

Logic of Nonsense and Pragmatics of Language Used in Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

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ABSTRACT

Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland is an adventure story that appeals to children as well as adults. While children are interested in the surface humour, adults are interested in the strange way of reasoning and the satire on many aspects of Victorian society. This paper aims at analyzing the conversations between Alice and the inhabitants of Wonderland to show how Lewis Carroll, through violating the well-established norms of logical argumentation and the pragmatics of conversation based on the Cooperative Principle of Grice (1975) and the Politeness Principle of Brown and Levinson (1978), was able to create humour and convey deeper messages. The paper highlights how the exchanges between Alice and the inhabitants of Wonderland turn out to be puzzling, and sometimes, even nonsensical and humorous because of the way language is used. It also shows that Carroll, through the nonsensical, yet seemingly logical, arguments of the inhabitants of Wonderland, was able to convey deeper messages, such as pointing out how confusing adults and their world are to children and how there is a gap in communication between them and mocking some aspects of the restrictive Victorian society. In this, the paper provides a deeper understanding of the language of Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.

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KEYWORDS

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1. Introduction

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland is a fantasy about the unusual adventures of a young girl who falls into a rabbit hole. It is a funny fantasy of strange happenings in which Alice happens to meet many creatures she has never seen talking like human beings before. It is also a book of philosophical jokes (Haughton, 1998) and logical puzzles. Alice is puzzled by many questions, such as "Why is a raven like a writing-desk?" (Ch. 7, p. 97). Because of the circumstances in which she finds herself, she becomes confused so much so that she is unable to remember even the multiplication table. Her attempts to sing songs containing morals end up as comic parodies. It is this combination of her puzzlement and curiosity that keeps the reader absorbed in the world of nonsense.

The book combines child psychology with a rare sense of comedy in such a way that it reflects the real world of one's childhood in Victorian society while retaining the charms of a fairy tale (Haughton, 1998; Şahini, 2017; Junaid et al., 2023; Andini, 2017). For instance, Alice is very concerned about having good manners and is always trying to remember the lessons she has had at school. All these things are expected of a seven-year-old Victorian girl. Her opinions and arguments are products of typical Victorian childhood education. Even the characters of Wonderland are mockeries of Victorian adults and their behaviour is a parody of the life of Victorian adults. For instance, while the Mad Hatter mocks the behaviour of the hatters of the Victorian time who go insane due to breathing the mercury, the White Rabbit is an example of a man who is timid around important people and enjoys lording over people who rank below him (Moqbel, 2007; Lanta et al., 2022; Rahman, 2017).

In fact, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland is a story that appeals to both children and adults. This story can be read at superficial level and serious level. At a very superficial level, Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland seems to be incongruous and nonsensical because events and arguments do not fit into an accepted system, which creates humour. Such humour can be interpreted in the light of the incongruity theory of humour. According to this theory, people laugh at the unexpected or incongruous and humor is produced by deviating from the accepted conventions of language usage. In other words, the discrepancy between what is expected and what occurs in the utterance can create humour

for people (Ross, 2005). The key factor in this is the ambiguity or double meaning of words or sentences, which deliberately misleads the audience as Ross (2005) argued.

At a serious level, Carroll was able to convey deeper messages. In the imaginary world of Wonderland, through the incongruous and nonsensical events and arguments, Carroll could depict the bewildering experiences of children while dealing with adults and the journey from childhood to adulthood. Besides, he could satirize the Victorian society, and its systems of education and justice as well as the whimsical and unpredictable behaviour of the members of aristocracy (Moqbel, 2007; Walker, 2001). It is perhaps this combination between humour and seriousness that makes the book appeals to both children and adults (Mukerjee, 2011). For instance, in the court scene, giving his evidence, the Hatter says “with the bread-and-butter getting so thin—and the twinkling of the tea—.” When the King asks the Hatter “The twinkling of what,” he replies, “It began with the tea.” To this, the King says sharply “Of course, twinkling begins with a T!” (Ch. 11, p. 170-171). Using the initial letter of “twinkling,” the King creates a confusion between “tea” and the first sound of “twinkling”. Such a nonsensical confusion creates humour as it presents the King as a foolish person who can comprehend the word tea only in the sense of the letter “T”. It can also be read as a satire on the court as well as the judges.

This paper aims at analyzing the conversations between Alice and the inhabitants of Wonderland to show how Lewis Carroll was able to create humour and convey some other deeper messages. To this end, the paper discusses the strange way of reasoning used by the inhabitants of Wonderland who justify their most absurd behaviour by funny, sometimes even illogical, reasoning which is a source of delight to the reader and a puzzle to Alice. The paper also looks at the pragmatics of the language used in the conversations between Alice and the inhabitants of Wonderland, highlighting the violation of pragmatic presuppositions, the Cooperative Principle (CP) of Grice (1975), and the Politeness Principle (PP) of Brown and Levinson (1978).

2. Methodology

In order to meet the objective of the study and due to the study nature, which involves analyzing and interpreting the content of textual data, this study adopts the qualitative content analysis method. It is a deductive analysis where the conversations between Alice and the inhabitants of Wonderland are analyzed in terms of the pragmatics of language used and the violation of the Cooperative Principle of Grice (1975) and the Politeness Principle of Brown and Levinson (1978). To highlight the underlying messages of Carroll in Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, the analysis focuses on how the inhabitants of Wonderland violate the well-established rules of logical argumentation as well as pragmatics of conversation based on the principles of cooperation and politeness.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Logic of nonsense

Logic is based on premises that lead to a conclusion. If premises (facts that support a conclusion) are true, then the conclusion is true too. In languages, logic can be realized as the hidden link between language devices and the meanings of sentences (Almabrouk, 2020). Through its principles, logic can serve as a tool to clarify utterances (Saeed, 2003). However, literary texts frequently violate norms of logic for stylistic reasons, such as irony, satire, etc. Such violations can affect the meaning of sentences and result in semantic gaps, turning sentences into linguistic puzzles, which require readers to apply logic to figure out them (Almabrouk, 2020). In Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, the violation of the norms of logic in the arguments of the inhabitants of Wonderland leads to logical nonsense, Carroll used it to convey several messages.

Adults need rules to live by. They may even stick to them blindly, which leads sometimes to arbitrary behaviour on their part or may appear to be illogical to a child (de Rooy, 2004). This is what Alice experiences in Wonderland. The inhabitants of Wonderland land justify their most absurd behaviour by funny, sometimes even illogical, reasoning very often in the form of a logical syllogism which is a source of delight to the reader and a puzzle to Alice. Their behaviour parodies the behaviour of Victorian adults. Wonderland is as illogical as the realm in which most human beings exist.

The nonsensical logic of Alice’s arguments, in some cases, points out how confused she is. For example, when she goes down the rabbit hole, she wonders whether she has lost her identity and become Mabel: “London is the capital of Paris, and Paris is the capital of Rome, and Rome—no, that’s all wrong, I’m certain! I must have been changed for Mabel!” (Ch. 2, p. 20). Alice’s conclusion that she has become Mabel is based on the following premises: Mabel is the one who knows very little and who may take London to be the capital of Paris. As Alice considers London to be the capital of Paris, it follows that she is Mabel. However, she knows that she could not be Mabel: “I’m sure I can’t be Mabel,

for I know all sorts of things, and she, oh! she knows such a very little!" (Ch. 2, p. 19). Alice is really confused about her identity: "Who in the world am I? Ah, that's the great puzzle!" she wonders (Ch. 2, p. 19). It is indeed one of the greatest philosophical puzzles, the problem of her identity.

The Pigeon claims that Alice is a serpent because her long neck looks like a serpent. Alice denies it. To prove that Alice is a serpent, the Pigeon argues as follows: "I suppose you'll be telling me next that you never tasted an egg!" Alice confesses that she, like all little girls, has tasted eggs before, but this does not mean that she is a serpent. The Pigeon's argument is as follows: Serpents eat eggs and Alice concedes that little girls eat eggs. Therefore, they are a kind of serpent. The Pigeon says so in so many words: "but if they do, why then they're a kind of serpent, that's all I can say" (Ch. 5, p. 73). The Pigeon's generalization that little girls are a kind of serpent is based on this faulty logic. Even if all girls eat eggs and all serpents eat eggs, the two premises of the syllogism are not logically linked and do not lead one to the conclusion that all girls are a kind of serpent. The Pigeon does not accept that although eating eggs is a necessary condition for being a serpent, it is not a sufficient condition to conclude that someone is a serpent. It asserts that Alice is a serpent just because Alice eats eggs; it ignores that creatures other than serpents also eat eggs.

An interesting example of a logical but one-sided argument refers to an occasion when Alice wants to get into the Duchess's house. She goes up to the door and knocks; but the Frog Footman, who is also outside the door, tells her, "There's no sort of use in knocking ... and that for two reasons. First, because I'm on the same side of the door as you are; secondly, because they're making such a noise inside, no one could possibly hear you" (Ch. 6, p. 78). The Frog Footman's argument is correct, as he is the only one who could respond to the knock but he is outside the house. Those inside the Duchess's house are shouting so much that they cannot hear the knock. However, the door could open for some other reason and that is what happens; somebody opens it because he wants to throw a plate out.

Another instance of interesting argument occurs when Alice asks the Cat which way to go:

Data 1

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat. "I don't much care where—" said Alice. "Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat. "—so long as I get somewhere," Alice added as an explanation. "Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough." (Ch. 6, pp. 89-90)

Such a conversation is based on sound logic, yet it is absurd. The Cat's conclusion — "it doesn't matter which way you go" — is based on the premises that 'Alice wants to go somewhere' and 'she does not much care where.'

An instance of nonsensical logic is the view of the Cat that they are all mad in Wonderland, including himself and Alice. When Alice asks him "How do you know I'm mad?," the Cat says "You must be or you wouldn't have come here" (Ch. 6, p. 90). The Cat states that by coming to Wonderland — metaphorically to the world of adults — Alice has proved that she is mad. The Cat justifies his being mad as follows:

Data 2

"To begin with," said the cat, "a dog's not mad. You grant that?" "I suppose so," said Alice. "Well, then," the Cat goes on, "you see, a dog growls when it's angry, and wags its tail when it's pleased. Now I growl when I'm pleased, and wag my tail when I'm angry. Therefore I'm mad." (Ch. 6, pp. 90-91)

The argument is very simple. The Cat's behaviour is just the opposite of the behaviour of the dog. Since the dog is not mad, it can be concluded that the cat is mad. It is a strange logic but it has philosophical implications.

The most absurd logic is that of the Dormouse, the March Hare, and the Hatter. They contradict Alice, using confusing arguments that have strange logic. When Alice states that she says what she means, or at least, she means what she says and insists that the two statements mean the same thing, the Hatter, the March Hare, and the Dormouse use similar flippant sentences to prove that "I mean what I say" and "I say what I mean" are not the same thing. How can "I see what I eat" mean "I eat what I see," argues the Hatter. "I like what I get" does not mean "I get what I like," says the March Hare in his support. How can "I breathe when I sleep" mean "I sleep when I breathe," asks the sleepy Dormouse (Ch. 7, p. 98). Although Alice's statement is based on logic and the parts of her statement can be equated as in ordinary usage, 'saying what we mean' is similar in meaning to 'meaning what we say' (Mukerjee, 2011) at least when taken literally; however, their way of reasoning leads Alice into a logical trap, the inherent traps and shortcomings of language

(Walker, 2001), from which there is no escape. Dunn and McDonald (2010) argued that since the inhabitants of Wonderland employ a strange form of reasoning to reach utterly illogical conclusions, it is impossible for Alice to win. Chiang (2012) argued that if the argument of the Hatter, the March Hare, and the Dormouse that the statements of Alice's "I say what I mean" and "I mean what I say" are considered to be different, then "the overtly optimistic correspondence between saying and meaning is called into question by coincidence" (p. 58).

Alice gets surprised at the Hatter's watch, which "tells the day of the month, and doesn't tell what o'clock it is!" (Ch. 7, pp. 99-100). To justify it, the Hatter first asks Alice if her watch tells her what the year is. Alice explains why her watch does not tell what the year is; it is because that "it stays the same year for such a long time together." The Hatter retorts saying, "Which is just the case with mine" (Ch. 7, p. 100), i.e., it (the hour) stays the same time for such a long time. For the Hatter, time is always fixed at tea-time but Alice does not realize that and fails to understand his statement about his watch.

The Queen accuses the Hatter of 'murdering the time'. The Hatter understands this idiom literally in the sense of 'killing time,' and not in the sense of 'wasting time'. If 'time' is personified, it is animate and can be killed; that is the underlying logic behind what the Hatter says. Time, then, can be kept in good humour and even manipulated. Immediately after nine o'clock when classes in school begin, if 'Time' jumps to one thirty, lessons will be over and classes will end for the day. Not only that, 'Time' can stop moving at all. All these sound fascinating and convincing to Alice and she wonders if that is the reason why it is always six o'clock with the Hatter and his friends who inform her, "it's always tea-time, and we've no time to wash the things between whiles" (Ch. 7, p. 104).

Another interesting example of queer reasoning is based on the use of the words 'less' and 'more'

Data 3

"Take some more tea," the March Hare said to Alice, very earnestly. "I've had nothing yet," Alice replied in an offended tone, "so I can't take more." "You mean you can't take less," said the Hatter: "it's very easy to take more than nothing." (Ch. 7, p. 106)

The word 'more' indicates semantically that Alice has already had some. As Alice has not taken any tea, she cannot use the word 'more' appropriately, even if she takes some tea now. Alice is right because in her world the March Hare's offer implies that she has already had tea. However, the Hatter argues that one cannot take 'nothing' but it is easy to take 'more'. The Hatter, the March Hare, and the Dormouse make use of the comparative forms of gradable adjectives much and little (i.e., 'more' and 'less') to build up an argument based on an apparently positive sense of the sentence 'I have had nothing' (They consider this sentence parallel to 'I have had something'.), deliberately ignoring the point that it has a negative sense (i.e., 'I did not have anything'). 'Nothing' is zero but in the field of logic, it represents the null class, the class without members which is useful but difficult to explain. It is a curious but important logical entity. The logic in Lewis Carroll is fascinated by words. If 'nothing' is an entity (as 'zero' is in mathematics), it behaves like an entity in this queer world of Wonderland, and hence, what is seemingly illogical is logical in that world.

The Dormouse tells a story of three sisters who lived on the 'treacle' at the bottom of a well and ate and drew the treacle all the time. Alice does not believe it and says, "But I don't understand. Where did they draw the treacle from?" The Dormouse justifies this possibility as follows: "You can draw water out of a water-well ... so I should think you could draw treacle [thick sticky dark syrup made from partly refined sugar; molasses out of a treacle-well—eh, stupid?" (Ch. 7, p. 108). If one ignores the ambiguity of the word 'draw', the argument seems to be convincing, but the fact is that 'drawing a picture' (i.e., producing an image of something) is different from 'drawing' (i.e., pulling) water out of a well. The Dormouse's argument is nonsensical because if one can draw water from a water-well, it does not mean that one is able to draw treacle from a treacle-well. It is very logical and to think otherwise is "stupid" from the Dormouse's point of view.

Very often the humour in the text is based on the lack of connection between the 'signifier' and 'signified' which is backed up by the reasoning of the inhabitants of Wonderland. For instance, the Mock Turtle says that the old Turtle who taught them was called a 'Tortoise'. He justifies this as follows: "We called him Tortoise [tɔ:təs] because he taught us [tɔ:təs]" (Ch. 9, p. 142). Alice is also surprised at the curious plan of the Mock Turtle's lessons whose duration became shorter day by day. The Gryphon justifies it based on homophone between 'lesson' and 'lessen' (i.e., the two words are spoken alike): "That's the reason they're called lessons ... because they lessen from day to day" (Ch. 9, p. 145).

The argument of the King of Heart in the trial of the Knave is another example of absurd logic:

Data 4

“Please your Majesty,” said the Knave, “I didn’t write it, and they can’t prove I did: there’s no name signed at the end.” “If you didn’t sign it,” said the King, “that only makes the matter worse. You must have meant some mischief, or else you’d have signed your name like an honest man.” (Ch. 12, p. 182)

The argument of the King leads to a kind of syllogistic reasoning. In the real world, the signature is considered a proof of one’s authorship. However, this inferential reasoning is fully ignored by the King who considers the absence of the Knave’s signature on the letter as proof of his authorship. Through this absurd logic of the King, Carroll shows us that the absence of a signifier is itself a piece of evidence and may signify something (Mukerjee, 2011).

In the light of the arguments analyzed, it can be stated that Carroll builds up a pure logical sequence of reasoning on illogical premises. Most of the nonsensical arguments are based either on the wrong premises of a syllogism or on the homophony of some expressions. On one hand, these nonsensical arguments are a source of humour. On the other hand, they manifest deeper messages, such as how confusing adults and their world are to children.

3.2. The pragmatics of language use

Pragmatics is the study of meaning in the context (social, situational, textual, or background knowledge context) in which it is used (Paltridge, 2008). That said, meaning is interpreted in relation to the participants in the interaction; i.e., speakers and hearers (Saeed, 2003). To Paltridge (2008), pragmatics posits that people typically adhere to some sort of cooperative principles when they interact with one another. People need also to adhere to politeness principles to facilitate interaction. This section analyzes the exchanges between Alice and the inhabitants of Wonderland in relation to violating pragmatic presuppositions as well as the principles of cooperation and politeness.

a. Violation of pragmatic presuppositions

The term ‘pragmatic presupposition’ was first introduced by Stalnaker (1974) who stressed the importance of contexts for utterances to be correctly interpreted (Mey, 2001). The term investigates how utterances are understood in contexts of the participants’ shared knowledge of the world (Abusch, 2002; Levinson, 2008; Mey, 2001; Saeed, 2003). They are vital to understand what people mean by what they say. To Paltridge (2008), pragmatic presuppositions are “context-dependent and arise from the use of an utterance in a particular context” (p. 60). They are held by the sentences that coincide with what we know about the real world. If they do not coincide with reality, or with the imaginary world based on reality, they create an incongruous situation.

Analyzing Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland from this point of view helps us to see how Alice is unable to communicate effectively with the inhabitants of Wonderland as well as reveals the effect Carroll wants to create by what some utterances pragmatically presuppose and entail. The rules of conversation in Wonderland are so different from those in Alice’s natural environment that she fails to comprehend them.

For instance, in A Mad Tea-Party, the March Hare offers wine to Alice, “Have some wine.” Such an utterance presupposes the existence of wine on the table. However, Alice finds no wine on the table: “‘There isn’t any,’ said the March Hare. ‘Then it wasn’t very civil of you to offer it,’ said Alice angrily.” At this point Alice is reminded that she is an uninvited guest: “It wasn’t very civil of you to sit down without being invited,” the March Hare says to Alice (Ch. 7, p. 96).

In a similar fashion, the March Hare offers tea to Alice, “Take some more tea.” This utterance pragmatically presupposes that Alice has already had some tea. In Alice’s world, ‘some more’ means ‘an additional quantity’. As Alice has “had nothing yet,” she replied in an offended tone, “I can’t take more.” Alice means by ‘nothing’ ‘no tea’. However, the Hatter takes the word literally and logically tries to correct Alice, saying, “It is easy to take more than nothing” (Ch. 7, p. 106).

Another instance occurs when the Hatter asks Alice, “Why is a raven like a writing-desk?” (Ch. 7, p. 97), the utterance presupposes the existence of a raven and a writing-desk which are, in some ways, similar and wants to know the reasons for their being similar, but it is not the case. As there is no resemblance between the two, the riddle has no answer as the Hatter, who puts the riddle, says to Alice when asks him about the answer of the riddle, “I haven’t the slightest idea” (Ch. 7, p. 101). In social interaction, it is absurd to ask a riddle that has no answer and expect an answer. Pragmatically, the Hatter’s question is irrelevant.

Alice feels frustrated with the Hatter for asking a riddle with no answer, accusing him of wasting time: "I think you might do something better with the time ... than waste it in asking riddles that have no answers." For the Hatter the 'Time' is a 'him' not an 'it': "If you knew Time as well as I do," said the Hatter, "you wouldn't talk about wasting it. It's him."

Here, the Hatter personifies time as an actual human being and uses the pronoun 'him' instead of 'it' to refer to time (Carter, 1995). This confused Alice: "I don't know what you mean," said Alice (Ch. 7, p. 101). Alice becomes more confused when the Hatter says, "I dare say you never even spoke to Time!" Alice replies, "but I know I have to beat time when I learn music." For Alice, the concept of time is different. It is not something that one can speak to; rather, it can be something that one has to beat (i.e., mark the rhythm) when learning music. For the Hatter, time is personalized as a human being, so "He [Time] won't stand beating [i.e., hitting]" (Ch. 7, p. 101). There is indeed a gap in communication between the two.

Likewise, the Dormouse tells a story of three sisters. He says, "Once upon a time there were three little sisters ... they lived at the bottom of a well ... They lived on treacle" (Ch. 7, pp. 105-106). This utterance presupposes the existence of three little sisters, a well, and treacle; and asserts their unbelievable way of living on treacle at the bottom of a well. Alice remarks, "They couldn't have done that" (Ch. 7, p. 106) because the world of make-believe created by the Dormouse does not convince her.

In everyday communication, the pragmatic nature of references and the extent to which they are successfully interpreted depend on the ability of listeners or addressees to infer them appropriately in relation to their specific context (Downing, 2000) rather than their literal meaning. In the court, the King says to the Hatter, "Take off your hat." As the Hatter understands the deictic 'your' in "take off your hat" as a genitive, he interprets it as 'Take off the hat which belongs to you,' and not as 'Take off the hat that you are wearing,' and he replies, "It isn't mine." The King intensifies the effect of this interpretation by shouting "Stolen!" (Ch. 11, p. 168). This failure to interpret a genitive expression creates humour.

It seems that the exchanges between Alice and the inhabitants of Wonderland turn out to be funny, absurd, and even nonsensical due to violating the well-established rules of pragmatics. This enables Carroll to highlight the gap in communication between Alice (as a child) and the inhabitants of Wonderland (as adults) whose utterances do not coincide with what Alice knows about the real world and how confusing adults are to children.

b. Violation of cooperative principle (CP)

According to the CP of Grice (1975), in ordinary conversation, speakers have to obey maxims of four categories: quantity, quality, relation, and manner if they want their utterances to be understood by hearers. The category of Quantity has two maxims: (a) make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange and (b) do not make your contribution more informative than is required. The category of Quality has two maxims too: (a) do not say what you believe to be false and (b) do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence. The category of Relation has only one maxim: Be relevant. The maxims of the category of Manners are these: (a) avoid obscurity of expression, (b) avoid ambiguity, (c) be brief, and (d) be orderly. Analyzing the conversations between Alice and the inhabitants of Wonderland from this point of view, one can see how these maxims are often violated.

By way of introduction, a complete lack of cooperation occurs when Alice falls into the pool. She meets the Mouse and asks him, "O Mouse, do you know the way out of this pool? I am very tired of swimming about here, O Mouse!" (Ch. 2, p. 24). Although Alice speaks politely to the Mouse and keeps asking him for help, he looks at her "rather inquisitively" and says "nothing." This makes Alice think that he does understand her, "Perhaps it doesn't understand English" and that "it's a French mouse, come over with William the Conqueror" (Ch. 2, p. 25). It does not come to Alice's mind that the Mouse chooses not to speak to her (Hart, 2015).

Another instance of complete lack of cooperation occurs while Alice listens to the story of the three sisters the Dormouse tells. She is very confused about their strange way of life and asks, "But why did they live at the bottom of a well?" The Dormouse ignores her question and the March Hare changes the subject, saying to Alice, "Take some more tea" (Ch. 7, p. 106).

On another occasion, Alice becomes very small after eating a piece of cake. She meets the Caterpillar who advises her to eat from the mushroom to grow taller or shorter, "One side will make you grow taller, and the other side will make you grow shorter." It seems that the Caterpillar violates the maxim of quantity as he does not provide Alice with enough information about the exact portion of the mushroom which will make her grow taller or shorter, meaning that Alice will not be able to make use of the Caterpillar's advice as Háhn (2010) claimed. Only when Alice asks "One side of what? The other side of what?," does the Caterpillar tell her that it is of the 'mushroom' (Ch. 5, p. 68). Even after this,

Alice is still confused: "And now which is which?" Alice said to herself (Ch. 5, p. 68). Because of its round shape, the mushroom does not have sides.

When Alice wants to get in the Duchess's house, she goes up to the door and knocks, but the Frog Footman tells her that there is no use knocking because of two reasons: "First, because I'm on the same side of the door as you are; secondly, because they're making such a noise inside, no one could possibly hear you" (Ch. 6, p. 78). Then Alice asks him, "How am I to get in?" The Footman replies, "There might be some sense in your knocking ... if we had the door between us. For instance, if you were inside, you might knock, and I could let you out, you know." When Alice asks the Footman again "How am I to get in?," he remarks "I shall sit here till to-morrow— ... —or next day, maybe." Alice realizes that his remarks are not helpful and asks, in a louder tone, "How am I to get in?" The Footman says, "Are you to get in at all?" (Ch. 6, pp. 79-80). It is clear that the Frog Footman is not cooperative at all. He could tell her about the way of getting inside the house or indicate directly that it is impossible to get in. However, the Footman violates the maxim of manner by giving Alice a puzzling answer. He also violates the maxim of quantity by asking her a question, instead of answering her. Alice feels that "It's really dreadful ... the way all the creatures argue. It's enough to drive one crazy!" (Ch. 6, p. 80). She realizes that the Footman is not cooperative at all and she will never understand him; therefore, taking independent action, she walks through the door without his assistance (Carter, 1995): "Oh, there's no use in talking to him," said Alice desperately. 'he's perfectly idiotic!' And she opened the door and went in" (Ch. 6, p. 80).

The conversation between Alice and the Cheshire Cat is another instance of uncooperative communication:

Data 5

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat. "I don't much care where—" said Alice. "Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat. "—so long as I get somewhere," Alice added as an explanation. "Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough." (Ch. 6, pp. 89-90)

Alice violates the maxim of quantity, as she does not offer sufficient information about where she wants to go. The Cat is well justified; he cannot tell the way unless he knows Alice's destination. When Alice is not able to say where she wants to go, the Cat very rightly provides her with an appropriate answer, if one walks long enough, one is sure to go somewhere. This reply is logically correct but not helpful. However, its burden falls on Alice who does not know where she wants to go. When Alice asks the Cat "What sort of people live about here?," he replies, "In that direction,' ... waving its right paw round, 'lives a Hatter: and in that direction,' waving the other paw, 'lives a March Hare. Visit either you like: they're both mad'" (Ch. 6, p. 90). Since both of them are mad, it does not matter whom Alice calls on. This is a seemingly logical answer.

Carroll shows how adults ignore children's questions (Moqbel, 2007). For instance, Alice asks the Hatter, "What happens when you come to the beginning again?" (Ch. 7, p. 104). The March Hare interrupts saying, "Suppose we change the subject ... I'm getting tired of this. I vote the young lady tells us a story" (Ch. 7, p. 105). The Hatter, here, violates the maxim of quantity. As he does not answer Alice's question at all, he is uninformative.

A good example of a lack of communication is the conversation between Alice and the Mock Turtle:

Data 6

"Oh, as to the whiting," said the Mock Turtle, "they—you've seen them, of course?" "Yes," said Alice, "I've seen them at dinn—" she checked herself hastily. "I don't know where Dinn may be," said the Mock Turtle; "but, if you've seen them so often, of course you know what they're like?" (Ch. 10, p. 152).

The Mock Turtle does not understand that Alice is referring to 'dinner' because she violates the maxim of quantity by not speaking out the full word (i.e., dinner) for the occasion on which she has seen the 'whiting'. As she speaks only the first syllable, the Mock Turtle presumes 'Dinn' to be the name of the place at which Alice might have seen the 'whiting'.

If we look at the conversation between the King and the Hatter in the court from the point of view of the CP, we realize how effectively Carroll satirizes the court scene:

Data 7

"Give your evidence," the King repeated angrily, "or I'll have you executed, whether you're nervous or not." "I'm a poor man, your Majesty," the Hatter began, in a trembling voice, "and I hadn't begun my tea— not above a week or so— and what with the bread-and-butter getting so thin—and the twinkling of the tea—" "The twinkling of what?" said the King. "It began with the tea," the Hatter replied. "Of course, twinkling begins with a T!" said the King sharply. "Do you take me for a dunce? Go on!" (Ch. 11, p. 170-171)

The Hatter breaks the maxim of relation overtly by ignoring the King's question and talking about himself. He also violates the maxim of quantity when the King asks him "The twinkling of what?" It makes the King understand 'tea' as 'T'-the first letter of 'twinkle'. This absurd situation arises because of the way the Hatter responds to the King's question.

If we consider the four maxims of the CP while examining the conversation of the King and the Queen with Alice in the court, we can see Carroll's effective way of satirizing the judicial system:

Data 8

"Rule Forty-two. All persons more than a mile high to leave the court." Everybody looked at Alice. "I'm not a mile high," said Alice. "You are," said the King. "Nearly two miles high," added the Queen. "Well, I shan't go, at any rate," said Alice: "besides, that's not a regular rule: you invented it just now." "It's the oldest rule in the book," said the King. "Then it ought to be Number One," said Alice. (Ch. 12. p. 180)

What Alice points out is factually and logically correct; if a rule is the oldest, it ought to be rule number one, and not forty-two but this kind of normal argument does not hold good in Wonderland. Alice might be right, the King might invent the rule to dismiss Alice from the court as she keeps challenging him and the Queen.

By analyzing the conversations between the inhabitants of Wonderland from the point of view of the CP of Grice (1975), we show how Lewis Carroll is able to create nonsensical conversations in an apparently sensible manner. Through this, Carroll is not only able to create humour, but also convey some deeper messages, such as how confusing adults and their world are to children and satirizing the judicial system of Victorian society.

c. Violation of politeness principle (PP)

According to Leech (1983), the PP can be formulated in its negative form as "Minimize (other things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs" and in its positive form as "Maximize (other things being equal) the expression of polite beliefs" (p. 81). In conversation and social interactions, adopting either positive or negative politeness strategies depends on the type of interaction between the interlocutors involved in the communication. Positive politeness strategies are usually oriented towards minimizing the threat to the hearer's positive face, while negative politeness strategies are oriented towards partially satisfying the hearer's negative face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Central to the PP are face-saving and face-threatening acts. Both acts can be verbal or nonverbal. A face-threatening act damages the face of the hearers or the speakers due to being against the needs and desires of the other, whereas a face-saving act minimizes face loss of people involved in social interaction (Agustina, 2021).

People talking to one another try to be polite by minimizing the use of impolite expressions (e.g., by making commands and prohibitory expressions palatable) and maximizing the use of polite expressions. However, it is not always so in Wonderland. When Alice goes there, she meets several creatures. As a little girl, they are supposed to talk kindly to her, but they do not. They become impolite to her, maximizing the number of their face-threatening acts. For instance, when Alice first meets the Duchess and tells her that she does not know that cats can grin, the Duchess tells her very rudely, "You don't know much ... and that's a fact" (Ch. 6, p. 83). As Alice does not at all like the tone of this remark, she prefers not to go any further in this argument. The Duchess even cuts Alice off when she wonders whether the earth takes twenty-four hours or twelve to turn round on its axis, saying "Oh, don't bother me" (Ch. 6, p. 84).

In the Mad Tea Party, the March Hare, the Hatter, and the Dormouse disagree with Alice from the beginning. They shout at her "No room! No room!" (Ch. 7, p. 95) when she tries to sit with them at the table though there is plenty of room. The March Hare even asks her to "Have some wine" (Ch. 7, p. 96) although they have no wine to offer. Such rudeness to a young girl in terms of telling her that there is no room for her at the table when there is and offering her some wine when they have not any to offer put the validity of language into question (Walker, 2001). The Hatter even

makes personal remarks on Alice: "Your hair wants cutting." Trying to impose the rule of politeness on the Hatter (Lecerle, 2002), Alice tells him with some severity, "You should learn not to make personal remarks ... it's very rude" (Ch. 7, p. 96). This rule is used against her later on: "'Nobody asked your opinion,' said Alice. 'Who's making personal remarks now?' the Hatter asked triumphantly" (Ch. 7, p. 106).

The Hatter and the March Hare rudely order her to be silent when she contradicts the Dormouse because of his strange story. The Dormouse even remarks, "If you can't be civil, you'd better finish the story for yourself" (Ch. 7, p. 107). Such rudeness reaches its highest point when the Hatter tells Alice, "Then you shouldn't talk" (Ch. 7, p. 110) as if she has no right to speak, which is the status of children in dialogues among adults. The purpose of these insults is to quiet Alice and push her to leave (Lecerle, 2002). As Alice could not bear such rudeness, she gets up in great disgust, saying, "At any rate I'll never go there again!" "It's the stupidest tea-party I ever was at in all my life!" Alice adds (Ch. 7, p. 111).

The Mock Turtle and the Gryphon are also rude to Alice. The Mock Turtle tells her a long-drawn-out story of its school days. When Alice asks about the reason for calling 'Turtle' a 'Tortoise', the Mock Turtle says angrily, "We called him Tortoise because he taught us ... really you are very dull!" The Gryphon adds, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself for asking such a simple question" (Ch. 9, p. 142). The Mock Turtle and the Gryphon shout at her and ask her to hold her tongue: "'I never said I didn't!' interrupted Alice. 'You did,' said the Mock Turtle. 'Hold your tongue!' added the Gryphon, before Alice could speak again." This hurts Alice who "felt ready to sink into the earth" (Ch. 9, p. 142). The Mock Turtle even describes her as a 'simpleton' because she is unable to understand the meaning of 'uglify': "If you don't know what to uglify is, you are a simpleton" (Ch. 9, p. 144).

As a little girl, Alice always remains polite, cooperative, and eager to help the inhabitants of Wonderland who are violent, rude, and argumentative (Lecerle, 2002). However, when Alice has grown older, she becomes stronger and more confident to defend her ideas and opinions and to challenge others (Bush, 2004). In the Queen's Croquet-Ground, the Queen asks Alice about the three gardeners. In her response, Alice is not polite. She even shouts at the Queen who just keeps silent:

Data 9

"And who are these?" said the Queen, pointing to the three gardeners "How should I know?" said Alice, surprised at her own courage. "It's no business of mine." The Queen turned crimson with fury, and, after glaring at her for a moment like a wild beast, began screaming, "Off with her head! Off—" "Nonsense!" said Alice, very loudly and decidedly, and the Queen was silent. (Ch. 8, p. 116-118)

Alice becomes more annoyed with the nonsense of Wonderland. She even gains the bravery and confidence to speak up for herself (Bush, 2004). In the courthouse, when the Queen makes the absurd declaration "Sentence first—verdict afterwards," Alice disagrees and says loudly, "Stuff and nonsense!" "The idea of having the sentence first!" When the Queen commands her to hold her tongue, Alice refuses. She even boldly rejects the trial, naming the characters as they are in the real world, "Who cares for you? ... You're nothing but a pack of cards!" (Ch. 12, p. 187). The PP is fully violated by both Alice and the Queen. Through this violation of the PP, Carroll is able to convey several messages, mainly satirizing the judicial and ruling systems of Victorian society, highlighting the ability of adults to defend their ideas, and pointing out the end of innocence of children once they become adults.

In short, considering the flouting of the PP in the exchanges between Alice and Wonderland inhabitants helps realize the underlying messages of Carroll. In their exchanges with Alice, the inhabitants of Wonderland show no politeness towards Alice. This highlights the verbal violence and harshness and autocratic power of adults towards children (Walker, 2001). According to Şahini (2017), the violence and aggression of the inhabitants of Wonderland towards Alice, whom they consider an invader, can be understood as a natural resistance against invaders. If this claim is true, then, it is through the violation of the cooperative principle and politeness principle on the part of the inhabitants of Wonderland towards Alice that such a claim can be realized.

4. Conclusion

The paper discusses the logic of nonsense and pragmatics of language used in Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland by analyzing the conversations between Alice and the inhabitants of Wonderland. Carroll, through violating the well-established norms of logical argumentation and the pragmatics of conversation based on the principles of cooperation and politeness can create a funny world in which extraordinary conversational encounters take place. These encounters are not only funny, but they also have some underlying messages. What seems logically

nonsensical is actually a reflection of the society in which the author lived and is based on the sound principles of reasoning in the form of a logical syllogism. It is another thing that their seemingly logical conclusions are based on faulty premises. Carroll uses them to convey how confusing adults are to children and how there is a gap in communication between them. He can also mock some aspects of the restrictive Victorian society and satirize the political, social, judicial, and educational systems of the Victorian society. As the paper demonstrates, Lewis Carroll can convey all these effects through creative manipulation of language in terms of meanings of words or sentences.

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