

CHAPTER THREE

THE OCCURRENCE OF CONFLICTS DUE TO THE NON-OBSERVANCE OF THE GRICEAN MAXIMS IN PARENTHOOD TV SERIES, SEASONS 2-4

According to the title of my thesis analysis, I want to discuss some speech events which tend to end with a quarrel between a speaker and a listener because the non-observance of Gricean maxims are flouted by some speakers. The first speech event is between Joel and Julia.

Speech event 1

Julia: Okay, listen, I know we said there needs to be more room for you, especially if we are going to have a second child, but I need to understand – you know, is this what that looks like? Because – because I do not know if we can manage it. I do not know how that works. How can we manage this?

Joel: I do not know. I do not know, but we will figure it out, okay?

Julia: We need to discuss – we need to discuss this. Can we – oh, my God.

Joel: Yes, yeah, okay. Let us discuss this. We just need to discuss. Yeah, let us talk about this. (stop for a minute) You do not want me to work ever.

Julia: **1) Oh, give me some credit, Joel. I moved mountains --**

Joel: **2) I moved mountains for you for years, Julia, and this is one week I am asking from you!**

Julia: I am not trying to be ungrateful. I am just trying to face reality here.

Joel: Okay, what reality is that?? Just spit it out.

Julia: The reality is that you are working all hours of the night. **3) I am working mad hours.**

Joel: Yes. (with a cold tone)

Julia: **4) There is no one watching our child.**

Joel: Do not get so dramatic.

Julia: I mean – there is plenty of people to take care of our kid. We got a family to take – what am I just supposed to leave a deposition

Joel: What are you getting at??

Julia: **5) I am billing \$600 an hour for, so you grout some guy's bathroom??**

Joel: No, you are right. I mean. If it is, um -- if it is about whose time is worth more, you win. (Joel says it in a cold tone. Then, he leaves Julia)

Julia: No, that is not – Come on...

Analysis:

The first speech event is taken from season two; episode seven, entitled *Seven Names* (CD). The conversation is between Julia and her husband, Joel. In this season of *Parenthood*, Julia and Joel have a daughter named Sydney Graham.

They are having a conversation in their house. In this speech event, they are talking about how they should manage their time to look after their child, Sydney. At first, Julia wants to tell Joel that she needs him to look after Sydney. In addition, Joel gives his opinion about managing the time to do it. While they were discussing it, Joel is in a hurry to leave house because he has to meet his partner at work.

In the middle of their conversation, they suddenly argue and blame each other. That is the beginning of a conflict between them. Julia, as Sydney's mother, does not tell the truth that she does not like her husband to work as a contractor. She does not want Joel to do his work because she only wants Joel to stay at home to look after their child when she works.

Julia works as a lawyer. Although Julia takes her job very seriously, she is also very involved with her family and in raising Sydney. Julia's job as a lawyer usually makes her busy with her clients. That is why, she wants Joel to be a good father by looking after Sydney at home.

Julia does not like it when Joel has to work as a contractor because it means that Joel will not be able to look after Sydney well at home. Nobody will be able to do it. Moreover, she feels upset when Joel calls her in the middle of her meeting with her clients. Joel always calls her to take care of Sydney after she is back from school. Joel does that because he wants to focus on his work as a contractor. This reason becomes the essential part which triggers a conflict in the end.

In saying, **“Oh, give me some credit, Joel. I moved mountains –”** Julia **has flouted the maxim of quality**. She does it because she wants Joel look for

another plausible interpretation. Actually, her utterance means that she has done her best in life and she wants her husband to be aware of it. The implicature is Julia does not want Joel to take the job as a contractor in Berkeley.

Referring to Julia's utterance, it triggers the conflict between them. As a response, Joel says, "**I moved mountains for you for years, Julia, and this is one week I am asking from you!**" Joel has flouted the maxim of quality. He does it because he wants to make Julia look for another plausible interpretation. Actually, he wants Julia think that however he needs to take the job as a contractor in order to avoid family finance cannot be maintained by Julia because Julia seems to have a problem in her work. The implicature is Joel must take the job as a contractor to help in balancing family finance.

The conflict still continues between them, because Joel shows his anger to Julia, by saying, "Okay, what reality is that?? Just spit it out." As a response, Julia says, "**I am working mad hours.**" Julia has flouted the maxim of manner. She does it because she does not state what she actually wants to say directly. Her utterance implies that she has done her best in the family. The implicature is Joel must focus only on Sydney.

Then, in saying, "**There is no one watching our child.**" Julia has flouted the maxim of quality and manner. She flouts the maxim of quality because she says something which is totally false. She does it because she wants Sydney to be looked after well by Joel at home. The implicature is Joel does not look after Sydney well at home.

Moreover, she has also flouted the maxim of manner. She does it

because she does not say directly that Joel must look after Sydney. The implicature is it is better for Joel to stay at home with Sydney. Thus, the conflict is the clash of ideas between them. On the one hand, Julia wants Joel to give his time for Sydney because she thinks Sydney is not looked after by anyone when Julia works; on the other hand, Joel does not share her opinion.

The conflict reaches its climax as can be seen when Julia says, “what am I just supposed to leave a deposition” Julia’s utterance serves as a consequence of having neverending conflicts with Joel. She seems to be annoyed because their argument has not ended yet.

Joel also gets annoyed by giving a response, “What are you getting at??” Julia is really upset. That is why, she replies, “**I am billing \$600 an hour for, so you grout some guy’s bathroom??**” Julia has flouted the maxim of relation. She does it because she wants Joel think for another plausible interpretation. Actually, she wants to emphasize her previous statements that she has done really well for her family. The implicature is what Joel has done for family cannot be compared with Julia’s.

The conflict ends when Joel says, “No, you are right. I mean. If it is, um -- if it is about whose time is worth more, you win.” in a cold tone while leaving Julia.

Speech event 2

Camille: So what would you say to him?

Zeek: **6) Say to who?**

Camille: Yeah, do not play dumb with me. You know exactly what I am talking about. What did you say to my art teacher??

Zeek: I told him to stay away from my wife.

Camille: And I told you nothing was going on.

Zeek: Yeah, well... I wanted to tell him myself.

Camille: **7) It was so humiliating.**

Zeek: It is humiliating for you? What do you think it is for me? It is humiliating for me, Camille! You ask me, and you ask me and ask me to share my feelings with you, and when I do. I tell you how I am feeling! This situation makes me feel like crap! And you say, “so what?” So I went to your little Portuguese pound cake, and I told him to stay away from what is mine.

Camille: What is yours?

Zeek: **8) You know what I mean.**

Camille: **9) Yeah, I know what you mean. I know exactly what you mean!**

Zeek: (throws away some stuff).

Camille: All this time in therapy! Talk about change? You have not changed. You do not change. You have not changed a bit.

Zeek: Really?

Camille: Yeah, really. (leaves Zeek)

Analysis:

The second speech event is taken from season two; episode nine, entitled *Put Yourself Out There* (CD). The conversation is between Camille and her

husband, Zeek. Zeek and Camille are the father and mother of Adam, Sarah, Julia, and Crosby. In this speech event, Zeek and Camille have a conversation at a garage. The conversation is about Camille's art teacher and her relationship with the teacher. Actually, Camille does not have an affair with her art teacher at all like what Zeek thinks.

Camille and her art teacher, Matthew, are only friends and they usually get together only to discuss Camille's progress in drawing something beautifully and in a good perspective as he has taught her. Yet, Zeek thinks differently because he is convinced that Matthew has an affair with Camille. Zeek does not want Matthew to be together with Camille. Then, Zeek decides to go to the course to meet Matthew and tell him to stay away from Camille.

As a result, Matthew makes a distance with Camille and it makes Camille confused. Then, Camille asks for a clear explanation from Matthew why he acts differently to her in class, so he tells her the truth. Consequently, Camille feels disappointed with Zeek because she thinks that Zeek does not trust her at all like what Zeek has said.

At first, Camille just asks Zeek to tell her something that he has said to her teacher; yet, Zeek pretends not to know the answer, in which he tries to mislead Camille. A conflict occurs between them because Camille actually has known the truth what Zeek has said to her art teacher; as a consequence, it makes her get angry with him.

In saying, "**say to who?**" Zeek **violates a maxim**. He does it because he tries to make Camille think that he actually does not know what she was saying to him at that time; yet, he fails to mislead Camille because she has known the truth.

She just wants to ask about the truth directly from Zeek. As a result, she gets really angry with him because he does not tell the truth to her although she has already known from Matthew.

A conflict occurs when Camille says, “**It was so humiliating.**” Camille **has flouted the maxim of manner**. She does it because she gives an unclear utterance to Zeek. The statement is unclear because she does not tell Zeek directly that she is disappointed with him because Zeek does not trust her at all. Therefore, Zeek also gets angry when Camille says it to him. Camille does that because she wants to show that she does not really like what Zeek has done to Matthew. The implicature is Zeek does not trust Camille at all. In fact, Zeek’s act is very childish.

The conflict becomes worse when Zeek says, “**You know what I mean.**” Zeek **has flouted the maxim of manner**. He does it because he gives an unclear response to Camille. Zeek’s utterance is unclear because he does not state directly that Camille must stop continuing her art class. He does that because he does not want Camille to get closer to Matthew, although she actually does not have any kind of intimate relationship with him. The implicature is Camille must make a distance with Matthew no matter what she has to do. Thus, the conflict is the clash of ideas between them. Zeek thinks that Camille has an affair with her art teacher; while, she actually does not have an affair at all.

Their conflict reaches its climax when Camille gives a response, “**Yeah, I know what you mean. I know exactly what you mean!**” Camille **has flouted the maxim of quality**. She does that because she does not know what actually

Zeek means to her. She says it because she seems to be annoyed by Zeek's utterance. The implicature is Camille does know how to face Zeek anymore.

As a result, Zeek also gets angry by throwing away some stuff near him. Camille still shows her dislike to her husband by saying, "All this time in therapy! Talk about change? You have not changed. You do not change. You have not changed a bit." Finally, the conflict resolves when Camille leaves Zeek alone.

Speech event 3

Teacher: The kids were eating lunch. I mean everything was fine, uh, until I heard the shouting. And as I get closer, Max pushed Jabbar on the ground.

Christina: How did this whole thing start? I do not get what happened.

Teacher: Max told us that Jabbar was supposed to eat with him.

Jasmine: I am sorry. I am a little confused, because I thought that we figured out the lunch issue. (Jasmine talks to Crosby)

Christina: The lunch issue?

Jasmine: You said that you talked to your brother? (Jasmine still asks it politely)

Crosby: **10) I said I was going to and I did not end up having time to, so --**

Adam: What is -- What is this about?? I do not know what is going on here (He looks confused) What the hell is going on, Crosby?

Jasmine: Max told Jabbar that they had to eat lunch together every day.

Christina: I thought that they wanted to eat together.

Adam: Yeah. What -- ?

Jasmine: Not -- not all the time.

Christina: What?

Jasmine: So what do you mean, you did not have a chance to talk to Adam??

That is what we agreed, that that was the best way to handle this!

Crosby: **11) I spoke to Jabbar, we had a conversation, and I thought the whole lunch thing would blow over, and it did not. I am sorry.**

Jasmine: What did you say to Jabbar??

Crosby: **12) It is not relevant. It does not matter, clearly.**

Jasmine: Yes, it is relevant!

Jabbar: He said that I had to be nice to Max because there is something wrong with him. (Then, Christina and Adam look so surprised after hearing it)

Crosby: No, no, no, no, that is not what I said.

Christina: Max, nothing is wrong with you.

Crosby: I said that we are family and we need to stick together and I said Max has some problems.

Adam: Who does not have problems? You should have listened to her! (Adam point at Jasmine)

Jasmine: And come and talked to me!

Adam: What the hell is matter with you?? (Adam leaves Max and Jabbar's school by getting angry with Crosby and still shouts at him)

Analysis:

The third speech event is taken from season three; episode four, entitled *Clear Skies From Here on Out* (CD). The conversation is between Max and Jabbar's teacher, Christina, Adam, Jabbar, Jasmine, and Crosby. Jabbar is Jasmine

and Crosby's son while Max is Adam and Christina's son. They have a conversation at school. Max and Jabbar's teacher informs that Jabbar and Max have a fight during lunch time at school. Then, both Max and Jabbar's parents try to discuss it together; yet, it ends with a conflict.

Max and Jabbar have a fight because Jabbar feels upset as he must spend his lunch time only with Max. He also wants to spend his time with his friend, Jensen, but Max does not give a permission to Jabbar to hang out with Jensen because he wants Jabbar to be his only friend. Jabbar is not allowed to leave Max alone during lunch time even though Jabbar has finished his meal. As a result, Jabbar gets bored and angry.

Then, he leaves Max alone after finishing his meal. Max does not accept it easily, he also gets angry and try to urge Jabbar to stay with him. Yet, Jabbar tries to avoid Max by pushing him away which ends in a fight.

The conflict actually starts when Jasmine misunderstands Crosby. She thinks that Crosby has talked to his brother, Adam, that their son does not want to spend his time only with Max during lunch time. The cause of the conflict is because Crosby does not tell what has happened to Adam. He does not do it because he does not want to make Adam sad to hear that Jabbar does not want to be with Max anymore when having lunch. As a parent of Jabbar and a brother of Adam, Crosby must discuss his son's problem with Max at school together with Adam to avoid misunderstanding between them.

In saying, "**I said I was going to and I did not end up having time to, so –**" Crosby actually **has flouted the maxim of manner**. Crosby does it because he makes a long-winded response to Jasmine. Actually, he does not tell Adam about

Jabbar and Max, because he does not want to make Adam misunderstand the situation that has happened between their children. The implicature is Crosby has not told Adam yet.

After hearing Crosby's utterance, Adam looks confused because he does not know what actually has happened. Adam and Christina think that Jabbar wants to have his lunch together with Max every day. Yet, Jasmine tells them that it is not the case. In fact, Jabbar does not want to do it every day.

Because of Christina's confusion, Jasmine asks Crosby to explain what actually he means by saying, "**I said I was going to and I did not end up having time to, so –**" because actually Jasmine and Crosby have agreed that Crosby will tell Adam about Jabbar's problem with Max at school during lunch time.

As a response, Crosby says, "**I spoke to Jabbar, we had a conversation, and I thought the whole lunch thing would blow over, and it did not. I am sorry.**" Crosby **has also flouted the maxim manner**. Crosby does that because he makes a long-winded response to Christina. The implicature is Crosby did not ask Jabbar to leave Max.

Crosby is right that he talks with Jabbar about his disagreement to spend his time with Max, but he does not want to tell the truth that he has had a conversation with Jabbar about Max's problem, because he thinks it will hurt Adam's and Christina's feeling.

Then, in saying, "**It is not relevant. It does not matter, clearly.**" Crosby **has still flouted the maxim of manner**. Crosby keeps doing it because he does not want to answer Jasmine's question about what he has actually said to Jabbar. He still does not want to reveal that he has discussed with Jabbar about Max's

problem. Unfortunately, Jabbar tells the truth about what Crosby has said to him by saying, “He said that I had to be nice to Max because there is something wrong with him.” The implicature is Crosby has said nothing to Jabbar about Max.

Thus, the conflict is the clash of ideas between them. On the one hand, Crosby thinks that Jabbar’s problem with Max is better to be kept without Adam’s knowledge; on the other hand, Jasmine does not think so because it can cause misunderstandings. Besides, Adam and Christina think that Crosby wants to make Jabbar leave Max alone during lunch time, because Max has a problem with his ability in communicating at school. Actually, Crosby thinks that he does not tell the truth because he does not want to hurt their feeling.

After hearing it, Adam and Christina get upset, especially Adam who shows his anger all the way back home to Crosby by saying, “What the hell is matter with you??” The conflict reaches its climax when Adam says that Crosby does not understand what he actually says to him by shouting out to Crosby when he wants to leave the school by car.

Speech event 4

Joel: Mc Shane and Kyle, by some miracle or act of God, are -- are both free and are starting Tuesday.

Julia: (Julia nods her head) That is great.

Joel: It is really great. Thank you for your enthusiasm.

Julia: No, you know what? **13) Honestly, I just cannot believe that you said yes the same day that we agreed Victor is our priority.**

Joel: Victor is our prior -- wait. I am sorry. I am sorry, what – is that what this is about??

Julia: We have so much going on in building this relationship, **14) and it is fragile, and you are bailing on us.**

Joel: Wait. I am bailing on the family??

Julia: That is what I feel like!

Joel: Is what what you feel like??

Julia: Yes!

Joel: Jule, one of us has to make money!

Julia: **15) And I think you should get your priorities straight. That is what I am saying.**

Joel: Are you kidding me?? Wait. I am sorry. (Joel raises his voice)

Julia: I am not kidding you at all! I feel like this is --

Joel: I do not understand. (Joel says it in a cold tone because he is still angry until the end. Then, he leaves Julia alone)

Analysis:

The fourth speech event is taken from season four; episode four, entitled *You Can't Always Bet What You Want* (CD). The conversation is between Joel and Julia. In this season of *Parenthood*, Julia and Joel want to have another baby; yet, Julia cannot give Joel another baby because Julia has a problem with her womb. That is why, Julia and Joel decide to adopt a child. Finally, they adopt Victor, a child from an adoption agency.

Julia and Joel have a conversation in their bedroom. The conversation is about Joel, who wants to take a job as a contractor of a huge building in West Berkeley. However, Julia does not want Joel to take the job because she thinks that both of them must make a priority for Victor. A conflict occurs because Julia wants Joel to focus on Victor as their adopted child, but she does not tell it explicitly to him. Actually, Joel has promised Victor to take him wherever he wants to go. Moreover, they had confirmed the date to go out together. Yet, in the end Joel decides to take the job in Berkeley.

Julia thinks that Victor is a new family member whom she really loves. That is why, Julia wants to make him as a priority in their family. It means that whatever Victor or Sydney wants to get must be fulfilled. On the other hand, Joel wants to take the job because their family needs money after Julia has lost her job. Yet, Julia gets angry because Joel does not discuss it with her before he takes the job. Julia has lost her job because she wants to be a better mother for Victor. Therefore, her job cannot be handled well. Julia has made a big mistake, so she decides to quit from her job.

In saying, **“Honestly, I just cannot believe that you said yes the same day that we agreed Victor is our priority.”** Julia has flouted the maxim of **manner**. Julia does that because she makes an unclear utterance to Joel. Actually, Julia wants to make Joel aware because he forgets about the plan which they have arranged for Victor.

Julia does that because she has made a decision to give everything to Victor as her adopted child. However, she does not state her disagreement if Joel

must go to West Berkeley to do his job as a contractor. Moreover, Julia and Joel have discussed that they will have a transitional period with Victor.

That is why, Julia and Joel decide to make Victor a priority. The implicature is Joel should have prioritized Victor over the job. As a consequence, Joel gives his response by saying, “Victor is our prior -- wait. I am sorry. I am sorry, what – is that what this is about??” Joel seems to deny that he has planned it for Victor. It is the reason for the conflict to occur.

Then, in saying, “**and it is fragile, and you are bailing on us.**” Julia **has also flouted the maxim of manner**. Julia does it because she does not say what she wants to say clearly. She still gives an unclear response to Joel. She thinks that Joel does not care about his family anymore. It means that the problem of Victor as a priority in the family is the most important thing to discuss. Julia does that because she wants to make Joel spend his time with Victor. The implicature is family should come first.

Joel gets angry by saying, “Wait. I am bailing on the family??” Joel actually does not mean not to care about his family anymore, especially Victor. Joel thinks that he needs to take the job in Berkeley because his family needs money after Julia has lost her job as a lawyer. Joel’s decision to take the job is a good reason to maintain their family finance; yet, he has made a mistake because he does not discuss it first with Julia. That is why, Julia gets angry by saying, “That is what I feel like!”

The conflict reaches its climax when Julia says, “**And I think you should get your priorities straight. That is what I am saying.**” Julia **has flouted the maxim of manner**. She does that because she still gives an unclear response until

the end. Actually, she does not mean that Joel must get a priority in the family in the first place. She does that because she wants Joel to focus on Victor than the job which. The implicature is Victor should prioritize himself over Joel.

Thus, the conflict is the clash of ideas between them. On the one hand, Julia thinks that Joel does not care anymore about his family; while, actually he does. As a result, Joel's anger explodes after hearing Julia's utterance.

Joel's anger explodes because he thinks that she is so ridiculous at that time. Therefore, Joel gives a response, "Are you kidding me?? Wait. I am sorry." Joel says it by raising his voice. The conflict ends when Joel gives his last response to Julia, "I do not understand." Joel says it in a cold tone while leaving Julia.

(3,417 words)