act I, p.7*

Algernon and Lane (his servant) are in the morning room in Algernon’s flat in Half-Moon Street. Algernon comes to know from the book of Lane that there is an entry of ‘eight bottles of champagne’ as having been consumed when Lord Shoreman and Mr. Worthing came to dine with him. He wants to know from Lane about the ‘servants invariably drink(ing) the champagne’ at a bachelor’s establishment.

Lane’s reply about the superior quality of wine is to the point answer and accurate information as asked by Algernon. But, Lane goes on to add more information. His utterance is in non-compliance with the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity, and thus he violates the maxim of Quantity. He not only states the superior quality of wine at a bachelor’s house but also contrasts it with that of inferior quality as
compared to married households. By way of violating the maxim he indirectly appreciates Algernon for keeping wine of the ‘first-rate brand’. He deliberately violates the maxim of Quantity.

Example 2

JACK: Well…may I propose to you now?
GWENDOLEN: I think it would be an admirable opportunity.
And to spare you any possible disappointment, Mr. Worthing, I think it only fair to tell you quite frankly beforehand that I am fully determined to accept you.

_Act I, p.18_

Lady Bracknell and Gwendolen visit the flat of Algernon. Algernon takes Lady Bracknell to the music-room leaving Gwendolen and Jack in order to provide Jack with “an opportunity for proposing to Gwendolen” (p. 14). Jack and Gwendolen become busy in their conversation and Jack expresses his love for Gwendolen and asks her for marriage. She tells him that she adores him but he has not yet proposed to her. The question above by Jack is to seek permission to propose to her then.

Gwendolen feels that if he proposes to her then, then that ‘would be an admirable opportunity’ which is an indirect speech act implicating that she has allowed him with the permission to propose to her. Her utterance is a violation of maxim of Quantity. She continues to provide more information on the issue thinking that Jack would be hesitating to propose to her thinking about the reply. She informs him beforehand that she is ‘fully determined to accept’ him. Her violation of the maxim of Quantity is based on her compliance to the second sub-maxim. She deliberately violates the maxim so that she could boost Jack’s
confidence to propose to her and that there should not be any further delay in the act of proposing.

Example 3

JACK: Gwendolen, will you marry me?

GWENDOLEN: Of course I will, darling. How long you have been about it! I am afraid you have had very little experience in how to propose.

Act I, p. 19

At the flat of Algernon, Algernon provides Jack with an opportunity to propose to Gwendolen who is there with her mother. Jack hesitates to propose but expresses his feeling to her. Gwendolen allows him to propose to her with the assurance that she is going to accept his proposal. Jack proposes to her for marriage.

The utterance of Gwendolen (Of course I will, darling.) is a sufficient reply to Jack’s proposal. She accepts his proposal. But, then, she goes on to inform him that she has come to know from Jack, taking such a ‘long’ time to propose to her, that he ‘had very little experience in how to propose’. Her utterance goes in violation of the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity. She violates the maxim of Quantity in order to perform the act of indirect complaining (theory of Indirect Speech Act) to Jack about his lack of experience in proposing.

Example 4

JACK: Oh, I might trot round about five if that would suit you.

CHASUBLE: Perfectly, perfectly! In fact I have two similar ceremonies to perform at that time. A case of twins that
occurred recently in one of the outlying cottages on your own estate. Poor Jenkins the carter, a most hard-working man.

*Act II, p.35-36*

Dr. Chasuble talks about his sermon on the meaning of the manna which could be ‘adapted to almost any occasion’ and that he has preached ‘it at harvest celebrations, christenings, confirmations, on days of humiliation and festal days’ (p. 35). On hearing about Dr. Chasuble performing christenings Jack tells him that he wants him to perform an act of christening. Dr. Chasuble comes to know that Jack himself wants to be christened and asks him about the hour when to perform the ceremony. Jack tells that he would like to be christened around five if that suits Dr. Chasuble.

Dr. Chasuble’s reply (‘Perfectly, perfectly!’) is a speech act of providing necessary information about his not having any trouble. But, he violates the maxim of Quantity by providing more than required information which is in non-compliance with the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity. He adds information about the other christenings that he was going to perform the same day. His violation of the maxim is a deliberate one through which he provides the implicature of assurance. He violates it to assure Jack that he would be very much available at five.

Example 5

CECILY: Sugar?

GWENDOLEN: No, thank you. Sugar is not fashionable any more.

CECILY: Cake or bread and butter?
GWENDOLEN: Bread and butter, please. Cake is rarely seen at the best houses nowadays.

*Act II, p. 47*

Gwendolen visits the Manor House to meet Jack (whose name she knows is Earnest) but she meets there Cecily, his ward. Cecily and Gwendolen are impressed by each other initially, but when they come to know that both of them are engaged to Earnest, they begin to dislike each other and believe that the other has entrapped into other’s relation with Earnest. But in order to maintain the courtesy of entertaining a guest, Cecily offers Gwendolen tea and some eatables.

Cecily asks her if she would like to have sugar in the tea, to which the above utterance (‘No, thank you’) by Gwendolen is quiet a modest negation, but she gives additional information about sugar not being fashionable and hence, she violates the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity. She, further, violates the maxim when she accepts the offer of Bread and butter but tells that cake is a rare thing in best houses, again the violation is on the account of not following the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity. Gwendolen violates the maxim, in both the occasions, deliberately by way of implicating sarcasm towards Cecily and she thinks that Cecily is a girl living in the country and does not know much about fashion.

Example 6

GWENDOLEN: Is your name really John?

JACK: I could deny it if I liked. I could deny anything if I liked.
       But my name certainly is John. It has been John for years.

*Act II, p. 49*
Gwendolen comes to visit the Manor house where she comes to know that Jack has a ward called Cecily. She meets Cecily and gets the notion that Cecily is in love with Jack as Cecily tells her that she is engaged to Earnest, whereas for Cecily Earnest is Algernon; but for Gwendolen the name Earnest refers to Jack. Both the ladies are in grave doubts regarding their engagement to the same person when they see Algernon and Jack coming into the garden. They come to know, from each other, that the person to whom Cecily is engaged is none but Gwendolen’s cousin Algernon; whereas Gwendolen herself is engaged to Cecily’s guardian and uncle, Jack. After knowing the truth about the name of Jack, Gwendolen asks him the above question.

Jack replies the above question ‘standing rather proudly’ (p. 49) as he thinks it to be a better act as the truth has been revealed. Jack’s utterance above is an example of the violation of Quantity maxim as his utterance is in non-compliance with the second sub-maxim of the maxim. Jack’s utterance is a repetition of the same meaning twice. He first repeats the statement that he could deny anything; again, he further makes a repetition of the utterance that would mean that his name is John and nothing else. Both the repeated utterances form a defective strategy of conveying meaning that is called tautology. The tautological expressions mark the above utterance as a violation of the maxim of Quantity. His violation of the maxim of Quantity above is a deliberate one.

Example 7

GWENDOLEN: An admirable idea! Mr. Worthing, there is just one question I would like to be permitted to put to you. Where is your brother Earnest? We are both engaged to be married to your brother Earnest, so it is a matter of some
importance to us to know where your brother Earnest is at present.

JACK: …However, I will tell you quite frankly that I have no brother Earnest. I have no brother at all. I never had a brother in my life, and I certainly have not the smallest intention of ever having one in the future.

*Act II, p. 50*

Gwendolen and Cecily come to know that both of them are engaged to Earnest. They start disliking each other. When Jack enters, Gwendolen comes to know that the guardian of Cecily, who is Earnest for Gwendolen, is known by the name of Jack and his name is not Earnest. Cecily also comes to know that whom she knows to be Earnest in reality is Algernon. They both feel that ‘a gross deception has been practiced on’ (p. 49) them. Both the girls tell since they are both engaged to Earnest they want to meet Earnest. They demand to know about the whereabouts of Earnest.

Jack informs that he has ‘no brother Earnest.’ He further goes on to provide more information stating that he ‘never had a brother in’ his life and not even intends to have a brother in the future. He goes against the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity. His violation of the Quantity maxim is tautological as he has repeated the same information again and again. His violation of the maxim is a deliberate one through which he intends to implicate that she should believe his love. He violates the maxim to make her believe or to convince her.

Example 8

ALGERNON: Of course I could, Cecily. You know I could.
CECILY: Yes, I felt it instinctively, but I couldn’t wait all that time. I hate waiting even five minutes for anybody. It always makes me rather cross. I am not punctual myself, I know, but I do like punctuality in others, and waiting, even to be married, is quite out of the question.

*Act III, p. 61*

After Lady Bracknell’s objection to the marriage of Jack and Gwendolen, it is obvious that Jack would also have objection to give his consent for the marriage of Cecily and Algernon. Algernon is Lady Bracknell’s nephew and Cecily is the ward of Jack. Lady Bracknell accepts the engagement of Algernon and Cecily on the ground that Cecily has a large fortune, but she could not accept the proposal of Jack’s marriage to Gwendolen. Lady Bracknell tells that if Cecily comes of age, which is not far as she is already eighteen, then there would be no need of any consent of her guardian. Jack informs her that ‘Miss Cardew does not come legally of age till she is thirty-five’ (p. 61). Lady Bracknell is ready to wait till Cecily turns thirty-five thinking that then ‘there will be a large accumulation of property’ (p. 61). Algernon too agrees to wait.

But Cecily informs him that she could not wait. Her utterance (‘I couldn’t wait all that time’) is sufficient to inform her decision to Algernon, but she goes on to provide additional information and thus violates the maxim of Quantity by way of violating the second sub-maxim. Her violation of the maxim is a deliberate one which implicates that she wants to get married as early as possible. She violates the maxim to emphasise her decision of not waiting till the age of thirty-five to get married. She does so by way of informing Algernon about her nature and character of not liking to wait for anything.
3.3.3 Violation of Maxim of Quantity in *An Ideal Husband*

Example 1

LADY BASILDON: Ah! I hate being educated!

MRS. MARCHMONT: So do I. It puts one almost on a level with the commercial classes, doesn’t it? But dear Gertrude Chiltern is always telling me that I should have some serious purpose in life. So I come here to try to find one.

*Act I, p. 1*

Lady Basildon and Mrs. Marchmont are engaged in a conversation in the octagon room at Sir Robert Chiltern’s house. During their course of conversation Lady Basildon tells that she hates to be educated. Mrs. Marchmont supports her views by replying in the affirmative.

The affirmative reply of Mrs. Marchmont is sufficient information for her (Lady Basildon) about her hatred of being educated. But she goes on to provide more information than is required. Her utterance is in non-compliance to the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity. Her utterance is a deliberate violation of the maxim of Quantity. She not only expresses her philosophical idea of being educated to that of ‘commercial class’ but also informs her that she has come to find ‘some serious purpose in life’.

Example 2

SIR ROBERT CHILTERN: But you have not told me yet what makes you honour London so suddenly. Our season is almost over.
MRS. CHEVELEY: Oh! I don’t care about the London season! It is too matrimonial. People are either hunting for husbands, or hiding from them. I wanted to meet you. It is quite true. You know what a woman’s curiosity is. Almost as great as a man’s! I wanted immensely to meet you, and … to ask you to do something for me.

Act I, p. 7

Mrs. Cheveley arrives at a party organized by Sir Robert Chiltern and his wife, Lady Chiltern. Sir Robert Chiltern is introduced to Mrs. Cheveley by Lady Markby. He and Mrs. Cheveley are engaged in a conversation in order to each other’s interest. Sir Robert Chiltern asks her about the reason of her being in London when the season is almost over.

Mrs. Cheveley’s reply that she has come to London to meet Sir Robert is sufficient, but she violates the maxim of Quantity by way of adding more information. Her addition of more information leads her to violate the maxim of Quantity as she does not follow the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity. She has deliberately violated the maxim of quantity. Her additional information is of philosophical nature. She describes a woman’s curiosity as “almost as great as a man’s”. She also violates the maxim to emphasize her point of coming to London to specifically meet Sir Robert Chiltern.

Example 3

LADY BASILDON: Are you here? I had no idea you ever came to political parties!

LORD GORING: I adore political parties. They are the only place left to us where people don’t talk politics.
LADY BASILDON: I delight in talking politics. I talk them all day long. But I can’t bear listening to them. I don’t know how the unfortunate men in the House stand these long debates.

_Act I, p. 9-10_

At Sir Robert Chiltern’s political party, there are many guests present. Among the guests Lady Basildon is also present and when she sees Lord Goring in the party, she could not believe that Lord Goring would be present in the party, as she thought that political parties are not for him. To her curiosity she asks the above question to Lord Goring.

Lord Goring’s reply is a violation of the maxim of Quantity as he not only provided the information that he adores political parties but also he has provided the reason of his adoring such parties. Her act of providing more than necessary information is in non-compliance with the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity. His violation is a deliberate one which is to give an implicature to Lady Basildon that she should not harbour any idea that his coming to political party’s means that he likes them.

Again, Lady Basildon’s information on her ‘delight on talking politics’ is another instance of deliberate violation of Quantity maxim. Her violation of the maxim makes the utterance a sarcastic one. She is of the view that politics is interesting only to talk about but not good enough for listening. She considers those men listening debates in the House to be unfortunate. She too violates the maxim of Quantity by not following the second sub-maxim.
SIR ROBERT CHILTERN: And are you going to any of our country houses before you leave England, Mrs. Cheveley?

MRS. CHEVELEY: Oh, no! I can’t stand your English house-parties. In England people actually try to be brilliant at breakfast. That is so dreadful of them! Only dull people are brilliant at breakfast. And then the family skeleton is always reading family prayers. My stay in England really depends on you, Sir Robert.

_Act I, p. 12_

Mrs. Cheveley has come to attend the political party at the house of Sir Robert Chiltern. She and Sir Robert are engaged in conversation. Sir Robert asks her if she has plans to visit other country houses before leaving England.

The reply of Mrs. Cheveley (‘oh! No’) is sufficient enough to the question of Sir Robert. She extends her utterance to provide more information reasoning her negative reply. While providing reasons she goes on with her utterance to the extent that she stops following the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity.

She deliberately violates the maxim of Quantity to make him understand her dislike for ‘English house-parties’. She violates the maxim to bring in her real intention of visiting England. She tells Sir Robert in clear words that her stay in England ‘really depends’ on him. By way of deliberate violation of the maxim she also intends to implicate her political interest for her visit to England.
Example 5

MRS. CHEVELEY: You were Lord Radley’s secretary, weren’t you, when the Government bought the Suez Canal shares?

SIR ROBERT CHILTERN. Yes. But the Suez Canal was a very great and splendid undertaking. It gave us our direct route to India. It had imperial value. It was necessary that we should have control. This Argentine scheme is a commonplace Stock Exchange swindle.

_Act I, p. 13_

Mrs. Cheveley is attending the political party at the house of Sir Robert Chiltern, when the later asks her about her plan during her stay in England. Mrs. Cheveley informs him that her stay in England depends on him. Sir Robert was surprised to hear it and asks her if she really meant what she said. Mrs. Cheveley confirms the seriousness of her utterance and tells him that it is in connection to the political and financial scheme of the Argentine Canal Company. She, in the utterance above, asks him whether he was not Lord Radley’s secretary ‘when the Government bought the Suez Canal shares.’

The reply of Sir Robert Chiltern in the affirmative is sufficient enough to reply to the query of Mrs. Cheveley. But, Sir Robert goes on to provide more information regarding the canal schemes and thus violates the second sub-maxim which consequently is a violation of the maxim of quantity. His violation of the maxim is a deliberate one where he wants to provide the implicature that she should not think of any investment in the Argentine scheme which for him ‘is a commonplace Stock Exchange swindle.'
Example 6

SIR ROBERT CHILTERN: Wait a moment! What did you propose? You said that you would give me back my letter, didn’t you?

MRS. CHEVELEY: Yes. That is agreed. I will be in the Ladies’ Gallery to-morrow night at half-past eleven. If by that time – and you will have had heaps of opportunity – you have made an announcement to the House in the terms I wish, I shall hand you back your letter with the prettiest thanks, and the best, or at any rate the most suitable, compliment I can think of. I intend to play quite fairly with you. One should always play fairly … when one has the winning cards. The Baron taught me that …amongst other things.

_Act I, p 16-17_

Sir Robert Chiltern and Mrs. Cheveley are busy in a conversation in which Mrs. Cheveley continually tries to blackmail him in order to help her in the Argentine Canal scheme. He is not ready to withdraw the report and to make a short speech stating that there are possibilities in the scheme. He does not want to help her, but, then, she warns him of providing the letter to the newspaper office which could bring him his doom. She tells him that if he would help her in the project then she would give him the letter. Sir Robert wants to confirm from her if she really meant to give him back his letter.

Mrs. Cheveley assures him by saying ‘Yes. That is agreed.’ But, she goes on to provide additional information which is a violation of the maxim of Quantity. Her violation of the maxim of Quantity is the result of her not following the second sub-maxim of the maxim. She deliberately violates the maxim in order to provide Sir Robert Chiltern
with the information as to where he should come to get his letter from her and at what time. She, in her utterances above, provides an indirect warning of fair play because she ‘has the winning cards.’

Example 7

LADY CHILTERN: Why did you wish to meet my husband, Mrs. Cheveley.

MRS. CHEVELEY: Oh, I will tell you. I wanted to interest him in this Argentine Canal scheme, of which O dare say you have heard. And I found him most susceptible,—susceptible to reason, I mean. A rare thing in a man. I converted him in ten minutes. He is going to make a speech in the House tomorrow night in favour of the idea. We must go to the Ladies’ Gallery and hear him! It will be a great occasion!

*Act I, p. 18*

Mrs. Cheveley comes to the party at the house of Sir Robert Chiltern. As she comes to the party she is interested to talk to Sir Robert Chiltern and showed her wish to meet him to his wife, Lady Chiltern. When she was about to leave the party, she tells Lady Chiltern that ‘it has been so interesting getting to know your husband’ (p. 18). Lady Chiltern asks her why she (Mrs. Chevely) wished to meet her husband.

The reply that Mrs. Cheveley has given above is a violation of the maxim of Quantity. Her violation of the Quantity maxim occurs on account of the fact that she has not followed the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity. She has not only provided a reasoned answer for the question put by Lady Chiltern, she has, rather, also provided her with the information regarding the outcome of her meeting with Sir
Robert Chiltern. Her violation is a deliberate one where she provides Lady Chiltern with the implicature that her meeting with Sir Robert was a successful one and her husband has agreed to her terms and conditions to withdraw the report of the canal scheme. It is a matter of triumph for her as she has always hated Lady Chiltern since school days.

Example 8

SIR ROBERT CHILTER: Baron Arnheim.

LORD GORING: Damned scoundrel!

SIR ROBERT CHILTERN: No; he was a man of a most subtle and refined intellect. A man of culture, charm, and distinction. One of the most intellectual men I ever met.

*Act II, p. 26*

Sir Robert Chiltern and Lord Goring are engaged in a conversation in the morning room at Sir Robert Chiltern’s house. Sir Robert is under mental distress and wants to get rid of the problem created by Mrs. Cheveley. He discusses it with his friend, Lord Goring. Lord Goring, when comes to know that Sir Robert has bought his success, in his youth, by paying a great price for it, he wants to know what made him think in such a way to buy his success. Sir Robert mentions the name of Baron Arnheim. Lord Goring does not know anything about Baron Arnheim, so he thinks him to be a ‘damned scoundrel’.

Sir Robert Chiltern tells Lord Goring that Arnheim was not scoundrel. His utterance (‘No’) is sufficient as a reply to Goring’s exclamation. But he violates the maxim of Quantity by providing more information, which is not in compliance with the second sub-maxim of the maxim, about the nature of Baron Arnheim. He deliberately violates the maxim of Quantity in order to emphasise his negation of Arnheim being a
scoundrel. His violation of the maxim is a deliberate one and is intended to provide Lord Goring with the implicature that though Arnheim made him think for the first time about buying his success, he does not blame him because of the fact that he was ‘one of the most intellectual men’ Sir Robert ever met.

Example 9

LORD GORING: You were worth more, Robert.

SIR ROBERT CHILTERN: No; that money gave me exactly what I wanted, power over others. I went into the House immediately. The Baron advised me in finance from time to time. Before five years I had almost trebled my fortune. Since then everything that I have touched has turned out a success. In all things connected with money I have had a luck so extraordinary that sometimes it has made me almost afraid. I remember having read somewhere, in some strange book, that when the gods wish to punish us they answer our prayers.

Act II, p.27-28

Lord Goring asked Sir Robert Chiltern to tell him all about how he bought his success. Sir Robert Chiltern told him that he passed some private information of the state to Baron Arnheim for which he received ‘from the Baron £110,000’ and advice ‘in finance from time to time’ (P. 27). When Lord Goring comes to know that the Baron paid him on £110,000 he tells him that he was worth more.

Sir Robert’s reply in the negative is sufficient to satisfy Goring’s statement. He goes on to provide more information and thus violates the
maxim of Quantity by not following the second sub-maxim of the maxim. His violation of the maxim is to inform Lord Goring that the amount he received from Baron and his (Baron Arnheim) advices in finance were sufficient enough and had helped him a lot in gaining more and more money. He deliberately violates the maxim of Quantity. His violation of the maxim is an attempt to indirectly state that he is not a greedy person and was happy with what he received.

Example 10

LADY CHILTERN: Are you a pessimist?...

LORD GORING: No, Lady Chiltern, I am not a Pessimist. Indeed I am not sure that I quite know what Pessimism really means. All I do know is that life cannot be understood without much charity, cannot be lived without much charity. It is love, and not German philosophy, that is the true explanation of this world, whatever may be the explanation of the next.

_Act II, p. 33_

Lady Chiltern and Lord Goring are busy talking after Lady Chiltern comes home from the Woman’s Liberal Association. Lord Goring wants to see the reaction of Lady Chiltern if by any chance she comes to know the secret of her husband. He could not tell her directly the whole incident of Sir Robert Chiltern’s life. He, therefore, takes the help of an imaginary case in which ‘any public man, my father, or Lord Merton, or Robert, say, had, years ago, written some foolish letter to someone…’ (p. 33). Lady Chiltern objects of Robert doing any foolish thing, to which Lord Goring states ‘nobody is incapable of doing a foolish thing’ (p. 33). Lady Chiltern is not ready to associate her husband’s name with
any foolish thing or wrong thing and so asks Lord Goring if he is a pessimist.

Lord Goring’s utterance (‘No, Lady Chiltern, I am not a Pessimist’) is a reply that is enough to satisfy her query. But Lord Goring adds additional information and violates the maxim of Quantity, by not following the second sub-maxim, during his course of conversation. He deliberately violates the maxim to provide Lady Chiltern with the implicature that she would very soon be in trouble and that during that period of trouble she could find him as a trustworthy friend. He has not only hinted on her need of a friend rather he has also told her to believe in love which indicates that her love for Robert should help her get the ‘true explanation of this world’.

Example 11

    LORD GORING: …Who told her?
    SIR ROBERT CHILTERN: Mrs. Cheveley herself. And the woman I love knows that I began my career with an act of low dishonesty, that I built up my life upon sands of shame – that I sold, like a common huckster, the secret that had been intrusted to me as a man of honour. I thank heaven poor Lord Radley died without knowing that I betrayed him. I would to God I had died before I had been so horribly tempted, or had fallen so low.

    Act III, p. 52

Sir Robert Chiltern comes to the house of Lord Goring and is informed by the servant that he is not at home which he was instructed to do as Lord Goring was going to meet Lady Chiltern as per the letter received from her. But, Sir Robert requests him to be ‘at home’ for him as he is
his ‘only friend’. Sir Robert Chiltern informs him that his ‘wife has discovered everything’ (p. 52). Lord Goring asks him the above question.

Sir Robert Chiltern informs him that the person is ‘Mrs. Cheveley herself’. But Sir Robert Chiltern did not stop giving information. His act of providing more than required information goes in violation of the second sub-maxim of Quantity. He deliberately violates the maxim of quantity by providing more than necessary information to the interrogative utterance of Lord Goring. He tells that he was not able to keep the secret which was ‘intrusted’ to him and had betrayed Lord Radley. His violation of the maxim implicates that he is regretting his past ‘dishonoured’ deeds, further, more he tries to implicated that Lord Goring should understand him and help him to be out of the situation.

Example 12

MRS. CHEVELEY: What do you mean?
LORD GORING: I mean that you stole that ornament from my cousin, Mary Berkshire, to whom I gave it when she was married. Suspicion fell on a wretched servant, who was sent away in disgrace. I recognised it last night. I determined to say nothing about it till I had found the thief. I have found the thief now, and I have heard her own confession.

*Act III, p. 59-60*

Mrs. Cheveley visits Lord Goring at his house when he was actually expecting Lady Chiltern. During their conversation, Lord Goring comes to know from her that she had been to Lady Chiltern’s house to search for a brooch which she lost. Lord Goring informs him that he found it
‘and stupidly forgot to tell the butler anything about it as’ he was leaving (p. 59). He ‘clasps it on her arm’ (p. 59) as a bracelet and when asked by her how it is looking, he tells her that ‘much better than when’ he saw it ten years ago. Mrs. Cheveley is surprised to know that Lord Goring has seen the brooch ten years ago and so she asks him the question (what do you mean?).

Lord Goring’s reply that she has stolen the brooch from his cousin, Mary Berkshir is enough for the question to be answered. But, then, he goes on providing more information on the theft of the brooch and violates the maxim of Quantity, by way of not following the second sub-maxim of the maxim. His violation of the maxim is a deliberate one as by doing so he tries to provide the implicature to Mrs. Cheveley that the theft of the brooch was seriously dealt then and out of suspicion a servant was ‘sent away in disgrace’ (p. 60) but the brooch was still not found. He emphasizes the fact that he has found the thief and she has confessed that it belongs to her. His violation of the maxim is an indirect threat to Mrs. Cheveley which makes her nervous and afraid of being punished if Lord Goring could prove her act of stealing.

Example 13

**LORD CAVERSHAM**: I suppose you have read *The Times* this morning?

**LORD GORING**: *The Times?* Certainly not. I only read *The Morning Post*. All that one should know about modern life is where the Duchesses are; anything else is quite demoralising.

*Act IV, p. 64*
Lord Goring is full of interesting information and wants to share it with someone, so he goes to the house of Sir Robert Chiltern and waits in the morning room. He is informed by the servant that Sir Robert ‘is still at the Foreign Office’, ‘Lady Chiltern not down yet’, and ‘Miss Chiltern has just come in from riding’ (p. 63). The servant tells that Lord Caversham is waiting for Sir Robert in the library. Lord Caversham comes to have a talk with Lord Goring, which he was expecting to avoid, about his marriage. Lord Caversham, after asking him about his engagement, asks him the question above.

The reply of Lord Goring in the negative in the first part of his utterance is an answer sufficient for the question. He goes on to provide more information by not following the second sub-maxim of the maxim of Quantity. He deliberately violates the maxim of Quantity by providing additional information in which he wants to inform his father that he is only interested about ‘where the Duchesses are’. His violation of the maxim provides an implicature that he is not interested to talk to his father then, as his father’s talk would centre round the idea of his getting engaged whereas he is full of ‘interesting information’ (p. 63) and which he wants to share but not with his father.

### 3.4 Conclusion

The present chapter has an in-depth analysis of the first two categories of the conversational maxims, put forward by H. P. Grice. The violations of the maxims that are analysed in this chapter are, namely, maxim of Quality and maxim of Quantity. The utterances selected from the three plays selected for the purpose of the study are analysed thoroughly against the violation of the both the maxims and their sub-maxims.