

Power Relations through the Flouting of Cooperative Principles in Popular Culture- House M.D.

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Abstract

This paper studies the flouting of the conversational maxims as means of exercising power in a sample of popular culture; the medical television drama *House M.D.* The study samples scenes from the eight seasons of the series in which its protagonist Dr. Gregory House intentionally, and unintentionally, flouts conversational maxims to redefine rules of power play. To that end, this linguistics study of conversational principles is contextualized within a broad sociological framework of the theories defining power and a broader frame of the critical discursive analysis of power and language. The findings primarily demonstrate that uncooperativeness of one of the participants and their disregard for conversational principles points towards an imbalance in power relations.

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House Rules

Power Relations through the Flouting of Cooperative Principles in Popular Culture –

House M.D.

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in
Applied English Language Studies

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ABSTRACT

This paper studies the flouting of the conversational maxims as means of exercising power in a sample of popular culture; the medical television drama *House M.D.* The study samples scenes from the eight seasons of the series in which its protagonist Dr. Gregory House intentionally, and unintentionally, flouts conversational maxims to redefine rules of power play. To that end, this linguistics study of conversational principles is contextualized within a broad sociological framework of the theories defining power and a broader frame of the critical discursive analysis of power and language.

The findings primarily demonstrate that uncooperativeness of one of the participants and their disregard for conversational principles points towards an imbalance in power relations.

DEDICATION

To wacky, off the wall ideas and those who believe in them.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the Study

It is customary in language exchanges for participants to uphold- and to be expected to uphold- certain unwritten rules to maintain the coherence, cohesion and clarity of a meaningful conversation. Such ideally structured conversations, while frequent, are anomalous. It is often that these rules are either bent or broken, with varying degrees of intentionality, as the level of engagement, interest, or even benefit from the interaction varies from one participant to the other while considering the subject of the conversation and the relation that binds the participants together in a social context. These contextual elements of knowledge and social proximity can often create a sociolinguistic imbalance detectable in the extent of linguistic cooperation participants invest in exchanges. If one is aware of the constraints of societal norms, political correctness and politeness, imbalances and inequalities can be detected in uncooperative communication. The various shades of uncooperativeness involved in conversations can mark areas of influence, power, dominance and authority in various social settings.

Certain social requirements are required to grant participants more liberty at flexing their socio-linguistic muscles to exert power, regardless of their position in the hierarchy. Participants require a degree of familiarity with, if not expertise in, and access to the discourse, to be entitled to a greater disregard of cooperation through the non-observance of the conversational principles in order to set new rules to the power play: The more familiarity, access and control a participant enjoys, the more likely intentional occurrences of flouting are going to frequent the interaction irrespective of the participant's position in the institutional hierarchy.

1.2 Introduction of the Study Subject

On a check list of the previously suggested prerequisites, Dr. Gregory House, the subject of the study and the protagonist of the American medical drama series, House M.D enjoys a wealth of medical information that he uses and/or abuses on multiple levels of personal and professional interactions. His intellectual superiority grants him a degree of uncooperativeness, thus enabling him to usurp power that is usually not within his reach as the Head of the Diagnostics department. While his actions usually speak louder, it is often his use of language that empowers him to maneuver within the institution.

The television show features interactions between Dr. House, an exceptional lead diagnostician and his team of remarkable doctors; his superior, the Dean of Medicine Dr. Lisa Cuddy, and his only friend, the oncologist Dr. James Wilson at the fictional Princeton Plainsboro Teaching Hospital. Apart from the hierarchy of the hospital in which interactions range from those with superiors, colleagues, and patients within Dr. House's sphere of diagnostics and clinic hours, the dramatic twists intensify and widen the scope of interactions to include neighbors, spouses of colleagues, policemen, judges, military personnel, and politicians in a wider societal spectrum. The show accounts for various exchanges between and/or with different ethnicities, genders, religious backgrounds, as well as age groups thus reflecting a social complexity highly comparable to that of real-life situations in which participants are bound to social and linguistic uncooperativeness and to manipulate language to exert power. Attempts at analyzing the show psychologically and philosophically have been made in *House the Wounded Healer on Television* (2010) and, *House and Philosophy* (2008), but language has never been at the heart of either attempt.

1.3 Problem Statement

The main question the study poses is whether the non-observance of conversational principles is a contributing factor to the creation and recreation of power relations.

1.4 Research Objectives

The research attempts an examination of conversational principles in relation to power and inspects the impact of flouting the principles in the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of power relations in a context of natural linguistic exchanges.

1.5 Dissertation Structure

While the first chapter introduces the study, its subject and its objectives, the second reviews linguistic, sociological, and discursive literature. The third chapter outlines the methodology used in collecting and analyzing data before describing and discussing the results in the fourth. In the final chapter, conclusions are drawn and certain recommendations pertaining to the expansion of the study question and potential areas of application are made.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Literature Review

Whenever power has been examined linguistically, it has been through gauging the extent of what words can do, and what can be done through words. This was evident in the philosophical works of Austin (1975) and Searle (1969) formulating the extensively studied branch of pragmatics known as speech acts theory. Speech acts theory, as the name suggests, studied the way in which one participant in an interaction influenced the other using language in varying forms of directives, assertive, expressive, commissives, and declarations (Searle, 1969). To observe power relations using speech acts required certain linguistic and paralinguistic conditions, including a proper setting, a legitimate authority, and consenting participants: a wedding ceremony for example. A more subtle observation of power in other areas of study under pragmatics was not packaged in similar conditions, thus implicatures, speaker meaning, and reference did not attract the same attention, while they were equally philosophically oriented.

The study of the cooperative principle and its subordinating maxims has been highlighted by an extensive examination of conversational and conventional implicatures in linguistic interactions. The core interest of the study of implicatures was not focused on the linguistic form of these occurrences, but rather with the mapping out of meaning on those forms, hence the interest in implicature, meaning, and reference. What Grice discussed in *Logic and Conversation* (1975) was not a new area of study, especially in the field of philosophy; Kant for instance set a similar framework in *The Critique of Judgment* (2007), as did Wittgenstein's in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1947) and, of more relevance to linguistics, a similar discussion can be

found in *Principles of the History of Language* by Paul (1888). Although Grice has never referred to the subject of his study as pragmatics, its novelty however lay in the examination of certain linguistic aspects involved in the creation of implicatures: the cooperative principle and the conversational maxims.

He explained that for participants to have an effective linguistic exchange not only did they need a general framework of mutual interest, understanding, prospective outcomes, and reciprocity of contributions; he proposed certain guidelines that would enable effective communication, starting with a general principle that required participants to observe elements of setting, plot and purpose by making their contributions "as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange" (45), which he called the cooperative principle (CP henceforward) supplemented by four maxims that in turn branch into a number of sub-maxims:

Quantity: Give the right amount of information;

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

Quality: Try to make your contribution one that is true;

- (a) Do not say what you believe to be false
- (b) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

Relation: Be relevant.

Manner: Be perspicuous;

- (a) Avoid obscurity of expression.
- (b) Avoid ambiguity.
- (c) Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
- (d) Be orderly.

In brief, quantity could be reduced to informativeness, quality to truth assessment, relation to relevance to the field and subject matter of the contributions, and manner to quasi-linguistic markers of style.

Yet Grice, seemingly disinterested in generating other maxims, acknowledged the possibility of propagating other maxims concerned with the sociability, morality, and aesthetics of participants in contexts of linguistic interactions, thus leaving the door open for further research. Leech (2005) compliments the Gricean principles with a politeness principle (henceforward PP) and a socio-linguistically sensitive set of maxims and sub-maxims, namely the tacit, generosity, approbation, agreement, and sympathy maxims. The PP, Leech stated, was to be viewed in proximity to the Gricean maxim of manner in the sense that it seeks to "minimize (other things being equal) the expression of impolite belief" (100). While Grice's manner seems to be inherently ambiguous, Leech's sociopragmatic principle and its concern with the social phenomenon of face¹ rendered it peripheral to the focus of this study.

Horn (2006), however, a neo-Gricean scholar, condensed the principles into two main principles of quantity and relation: the Q- and R-principles, diminishing the importance of quality and manner. Despite the attempt to develop the manner maxim into an M-principle in Levinson (2000) who proposed a set of Q-, I(informativeness) and M-principles, in that order of importance, it remained a vague area of study while relevance branched into a full-fledged theory. This was developed by Wilson and Sperber in several of their collaborative works. In *The Handbook of Pragmatics*, they claimed that relevance of contributions to the general theme of interactions was the locus of cooperative and meaningful conversations, stating that "human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance" (255).

While in most cases, participants sought to uphold these principles, Grice did not neglect the possible need for linguistic maneuvers in which participants loosely did or did not abide by the conversational rules. He noted the possibility of a clash of maxims which cornered the

participant into violating one or more of the sub-maxims resulting in mixed messaging, opting out by declaring unwillingness to cooperate, and flouting maxims as admissible linguistic tactics.

In the seventh volume of the *Studies in Language Companion Series*, Leech (1981) noted that "principles (like Grice's Cooperative Principle) were different from rules (like the syntactic rules of negation and integration in English) although both were constraints on linguistic behavior" (413). Grice addressed the problem by stating that he did not seek to prescribe standardized conversations but rather to describe "something that is REASONABLE for us to follow, that we should not abandon"¹ (48). While Grice avoided prescriptivism and its moralistic implications, Habermas (1992) for instance, approached communication moralistically by prescribing four conditions to be upheld to maintain meaningful conversations in his remarks on discourse ethics listing: comprehensibility, truth, transparency, and legitimacy to loosely resemble the four Gricean maxims².

To ease the constraints Leech previously suggested, Levinson (2000) revised his theory of generalized conversational implicature (GCI). He noted that Grice's framework was designed to adequately study, what Levinson enumerated as three layers of meaning³ in interactions and the processes of allocating semantic meanings to linguistic expressions and interpreting those meanings pragmatically. To this end Levinson divided his principles into sub-maxims to account for the layers of meaning: speaker's maxim that required a speaker to "specifically, select the informationally strongest paradigmatic alternate that is consistent with the facts"; and receiver's maxims that required the receiver to accept that the speaker "made the strongest statement

¹Grice capitalized the word in the original text of *Logic and Conversation* published 1975.

²Habermasian truth resembles Gricean quality, while comprehensibility, transparency and legitimacy echo Gricean quantity and manner respectively. The Habermasian conditions presupposed relevance of contributions therefore diminished the importance of relevance as a separate condition.

³According to Levinson, the three layers of meaning are speakers-meaning, utterance meaning, and expression meaning.

consistent with what he knows" (76) in the case of the Q-principle. Bach (1999) as well attempted to reexamine the work of Grice by arguing that conversational implicature was an inadequate description of the linguistic phenomenon Grice tried to explain. Thus Bach and Harnish (1979) aimed higher at redefining the conversational principles as a "Communicative Presumption" which they describe as instances where "someone says something to somebody, he intends to be performing some identifiable illocutionary act" (12) that is founded on the "quasi-contractual" nature of interactions as (48) described :

To flesh out these theoretical ideas, an application of Grice's principals by linking them to Game-Theoretical Semantics (GTS henceforward) is in order. Following the tradition of an academic marriage between mathematics and linguistics, GTS could be viewed as a legitimate child of both areas of study. Hintikka (1999) nurtured the relation between game theory and semantics in a number of his works, and Jaeger (2010) begot yet another relation with pragmatics. Jaeger (1) pointed out a few basic principles to the participation in any game: 1. There are at least two players. 2. The players interact, and the interaction results in a certain outcome. 3. Each player has a choice between various courses of action, their strategies. 4. The outcome of the interaction depends on the choice of strategy of each player. 5. Each player has a preference ordering over outcomes.

A typical example would usually revolve around a game of chess but attempting to simplify the complexity of the concepts; a game of tic-tac-toe would convey the idea more easily. In this game, two players should strategically take turns to align three Xs or Os vertically, horizontally, or diagonally to win. Each player's preference to align three letters before the other motivated their strategy not only to align their letter of choice but also to do so before the other

player did. The simplest of linguistic interactions could take place between two participants who strategically take turns in contributing to a conversation for various reasons corresponding to their preference in starting, maintaining, and ending the conversation, like a game of tic-tac-toe.

Ideally, and even moralistically, a conversation was presumed to be a win-win game even in the case of partial disregard to certain maxims while upholding the general principle of cooperation. Let's demonstrate this with an example:

A1: I need some coffee.

B1: You need 42 beans ground into a tablespoon and an ounce of water for 25-30 seconds and you will have an espresso shot.

B2: Coffee causes cancer.

B3: My car is in the garage.

In this scenario, A, whose contribution shall be constant, stated that she needs coffee: a statement that could elicit any number of contributions from participant B in response. In the first instance B's contribution implied that if A needed coffee, an espresso to be precise, she would need to follow through the process he described to make one. B violated the second sub-maxim of quantity which required that the contributions did not exceed a degree of informativeness required by A. The contribution, nonetheless, hinted at a general adherence to cooperation by providing information that may or may not help A get her coffee. While the contribution could be informative to coffee connoisseurs, the volume of information violated the third attendant sub-maxim of the maxim of manner: to be brief.

In the second case, B's response violated the first sub-maxim of quality which required that contributions were substantiated by evidence and did not supplement his statement with supporting evidence to verify the validity of the conclusion. The third contribution, though

cooperative in the implication that had B had his car he would have taken A for coffee, violated relevance.

In all possible scenarios above, A had to work her way around the implications of B's contributions who was constantly cooperative. By looking at Grice's general outline of a cooperative conversation of reciprocity of interest, understanding, contributions, and desired outcomes; the interaction or rather linguistic game above could be referred to as a partnership game⁴ employing a Nash equilibrium. As suggested by Nash (1950), an equilibrium aimed at stabilizing systems, otherwise uncooperative and instable, by a change of strategy optimizing the utility and gain of all participants interacting within any given system; in other words, it attempted to find a mutual agreeable resolution to otherwise situations of uncooperativeness. The Nash equilibrium optimized A's preference to fulfill a certain need conveyed in her statement and B's preference to cooperate utilizing a different strategy in each of the scenarios, B's contributions were rewarding to both: both win.

In a zero-sum game, Nash equilibria were abandoned; the participants' preference was accentuated and reflected in their choice of strategy optimizing their individual gain. Considering the example below, A still needs coffee:

A1: I need coffee.

B4: I have nothing to add.

B5: Help yourself.⁵

In B4, B opts-out of the conversation by stating his unwillingness to cooperate with A, and in B5, he did not observe any of the maxims, therefore changing the rules of the game and

⁴A partnership game is a game of cooperation in which participants seek to cooperate with each other to pursue further gains.

⁵Assuming that there is not a coffee maker in the setting of this interaction.

subsequently the outcomes which were bound to be unsatisfactory to A who did not get any closer to getting the coffee she needed.

In all cases, this seemed to indicate that without Nash equilibria interactions suggest an inequality between participants, ergo power imbalances too⁶. Dahrendorf (1969) attempted to trace the origin of human inequality, and managed to compress the intellectual and political history of power, sans the ideological bias, in a formula that defined society, in which norms, sanctions, and institutionalized power comprised "the abstract core of all power" (38). While he acknowledged the underlying assumption of inequality through the imperative need for laws: had all been equal, laws would not have been needed. Norms to Dahrendorf were of greater significance sociologically. They were societal prerequisites, against which human behavior could be measured and the degree of the behaviors' compliance to the norm could be sanctioned either positively through rewards, or negatively through punishments⁷. Dahrendorf did not elaborate on the notion of institutionalized power in his *On the Origin of Inequality Among Men* (1969), but the institutionalization seemed to have occurred when a society collectively upheld and adhered to norms. Relevant to Grice's conversational maxims, society collectively upheld a norm of presumed cooperative conversations. The contributions of participants were checked against and ranked on a scale of cooperativeness and could either result in a win-win for all participants as in partnership games or play to the advantage of one of the participants in a zero-sum game on a level of individual differences. The possibility of imposing sanctions on a

⁶These suggestions however should not be restricted to hierarchical cases of power relations. As shall be discussed below, power relations do not necessarily occur only in superior-subordinate interactions but are as frequent in exchanges amongst peers. The coffee example detailed above intentionally neglects any reference to social status and rank to deemphasize the importance of hierarchies in power play.

⁷Norms are societal constructions that seem more authoritative than laws, due to the societal negative sanction's norms entail. These might include, naming and shaming, and social ostracism and outcastedness. Norms are more powerful than individual traits put into good use, like charisma that is controlled by the individual and not by society.

societal level could be traced in Habermasian ethics of discourse (Habermas, 1992) or in the psychological component of exchange theory (Homans, 1985).

While game theory has been primarily employed in the study of economics and politics, sociology has rather gingerly begun exploring applications of game theory, whether implicitly or explicitly, in sociological literature almost half a century ago. Homans (1985) experimented with behaviorist sociology as he lamented the negligence of approaching social behavior as an economic interaction, by proposing a revival of an exchange approach to sociology in which behaviors were viewed as an exchange "of goods, material goods but also non-material ones, such as symbols of approval or prestige" (606). Homans, nonetheless, realized that such an approach would not necessarily seek the use of equilibria, and that participants might pursue personal gain irrespective of the preferences of other participants in the exchange.

Bourdieu (2011) as well grasped the resemblance between economics and language and hinted at games in sociolinguistic settings in *Language and Symbolic Power* (66):

Linguistic exchange (...) is also an economic exchange which is established within particular symbolic relations of power between a producer, endowed with a certain linguistic capital, and a consumer (or a market) and which is capable of producing a certain material or symbolic profit. In other words, utterances are not only (save in exceptional circumstances) signs to be understood and deciphered; they are also *signs of wealth* intended to be evaluated and appreciated, and *signs of authority* intended to be believed and obeyed.

Bourdieu's game consisted of two players: a producer and a consumer whose Xs and Os were "linguistic capital" in an exchange of meaningful utterances. While capital has been usually

used to refer to a wealth, or lack, of economic resources in economic literature, Bourdieu expanded the notion to include the possession of linguistic resources. The significance of such a notion was emphasized in Bourdieu's original text through the use italics. Language, while in itself a system of signs to which sounds, and meanings were assigned on a linguistic level, signified wealth and authority on a sociological one. To Dahrendorf (1969), the sociological signification of wealth and authority in the Bourdieusian context served as a foundation of a dual-faceted social inequality amongst equals and within hierarchies. Similar to Dahrendorf's proposition, Bourdieu framed this in *Distinction* (1984) in what is referred to as Field Theory in which [(Habitus) (Capital) + Field = Practice]. According to this formula, social practices were generated when habitus as a set of a participant's predisposed skills was multiplied by capital: economic, social, and cultural, in a given field. Symbolic power⁸, Bourdieu's main interest in *Language and Symbolic Power* (2011), seemed to stem from the symbolic nature of cultural capital including that of language.

Bourdieu's title conjoined the two phenomena by a coordinating conjunction, but this does not seem to suffice to capture the embeddedness of language in the reservoir of knowledge. Foucault (1982) proposed the term power/knowledge to describe power as a network of relations and discourse. What Foucault evaded in definitions, he compensated for in volumes describing the manifestations of power/knowledge in various aspects of society. The Foucauldian concept acknowledged the difficulty of separating power from knowledge, hence the creation of a syzygy between both concepts. Foucault's examination of aspects of power in social life could be defined in Fairclough's *Language and Power* (2001). Fairclough, as well spoke of the deep-

⁸Symbolic power marks the territory of a participant in the field. Bourdieu's view builds on the assumption of power relations are only bred in hierarchical settings where an individual has to mark their territory within the institution.

rooted dialectical nature of the relationship between language and society describing linguistic phenomena as social and, social phenomena as linguistic. He also recognized two types of power intertwined in language or discourse in general: one that functioned within discourse, "discourse is the site of power struggles", and another that functioned behind it, "discourse is the stake in the power struggles" (61). Power behind discourse was generally what Foucault inspected in his corpus, and what Fairclough sought to achieve through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA henceforward). Fairclough's analysis which was focused on examining both phenomena could be summed in his analogy of cultural goods, similar to the Bourdieusian cultural capital, to material goods. These goods were just as "unequally distributed, so that members of (...) the *dominant bloc*- (the capitalist class, the 'middle class', the professions) have substantially more of them than members of the working class- they are richer in *cultural capital*" (52).

Fairclough's Marxist indoctrination repelled scholars of discourse from taking the budding critical branch as seriously as its proponents wished, as he believed that a critical analysis of power discourses "is nothing if it is not a resource for struggle against domination" (216). Yet in his emancipatory literature, he suggested that one of the methods of detecting power behind discourse was through the access to and control of orders of discourse⁹.

Despite their different critical approaches to discourse analysis, all approaches of the field did not escape the leftist influence traced in its interest in inspecting social power, inequality, discrimination, and racism in discourses; access to and control of discourses and capital, were central to Dijk's (2003) socio-cognitive approach to CDA. But rather than analyzing a dialectical relation between discourse and society, Dijk stratified his evaluation into three layers: cognitive, social, and linguistic. On the three strata, it was possible to place implicature

⁹Fairclough's order of discourse corresponds to social practices.

and inference on the cognitive macrostratum, cooperation and power on the social mesostratum, and the details of structure and form on the linguistic microstratum in order to dissect Grice's magnum opus.

Whether power was in discourse or behind it, real or symbolic, such a concept was rather difficult to specify given the number of taxonomical concepts associated with it such as dominance, authority, violence and influence. Nonetheless, power demanded a definition. The sociological and social psychological study of power was abundant with varying views of the nature, the variations, and the (ab)users of power.

The starting point of the review of power would commence with the underlying premise of speech acts theory that certain linguistic constructions could bring about a change in behavior of one of the participants; at this stage the hierarchical aspect considered in speech acts theory would be overlooked and discussed at a later stage. This premise discounted Weber's (1991) account of power, as he viewed it as an empowering social element. Such a view should not be discredited for allowing a positive outlook towards power, rather than the constant negative perception and connotations allocated to it. Similarly, this positive outlook to power was touched upon by Parsons (1963) who focused his analysis on the facilitative nature of power in a distinction between power to and power over, of which the former functioned positively to facilitate, while the latter functioned negatively to prohibit human behavior.

Lukes (2005) believed that power is prohibitive, and proposed what he called a three-dimensional view of power to overcome the shortcomings of the one-dimensional view presented by Dahl (1957), and the two-dimensional view proposed by Bachrach and Baratz (1970). While Dahl's view highlighted power relations in social practices involving decision making and

Bachrach and Baratz focused on the power play of agenda control, Lukes' radical view introduced alongside the two former views an inspection of power relations in practices including a clash of objective and subjective interests of participants, and dormant conflicts between participants. This he summed up in the formula in which "A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interest" (37). To this effect, Shaw (1981) concurred with Lukes' view by stating that social power suggested "the ability of one person to control or influence another person in some way" (294). While the notion of latent conflict would require a degree of psychological testing, Lukes' view duly deemphasized the asymmetry usually demanded as a prerequisite to detect imbalances of social power and relations as those obvious in hierarchical institutions. The hierarchy constituted one of many variables, that could be disregarded because power pushes and pulls could be as frequently occurring among equals and as those between superiors and subordinates.

Clegg (1980) made a point on power within organizations in which an organization is analogous to a game of chess in which players "gain their power through their current position through their power to make moves according to the rules of the game" (444). Chess, however, did not fit into the description of partnership games in which players cooperate through an equilibrium to maximize gains for all. Yet the creation of power within that game did not escape Clegg, who reiterated that a participant who is able to "rule in his own interest, would in this sense have power". Weber (1947) identified three types of power, and French and Raven (1959) listed five types, and others have recognized more but power *in* discourse should investigate the finer linguistic details that allow A to impact B regardless of B's interest.

To this end, CDA sought to dissect those elements in political and media discourses as primary sources. Yet other discourses did not necessarily reflect discursive power relations as

conspicuously as in political discourses that were manufactured to serve as power behind discourse. Everyday interactions between participants that are not pulling the strings behind the media or the political scene could be an equally interesting show to observe.

Several studies have been conducted in the area of power and language, specifically within the scope of institutional and organizational discourse which provides so-called authentic data for analysis. These studies cover various types of interactions in the fields of medicine, law, business and education, to name a few. All of which are domains with observable hierarchies of power relations. Fairclough (2001) provides prime examples of such analyses. Fisher and Todd (1986), Clegg (1980, 2006), and *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism* (2013) extensively consider the relation between language and power within a hierarchies.

Relevant to fictional discourses and scripted conversations, several studies were conducted in research of occurrences of flouting of the cooperative principle and the reasons behind them in cultural exhibits. Similar to the subject of this study, Burhan (2013) discusses the movie *UP!*, Oktavia (2014) studies the movie *Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs*, Ismawan (2014) study of the *In Time*, Kinasih and Heerawat (2013) studies *The Art of Getting By*, Safril (2012) analysis of *The King's Speech*, Wahyaningsih (2013) and Setiawan (2013) examination of *The Dark Knight Rises*, and several other studies focused on the cooperative principle.

Oktavia (2014) states in the conclusion of her research of flouting in the Ice Age movie that there are several detectable reasons that require characters to resort to flouting, noting cases where characters wish to give detailed explanations, to create comfortable social settings considerate of ones and others feelings, to hide the truth, and to attempt to convince others. The researcher, however, suggests in the conclusion of the study that future research could examine

incidents of flouting within the discursive context, and/or in relation to speech act theory or politeness. Burhan (2013) who examines the movie *UP!* shared similar findings to those of Oktavia (2014) in which she finds that characters flout the cooperative principle to create comfortable interactions where interlocutors can avoid some tough questions, but still be able to express their sentiments and exchange information. Kinasi and Heerawat (2013) note in the conclusion of their analysis of the movie *The Art of Getting By*, that the flouting of the cooperative principle allows characters at opposite ends of the spectrum, the protagonists and the antagonists, to better express the different personalities, attitudes, and emotions, as well as enables them to create either humorous or dramatic situations.

Setiawan (2013) and Wahyaningshi (2013) both studied the cooperative principle in the 2012 movie *The Dark Knight Rises*. The latter states that “the implicature is related to the the context situation. A different context could make a different implicature”, the former reached the conclusion that flouting “may cause misunderstanding and wrong inference that are probably made by the addressee, if the addressee does not understand the context of situation where the conversation happens”.

However, Khan and Bughio (2012) specifically examined the role of the context in conversations in his study of the nunnery scene, an encounter between Hamlet and Ophelia in Shakespear’s *Prince Hamlet*. The discursive interpretation of those instances led the researchers to conclude that while flouting occurred on both the surface level of the utterance and the deeper level of meaning creating implicatures, implicatures gave way to more meaningful interactions. And as they derived that the “application of pragmatic concepts of implicature and cooperative principle can enable us to explore various aspects and facets of conversation”, the researchers

suggest that understanding the motives of flouting can contribute to a better understanding of the characters in questions as they function against a wider context of interaction.

And while some of these works did not exceed an enumeration of instances of flouting, others investigated the underlying motives of flouting and acknowledged the shortcomings of inspecting the cooperative principle in a contextually reduced environment. These studies have left the door open to further contextual research that can go beyond the study of the cooperative principle as a miniscule and isolated aspect of language, but rather indicative of entangled socio-discursive elements of interaction.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach

The title of the study, *House Rules: Power Relations through the Flouting of Conversational Principles in Popular Culture*, indicates an interdisciplinarity, and therefore, calls for a multifaceted approach to answer taking into consideration the versatility of the study as it investigates language, society, and discourse. To break down the study question, I seek to inspect the linguistic elements of the study by drawing attention to instances of the flouting of conversational principles in relation to the concept of power as the first and second elements of the study. Both phenomena do not occur in a vacuum but can be pinned in discourses- the third element of the research. The sociological literature, on the other hand, supplements the study with comprehensible definitions of power that can be demonstrated linguistically. Examples of flouting conversational principles in power play will be examined against these definitions. Both language and sociology can be incorporated within the domain of the socio-cognitive approach of CDA. Participants' wealth of knowledge and the degree of access to and control of that knowledge can be reflected in the extent of cooperation they invest in the interaction. Given the social context of the exchange, these factors can be instrumental in wielding power in favor of one participant over others.

While the study is at its core a study of linguistics, enumerating isolated instances of successful flouting adds no value to the general study of pragmatics; examining the function of flouting might. By contextualizing interactions, the research tries to move away from studying examples of uncooperativeness to assess whether participants adhere to decontextualized rules of interaction.

3.2 Strategy and Method

While the study seeks to investigate the effective use of flouting in power play, two subordinating questions were posed to focus the scope of the research: which of Grice's conversational principles are being violated and how does the violation redefine the rules of the power play? To overcome the short comings of individual approaches and to better answer those questions, the study resorts to a mixed strategy of sampling and surveying that accounts for qualitative validity and reliability of the data and the analysis.

3.3 Data Collection

Over the span of three months, eight seasons of House M.D were viewed with the intention of collecting research material. The process of data collection was spread over two phases commencing with a phase of viewing the footage and selecting data relevant to the study, followed by a stage of data reduction in which the data was sifted through and verified against the transcription of the minutes selected.

To ensure the randomness of the samples, the number of episodes in each season was divided by two. Odd numbered episodes were used to extract study samples from seasons one, six, seven, and eight; while even numbered episodes from seasons two, three, four, and five.

While the data is sensitive to its immediate context, the study does not take into consideration the larger plot of the episodes and by extension the dramatic and psychological development of the plot and the characters. It is important to note as well that with the progression of the series and the development of a dramatic plot, the quantity and quality of data witnessed a significant decline when compared to the first few seasons.

3.4 Data Analysis

Using a document analysis technique, the data was subjected to a twofold test to account for the linguistic and discursive aspects of the study. The data gathered was tested against the Gricean conversational principles to confirm flouting. Incidents of successful flouting were then examined against the immediate context of the occurrences to gauge the power shift in the sociological context.

3.5 Reliability, Validity, Generalizability and Limitations

Considering the use of a TV series as a study sample can propagate questions of reliability, validity and generalizability. The use of popular culture does not diminish the validity of the study as it provides a controlled, quasi-realistic, environment to analyze the frequently occurring, yet otherwise evasive, phenomenon of flouting. Nonetheless, the results of the analysis are restricted to the study sample of this series. General outlines can be drawn as to the employment of uncooperativeness in the establishment and maintenance of power relations.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Note on the presentation of findings

For ease of reference, I will demonstrate and discuss the findings as comprehensive instances of discourse, containing one or more examples of uncooperativeness and discuss each discursive sample against Grice's model of cooperative communication, Lukes' (2005) view of power where "A exercises power over B when A is affecting B in a manner contrary to B's interest" (37), and the notion of access-and-control as presented by van Dijk (2003) simply to mean "that those groups who control most influential discourse also have more chances to control the minds and actions of others" (355).

4.2 Results and Discussion

The audiences' first encounter with the Dean of Medicine Dr. Lisa Cuddy, in the pilot episode *1:1 Everybody Lies*, is when she finds Dr. House leaving the hospital avoiding a meeting with her. This encounter between two of the main characters sets the pace for the conflict of interests in their eight-seasons-long relationship. House immediately flouts the quantity, manner and relevance of his responses to Cuddy's questions:

[Cut to House standing at the elevator, he sees Cuddy and presses the down button twice]

Cuddy: I was expecting you in my office 20 minutes ago.

House: Really? Well, that's odd, because I had no intention of being in your office 20 minutes ago.

Cuddy: You think we have nothing to talk about?

House: No, just that I can't think of anything that I'd be interested in.

Cuddy: I sign your paychecks.

House: I have tenure. Are you going to grab my cane now, stop me from leaving?

Cuddy: That would be juvenile.

[Both enter the elevator]

Cuddy: I can still fire you if you're not doing your job.

House: I'm here from 9 to 5.

Cuddy: Your billings are practically nonexistent.

House: Rough year.

Cuddy: You ignore requests for consults.

House: I call back. Sometimes I misdial.

Cuddy: You're 6 years behind on your obligation to this clinic.

House: See, I was right, this doesn't interest me.

Cuddy: 6 years, times 3 weeks; you owe me better than 4 months.

House: It's 5:00. I'm going home.

Cuddy: To what?

House: Nice.

Cuddy: Look, Dr. House, the only reason that I don't fire you is because your reputation still worth something to this hospital.

House: Excellent, we have a point of agreement. You aren't going to fire me.

Cuddy: Your reputation won't last up if you don't do your job. The clinic is part of your job. I want you to do your job.

House: Well, like the philosopher Jagger once said, "You can't always get what you want."

While his contributions "*I'm here from 9 to 5*", "*Rough year*", and "*I call back. Sometimes I misdial*" are relevant to Cuddy's contributions; they are too brief to adequately answer her concerns. The brevity of his contributions violates the sub-maxim of quantity, as they are not as informative as the other participant wishes them to be. They are enough to maintain a conversation, however uncooperative, but remain open to further semantic interpretations that might vary according to speaker and hearer. When the tit-for-tat exchange does not help House escape the situation, he resorts to irrelevance, when he states in response to Cuddy's "*6 years, times 3 weeks; you owe me better than 4 months*", by making his unwillingness to cooperate even more obvious by saying that "*It's 5:00. I'm going home*". Furthermore, he ends the conversation with partial ambiguity, while not completely irrelevant, quoting Mick Jagger the lead singer of the Rolling Stones, as a philosopher.

Cuddy's attempts to keep up the pace with House eventually fail and he manages not only to win the game verbally, by not cooperating, but also, he leaves the hospital without having to sit in a meeting with his superior or due his clinical duty. House's linguistic choices reflect an observable overt conflict between House and Cuddy.

As much as he detests clinic duty, House fills in a few hours to keep Cuddy from complaining. In this scene in episode *1:3 Occam's Razor*, House interacts, or does not, with a patient in a clinic examination room while he awaits Cuddy's consultation. This is again an example of a conflict of interest in which House has more power over Cuddy. An extra-linguistic sign of uncooperativeness is playing a Gameboy while the patient awaits a diagnosis. House's interaction with the patient flouts relevance and quantity, and as soon as Cuddy enters the scene, he disregards quality to justify his need for a consultation.

[Cut to the clinic, where House is very involved in his Gameboy.]

Clinic patient: What are you doing?

House: Level 4.

Patient: No, I mean –

House: I know what you meant. We're waiting.

Patient: My throat hurts.

House: So you said.

Patient: How long are we waiting?

House: Two minutes less then when you asked me two minutes ago. [Cuddy walks in.]

Patient: Hi.

Cuddy: Hi. I'm Dr. Cuddy. Nice to meet you.

House: Dr. Cuddy, thanks for the consult. [He closes the Gameboy.] His throat seems to have some condition.

Cuddy: Say "Ah".

Patient: Ah.

Cuddy: He has a sore throat.

House: Of course! Yes, why didn't I... I mean, because he said that... it hurt, and I, I should have deduced that meant it was sore...

Cuddy: I was in a board meeting.

House: Patients come first, right?

Cuddy: Wouldn't want to prescribe a lozenge if there was any doubt about its efficacy, huh?

House: You once asked why I think I'm always right, and I realized that you're right... at least, I think you're right. I don't really know now, do I? [Cuddy smiles.]

Patient: Hey! I'm here.

Cuddy: Go home. Drink some hot tea. [She leaves.]

The patient asks a question expecting a medically relevant response; House flouts relevance and updates the patient on his progress in the game. He flouts quantity by giving his patient less information than is required to answer his inquiry *"We're waiting"*, and by not adhering to manner in *"Two minutes less than when you asked me two minutes ago"* and continues to play his video game. His attention soon shifts to uncooperativeness with Dr. Cuddy when she enters the examination room under the pretense of House's need for a consult. Knowing well that the patient has a sore throat, he flouts quality when Cuddy confirms the diagnosis *"Of course! Yes, why didn't I... I mean, because he said that... it hurt, and I, I should have deduced that meant it was sore"*.

In episode *1:15 Mob Rules*, the personal and professional power of Mr. Bill Arnello, the brother and the lawyer of Joey Arnello, a hospitalized mobster who is about to go into a witness protection program, does not deter House from disregarding relation and quantity to try to find the upper hand in an interaction with a member of the mafia:

Bill: Dr. House, Bill Arnello. [He shakes House's hand.] I'm a lawyer, I represent Mr. Smith. What's wrong with him?

House: Do I come to you with my problems?

Bill: He's also my brother.

House: What, you changed your name? "Smith" wasn't good enough for you?

Bill: His name's Joey, he's my only brother.

House: He's important to you, got it. So, no placebos for him, we'll use the real medicine. [Elevator dings, House gets in.] Well, this was fun, let's do it again soon. [Bill follows him in.] Brother in the Mafia? [Door closes.] So, just Joey? I was hoping for a nickname. Joey Mango. Joey the Wrench. [Bill hits the emergency stop.] People know where I am.

Bill: I want you to do your job. Diagnose him, fix him, and keep him here.

House: We're a bit of a specialized hospital. We generally only deal with patients when they're actually sick.

Bill: If you release my brother to the government, and he does what they want, even if you fix him, he's dead. I need time to convince him of that. [He shuts off the stop.] Good news is, if you screw up you don't have to worry about a malpractice suit. If he's dead,

one by one, I'll take away the things you love 'till there's nothing left. [Elevator opens. House leaves.]

House: So, on the Mafia thing, that's a yes.

A greater conflict of interest occurs in this scene, Arnello intends to keep his brother in the hospital after he is treated in order to convince him not to join a witness protection program—an interest that contradicts that of House, and the *raison d'être* of hospitals: to treat and discharge patients. Both participants in the interaction make the contradiction of their interests obvious to one another as Arnello states *"I want you to do your job. Diagnose him, fix him, and keep him here"*, to which House responds, *"We generally only deal with patients when they're actually sick"*.

Uncooperativeness between the two starts earlier in the interaction as House ignores Bill Arnello's introduction, and starts by violating relation *"Do I come to you with my problems"* To Arnello's introduction of his relationship to the patient, House flouts quantity by contributing with more than is required both medically and personally such as inquiring after the brothers' connection to the mafia, and whether or not Joey has a nickname. Arnello does not take House's logorrhea lightly and implicitly threatens House not only verbally but by stopping the elevator in order for them to talk about Joey's case. Challenging Arnello's power, House maintains his uncooperativeness by further flouting relation in response to Arnello's last contribution.

Another example of flouting can be observed in 3:2 *Cane and Abel* when Dr. Chase rushes to House as their patient has disappeared from his hospital room. House is seen making his way out of the hospital when the exchange occurs. He brushes off the urgency of the matter by not observing of quantity, and relevance by making a cultural reference to the Star Wars movies:

Chase: House! Clancy's gone missing.

House: Oh, no! Well, you take Alpha Centauri, Foreman can look on Tatooine, and Cameron can set up an intergalactic checkpoint. Let's pray he hasn't gone into hyperdrive! We'll never catch him.

Not much of a power conflict occurs in the scene above, but it is clear that House, who is seen leaving the hospital, has no interest in chasing up a missing child in the hospital regardless of his medical condition.

Although House believes that everybody lies, he seldom relies on the flouting of the maxim of quality. Yet desperate times call for desperate measures. He neglects quality and quantity in order to obtain painkillers, to which he is addicted, in this interaction with a pharmacist in *3:10 Merry Little Christmas*. Despite the potential legal repercussions of his actions, House's uncooperativeness and exercise of power over the suspecting but easily convinced pharmacist secures his temporary access to drugs:

Pharmacist: Sign the book.

House: Picking up a script for Zebalusky.

Pharmacist: This is err... doctor Wilson's patient.

House: Yeah, Wilson's busy right now what with Mr Zebalusky dying in agony on account of his metastatic lung cancer and not having the pills to relieve that agony because of some moron pharmacist.

In this interaction, in *3:18 Airborne*, House flouts quality as he tests his sociological rather than medical theory on fellow passengers, including Dr Cuddy. The passengers were convinced they have contracted an exotic illness flying out of Singapore. House's control of information and the passengers' acknowledgement of his superiority as a doctor enable him to instantly manipulate them into believing that they are critically, if not terminally, infected before he decides to burst the bubble:

HOUSE: [to Air Cameron] Hold this.

[He hands her the shot glass. She looks less than thrilled to hold it, despite not knowing what it is. He picks up the receiver to the PA system to address the anxious passengers.]

HOUSE: [over PA system, somberly] Ladies and gentlemen, we have a passenger with a confirmed case of bacterial meningitis.

[Shocked murmurs all around.]

HOUSE: [over PA system] And even if we land as soon as possible, the passenger will not survive. It's very likely that some of you have been infected as well.

[Some passengers start to break down.]

HOUSE: [over PA system] As soon as you start feeling symptoms, we need to isolate you in the first-class cabin.

[Some people start coughing.]

HOUSE: [over PA system, rattling off the symptoms] Fever, rash, ...

[Some passengers start looking for rashes on their bodies.]

HOUSE: [over PA system, continuing] ... nausea, and in the late stages...

[He waits a beat. The passengers brace for the last symptom.]

HOUSE: [over PA system] ... tremor in the left hand.

[People start panicking heavily, their left hands trembling visibly.]

FRIGHTENED PASSENGER 1: I have that!

JOY: [watching her own trembling left hand] Oh, god.

FRIGHTENED PASSENGER 2: [watching his left handshake] No!

[The passengers generally start to go to pieces.]

KEO: [worried, to House] What do we do?

HOUSE: Break out the bubbly. [yells] Yo! Listen up!

[The passengers stop panicking for a moment and look at House hopefully.]

HOUSE: [over PA system] Bad news is you have an illness. The good news is, it's not meningitis.

[Sighs of relief all around.]

HOUSE: [over PA system] It's not fatal. It's just embarrassing. It's conversion disorder. More commonly known as mass hysteria.

[In the first-class cabin, Cuddy looks behind weakly.]

HOUSE: It happens often in high anxiety situations, especially to women.

[Clueless wife looks offended.]

HOUSE: I know it sounds sexist, but science says you're weak and soft, [chuckling] what can I do?

CUDDY: House, you're wrong!

JOY: [holding out her trembling left hand, hysterically] Look at my hand.

HOUSE: Yeah, look at her hand. Shaking left hand. What is that a symptom of? Not meningitis. It's basically a symptom of nothing. Put the idea into their heads and watched it happen. Same thing that Peng cruelly did with the puking and the rash.

JOY: The rash is in my head?

HOUSE: Your mind controls your body. It thinks you're sick, it makes you sick.

[Cuddy purses her lips, feeling foolish. However, the passengers still seem flustered.]

HOUSE: [over PA system] If-if you'll all just calm down; your symptoms will soon go away. And to facilitate this process, your flight crew will move through the cabin with a complimentary bar service.

[Keo, a relieved smile on her face, goes to make it happen.]

HOUSE: [over PA system] Thank you and, as always, have a pleasant flight.

The choice of the maxim depends on House's control of the information he wishes to test. To test his hypothesis of mass hysteria, he uses several statements for which he lacks evidence—such evidence can only be ascertained by the intentional flouting of quality.

He starts off by naming the potential diagnosis as *bacterial meningitis*; the statement adheres to the sub-maxim of manner requiring the participant to be brief but violates a sub-maxim of quantity that requires the participant to be as informative as possible. House never bothers with an elaboration of *meningitis* but continues to assess the validity of propositions by listing immediately detectable symptoms, such as "*Fever, rash*", "*nausea*", and "*tremor in the left hand*". The breakout of mass confirmations amongst the frightened passengers asserts his hypothesis, therefore he abandons his intentional flouting to "*break out the bubbly*". He explains his game by finally providing an explanation for the mass hysteria the passengers experienced "*Yeah, look at her hand. Shaking left hand. What is that a symptom of? Not meningitis. It's basically a symptom of nothing. Put the idea into their heads and watched it happen.*" House's power over the passengers stems from his control and access of information that he withholds from the passengers to test a social, rather than a medical, hypothesis which allows him to be uncooperative and demonstrate power over the gullible crowd.

Dr. Foreman, a member of House's team of diagnosticians, appears in many encounters to be House's prodigal son. In *3:20 House Training*, Foreman plays by House's rules of flouting quantity to win a game of decision making and manages to have the last word in the argument by getting the green light to administer steroids to the patient:

House: The only question is what kind of autoimmune.

Foreman: Doesn't matter what kind.

House: It always matters what kind.

Foreman: Treatment is always steroids.

House: Treatment is always boring! Diagnosis is –

Foreman: Okay. It's affecting the larger blood vessels, so it's gotta be giant cell arteritis.

I'll start her on steroids. It's affecting her smaller blood vessels, it's gotta be lupus vasculitis. I'll start her on steroids. It's affecting –

House: Yeah, got it. Start her on steroids.

As he ignores Foreman's contribution that the "*Treatment is always steroids*", House wants to consider possible diagnoses, claiming that treatments are boring. Foreman cuts this story short by contributing abundantly in support of his former contribution: "*Okay. It's affecting the larger blood vessels, so it's gotta be giant cell arteritis. I'll start her on steroids. It's affecting her smaller blood vessels, it's gotta be lupus vasculitis. I'll start her on steroids. It's affecting --*". House succumbs and approves Foreman's treatment.

In 4:6 *Whatever it Takes*, the power relations depend heavily on the control and access of information. House and fellow doctor, Dr. Sidney Curtis, are asked to assist in diagnosing a CIA operative (see appendix page 99 to 102). While in a previous example, House had greater control of information, in this episode CIA agent Samira Terzi has more control and access to information about the case than House does, which gives her the upper hand in making the final decision. To gather information relevant to the diagnosis, and to undermine Terzi's power over the case, House chooses to disregard many of the maxims. For instance, Terzi cannot share the real name of the patient, who is referred to as John, or the nature and whereabouts of his last mission during which he contracted the disease. This annoys Doctor Sidney Curtis, but Terzi's uncooperativeness does not get to House, who when denied access to knowledge becomes equally uncooperative. As seen in the interaction between the three characters: Curtis, obviously irritated, asks Terzi "*Well, what can you tell us?*" and House's irrelevant contribution "*Yeah, did Oswald really have sex with Marilyn Monroe?*"

House's frustration with the limits imposed on his access to information can be seen disguised with irrelevance when interacting with the patient "*Hey. Something I've always wanted to know. That poison lipstick that Ginger used to kiss Gillian. Why didn't kill her?*", or in "*malpractice insurance doesn't cover alien autopsy*", only to get Terzi's humorous, yet relative, response "*That's fine. X-Files are the next wing over*".

In 5:6 *Joy*, Cuddy seeks House's medical advice in a life-or-death scenario in which either the surrogate mother or the baby which she plans to adopt dies. House manipulates Cuddy's assumption of his ability to make an objective decision and takes advantage of his control of a much-valued medical opinion regardless of the sensitivity of the situation:

Cuddy: The mother had a stage two placental abruption. She's losing blood.

House: So, deliver the baby.

Cuddy: The lungs are ten weeks premature. [She hands him a clipboard.]

House: So, deliver now, risk the baby. Deliver later, risk the mom. It's not your baby yet. It's not your call.

Cuddy: She'll do whatever I tell her to do.

House: Self-worth issues. That's genetic, you know. You should deliver now.

Cuddy: Right. [She gets up to leave.]

House: Are you serious?

Cuddy: You're not? You just told me —

House: The wrong answer. You can give the mom more blood. You can't give the fetus more lungs.

Cuddy: The lungs might work. It's the right decision medically.

House: And yet you're here.

Cuddy: To get your opinion, not to get jerked around.

House: See, this is what's screwed up here. You're not sure that this is the right call, but you are sure that this is what you want to tell her. And that scares you because your motives aren't medical. Some part of you doesn't want this baby, and that part wants to tell her to kill it.

Cuddy: This is an impossible situation. I'm advising her to take the safest route.

House: Right. Doesn't explain why you changed your sweater.

[She stares at him then leaves.]

House deliberately flouts manner by trimming his contributions to a degree of minimum meaningfulness in, "*So deliver the baby*". Following an elaboration of his brief contribution,

House flouts relation: *"Self-worth issues. That's genetic, you know"* in response to Cuddy's assurance that the mother will do as Cuddy tells her. Following a few exchanges, Cuddy realizes that House is pulling her leg, to which he responds by violating quantity in, *"See, this is what's screwed up here. You're not sure that this is the right call, but you are sure that this is what you want to tell her. And that scares you because your motives aren't medical. Some part of you doesn't want this baby, and that part wants to tell her to kill it"*. This is a clear incident of a conflict of subjective and real interests: Cuddy herself is conflicted between her subjective interest in saving the baby, which will be hers after the adoption, and her objective, real, interest as a doctor to prioritize saving the mother's life. House takes note of this and flouts a few maxims throughout the interaction, exercising more power over Cuddy.

Trying to find the root of the problems of another young patient in *5:10, Let Them Eat Cake*, Cuddy decides to play by House's rules. When he violates manner and relation, she gives him a taste of his own medicine:

House: Ten points for doing what I said. Minus ten points for doing it badly. If this was diabetes-induced nerve damage, it would've kicked in years ago. [Turns to his desk.

Cuddy is still on the phone. Loudly] Have you seen my balls?

Cuddy: Can you hold on a second? [She puts the phone against her shoulder and turns to listen to House.]

House: My balls. Have you seen my balls? Giant one and the red one.

Cuddy: Your plan isn't gonna work.

House: Of course, it is. I try to make you miserable to make you leave. You deny that it's making you miserable. You try to make me miserable, so I'll stop making you miserable. And eventually you will leave, citing reasons that have nothing to do with misery.

Cuddy: [searching in her purse] You're not bothering me.

House: Step one complete.

Cuddy: [into the phone] I'm gonna call you from my cell. [She hangs up.] And then I will come back in here. [She dials the cell.] Hey. Yeah, I just had to explain to him that I had his balls and he's not getting them back. [She pats House on the arm as she walks past him.] Excuse me.

"Have you seen my balls?" and *"My balls. Have you seen my balls? Giant one and the red one."* In relation to the context, House flouts manner by asking for his balls, literal or figurative, in an attempt to annoy Cuddy who is sharing his office in this episode and having a phone conversation while House and his team attempt to diagnose a case. While Cuddy is fully aware of House's attempts to get her out of the office, she makes it clear that she knows what he is trying to do, and concludes the interaction by apologizing to her participant on the phone and by flouting relevance in the same fashion: *"I just had to explain to him that I had his balls and he's not getting them back"*. The euphemistic nature of the expression indicates who has the upper hand by the end of the conversation.

In a conflict of interest, the apparently reformed and refined House is trying to cooperate both linguistically and socially with his neighbor Murphy in *6:3 The Tyrant*:

Murphy: I was wondering what that noise was. It's the damn cane.

House: And I'm Greg.

Murphy: And I can't sleep with you banging around with that thing.

House: You're not actually saying that I have too loud a cane?

Murphy: Is that hard for you to understand?

House: Only in the sense that it has a rubber tip on the end, not a tap shoe.

Murphy: Now you're getting cute with me.

House: Okay, we started badly. I apologize for the noise, and we will try to figure out a way to be quieter –

Murphy: And a thousand other things I don't give a crap about. Now you keep it down, or we're gonna have trouble.

His first attempt at sociability disregards relevance by introducing himself in response to Murphy's complaint about the noise House's cane is causing. Murphy ignores House's introduction and responds irrelevantly with *"And I can't sleep with you banging around with that thing"*. House maintains the effort throughout the conversation, only to be faced with Murphy's irrelevant contributions, such as, *"Now you're getting cute with me"* and, *"And a thousand other things I don't give a crap about"*. Several paralinguistic elements assist Murphy's uncooperativeness in exerting power over House, one of which is the larger context of the

interaction in which House tries to cooperate given his recent psychological and social reformation. The apparent irritation of the neighbor detectable in his tone and uncooperative choice of contributions is subsequently alleviated to the level of a threat: *"Now you keep it down, or we're gonna have trouble"* to which House succumbs.

In 6:5, *Brave Heart*, House's control of and access to medical information allows him to manipulate both Dr. Chase and Donny the patient. In the interaction below, House's contributions are based on a control of information that does not only baffle the patient, but also has the same effect on Dr. Chase. By flouting quality, as he has no evidence supporting the diagnosis, House, rather conclusively, informs the patient that he has *"Ortoli syndrome"*. To dismiss Dr. Chase's skepticism, he rests the case of the diagnosis by referring to the conclusiveness of scientific tests. The non-observance of quality applies to the prescription; *"It's Nabasynth"*. Dr. Chase is still confused, yet he plays along with a relevant contribution to assure the patient, affirming that *"Yes. So, all we have to do now is write a prescription and, uh, have him pick up the pills"*. The linguistic flouting of quality is supported by House passing mints to the patient and maintaining the lie for the remainder of the conversation. Donny is denied access to the medical information House seems to have regarding his case for he is not given any explanation either to the syndrome, a fictional syndrome that Dr. Chase could not recognize, or to the treatment which allows House greater power over fellow doctor and patient alike. Eventually, Chase realizes the game and plays along by pushing the patient around into believing whatever information he is given by two qualified doctors.

House: You have Ortoli syndrome. [Chase's eyes open wide as he stares at House in surprise.] Dr. Chase?

Chase: You sure?

House: Tests don't lie.

Chase: Right. Ah. [He clears his throat.] Well, it's-it's a... It's a very rare disorder that short-circuits the adrenals, which short-circuits the heart.

House: Blah, blah, blah, blah. Who cares about medical mumbo jumbo? Tell him the treatment.

Chase: It's... weh-well, it's-it's complicated.

House: [pouring a glass of water] Doctors always want to make everything sound so complicated. It's Nabasynth.

Chase: What?

House: Nabasynth.

Chase: [nods pompously] Yes. So, all we have to do now is write a prescription and, uh, have him pick up the pills.

[House opens his hand under Chase's nose, revealing the mints he took from the tin. He gives them and the glass of water to Donny.]

Donny: That's it? I take some pills, and I'm gonna be okay?

House: The real tragedy here is that the Tiburon swab technology didn't exist to detect Ortolini back in your dad's day.

[Chase ducks his head and turns away.]

Donny: He could've lived. [House nods somberly. Donny sighs.] Thank you.

[Donny washes the mints down with some water.]

House: If you'll sign these discharge papers, I'll get you a bottle of meds. Take one twice a day for a week, you'll live a long, healthy life.

[House signs them and gives them to Donny, who signs. House looks at Chase who keeps his head ducked down.]

Wilson, House's only friend, tries to play by House's rules in *8:7Dead and Buried*, and fails nonetheless:

House: I need to DDX a patient with you.

Wilson: I thought you had a team for that.

House: According to Foreman, they're only for DDXing people who are still alive.

Wilson: You have a dead patient?

House: Bigotry is boring when we add modifiers. I don't see creed, color, pulse.

Wilson: Foreman will find out you're taking this case and he'll bust you. But you know that, which means... you want to go back to jail... because it's the one place you're unable to indulge your self-destructive habits.

House: Yeah, it's much more likely that I'm taking this case because I miss showering with Cro-Magnons than that I actually happen to find it interesting. Four-year-old kid. His kidneys died, they transfused. His lungs died. He died.

Wilson: Have you seen *Bride of the Monster*? I just got the Ed Wood box set.

House: What if the chicken was the egg? What if the lung involvement came first?

Wilson: I don't really care about the movie. I just don't want to indulge your...

House: Lupus.

Wilson: Because this is a bad idea, House.

House: If the kid had a rash or some circulation issue... [He looks at his watch.] *Damn!* [Wilson looks startled.] I just realized I'm late for my anger management class.

House's team refuses to entertain his whims to run a battery of toxin detecting tests, so he seeks Wilson's assistance. Wilson's bewilderment expressed in the question: "*You have a dead patient?*" is disregarded. Whereas a yes-or-no response would have sufficed, House flouts manner by being obscure. In response to House's lengthy justification as to why the case of a dead boy interests him, Wilson flouts relevance to steer the conversation from its current track by asking "*Have you seen *Bride of the Monster*? I just got the *Ed Wood* box set*", only to be faced by a two-fold response in which the irrelevance of the first part only supports the medically relevant train of thought: "*What if the chicken was the egg? What if the lung involvement came first?*". Wilson admits that his attempts at irrelevance are attempts to deter House from yet another bad idea: "*I don't really care about the movie. I just don't want to indulge your...*" House ignores Wilson's contributions and, after suggesting Lupus as a possible diagnosis, walks out with that final idea to attend an anger management class.

Applying Lukes' three-dimensional view of power, the power push-and-pull in this scene revolves around the clash of subjective interest between the two characters; Wilson is clearly not interested in entertaining House's subjective interest, or whim, of examining a dead body.

A final example from 8:9, *Better Half*, is House's interaction with another distressed relative whose hospitalized husband has gone missing:

Joseph: Hey, don't be an ass. Can't you see she's upset?

House: No, she's guilty. 'Cause instead of being at her husband's side, she was under you.

Natalie: Okay, that's— y—

House: Yeah, yeah, yeah... He already said I was an ass. Personally, I applaud your decision to step down off your cross and get on with your life, but your misplaced guilt is shutting down your brain. We need you to sit, focus, and answer our questions.

[She obeys and sits down. House walks around the room and stops by the whiteboard. Everything is the same on it except one thing: "Today is Saturday".]

House's first contribution to the conversation is one responding to Joseph, a friend of the patient's family, to which he has no adequate evidence, therefore flouting quality based on deduction. Natalie, the wife of the Alzheimer's patient who disappeared from the hospital, is flustered which can only assert his assumption. To that he responds by flouting quantity and contributing with more information than required in the exchange. However, both instances of flouting succeed in giving him more power over the patient's relative, who is cornered by House's contributions and finally obeys him by answering some questions that might help locate her husband. If one is to apply Lukes' formula in which A exerts power over B, so that B performs an act despite their will, A and B being House and Natalie respectively, House succeeds in exerting power and forcing Natalie to cooperate.

The examples presented here are varied in contexts, subjects and participants, yet not all instances of uncooperativeness contribute to yielding greater power. As demonstrated, a keener look at the intentional negligence of linguistic cooperativeness allowed social imbalances to emerge on the surface of otherwise cooperative interactions. The linguistic games set in a hospital would presumably require a degree of cooperation from all participants in any interaction, be it between doctors or between doctors and patients, for all parties involved to maximize their individual gains. The examples illustrate zero-sum linguistic games in which one participant neglects the assumed equilibrium and optimizes their individual gain irrespective of the cost incurred by the other participant, therefore allowing them to amplify their social power.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

In response to the study question, the research arrives at a conclusion that the violation of conversational principles is one of many linguistic demonstrations of power relations and can be subject to the participants' intentionality and control of and access to knowledge. It is important to acknowledge the evasiveness of the linguistic phenomena and, unlike speech acts, the difficulty of placing it within a frame, without breaking the discourse down into its components of semantics, syntax, morphology, as well as figures of speech. Manipulating power relations through the flouting of the cooperative principle, is also often concealed by other sociolinguistic phenomena such as humor, sarcasm, or face saving or threatening language and thus, is hard to detect. However, as discussed in chapter 2, the cooperative principles could be adequately re-examined as presumptions and studied in a context for a better understanding of adherence and violation, and the function of both in sociolinguistic settings.

Relevant to the subject of the study, relevance, quantity, and quality were most frequently violated for effective power play, while manner as defined by Grice -who has thought little of the importance of the maxim, ranks the lowest. Manner, to be precise, remains fuzzy and might need to be readdressed to incorporate linguistic and paralinguistic mannerisms influencing the discourse, such as discursive intonation and body language. It is worth noting that while violation of the principles can manipulate power, an over-adherence to the rules of cooperation can be equally manipulative.

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