Pamimilosopo: Understanding the Filipino Practice of "Philosophizing"

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Abstract

Philosophy is an old discipline that has continued to thrive since the Pre-Socratic period, tackling the nature of practically everything from the concrete to the abstract. In addition to examining generally recognized concepts, philosophy also looks into indigenized concepts that can be discussed using local knowledge. *Pilosopiyang Pilipino*, for instance, looks richly into concepts related to *utang na loob*, *pakikipagkapwa*, and other concepts that have deep roots in our culture. Quite interestingly, Filipinos have, to a certain extent, owned the term 'philosophy' and its derivative words by coming up with terms like *pilosopo* (philosopher) and *pamimilosopo* (philosophizing) used in their colloquial senses to refer to the informal and, sometimes, frowned upon practice of 'philosophizing'. In its Filipino adaptation, *pamimilosopo* has been associated with excessive concern over the minor details and rules surrounding the use of words in conversations. This paper looks into the popular uses of the term by examining terms or expressions that are either loosely used, improperly qualified, or understood in a manner that deviates from the broader context in which they are usually used. In sum, this paper will show how *pamimilosopo* can either be a legitimate or an unwarranted practice, and how the *pilosopo* is, in certain ways, similar to or different from the actual philosopher.

Keywords: philosophizing, pilosopo, language

People are becoming more and more aware of illogical-sounding statements. Some claims made by certain people or groups have meanings that seem to digress from what they logically mean. More often than not, some people come forward to point out these linguistic faults. These faults may be due to the fact that humans have chosen some evolutions in language based on the selection of what can develop exclusivity within a group and on what makes things more convenient and appealing; or, perhaps, owing to the dynamism of language, people have identified shortcomings in the usage of certain expressions that are no longer appropriate to discuss certain states of affairs.

This paper looks into how Filipinos portray the act of *pamimilosopo (*philosophizing) and how it is usually frowned upon due to the impression that the *pilosopo* (the one who does the philosophizing*)* tends to exhibit excessive critical thinking in relation to the use of expressions. Contrary to the practice of philosophizing which inquires into the fundamental nature of concepts, *pamimilosopo* is associated with the perversion of this process when the *pilosopo* tends to engage in certain forms of abstraction and unreasonable scrutiny of expressions to employ meticulous reasoning, and often, infamously, unnecessarily argues with others over things that could be easily resolved with an "ordinary" understanding of words. Unlike the academic discipline of formal philosophizing that looks into views, theories, or questions on ethics, language and other related fields, *pamimilosopo* is often linked to playing with words or pointing out a mistake in how certain words are employed in conversations in order to elicit humor and laughter, or to serve as an instrument of condescension. It will also be shown though how the practice is legitimized in some instances when the *pilosopo's* nitty-gritty attitude is seen as an attempt to properly qualify and disambiguate words that were loosely used in an utterance, and to unravel details or states of affairs that an expression is presumed to have missed out on and should have covered in order to prevent other interpretations from creeping in and misleading others. In everyday conversations and even in the movies, we hear people say remarks like '*aba pilosopo ka ah*', '*huwag mo ako pilosopohin ha*' when there are individuals who show excessive concern over minor details such as when pointing the presumed faulty usage of what they think are improperly qualified expressions or terms.

The paper will enumerate and analyze some everyday ordinary expressions. The formulation of and responses to rhetorical questions will also be examined to provide additional examples of where the meanings of words are interpreted in a manner that deviates from how they were originally intended in order for a *pilosopo* to point out an alleged concern that was never intended in the message conveyed to begin with. The paper progresses by showing instances in which

pamimilosopo can be considered an acceptable practice, and other instances in which it is not warranted. It will be shown how *pamimilosopo* is somehow related to the formal form of philosophizing as an attempt to properly examine the use of words and establish clarity in their usage. Finally, it will be shown how *pamimilosopo* need not be employed in most ordinary conversations where the comprehension of meaning is basically rooted in tacit but established contexts that people share.

Using a philosophy of language approach, a combination of lenses from Gilbert Ryle's Systematically Misleading Expressions (1932), Paul Grice's Logic and Conversation (1975) and John Searle's Indirect Speech Acts (1975) will be used to show how these examples portray the practice of *pamimilosopo* reveals an attempt by some people to inquire into the ontology and actual meanings and connotations of certain expressions used in everyday conversation, which may either be poorly employed to describe states of affairs or used and understood in a different way altogether contrary to how they are expected to mean. Similar to Ryle's usage, the term "expressions" will be used in this paper to refer to single words, phrases, and sentences. Some of these expressions, Ryle claims, are quasi-terms or incomplete symbols which are primarily responsible for the creation of misleading expressions or unnecessary perplexities. These can only be made clearer by asking about the real form of the fact that is concealed and not duly exhibited by the expression in question (1932, pp. 169-170). Ryle shows that the instability of language use can be remedied by making clear distinctions between ordinary/standard and philosophical uses of language and exercising systematic restatement of propositions to ensure that claims are free from other interpretations, especially since individuals have varying ways of using and understanding language. It is interesting to note Ryle's perceived importance of "discovering and stating expressions of this or that radical type" (1953, p. 170), while at the same time pointing out that a discovery of alleged flaws in ordinary language use does not in the least imply that the naïve users of such expressions are in any doubt or confusion about what their expressions mean. Nor do they in any way need the results of philosophical analysis for them to continue to use intelligently their ordinary modes of expressions or to use them so that they are intelligible to others (Ryle, 1932, p. 142). This highlights both Ryle's linguistic ontological conservatism by inquiring into what certain expressions really mean, and his acceptance of the simple desire of some language users to plainly and simply convey meaning as they are actually intended.

John Searle argues that it is fairly easy to understand what others mean by their utterances as long as all participants in the conversation are knowledgeable of the rules and definitions governing their utterance. He recognizes, however, that this is never entirely the case

since individuals usually make utterances and mean more than what they literally meant. Searle refers to these as Indirect Speech Acts where the speaker hopes, consistently with his/her intention, to let the addressee understand that something more was said beyond the literal meaning of an utterance. Since Searle sees meaning as partly a function of the intention of the speaker to make the listener understand what was said, a problem arises when the indirect speech act is not deciphered in the utterance (1975, p. 60).

Grice, on the other hand, proposed a Cooperative Principle in conversation. Such a position assumes that when we communicate, we and the people we talk to will be conversationally cooperative in hopes of achieving mutual conversational ends. This cooperation is manifested in a number of maxims that require the provision of sufficient helpful information (maxim of quantity), prevention of false claims from being made (maxim of quality), supply of relevant information (maxim of relation/relevance), and delivery of claims in the clearest, briefest, most orderly, and efficient way (maxim of manner). Following the maxims means facilitating communication that makes individuals understand each other the best way possible. They can, however, be violated in any of four ways: (1) quietly and in a covert way, (2) overtly opting out, (3) prioritizing one maxim over another in case of a clash, and (4) flouting a maxim in order to exploit it. A violation of the maxims results in different types of implied messages. These are in the form of implicatures that are most often expressed through indirect ways (Grice, 1975, p. 44). This flouting of maxims is often used by individuals to make a point other than the literal meanings of the expressions uttered.

When there's a mismatch between what was said and what was actually intended, Searle claims that perhaps there is an intention on the part of the speaker to invite the addressee to infer more than what was said. At any rate, Grice proposes that participants in a conversation should strive to be cooperative with each other. In cases when this cooperation apparently fails, either there was a desire to still be cooperative by letting the addressee know that some maxim is being flouted to give a hint to the addressee that more is being said, or the speaker simply ignored some conversational maxim. Looking at both these approaches seems to suggest that Ryle is right when he claims that individuals should be able to distinguish the different uses of language which can either be in an ordinary or specialized sense which, in most cases, are largely an offshoot of how the expressions were intended.

These three philosophical lenses will be used to show the importance of making individuals draw the line between or among the intended uses of expressions and make these clear and apparent, and try, as best they could, to decode the context in which something was said.

The Birth of a *Pilosopo*

A philosopher is an intellectual who inquires into and offers views or theories on the nature of concepts related to ethics, metaphysics, politics, logic, language, and other fields. A philosopher continuously engages in discussions about these fields and undergoes the examination and reexamination of concepts, and offers new views and analyses on matters that require careful and thorough examination of the nature of concepts.

Through language, we are able to talk about pretty much everything a philosopher is normally concerned with, from the mundane to the extraordinary. We discuss concrete as well as abstract concepts that encompass practically everything about who we are and how we live. Language is the use of signs and symbols that carry with them an attached meaning. When constructed logically, language is able to convey a message that carries an attached meaning and embody expression in a manner that makes sense. By far, this is how most people communicate – using language allows us to most accurately piece out thoughts into words that others might understand. Language becomes, at once, a passage and a pit: a passage for those who come to have a broader understanding of its rules, a pit for those who remain at the superficial level of semantics. Communication is a very tricky process, but an essential one. Without it, progress as a species would have been a lot slower, not to mention a lonelier experience for all; but just as it is essential to progress and companionship, among others, it can be detrimental as well. Sending or receiving the wrong message might slow progress and may even prevent two people from ever talking to each other.

In the Philippine context, when one displays philosophical traits, such as an excessive inquiry into the nature of terms in instances where such practice is perceived to be unnecessary and seems to complicate matters more than resolve them, one is sarcastically referred to as a *pilosopo,* the Filipino translation of a philosopher. The word *pilosopo* has become associated with pedantry when one shows excessive concern over minor details in the way certain terms or expressions are used in conversations. The use of some expressions provides a good opportunity for a *pilosopo* to inquire into their 'proper usage' and question the basic logic behind their formulation as they seem to be improperly qualified and not appropriately used by those who employ them. Such usage prompts a *pilosopo* to employ 'analytical' strategies and attempt to show the faulty usage of some expressions and show how the terms miss out on their true meaning. Sometimes, it boils down to a *pilosopo's* attempt to show how some expressions are not just improperly used but are, in fact, syntactically full but semantically empty (cognitively meaningless). A *pilosopo* is triggered, so to speak,

by the perversion of the 'proper' usage of expressions and proceeds to show how others irresponsibly employ these expressions not just in arguments but even in ordinary conversation. While a philosopher seems to exhibit knowledge and wisdom in most things, a *pilosopo* is ironically associated with the behavior as if he/she seems to know everything despite not having the proper knowledge of certain subjects and being only opinionated most of the time.

Filipinos also love beating around the bush. This indirect allusion to what they want to refer to sometimes makes them employ terms with more than one distinct meaning. This provides an opportunity for others to play with the meanings of terms in the course of the conversation and employ the practice of *pamimilosopo.*

Some Filipinos are also relatively happy and love to kid around by trying to play with the meanings of words, practicing *pamimilosopo* and becoming *pilosopos* in the process. Contrary to the unnecessary practice of *pamimilosopo* which some people frown upon, this humorous way of engaging in the practice is usually more welcome especially when the humor is generally shared between or among those who partake of the conversation.

Pamimilosopo, therefore, is not entirely removed from the Philippine context as the term and the practice itself has acquired different dimensions ranging from formal philosophizing in areas that require a more technical analytical approach, to its being used as an instrument to elicit humor, all the way to its being the type that some people frown upon when one unnecessarily employs pedantry in the analysis of terms.

The Faults in our Language

Most terms or expressions that become automatic candidates for a *pilosopo's* meticulous analysis either have more than one distinct meaning or are not properly qualified when used. Technically, some of these terms commit the informal logical fallacy of 'equivocation' in which a particular expression can be used in multiple senses, and 'dicto simpliciter' in which a general rule or observation is treated as universally true regardless of specific circumstances where the rule may occur and fail to be applied. Additionally, there are also expressions that have only one distinct meaning or are properly qualified, but whose usage in conversations misses out on the broader context in which they are supposed to be understood.

When Fuzzy Turns Catchy (but Irritating!)

There are plenty of words, phrases and sentences in everyday life which seem simple in meaning and usage yet are more complicated

to understand than they appear. Terms such as *unlimited, everything, nothing, and forever*, to mention a few, are among everyday concepts that are normally used without qualification.

Logically, *unlimited* means something has no limit and will never run out. *Everything*, on the other hand, refers to the domain of all things and beings that are. *Nothing* means nothing and is not supposed to be known. *Forever* means forever, there is no end.

Some network providers would entice their clientele to avail services with *unlimited text and/or call* promos. They qualify these promos by usually saying *unlimited for [a certain period of time]* usually a day, a week, or even a month; but even this does not seem to render the concept in its full sense since a day's/week's/month's worth of unlimited promos is usually set with a *fixed* limit of text messages and calls.

The same goes for food and drinks as well. We usually opt to eat in food places that offer *unlimited* rice and *bottomless* drinks thinking that these will yield the best value for our money. Then again, the notions of *unlimited* and *bottomless* hold as long as the supplies last. Food items and drink refills can only last so long and are likely to run out.

Imagine further a student asking a teacher about the minute details of a "take-home" essay: "Does this essay have to be printed on white paper? Is black ink okay? How black should black be? Does it have to be printed on scratch paper? Is the paper short, long, or legal-sized? By five pages, does the fifth page have to be completely filled or is filling just a portion of it okay? Then again, it is not clear what constitutes an essay? How substantial should it be? Should it be computerized or hand-written? Can I work on my take-home essay outside of home? And can it be done without the negative connotations of work and leisure? If I do that, then it is not technically a 'take-home essay', is it, and may not fulfill the corresponding requirement, but you won't know, so does that matter?"

When Less Should Be More

A furniture shop that says, *please do not sit on the bed/sofa* could unintentionally have a customer infer that the prohibition is limited to "sitting" only. The customer could then opt to jump, lie down, or play on the sofa. When confronted, the customer who did anything but sit on the sofa can matter-of-factly invoke the prohibition that sitting on the sofa was the only act prohibited. Similarly, a restaurant that says, *customers who wear shorts and slippers will be denied entry* could get customers arguing that they can then enter the restaurant naked, since they are not technically wearing shorts or slippers.

Even a modern myth in the United States shows how improperly qualified restrictions usually lead to problems. In a made-up scenario, an old lady is said to have accidentally killed her cat by attempting to dry it in the microwave oven. Since there was no mention of a cat as among those not allowed to be put inside the oven, the old lady sued the manufacturer, won the case, and got a hefty sum of money for damages. Of course, no such lawsuit was ever filed, but it is possible that some undocumented old lady drying her cat in a microwave oven existed.

Unqualified Generalization

One important feature of communication is that some sentences are constructed with the aim of asserting or denying claims. That is, the expression of certain sentences brings about their qualification as either true or false. Now, in order to do this, the use of language should be impeccable; every word selected should be used in accordance with its definition. There can be no exaggeration or underrepresentation. There are instances, however, when "a word or phrase may be ill-chosen as being general where it should be specific, or allusive where the allusion is not known or not obvious" (Ryle, 1932, p. 141).

One cable company that arguably claims to be the biggest in the Philippines has a tagline that reads, *all you want under one perfect sky*. The cable company surely cannot give a person a double cheeseburger while one is watching television. Even if it can give its viewers a number of things as it claims it can, one only need to find one thing that the cable company cannot provide to make the *all* claim false.

Another catchy tagline turned jingle of a popular mall in the Philippines claims, *we've got it all for you!* The last time I checked though, the mall did not have spaceships or submarines. Perhaps by *all,* it is referring to those things that would normally be found in a mall; but not even that exhausts the meaning of *all*, does it? Such a tagline has evolved to do away with the impractical and lengthy explanation of what a mall can offer to its clientele. *Having it all* should make one wonder if one can indeed have it all since, based on spatial rules, one can only fit so much in a limited space. To *have it all* in the literal sense means fitting the world or the entire cosmos into the confines of the mall, and that is plainly not possible, well at least for now with our current limitations. In fact, the catchphrase will not be challenged until one fails to find what he/she is looking for at that particular mall. Only then will one realize that the catchphrase is only conditionally true and is not properly qualified.

Another example includes an advertisement that claims a *super-glue can hold anything*. Put the material in a powerful solution that dissolves *anything* or apply a ton of shear stress, however, and the

claim is likely to be disproven. When a chocolate store starts to claim that *everything tastes better with chocolate*, a *pilosopo* could easily identify exceptions - such as items people would never dare eat even if they had chocolate on them - that would automatically invalidate the claim.

We believe that in the context when one says one will *do anything*, one is really saying that one will go beyond one's comfort zone and there is practically nothing that will restrict one from doing something. When the speaker, however, fails to live up to the scope of the statement, one takes it literally and reacts with disappointment, uttering a remark like, *I thought you said you'd do anything?*

Be that as it may, in hard and cold logical and linguistic analysis, such uses of an *all* or *anything* formulation commit the fallacy of *dicto simpliciter* because the generalization is unqualified and is more likely to mislead than inform. Often, unqualified statements are used, and we accept them thinking they are perfectly understandable. On the surface, they would be. However, if one such person was set on creating a standardized criterion to quantify things, these statements would undoubtedly fall apart.

When Absurd Becomes Acceptable

We normally resort to our extended definition and experience to account for supposedly false or nonsensical claims. We remember the first movie we watched where the girl said she was *doing nothing* when in fact she was breathing and moving. We witness and experience this a couple more times in TV shows, phone calls, text messages, and books until we realize what it means to say *nothing* in these contexts.

Statements like *I can eat anything* or *Are you awake?* would usually showcase problematic expressions after a structured analysis of the sentences. It is practically impossible to be able to eat *anything* or expect someone to respond to an *Are you awake?* question when they are still asleep.

On the other hand, asking someone, *Can I ask you a question?* in its sole structure and meaning is absolutely nonsensical to a point that it is already stating the obvious or even defrauding. By asking permission to ask a question, one has already done so, even without the reply of the person being asked.

Moreover, we say things such as *I will do everything for you* and *I will be here forever;* realistically, however, they are false since one cannot do everything, much less be with someone *forever*. The concept that there is *forever* is then false. This is a fact of life. One cannot fly, or teleport, or live for all of eternity to fully experience what *doing everything* or *forever* means.

Anyone who claims *he/she does not know anything* should be logically incapable of saying such because the mere utterance of the claim already contradicts the point being made. The statement *triangular squares do not exist* cannot be about round squares since a combination of two contradictory conceptual meanings renders the concept being referred to inconceivable (Flew, 1952). Any blank page that contains the text *this page intentionally left blank* deviates from the idea that the page shall be blank and should not have any text on it.

Vagueness and Ambiguity

Language is also teeming with vague and ambiguous sentences that create communication breakdown (Ryle, 1932, p. 141). Meanings are not sometimes clearly separated out. Some sentence constructions may be used in a figurative sense or used differently in different contexts. The inventive and creative construction of expressions that do not follow exact measures sometimes present difficulty in determining their meaning (Davidson, 1978).

Some people tell others to drink *plenty* of water, go to bed *early*, *refrain* from doing bad things, among others. Trying to resolve the vagueness behind these, people eventually mentioned examples (eight glasses of water, go to bed early at 8:00 PM) without, entirely resolving the vagueness or ambiguity. Glasses vary in sizes and so will the water intake of individuals; people have different perceptions of time and hence of how early or late an activity is done. Others may proceed to enumerate examples of bad acts to be avoided without really exhausting the nature of what makes a bad act bad. There are just so many things these prescriptions and proscriptions offer, providing so much room for the creation of meaning and interpretation. Someone can just flout the meanings of *plenty*, *early* or *bad* relative to their own background and argue with anyone with a different take on these altogether. To all these, a *pilosopo* would always have a witty retort, questioning the logic behind how certain claims are made, using hard and cold logic in analyzing the meanings of every word.

On Rhetorical Questions and Sarcasm

Pamimilosopo is also usually evident when individuals formulate and respond to rhetorical questions. Similar to the previous examples mentioned, the use of rhetorical questions and the way people respond to them sometimes involves the perversion of meaning when individuals involved in the conversation miss out, deliberately or otherwise, on the actual intention behind the use of certain terms. The equivocal nature or loose usage of some terms in rhetorical questions provides an opportunity for others to point out the basic logic behind their formulation or usage. Moreover, the possibility of losing sight of

the pragmatic considerations behind the formulation of and responses to rhetorical questions provides a chance for the act of *pamimilosopo* to prosper where the self-professed *pilosopo* can employ excessive and unnecessary pedantry to make a big fuss out of rhetorical questions. In a nutshell, the formulation of and possible responses to rhetorical questions provide individuals with an opportunity to play with the meanings of words, and whether or not *pamimilosopo* will take place will depend how others will comprehend the actual intentions behind their usage.

The formulation of rhetorical questions encourages the receiver to fill in a missing gap in thought. Answers are not expected. Rhetorical questions convey messages in themselves, without the need for another person to explicitly complete the thought. Rhetorical questions are taken as a cultural norm and are generally perceived to be common. People ask them or respond to them as if they reflect the usual way individuals interact with each other. It may be so since we take this practice as something so ordinary and as a daily part of our lives and social interaction. Others, however, sarcastically respond to rhetorical questions as they intentionally respond to these with irony and exaggeration. Such has become natural to most people and it has become a unique way of communicating with others to express humor, disappointment, anger and a range of other emotions.

While some would elicit the expected response of a reflection, there are some Filipinos who would like to act the "philosopher" or *pilosopo* and respond often with wits and sarcasm. This is apparent among Filipinos who often lighten the mood or seek to cause some trouble. For example, if one's name is being called, one asks, "*Tinatawag mo ba ako*?" (Are you calling my name?), the *pilosopo* might respond, "*Hindi. Binibigkas ko lang pangalan mo.*" (No, I'm just saying your name.)

We usually suspect some illogical aspects of language when individuals say certain sentences like *Can I boycott your class*? Or *Can I run away?* which, at the onset, defeat the purposes of boycotting a class or running away since such acts are not supposed to be sought permission for to begin with. Anyone who gets asked these questions will have to think twice before responding, otherwise the logic of the act itself will be lost.

When someone asks a rhetorical question, we usually think that there is no need to answer the question because the response is plain obvious. It is as if the answer is staring at the person point-blank. So, the solution is to reply with an answer that the other person does not expect – a response that does not directly address the question. However, the trick is not to say a completely random answer. Even

though the response is completely unrelated to the correct answer, it should still be related to the question. For example, when asked, "*Uy, ano 'yan, sako ba 'yan ng bigas*?" (What is that? Is that a sack of rice?). An apt response would be, "*Hindi, hindi, unan 'yan*." (No, no, that's a pillow). It seems like a witty and a humorous answer because through our sense of sight, a sack of rice really is shaped like a pillow.

One usually acts like a *pilosopo* by formulating rhetorical questions as a reaction to claims that one thinks are improperly made. When one says, "*magbibihis na ako"* (I will get dressed), another person is quick to respond and say, "*bihis agad di maliligo?"* (Will you get dressed without taking a bath?). When the other person points out that taking a bath was already assumed in the statement, the other person continues being more of a *pilosopo* by saying, "*Ligo agad, di papasok sa banyo*?" (Will you take bath without going inside the bathroom first?). And one can just imagine how the conversation can go on ad infinitum until the minutest detail that leads to taking a bath is exhausted, and the other person left very irritated. Irritated, the other person would eventually say, "*Makanood na nga lang ng tv*!" (I will watch TV instead!), and the *pilosopo* is sure to "wittily" respond saying, "*Nood agad di muna isasaksak*?" (Will you watch TV without plugging it first?).

Using rhetorical questions to get others to think and let things sink into them often comes hand in hand with emotions felt by the one stating the rhetorical question. Instead of explaining what one feels, one expresses oneself using rhetorical questions. "*Hindi mo ba alam ang nararamdaman ko?"* (Don't you know how I feel?) often comes with a tone of sadness, of disappointment that enriches the statement and gets the responder to think about what he or she feels and try to seek empathy from the person. "*Naghahanap ka ba ng away?"* (Are you looking for trouble?) said in a pitchier, more assertive tone often implies that one is getting furious or annoyed. "*Talaga?"* (Really?) could either convey astonishment or confusion. For a *pilosopo* to respond to these questions at all would be antithetical to the point being made; but he/she responds anyway for various reasons in order to live up to what is expected of a *pilosopo* in the first place.

Someone who asks a mango vendor if the mangoes being sold are sweet is probably not asking a question per se but is implying either one or a combination of the following: that one is getting the mango vendor to vouch for the sweetness of the mangoes, that one will ask for reimbursement if the mangoes turn out to be sour, or that one will not buy from the mango vendor again if the mangoes are not as sweet as the vendor promised them to be. Interrogative sentences, formulated as rhetorical questions have the "bias of an assertion" (Rohde, 2006, p. 134), so to speak. It is unlikely that the mango vendor will respond and

say that the mangoes are not sweet as that will blow up her chance of selling even one mango at all.

In the event that a teacher catches a student cheating in an exam, a student cannot be expected to say *yes* to the teacher when the latter asks, *You think you're still going to pass this class?* The question was posed not to elicit a certain answer but to have the student consider a point. That is, instead of summoning an answer, the one asking the rhetorical question aims to produce an effect. Answering the question will only put the student in a worse situation. Borkin claimed that rhetorical questions "have the structure of a question but the force of an assertion and so are generally defined as questions that neither seek information nor elicit an answer" (Rohde, 2006, p. 134).

More so, when a basketball coach tries to encourage his/her team, he or she would normally say, *We can do this, right?* The question need not be answered by a member of the team. It would simply be comical and pitiful if someone from the team answered, *No!* which would totally ruin the supposed effect of the coach's pep talk.

One of the hardest questions to answer is the question *Are you busy?* when the person talking to one obviously sees one's multi-layer eye bags, messy hair, crumpled clothes, course readings almost lining up one's desk, and sachets of 3-in-1 instant coffee all piled up; or responding to *Are you tired?* when one just got back from three rounds of jogging, having a really hard time catching one's breath; or worse, responding to *Are you hungry?* When one is, admittedly, *always* hungry and feels like one's stomach is a bottomless pit that even a triple cheeseburger cannot fill.

Asking and Responding to Rhetorical Questions

It is interesting to analyze the cognitive happenings behind the desire to answer a rhetorical question. In the Philippines, asking rhetorical questions and responding to them is part of our practice when conversing with others. It is deeply embedded in our culture to respond quickly to rhetorical questions. Sometimes, even the responses themselves take on the form of rhetorical questions. Many Filipinos respond to questions that are meant to be rhetorical, often with remarks of sarcasm.

This practice of comically responding to rhetorical questions eventually evolved from merely seeking assurance or expressing politeness and persuasion to a desire to be witty, humorous, and a kick-to-the-obvious. More than just a question asked to point something out, rhetorical questions have eventually been used to amuse people through an often exaggerated manner. It somehow became part of the Filipino

notion of entertainment. This would not be without its downside, however, as some have used the practice to show condescension.

To illustrate further, the following sketches from Mr. Assimo, a segment of the Philippine television comedy sketch gag show, Bubble Gang, will be used. The Mr. Assimo sketches seem to capitalize on the mockery brought about by the lead character played by Michael V., Mr. Assimo, who tends to sarcastically reply to everyone he encounters. The overly-irate man often deals with people who ask questions that seem too obvious to even be asked, and responds to them with his witty yet perceivably offensive remarks, which, most of the time, are uncalled for.

In an episode when a lady asks Mr. Assimo if he was queuing for the ATM, Mr. Assimo, in his usual grumpy character, responded saying, "*Tinatanong mo ako kung nakapila ako sa* ATM? ATM *'to 'di ba*? *May hawak akong* ATM card. *Ba't naman ako pipila sa* ATM? Actually, *nandito ako nag-aabang ng bus, dahil kapag dumating 'yung bus, puwede na kitang paunahin at ikaw na ang maunang mag*-withdraw *sa* ATM!" (You're asking me if I'm queuing for the ATM? This is an ATM, right? I'm holding an ATM card. Why would I queue for the ATM? Actually, I'm waiting for a bus, and when it arrives, I will let you use the ATM first!) (GMA, 2012).

In another portion, there is a sequence wherein Mr. Assimo plays the role of a restaurant customer and the waiter asks, "Table for one, Sir?", to which Mr. Assimo responds sarcastically, "*Ay hinde. Sige, bigyan mo ako ng* table for two or three. *Nakikita mo naman, mag-isa lang ako 'di ba*?" (Oh, no. All right, give me a table for two or three. Can't you see I'm alone?) The portion would continue for a good amount of time with the same sequence of questions until Mr. Assimo blurts out his utmost irritation towards the person (GMA, 2015).

In a scene where a fitting room attendant asked Mr. Assimo if he was going to try the pants on, Mr. Assimo angrily responded saying, "*Ay hinde, papasok ako sa loob, lalabhan ko, isasampay ko, tapos plaplantsahin ko, bakit ko naman isusukat 'tong pantaloon sa loob ng* fitting room *'no*?" (Well, I'm going inside, wash the pants, dry then iron them. Why would I even try the pants on in a fitting room?) (Anobling, 2013).

Finally, in an episode when the house helper repeated Mr. Assimo's request in the form of a question, Mr. Asssimo sarcastically responded saying: "*Tinatanong mo ako kung ilalabas mo yung basura natin? Ay huwag mo ilabas, ilagay mo sa* ref *at baka masira. At kung may maglalabas, bakit naman ikaw? Baka mapagod ka*." ("You're asking me if you're bringing the garbage outside? No, don't. Place it in the fridge because it may rot. And if somebody's bringing it outside, why would it have to be you? You might get tired.") (GMA, 2012).

Various Reasons for Pamimilosopo: Violation of Gricean Maxims and Understanding the Alleged Faults in our Language

Language's main thrust is to convey. And convey it does in standard or non-standard ways alike. As long as people think they are able to get their message across, then nothing else matters.

In a sense, the practice of *pamimilosop*o touches on a disconnect between the utterance of and intention of the speaker, and the response and reaction of the addressee. As demonstrated by the examples above, *pamimilosopo* becomes inevitable if either the speaker or the addressee flouts Grice's maxims of quantity, relation, and manner. A speaker's use of ambiguous or improperly qualified expressions is a simultaneous violation of the maxim of quantity and the maxim of manner since there is an obvious failure to sufficiently provide information that would have been key to properly understanding the utterance and disambiguate the expressions. Moreover, with the addressee's failure to understand the actual meaning of the utterance, he/she may come up with an irrelevant response, thus violating the maxim of relation. In instances when the addressee realizes that there was a loose usage of expressions in the speaker's utterance or when there was an intentional failure to understand the intention behind the utterance, the addressee can respond either by tweaking the meanings of the expressions the speaker used or by using an equivocal expression whose meaning is different from how the speaker intended, thus violating the maxim of manner.

Some expressions such as those mentioned in this paper can be used loosely and interpreted beyond their usual intended meanings and can therefore create perplexities over how they should be understood. Such expressions usually violate three of Grice's maxims: the maxim of quantity, when the terms fail to be sufficiently informative to make the addressee immediately understand what is uttered; the maxim of manner, when speakers employ obscure expressions and provide room for other possible, equally plausible interpretations; and the maxim of relation, when participants in a conversation use irrelevant claims and responses and do not strive to cooperate in understanding the message being conveyed. Such expressions become perfect candidates for the critical analytical eye of a *pilosopo* because their usage renders more than one possible and reasonable interpretation.

What happens when maxims are violated is that people either deliberately lose sight of the need to cooperate or inadvertently fail to acknowledge the intention behind why such utterances were made in the first place. The use of certain expressions like *all, everything, unlimited, forever,* and *nothing* among others, assumes a tacit level of understanding without the need to explicitly mention claims that are

already presumed to be given. Others take advantage of this lack of explicit mention of other states of affairs, however, to attempt to show a gap in the thinking of another. Such a strategy invites the listener to identify clues such as intonation and body language in hopes of getting the listener to understand the desired interpretation. The problem with this is that the speaker leaves it up to the addressee to interpret the ambiguity and, hence, communication mismatch can occur (Levinson & Brown, 1987, p. 211).

These violations of maxims provide the perfect opportunity for a *pilosopo* to modify the meaning of a word and use it against the speakers. The speaker's violation of the maxims of quantity and manner per se is not wrong. It is not even to be automatically perceived as a desire to be uncooperative in a conversation. Often, the violation of Gricean maxims provides a trigger that will send a notice to the addressee that an inference has to be made so one's message can be decoded and properly understood. Such is the case with indirect speech acts. Searle claims that indirect speech acts are intended to make messages more informative. More than the literal meaning of the utterance, the speaker attempts to say something more in hopes of getting the addressee to understand the implied message.

Grice claimed that individuals sometimes flout the conversational maxims in order to be more informative or to make one's intention known (1975, p. 18). In the above examples on rhetorical questions, an obvious violation of the maxims was evident. On the surface level, the asking of questions may not be considered as sufficiently helpful in providing information that would elicit the needed response. The addressee may fail to consider rhetorical questions as intended and treat them merely as questions answerable with a yes or no (We can do this right? Are the mangoes sweet? Do you know how I feel? Are you looking for trouble?) In relation to this, there may be a perceived lack of supply of relevant information to bring about the desired response. In effect, the manner by which someone tried to make a stronger claim may not be perceived by the addressee as an efficient way of doing so.

Understanding Rhetorical Questions

Rhetorical questions normally call for a reasonable degree of intellect to, first and foremost, formulate them in a manner that gives justice to their actual use; and secondly, to understand them in much the same way they were formulated and intended. In its evolution though, the formulation of and responses, especially, to rhetorical questions have eventually reached a different level of appreciation, allowing people to use and respond to them for purposes of eliciting laughter and sometimes, as an abusive instrument of condescension.

By being indirect, beating around the bush and not concisely pointing out what one means, one violates a maxim but also indirectly conveys another intended meaning. Such a strategy invites the listener to identify clues such as intonation, body language in hopes of getting the listener to understand the desired interpretation. The problem with this is that the speaker leaves it up to the addressee to interpret it and, hence, communication mismatch can occur (Levinson & Brown, 1987, p. 211).

Rhetorical questions are also a good example to point out the practice of *pamimilosopo* since they can be evaluated in the same manner we evaluate fuzzy and other improperly qualified expressions. Their usage could often involve a very literal interpretation of their meaning as opposed to their intended usage.

Gullibility and the Need for Assurance and Certainty

In some Filipino practices, what people say proves effective in making one believe a claim. Filipinos love to feel an air of certainty around them. Sometimes, they ask the obvious to make sure that they fully know what they are getting themselves into. Even if one knows that a friend trembled and frightfully screamed in a rollercoaster ride, one would still ask the obvious question, "Was the ride scary?" and when the friend says "No", one is likely to believe it and disregard one's own observation. Going back to the mango- buying example, even when one has a gut feel that the mangoes are sour, the moment the mango vendor positively responds to one's rhetorical question concerning the sweetness of the mangoes, one is likely to believe that the mangoes are actually sweet.

In a sense, the gullibility of Filipinos has to do with their need to feel secure about the things they do. In the case of the lady queuing for the ATM, she needed to be sure that she was in the right line by asking Mr. Assimo if the line she was in was indeed the line for the ATM, though there was no other line around and it was obviously the only line leading to the ATM. Rohde (2006) considered this as the synchronization "of discourse participants' commitments confirming their shared beliefs about the world" (p.135).

The Mr. Assimo episodes show that while most people find the witty retorts funny, listening to them starts to feel uncomfortable over time. One may even think it rude and odd that he responds that way to others. While it is slightly comical to watch Mr. Assimo sketches, his reaction to other people's way of extending politeness or *pakikisama* could be seen as something that is aggravating, which normally asks for a laughable response, but which, at the same time, can also be frowned upon.

Politeness

Rhetorical questions are also used for reason of politeness. While conversation principles serve as sources of strong background assumptions about cooperation, informativeness, truthfulness, relevance and clarity, on many occasions, they may have to be softened for reason of politeness. As previously mentioned, a speaker hopes to have the addressee hit upon an interpretation that was intended so that the violation of the maxim becomes understandable (Levinson & Brown, 1987, p. 213). This is, obviously, easier said than done.

Searle recognizes that there are a number of motivations when individuals use indirect speech acts. One of these, he claims, is politeness (1975, p. 65). Being indirect is a way to make another person feel that his actions are unimpeded by others and that they are being affirmed.

Some Filipinos are basically timid in expressing their opinions. There are those who are careful to assume and polite, so they choose to ask questions like "*Para sa akin ba 'to*?" (Is this for me?) and "*Ano'ng ginagawa mo rito*?" (What are you doing here?) even though they already know the answer.

Sometimes, people also tend to ask questions they obviously already know the answer to because if they do not, they would seem disrespectful. We seem to ask the most unnecessary questions that we can actually answer on our own.

Asking someone, "Can I ask you a question?" in its sole structure and meaning is absolutely nonsensical to a point that it is already stating the obvious or even defrauding. By asking permission to ask a question, one has already done so, even without the reply of the person being asked. This is, of course, to be understood as asking a question besides the sought permission. It can also be a way for a person to show respect by asking permission first before asking the main question.

In some cases, by asking rhetorical questions, we try to show our unique way of being accommodating and caring. When we see someone in distress, we normally ask, "Are you okay?" even if we perfectly know they're not. When a fitting room attendant accommodatingly asked Mr. Assimo if he was going to try the pants on (even if it was obviously the case), she may have done so to express her willingness to assist Mr. Assimo while he was in the fitting room.

Sometimes, we use rhetorical questions to imply that we understand a request and repeat it in a question form as an acknowledgement. We do this in order to verify the receipt of information as was the case when Mr. Assimo's house help repeated the former's question.

Communication Mismatch and the Problem of Determining Other People's Intention

Pamimilosopo is about the loose and perverse use of terms in conversation where maxims of conversation are violated, and the deliberate or accidental use of informal logical fallacies such as equivocation or *dicto simpliciter* (unqualified generalization) takes place which makes one miss out on the intended meanings of terms.

From Complicated to Ordinary Language Usage

In this section, our attempt to understand the practice of *pamimilosopo* shifts from the violation of maxims (that warrants anyone to use overly excessive critical thinking) and understanding meanings beyond actual utterances (failure to do so makes someone respond irrelevantly and be a *pilosopo*) to understanding expressions according to their ordinary or standard use, which should explain how some attempts at *pamimilosopo* are sometimes not warranted. Searle held that "within a framework where indirect speech acts can be meant and understood, certain forms will tend to become conventionally established as the standard forms of indirect speech acts. While keeping their literal meanings, they will acquire conventional uses such as polite forms of expression" (1975, p. 64). In instances when there are no messages being implied or no intentional violation of maxims, Ryle claims that the expressions are being used in an ordinary or standard way. The violation of a maxim seems far-fetched if the speaker thinks he/she is not saying anything false or irrelevant and is just simply trying to get across a message that, to him/her, is perfectly understandable. If this is the case, the violation may be on the part of the addressee who responds to the speaker irrelevantly by insisting on a meaning or assigning a meaning to a word contrary to how the speaker intended it (Taghiyev, 2017, p. 287).

The responses to rhetorical questions, in the same manner that improperly qualified expressions are understood, also become systematically misleading because of a failure to acknowledge the context in which expressions are uttered. In effect, certain expressions lose their intended meaning. When responses are misunderstood, the context in which they are standardly or ordinarily understood is often neglected or ignored. A disconnect between how these expressions are ordinarily used and how they are understood usually involves some cultural and ethical barriers.

When someone says *all, everything, forever,* or *unlimited,* for instance, their uses are presumed to be as precise as they could get since they are presumed to be commonly known and understood, albeit used imperfectly from a *pilosopo's* perspective. The use of certain expressions

may be considered by the speakers themselves to be the clearest, briefest, and most efficient way of saying them. Imperfect language users feel that no maxim was violated because they assume a certain level of competence from their listeners in terms of comprehending what they said largely because they pretty much use the same expressions in more or less the same context. When we use the ordinary sense of an expression, we hardly ever have to explain what it means, nor give any rationale about its usage. Ordinarily, we are giving our hearers a reference which we expect them to get without hesitation (Ryle, 1953, pp. 169-170). But even standard or ordinary usage varies from place to place, culture to culture; and the same expression may have a number of ordinary uses in different contexts. A problem happens when speakers who are not familiar with how expressions work in a certain context participate in the language game without fully knowing the rules of the language. Ordinary intentions somehow become potential threats to cooperative interaction as it were (Levinson & Brown, 1987, p.145).

Beyond syntax and semantics which usually concern people with a formalistic frame of mind, the awareness of individuals of the existence of the pragmatic and socio-pragmatic aspects of language games, which greatly take social context into consideration, enables communication to be possible even if language usage seems to vary from culture to culture and from group to group (Flew, 1953; Stalnaker, 1972). *Unlimited* and *bottomless*, in the manner they are used with call, text, food, and drink promotions, do not really fit their connotation in a highly structured, logical language. They are normally used either to convey extra rice servings that customers could consume without paying extra, or as promos valid within a specified time with corresponding texts or calls pegged at fixed rates.

In the case of the student asking a teacher about *all* the details of a take-home essay, the student might turn out to be overly analytic or cautious when he/she asks even about minutely insignificant sentence details. This is tedious and the student is likely to miss out on the purpose of the requirement altogether. Repeated exponentially over all daily tasks and we would all be outmatched, accomplish nothing, and simply go on without having accomplished anything.

Prohibitions like *Please do not seat on the sofa*, *Customers who wear shorts and slippers will be denied entry*, or *so-and-so are not to be put inside the microwave oven* (without the mention of cats) continue to be used and said and not everyone really seems to care, and most people sort of understand what they mean. Perhaps, in the formulation of such expressions, it was intended that while there are things that have been explicitly identified as not allowed, it was likely intended that anything else *related* to the mentioned categories was equally not allowed. This,

of course, depends on the receiver's discernment on the grounds that there is a shared understanding of how such expressions are usually intended.

A *super-glue that claims to hold anything* cannot really hold all possible materials under all kinds of stress. This can easily be disproven by putting the material in a solution that can remove the adhesive or by applying a ton of shear stress. The tagline only means that the glue will be able to hold stronger than anything around the stress than the average maximum that humans can provide or withstand the everyday adhesive degenerative substances that the glue may come in contact with. With this, we see that holding "anything" is used in the context of the actual limitations of using a super glue.

When someone says that *he/she can eat anything*, it is socially understood that he could eat anything edible, which is a much more legitimate reality and a much smaller domain of *anything* that one claims one can eat. *Are you awake?* messages are then, in the same line of thought, to be understood as asking for a reply only in the event that the person being asked wakes up or is still awake.

Doing anything for someone may mean something very strong that borders on a line that could be on an action movie if it is originating from a person who is conveying a hero persona. On the other hand, it will mean a totally different thing if the person whom the line originated from is trying to say it in a sensually provocative manner. Perhaps this has become the trend because it is sometimes easier to promise the impossible. When we thus correctly say, *I will do everything within my capacity* instead of simply saying *I will do everything*; or *I will love you till either of us dies* instead of saying *I will love you forever*, the rephrased statements become more comprehensible, but they also lose some of their appeal and become less romantic. Even if the intended meanings are the same, they are phrased a little more realistically with less romantic undertones.

By understanding the common usage of these expressions, however, certain statements become understandable. *I know that I know nothing* could mean that the person is aware of the amount of knowledge that he or she has yet to acquire compared to the knowledge that has already been obtained or retained (Waismann, 1953). *Nothing* may even have been treated as equivalent to something trivial other than its more complete meaning. In some cases, *nothing* is used to refer to something that does not fall within its own scope (Flew, 1953).

The systematic ambiguity of *triangular squares do not exist*, which has been initially said as incapable of referring to non-existent entities, may be removed when the expression is intended to mean that *No*

squares are triangles, an expression that merely states a fact about the non-existence of a particular entity. Moreover, if we analyze the purpose of the text *this page intentionally left blank*, its intention is really to indicate that the blank page is not a result of a faulty printing and is not meant to contain any of the substantial contexts of a text.

Damer (2013) claimed that there is nothing wrong with using vague language since almost all of us use vague expressions as a part of our linguistic style. He noted though that such expressions only function quite well when nothing important is at stake. The way some individuals employ expressions like all, everything, unlimited, etc. flout some of the maxims of conversation. These violations, however, can be considered indeliberate since their use presupposes a certain level of understanding among the users of the expression.

Gay (1992) acknowledged that the inadequacy of words to describe the outside world leads us to applaud the subtle nuances that even blatant linguistic distortions sometimes facilitate. Austin (1957) claimed that "words are not facts or things and we need therefore to prise them off the world, to hold them apart from and against it so that we can realize their inadequacies and arbitrariness, and can look at the world without blinkers" (p. 8). In properly understanding others then, it is important to realize that more than the words we use, we have to appreciate that words are not the final arbiter of most of the things we intend to communicate.

Distinguishing the Philosophical from the Ordinary

Certain expressions have become more of a linguistic element than a philosophical one, which is why it is difficult for some people to understand them because they cannot be taken literally in ordinary contexts. Ryle (1932) claimed, however, that "understanding certain expressions in language need not involve the results of philosophical analysis in order for people to continue to use intelligently their ordinary modes of expression or to use them so that they are intelligible to others" (p. 142). As it were, there are expressions which are comprehended beyond the legitimate boundaries of formal systems (Jacquette, 1994). If any rational person was using any expression at all, it would be best understood in an ordinary way since the expression would ultimately mean what the author of such an expression intended it to mean, provided he/she had full knowledge as to how he/she was using the expression (Ryle, 1932; Zuñiga, 1995). The meaning of the word, then would ultimately be, as Wittgenstein (2001) put it, "its use in the language" (p. 20). The only useful thing to say about the meaning of an expression is that it is used in such-and-such a way or is usable in such-and-such circumstances. The meaning of the expression could be

explicated in terms of what users do with it and what they mean by it in particular occasions of use (Grice, 1957). Dumitru (2009) vouched for these views. He claimed that logic should cope with expressions as they are used on particular occasions in order to supplement the entailment rules of formal logic with the referring rules of ordinary language. Zuñiga (1995) remarked that "the use of an expression must be attributable to the particularity of the socio-cultural milieu in which given expressions appear to evolve. Some forms go through a transformation or a modification of use in their own territory" (p. 374).

The meaning of expressions like *I will do anything, we've got it all for you, do not sit on the sofa,* etc. can better be analysed "in terms of regularities over the intentions with which utterers produce certain sentences on given occasions" (Neale, 1992, p.8). These expressions may even have developed their own stipulative definitions and meanings to fit their customary usage over time.

Ryle (1932) argued that the naive employer of quasi-ontological expressions is not necessarily and not probably even misled since he has said what he wanted to say and anyone who understood the language would understand what he was saying. Strawson (1950) viewed this in a similar fashion claiming that the meaning of an ordinary language based on logic alone is misguided, precisely because "ordinary language has no exact logic" (p. 344; Harman, 2002). Ordinary language does not always behave like formal logical language. The meaning, then, of an expression is determined by actual linguistic practice which does not necessarily square with the philosopher's analysis. Dumitru (2009) claimed that "one cannot exhaust what natural language expressions convey across different contexts within ordinary discourse by an abstract meaning assignment which is governed by the norms of formal logic. The richness of the vernacular cannot be totally absorbed into the frugal paraphrases of logical canonical notations" (p. 545).

The natural economy of language dictates that in *ordinary* cases, such as when one typically expresses one will eat or do anything, no modifying expression is required or even permissible unless what was being described deviated from how the expression is normally used in everyday life. "Ordinary cases," according to Ryle (1953), "are usually in contrast with dictions which only a few people employ" (p. 167). He added that "while the edges of *ordinary* are blurred, we are usually not in doubt whether a diction does or does not belong to ordinary parlance" (p. 168).

Misunderstandings happen when people fail to appreciate the situation in which any message is made (Austin, 1957). Social knowledge and context clues go neatly with the ordinary understanding

of language in allowing individuals to understand what people say or claim. This works best when it is grounded in the most basic sensitivities of how communication works in a certain society. Jacquette (1994) properly articulated this when he said: "Without grounding in ordinary language and relation to informal ideas, even the formalisms most familiar to practicing logicians lacks meaning and application" (p. 3).

Communication, in the form of a seemingly faulty language, takes place, often successfully, because there are tacit transactions that allow the users of language to understand each other (Grice, 1975). Moore (1999) claimed, "in order to combat carelessness in handling our own language, close meticulous attention to its *correct use* (emphasis mine) is required" (p. 3). The correct use, according to Moore, is grounded in the word's *actual* use.

Humans are equipped with so much more sensing equipment than what is ordinarily needed for language comprehension. This is why we tend to try to convey meaning with more than what we just say. We try to understand what is communicated more than what is said. The meanings of words change according to the intent of their use, the tone in which they are delivered (in text or in speech), and the ability of the recipient (hearer/reader) to apply them to their prior linguistic experience. Confusions are mitigated when individuals resort to more common grounds that provide wider possibilities of understanding such as when the context in which some sentences occur are clarified and non-linguistic aspects of communication are looked into.

Grice (1986) believed that "a more or less detailed study of the way we talk, in this or that region of discourse, is an indispensable foundation for much of the most fundamental kind of philosophizing" (p. 58). Ryle (1932) earlier said though that the plain man who uses unqualified expressions is not making a philosophical mistake since "he is not even philosophizing at all. Neither is he misled by and does not notice the real meaning behind every word, phrase, or sentence he crafts. He definitely knows what message he is trying to get across and will definitely accept the more formal reformulation of what he will concur with as an equally intelligible paraphrase (p. 152). Some individuals use expressions on the everyday level of human interaction, and not on the philosophical or formal level (Zuñiga, 1995).

Ryle (1932) argued that instead of using misleading clues from generalized and oftentimes unqualified expressions, "the best way of expressing something is the way which is the most brief, the most elegant, or the most emphatic" (p. 152). While it is acknowledged that facts or states of affairs can be recorded in an indefinite number of statements or grammatical forms, stating them in a completely non-

misleading form of words is an ideal which may never be realized and that no situation is ever completely described (Austin, 1957; Ryle, 1932). Ryle was right after all to argue that the use of ordinary men of ordinary language with all its looseness and improper qualifications is justified insofar as they are not philosophizing and they are able to get their intended message across.

The Ignored Value of *Pamimilosopo*

The loose usage of expressions by either the speaker or the addressee provides a conducive ground for a *pilosopo* to become excessively critical of the meanings of the expressions used. Once the addressee understands that the expressions are being used in an ordinary way, he/she may become less critical of the meanings of the expressions. Credit is to be given, however, to the *pilosopo* who strives to shed light on the proper way expressions should be understood especially if their creation and/or usage is an offshoot of the irresponsible use of language. Such a move, no doubt, exonerates anyone (also known as the *pilosopo*) from being infamously linked to excessive manifestations of critical thinking or unnecessary scrutiny of expressions. Surely, one cannot be thought to be in violation of any conversational maxim if the sole intention for the *pamimilosopo* is to provide clarity, prevent confusion and misunderstanding, and not to make fun of others.

While the ordinary use of language allows for easier communication among individuals, there remains a great significance in the philosophical (and not-so-ordinary) analysis of language. Philosophical discourse involves the illumination of the ultimate structure of facts that, at times, show how certain expressions really work.

What happens when individuals philosophize and use abstraction to understand even the most basic sentences is that they add what Wisdom (1936) referred to as the non-verbal air of philosophical statements which usually accounts for their puzzlingness. Philosophical discourse is helpful in the sense that it draws attention to a terminology that would otherwise be problematic in ordinary language. Wisdom (1936) claimed that "the philosopher's purpose is to gain a grasp of the relations between different categories of being, between expressions used in different manners" (p. 77). Ryle (1932) articulated this earlier saying there remains an important sense in which philosophers can and must discover and state what is really meant by expressions used in certain ways. It remains significant, then, that we engage in the exercise of systematic restatement which strives to exhibit the forms of certain facts concealed, disguised, or not duly exhibited by other expressions.

It is through these concerns that arguments of greater complexity arise, regularly in basic interpretations of language. This is why the exercise of making language more precise at every turn is of importance in some areas (i.e., legal, medical, political, judicial) that affect human life. The philosophical analysis of ordinary language helps clarify human thinking by eliminating inappropriate linguistic forms.

The more formal analysis of illogical-sounding claims is not always symptomatic of confusion or puzzlement or of being detached from ordinary language usage and comprehension. It can also be indicative of the degree of sensitivity towards what is not usually noticed (Wisdom, 1936). The sense and structure that is being captured in more sophisticated forms of communication are those that are either hidden beneath ordinary language or those which ought to be present in them. Perhaps the versatility of ordinary language is what actually accounts for its inadequacies. Ordinary language sometimes conveys tone. Using formal language allows an individual to sever the power of a word, and the illusion that it brings about, over an individual. This is obvious in how ordinary language usually makes sense of empty or vague expressions (Rein, 1982).

Pamimilosopo: Legitimizing and Challenging the Practice

Analyzing language in an intricate manner could not proceed unless one first understood language in an ordinary way. A *pilosopo* should understand that the formal analysis of language should not lose contact with the workings of natural language (Strawson, 1964). Though there is no doubt about the significance of the use of sophisticated linguistic analysis in understanding complex forms of communication especially those that have to do with legal, scientific, medical, academic, and other technical fields, and while no ordinary language may be able to replace them and capture their technicality, it pays to be able to communicate with others properly for the main reason for which language was primarily created.

In exchanges of improperly qualified statements, for instance, both the speaker and the receiver of the message assume a level of rationality and competence of understanding expressions. There is an unspoken agreement, I'd like to think, among people that set standards for understanding improperly qualified sentences. A discourse-context is formed allowing participants to see the factors relevant to the conversation and to make one assume what the other knows (Tomasello, 2008). Davidson (1986) claimed that infelicities of language are not only common but are also commonly understood. Davidson (1984) earlier claimed that while each speaker may speak their own language, as long as the hearer understands the one who speaks, then communication will not be hindered. What is required, Davidson (1990) claimed, is

"a fit between how speakers intend to be interpreted and how their interpreters understand them" (p. 311). Being humans of intellectual capacities to understand and comprehend, to think and rethink, to learn and keep learning, we are capable of allowing certain room in our minds for a little taste of other people's perspectives.

Perhaps, the *pamimilosopo* that we know is not so much about the *pilosopo* who unnecessarily scrutinizes expressions or improperly responds to rhetorical questions and employs the same to make fun or look down on others as it is about the person who properly uses them in acceptable circumstances. In this case, based on one's perspective, a *pilosopo* can be similar to or different from the actual philosopher. Formal philosophizing inquires into the fundamental nature of concepts. *Pamimilosopo* on the other hand, is associated with inquiry that is sometimes unnecessary or unreasonable, focusing too much on details that could have been easily comprehensible within broader contexts of conversations. As pointed out, however, some instances of *pamimilosopo* verge on the side of caution in an attempt to make meanings clearer and avoid communication breakdown; at the same time, however, there is also a need to understand how people use terms with tacit but established ways of understanding them without the need to be overly nitty-gritty about their usage. At best, there is a need for individuals to make a distinction between the formal philosophical use of expressions from their ordinary usage in everyday conversations. If *pamimilosopo* takes the form of a formal inquiry into how actual terms are used, then it becomes more like the actual practice of formal philosophizing and the *pilosopo* is more like an actual philosopher. If *pamimilosopo* is employed, however, in ordinary conversations where its use is considered impractical and even unnecessary, then it becomes a practice that most people usually frown upon.

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