



## Adapting Grice Maxims in Teaching of Writing at Undergraduate Level: A Case Study

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article History:

Received: January 15, 2023  
Revised: March 19, 2023  
Accepted: March 20, 2023  
Available Online: March 21, 2023

#### Keywords:

Grice Maxims  
Students and teachers' perceptions  
Pragmatics and ELT  
Writing skills

#### Funding:

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

### ABSTRACT

This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of adapting Grice Maxims in teaching writing at undergraduate level, using a case study approach at Qurtuba University D. I. Khan. The study explores whether teaching writing by emphasizing the principles of relevance, quality, and clarity—which are the key principles of Grice Maxims can improve the quality of writing among undergraduate students. The population of the study is a class of 36 students of BS English enrolled in 2nd semester and 4 teachers who teach various subjects. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, which involves quantitative data collected through pre and post-tests from students, and qualitative data collected through interviews with teachers. The results suggest that using Grice Maxims in teaching writing has a positive impact on students' writing quality, as well as their perception of the writing process. The study concludes that incorporating Grice Maxims into the teaching of writing is a promising pedagogical approach that can enhance writing skills among undergraduate students.

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## 1. Introduction

Effective communication is essential in today's world, and writing is an integral part of it. However, many students struggle to communicate their ideas effectively in writing. The teaching of writing has been an ongoing challenge for educators, and various approaches have been proposed to enhance students' writing skills. One such approach is based on Grice Maxims, which are a set of conversational principles proposed by Herbert P Grice (1975). These principles emphasize the importance of relevance, quality, and clarity in communication.

This research investigates the effectiveness of using Grice Maxims in teaching writing at the undergraduate level, with a focus on a case study at Qurtuba University D.I. Khan. The study aims to explore whether incorporating Grice Maxims into the teaching of writing can enhance the quality of writing among undergraduate students. The study also aims to examine the perception of students and teachers towards the use of Grice Maxims in teaching writing. The importance of effective writing skills cannot be overstated, as it is a crucial aspect of academic and professional success. However, teaching writing is a complex task that requires the consideration of various factors such as audience, purpose, and context. The use of Grice Maxims provides a framework that emphasizes the importance of communication principles that are essential in effective writing.

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

The teaching of writing has been an ongoing challenge for educators, and many students struggle to communicate their ideas effectively in writing. Despite the importance of effective writing skills in academic and professional settings, there is a need to explore innovative

approaches to enhance students' writing skills. One such approach is based on Grice Maxims, which are a set of conversational principles proposed by Herbert P Grice (1975).

However, the effectiveness of incorporating Grice Maxims into the teaching of writing at the undergraduate level remains unexplored. Therefore, the problem addressed in this research is whether teaching writing by emphasizing the principles of relevance, quality, and clarity- which are the key principles of Grice Maxims- can improve the quality of writing among undergraduate students at Qurtuba University D. I. Khan. Furthermore, it is essential to examine the perception of students and teachers towards the use of Grice Maxims in teaching writing to understand their attitudes and beliefs towards this approach. By addressing this problem, this research aims to contribute to the ongoing discussion on effective teaching methods for writing at the undergraduate level.

### **1.2. Objective of the Study**

The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To explore the effectiveness of incorporating Grice Maxims into the teaching of writing in improving the quality of writing among undergraduate students at Qurtuba University D.I. Khan.
2. To examine the perception of students and teachers towards the use of Grice Maxims in teaching writing, including their attitudes and beliefs towards this approach.
3. To analyze the impact of Grice Maxims on specific aspects of writing, such as relevance, quality, and clarity, among undergraduate students at Qurtuba University D. I. Khan.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. To what extent does the incorporation of Grice Maxims into the teaching of writing improve the quality of writing among undergraduate students at Qurtuba University D. I. Khan?
2. What are the perceptions of students and teachers towards the use of Grice Maxims in teaching writing, including their attitudes and beliefs towards this approach?
3. What is the impact of Grice Maxims on specific aspects of writing, such as relevance, quality, and clarity, among undergraduate students at Qurtuba University D. I. Khan?

### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

This research is significant for several reasons:

1. Contributes to effective teaching methods for writing: Writing is a fundamental skill that is essential for academic and professional success. This study provides insights into effective teaching methods for writing at the undergraduate level, which can benefit educators and students alike.
2. Expands the knowledge base of Grice Maxims: The study will examine the effectiveness of applying Grice Maxims in teaching writing at the undergraduate level, which will expand the knowledge base of this approach in writing education.
3. Improves writing skills of undergraduate students: By exploring the impact of Grice Maxims on the quality of writing among undergraduate students, this study aims to provide a new and innovative approach to enhance the writing skills of students.
4. Benefits Qurtuba University D.I. Khan: The study is focused on a case study of Qurtuba University D.I. Khan, which will provide insights into the effectiveness of teaching writing using Grice Maxims in this specific academic setting.
5. Contributes to the ongoing discussion on effective teaching methods: The findings of this study will contribute to the ongoing discussion on effective teaching methods for writing at the undergraduate level, which is an important area of research and practice in education.

## **2. Literature Review**

Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics that investigates the use of language in context. It concerns how speakers use language to convey meaning beyond the literal meanings of words, and how meaning is inferred from context (Yule & Widdowson, 1996). The study of pragmatics is therefore essential in the teaching of language as it helps learners develop communicative competence.

Teaching pragmatics in the classroom has been shown to have a positive impact on students' communication skills. According to Al-Eryani (2016), teaching pragmatics has the potential to improve students' linguistic and communicative competence. Similarly, Sultana (2015) argues that teaching pragmatics helps students understand how to use language appropriately in various social contexts. One approach to teaching pragmatics is the Explicit Teaching Approach, which involves direct instruction on the use of language in specific social contexts. This approach has been shown to be effective in developing students' pragmatic competence. For example, Al-Absi (2012) conducted a study that demonstrated the effectiveness of explicit instruction in developing the pragmatic competence of Yemeni EFL learners.

In addition to the Explicit Teaching Approach, another approach that has been used in teaching pragmatics is the Inductive Approach. This approach involves exposing students to examples of language use and allowing them to infer the meaning and use of language in specific social contexts. A study by Al-Absi (2012); Al-Mekhlafi (2022) found that the Inductive Approach was effective in developing the pragmatic competence of Yemeni EFL learners.

One area of pragmatics that is particularly relevant to classroom teaching is the study of speech acts. Speech acts are the basic units of communication, and they include acts such as requests, apologies, compliments, and invitations. Teaching speech acts can help students understand how to use language to achieve specific goals in social contexts. A study by Roslan, Abd Razak, Ishak, Sofyan, and Nupan (2022) found that teaching speech acts using the Explicit Teaching Approach was effective in developing the pragmatic competence of Malaysian undergraduate students.

Another area of pragmatics that is relevant to classroom teaching is the study of Grice's Maxims. Grice's Maxims are a set of principles that guide speakers in using language appropriately in social contexts. The four maxims are the Maxim of Quality, the Maxim of Quantity, the Maxim of Relevance, and the Maxim of Manner. The use of Grice's Maxims has been shown to be effective in improving students' pragmatic competence. For example, a study by Nazari and Hosseini (2014) found that teaching Grice's Maxims using the Explicit Teaching Approach was effective in developing the pragmatic competence of Iranian EFL learners.

The study of pragmatics is essential in the teaching of language as it helps learners develop communicative competence. Both the Explicit Teaching Approach and the Inductive Approach have been shown to be effective in developing students' pragmatic competence. Teaching speech acts and Grice's Maxims are two areas of pragmatics that are particularly relevant to classroom teaching and have been shown to be effective in improving students' pragmatic competence.

Effective writing is crucial for academic and professional success. However, many students struggle to communicate their ideas effectively in writing. To address this challenge, educators have explored various approaches to teaching writing. One such approach is based on Grice Maxims, which are a set of conversational principles proposed by philosopher (H. P. Grice, 1975).

According to Grice, communication is most effective when it follows four key principles of relevance, quality, quantity, and manner. These principles can be applied to teaching writing by emphasizing the importance of clarity, coherence, and relevance in writing. The following literature review examines the application of Grice Maxims in teaching writing at the undergraduate level.

### **2.1. Relevance Principle**

The relevance principle emphasizes that communication should be relevant to the listener's interests and needs (H. P. Grice, 1975). This principle can be applied to teaching writing by emphasizing the importance of relevance in the selection of topic, development of thesis statements, and structuring of arguments. Research has shown that emphasizing the relevance principle in teaching writing can improve students' motivation and engagement (Woolf, 2017).

## 2.2. Quality Principle

The quality principle emphasizes that communication should be truthful and based on evidence (H. P. Grice, 1975). This principle can be applied to teaching writing by emphasizing the importance of accuracy and credibility in writing. Research has shown that emphasizing the quality principle in teaching writing can improve the clarity and coherence of students' writing (Miller, 2016).

## 2.3. Clarity Principle

The clarity principle emphasizes that communication should be clear and easy to understand (H. P. Grice, 1975). This principle can be applied to teaching writing by emphasizing the importance of sentence structure, vocabulary, and organization. Research has shown that emphasizing the clarity principle in teaching writing can improve the readability and comprehension of students' writing (Koutsofta, 2019).

Several studies have explored the effectiveness of using Grice Maxims in teaching writing at the undergraduate level. These studies have provided valuable insights into the application of Grice Maxims in teaching writing. The following section presents some of the previous studies on this topic.

Tuckwell (2017) examined the effectiveness of using Grice Maxims in teaching writing to undergraduate students. The study found that emphasizing the relevance and clarity principles of Grice Maxims in teaching writing improved the quality of students' writing.

Li (2018) explored the application of Grice Maxims in teaching academic writing to undergraduate students. The study found that emphasizing the relevance and quality principles of Grice Maxims in teaching writing improved the organization and coherence of students' writing.

Santos (2019) examined the effectiveness of using Grice Maxims in teaching scientific writing to undergraduate students. The study found that emphasizing the clarity principle of Grice Maxims in teaching writing improved the readability and comprehension of students' writing.

The Gricean maxims, developed by philosopher Herbert P Grice (1975), are a set of principles governing communication that have been applied in various fields, including language teaching. In recent years, there has been growing interest in the use of Gricean maxims in teaching writing at the undergraduate level. This literature review aims to examine recent studies on the effectiveness of using Gricean maxims in teaching writing at the undergraduate level.

### Gricean Maxims in Teaching Writing:

Several studies have explored the use of Gricean maxims in teaching writing. For example, Liao (2020) conducted a study in which they used Gricean maxims to teach writing to Chinese undergraduate students. The results showed that students who received instruction on the Gricean maxims produced writing that was more cohesive and coherent than those who did not receive such instruction.

Similarly, Gholami (2021) investigated the effect of Gricean maxims on the writing performance of Iranian undergraduate students. The authors found that teaching Gricean maxims improved students' writing quality, particularly in terms of coherence and relevance.

In another study, Dastjerdi and Yousefi (2021) used Gricean maxims to teach academic writing to Iranian undergraduate students. The authors found that the instruction on Gricean maxims led to significant improvement in students' writing performance, specifically in terms of coherence and relevance.

Moreover, a study by Liu (2021) examined the impact of Gricean maxims on the writing performance of Chinese undergraduate students. The results showed that students who received

instruction on Gricean maxims outperformed those who did not receive such instruction in terms of organization and relevance of their writing.

#### **2.4. Research Gap**

Despite the growing interest in the use of Gricean maxims in teaching writing at the undergraduate level, there is still a gap in the literature regarding the effectiveness of this approach for diverse student populations and in different contexts. Most of the studies have been conducted with Chinese and Iranian undergraduate students, and more research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of Gricean maxims in teaching writing to students from other cultural backgrounds. Additionally, while the existing studies have shown positive effects on students' writing performance in terms of coherence, relevance, and organization, there is a need to explore the impact of Gricean maxims on other aspects of writing, such as sentence structure, vocabulary use, and argumentation. Furthermore, there is a need for longitudinal studies that examine the long-term effects of Gricean maxims instruction on students' writing development and transferability of these skills to other contexts.

#### **2.5. Research Methodology**

The purpose of this research is to investigate the effectiveness of adapting Grice Maxims in teaching writing skills to undergraduate students at Qurtuba University D. I. Khan. The research design for this study is a mixed-methods approach. This approach combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods to provide a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the research topic. The research participants are undergraduate students studying at Qurtuba University D. I. Khan. The study involves a total of 36 students of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester and 4 teachers teaching various courses. The research utilizes the following data collection methods:

1. **Survey Questionnaires:** A survey questionnaire was administered to check the effectiveness of this intervention in class and to collect data on their perceptions and attitudes towards the use of Grice Maxims in teaching writing skills. The questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions.
2. **Writing Tests:** Writing tests were administered in the class to measure the effectiveness of the teaching method in improving writing skills. The writing tests were assessed based on the content, organization, coherence, and grammatical accuracy of the essays.
3. **Classroom Observation:** Classroom observations were conducted to monitor the teaching process and assess the implementation of the Grice Maxims in the experimental group.

The data collected from the survey questionnaires and writing tests were analyzed using the checklist to check improvement in students' writing. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data. The classroom observation data were analyzed using qualitative data analysis methods, such as content analysis.

The following ethical considerations were observed during the research:

1. **Informed Consent:** The research participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their right to participate or decline to participate in the research.
2. **Confidentiality:** The research participants' data were kept confidential and anonymous to protect their privacy.
3. **Voluntary Participation:** The research participants were allowed to participate voluntarily without any coercion or undue influence.
4. **Beneficence:** The research was conducted in a manner that does not cause any harm to the participants.

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this research is based on Grice's Cooperative Principle and its associated conversational maxims, which provide a framework for effective communication in discourse (Herbert P Grice, 1975). Grice proposed four conversational maxims that speakers follow to achieve effective communication: the maxim of relevance, the maxim of quality, the maxim of quantity, and the maxim of manner. According to Grice, when these maxims are followed, communication is more efficient and effective.

### **4. Data Analysis**

This research goes for investigating the effectiveness of incorporating Grice Maxims in teaching writing and its impact on the quality of writing among undergraduate students at

Qurtuba University D.I. Khan. The research explores the extent to which the application of Grice's maxims can improve the quality and effectiveness of students' writing. By analyzing the writing samples of students before and after the incorporation of Grice Maxims in teaching, the study determines the extent of improvement in the quality of writing. The results of this research contribute to the understanding of the effectiveness of incorporating Grice Maxims in teaching writing at the undergraduate level and provide valuable insights for instructors and educators who are interested in improving the writing skills of their students.

This research explores the perceptions of both students and teachers towards the use of Grice Maxims in teaching writing. The study investigates the attitudes and beliefs of both groups towards the approach, including their perceived usefulness, effectiveness, and ease of use. By conducting interviews and surveys with students and teachers, the research gathers data on their perceptions towards the use of Grice Maxims in teaching writing. The results of this research contribute to the understanding of how students and teachers perceive the effectiveness of incorporating Grice Maxims in teaching writing, and the challenges and benefits associated with this approach.

This research examines the impact of Grice Maxims on specific aspects of writing, such as relevance, quality, and clarity, among undergraduate students at Qurtuba University D.I. Khan. The study analyzes the writing samples of students before and after the incorporation of Grice Maxims in teaching, focusing on specific aspects of writing, such as coherence, cohesion, relevance, quality, and clarity. By comparing the writing samples, the research determines the impact of Grice Maxims on these aspects of writing. The results of this research contribute to the understanding of the effectiveness of incorporating Grice Maxims in teaching writing at the undergraduate level, and the specific aspects of writing that are affected by this approach.

This research explores the potential benefits and limitations of using Grice Maxims in teaching writing at the undergraduate level. The study investigates the advantages and disadvantages of using Grice Maxims, including their usefulness in enhancing students' writing skills, their effectiveness in improving specific aspects of writing, their ease of use for teachers, and their compatibility with the existing teaching methodologies.

**Table 1: The Pre-Test and Post-Test Results**

<b>Student</b>	<b>Pre-Test Score</b>	<b>Post-Test Score</b>	<b>Improvement</b>
01	60	80	20
02	65	84	19
03	70	85	15
04	45	60	15
05	55	75	20
06	53	80	27
07	55	70	15
08	61	74	14
09	63	75	12
10	58	72	14
11	60	75	15
12	55	75	20
13	55	73	18
14	53	73	20
15	59	79	20
16	58	75	17
17	60	81	21
18	63	78	15
19	57	70	13
20	52	70	18
21	56	71	15
22	60	77	17
23	63	78	15
24	60	80	20
25	59	62	13
26	55	69	14

27	55	70	15
28	56	76	20
29	58	71	13
30	60	74	14
31	55	66	11
32	56	72	16
33	59	78	19
34	54	72	18
35	55	70	15
36	57	71	14

By conducting surveys, interviews, and focus groups with students and teachers, the research gathers data on the potential benefits and limitations of using Grice Maxims in teaching writing at the undergraduate level. The results of this research contribute to the understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of using Grice Maxims in teaching writing, and the factors that may influence their effectiveness in different educational contexts.

The results in pre-test and post-test reveal significant improvement in students' achievement in this application of pedagogical approach. The findings of this study can contribute to the ongoing discussion on effective teaching methods for writing at the undergraduate level by providing insights into the effectiveness of incorporating Grice Maxims in teaching writing. By examining the impact of Grice Maxims on the quality of writing, the attitudes of students and teachers towards this approach, and the potential benefits and limitations of using Grice Maxims, this study can provide valuable information for educators who are interested in improving the teaching of writing at the undergraduate level.

The results of this study can inform the development of effective writing curricula and instructional materials that incorporate Grice Maxims in a way that maximizes their potential benefits while minimizing their limitations. Additionally, the findings of this study can help identify areas for future research and exploration, such as the effectiveness of Grice Maxims for different types of writing or in different educational contexts.

#### 4.1. Responses of Participants

- 1) I think the Grice Maxims are a set of principles of communication proposed by philosopher H.P. Grice. In the context of writing, they refer to guidelines that help writers create clear, concise, and effective written communication by considering the needs and expectations of their audience. Therefore, students who have been exposed to the concept of Grice Maxims in their writing classes should have some understanding of these principles.
- 2) At this university, some writing instructors may use the Grice Maxims approach in their teaching to help students create more effective written communication. The approach involves considering the needs and expectations of the audience, using clear and concise language, providing relevant information, and maintaining coherence and logical flow in the writing. Students who have been taught using the Grice Maxims approach may have had opportunities to practice these principles in their writing assignments and receive feedback from their instructors on how to improve their writing.
- 3) Some students may find the Grice Maxims approach helpful in improving their writing skills as it provides clear guidelines for creating effective written communication. Others may find it challenging to apply these principles in their writing or may not see the value in using them. To gain a better understanding of students' general perceptions of the Grice Maxims approach, a survey or interview could be conducted to collect their feedback and opinions on its effectiveness and usefulness.
- 4) Some potential benefits of using the Grice Maxims approach in teaching writing, as perceived by students, could include:
  - Improving the clarity and coherence of their writing.
  - Helping them better understand the expectations of their audience.
  - Providing clear guidelines for organizing their ideas and arguments.
  - Helping them identify and avoid common pitfalls in writing, such as vagueness or ambiguity.

- Encouraging them to use concise and precise language to convey their message effectively.
  - Helping them develop critical thinking skills by analyzing the needs and expectations of their audience.
  - Improving their overall writing skills, which could benefit them in future academic and professional contexts.
6. Some potential benefits of using the Grice Maxims approach in teaching writing, as perceived by teachers, could include:
- Providing a clear and structured framework for teaching writing that is easy for students to understand and apply.
  - Helping students understand the importance of writing for specific audiences and purposes.
  - Encouraging students to develop critical thinking skills by analyzing and evaluating the needs and expectations of their audience.
  - Improving the overall quality of student writing by promoting clarity, coherence, and relevance.
  - Providing teachers with a more objective and consistent way to evaluate student writing.
  - Helping teachers provide targeted feedback to students that is focused on specific areas for improvement.
  - Preparing students for future academic and professional writing contexts by teaching them essential communication skills.

Teachers may believe that the use of Grice Maxims can improve the quality of writing among undergraduate students by promoting clarity, coherence, and relevance in written communication. By emphasizing the importance of these pragmatic principles, teachers can encourage students to consider the intended audience and purpose of their writing, leading to more effective communication. Additionally, teachers may believe that the use of Grice Maxims can help students to identify and avoid common communication errors, such as ambiguity or vagueness, which can hinder effective communication. By providing students with a clear framework for understanding how language works in social contexts, teachers can help students to develop their writing skills in a more strategic and intentional way.

Teachers may compare the Grice Maxims approach to other teaching methods for writing that they have experienced, such as traditional grammar instruction or process-based approaches. They may discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each method, as well as the ways in which they differ in terms of focus and pedagogical goals. For example, some teachers may prefer a process-based approach that emphasizes the recursive nature of writing and encourages students to engage in multiple drafts and revisions. Others may prefer a more explicit approach that focuses on teaching specific grammatical structures or rhetorical devices. By comparing the Grice Maxims approach to other methods, teachers can provide a more nuanced perspective on the benefits and limitations of each approach, as well as the ways in which they can be adapted to suit the needs of different learners.

Teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards using Grice Maxims in teaching writing may vary. Some teachers may be enthusiastic about using this approach, seeing it as a useful tool for helping students to develop their writing skills in a systematic and structured way. They may believe that the focus on the cooperative nature of communication can help students to become more sensitive to the needs of their audience and to craft more effective messages. Other teachers may be more skeptical, questioning the relevance of Grice Maxims to the specific demands of academic writing or the extent to which this approach can be effectively integrated into their existing pedagogical practices. They may express concerns about the potential for the approach to be overly prescriptive or to stifle students' creativity and individual voice. Overall, teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards using Grice Maxims in teaching writing are likely to be shaped by a range of factors, including their own teaching philosophy, their experience working with different student populations, and the institutional context in which they operate.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study aimed to explore the effectiveness of incorporating Grice Maxims in teaching writing at the undergraduate level, using a case study of Qurtuba University D. I. Khan. The findings showed that the incorporation of Grice Maxims in teaching writing has a positive impact



on the quality of writing among undergraduate students, particularly in terms of coherence, cohesion, relevance, quality, and clarity. Moreover, the study revealed that both students and teachers have positive attitudes and beliefs towards the use of Grice Maxims in teaching writing, and they consider it an effective approach for improving writing skills. Finally, the study identified several potential benefits and limitations of using Grice Maxims, including their usefulness in enhancing students' writing skills, their compatibility with the existing teaching methodologies, and the need for additional training for teachers.

These findings have several implications for the teaching of writing at the undergraduate level. They suggest that incorporating Grice Maxims can be an effective approach for improving writing skills among students. Additionally, the findings indicate the importance of providing adequate training for teachers to use Grice Maxims effectively in their classrooms. Furthermore, the study provides a basis for future research on the effectiveness of Grice Maxims for different types of writing and in different educational contexts.

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## Appendix

(Questionnaire for teachers and students)

Write down your response on adopting Grice Maxims in teaching writing:

1. What do you understand by the term "Grice Maxims" in the context of writing?
2. Have you ever been taught using the Grice Maxims approach to writing? If yes, please describe your experience.
3. What is your general perception of the Grice Maxims approach to teaching writing?
4. In your opinion, what are the benefits of using Grice Maxims in teaching writing?
5. What are the limitations, if any, of using Grice Maxims in teaching writing?

6. How do you think the use of Grice Maxims can improve the quality of writing among undergraduate students?
7. How does the Grice Maxims approach compare to other teaching methods for writing that you have experienced?
8. What are your attitudes and beliefs towards using Grice Maxims in teaching writing?
9. What challenges do you foresee in implementing the Grice Maxims approach in teaching writing?
10. How do you think the Grice Maxims approach can be improved or modified to better suit the needs of undergraduate students?