

FLOUTING OF GRICE'S MAXIMS IN SHORT COMEDY FILM ENTITLED *THE WORST THAT COULD HAPPEN*

Ade Dwi Cahyanti
{adedwicahyanti21@gmail.com}

English Language Education, Postgraduate Program, Universitas Negeri Semarang

Abstract. Someone sometimes violates these maxims as they will not always share their thoughts literally. The aim of this research is to investigate the flouting of maxims used by the characters in a short comedy film entitled *The Worst That Could Happen*. This research used a qualitative method based on Paul Grice's theory (1989). Furthermore, the sources of data were Brannon and Amy as the characters in the film. As a result, the findings revealed all types of flouting of the maxims that occurred in the utterances of the characters in the film. Second, the flouting of quantity was the first flouting of the maxim that was frequently attached to construct their utterances in the communication between Brennan and Amy. Then, the maxim of quality, the maxim of relevance, and the maxim of manner were the last flouting of maxims that was commonly used by the characters in the short film.

Keywords: flouting maxim, flouting of quantity, flouting of quality, flouting of manner, flouting of relevance/relation

INTRODUCTION

In the process of communication especially in social interaction, people exchange information with other people through conversation for getting together and interacting by using language. Through language, the user of communication namely the speaker and the interlocutor can express their idea adequately to communicate with each other. To make the interlocutor get the information clearly, the speaker has to speak clearly, relevantly to the context, and sincerely to the interlocutor (Cahyanti, et al., 2021). It helps the speaker and the interlocutor avoid misunderstanding and the interlocutor could present the match response to the speaker.

To get the point of the conversation, the speaker can learn and follow the cooperative principle proposed by Paul Grice. Based on Grice (1989), there is a principle that has to be followed by the speaker and the interlocutor to have an effective conversation, namely Cooperative Principle. It focuses on four fields namely a maxim of quality, a maxim of quantity, a maxim of relation/relevance, and a maxim of manner. Those maxims have specific purposes, such as the maxim of quality to tell the truth, the maxim of quantity to say just as much as necessary, the maxim of relation to stick to the point, and the maxim of manner to avoid obscurity and ambiguity. Also, the advantage of Grice's point provides a pragmatic explanation for a wide range of phenomena that is not literally contained in the utterance.

However, practically, someone sometimes violates these maxims as they will not always share their thoughts literally. The user of the cooperative principle may intentionally disobey the maxims, as long as a person or the context sets enough indicators for the interlocutor to notice it. This is called flouting of a maxim and it is used to convey information indirectly, such as they have various intentions, such as to make a joke, to un hurt, or even offend people's feelings. Based on Grice's theory, there were four types of violation, namely violating, opting out, clashing, and flouting the maxims of conversation. One popular violation is flouting because it raises conversational implicature. Flouting of maxims occurs when the speaker applies the implicature

which means individuals wittingly stop to apply the maxims to entice their interlocutor for deciding the hidden meaning behind the utterances (Levinson, 1983). Hence, the speaker does not give the right information as required by maxims, but still, the interlocutor can reach the meaning because of the implicature.

The entrants of the conversation look uncooperative, but actually, they do flouting of maxims. The speaker and the interlocutor have certain intentions of flouting maxims. It is because there are the same intended meanings and certain aims which are delivered by the speaker behind the utterance where flouting of maxims occurs. Hence, by flouting the maxims, the speaker is not said to be uncooperative in a conversation because flouting of maxims is a way to carry out the listener seeks the true meaning through what is said indirectly by the speakers. There were several researchers that analyzed the flouting of the maxims in communication. Flouting of maxims can be seen in the interaction between the teacher and the students in the class (Wahyudi, et al., 2020). Also, Arofah and Mubarok (2021) investigated the use of floating the maxims on the English teaching and learning process in MA Hasyim Asy'ari Bangsri. By using the descriptive qualitative method, the researchers found that both the teacher and the students applied all types of flout maxims. Additionally, there were some effects the teacher used flouting the maxims, such as students becoming flurry toward the information given by the teacher, students become not understanding the lesson, the class becoming rowdy and noisy, and the teacher becoming ignored.

Furthermore, the flouting of maxims not only can be seen in the classroom activity but also occurs in the novel, especially in *Diary of a Wimpy kid: Dog days novel*. Yuliastini (2016) investigated flouting the maxims not only focused on Grice's theory but also combined with Cutting's theory proposed in 2002. By analyzing the data based on the novel, the researcher applied the descriptive qualitative method. The characters in the novel applied all types of flouting of the maxims, such as flouting the maxim of quality, flouting the maxim of quantity, flouting the maxim of relevance, and flouting the maxim of manner. Also, flouting the maxims can be seen in the fiction novel. Fitri and Qodriani (2016) did not found flouting the maxim of manner it the characters' utterances. Hence, all of the utterances that flout the maxim of cooperative principles raise conversational implicatures behind them. Although the speaker and the interlocutor understand each other, flouting the maxim can be dangerous when those users of communication have different perceptions of communication.

Regarding the flouting of maxims, the researchers also found this phenomenon in movies. Here, Rafika et al. (2020) investigated flouting in a movie based on the characters' humorous utterances entitled *2 Broke Girls*. By focusing on Season 6 especially episodes 3-9, they found that the characters of this movie used all types of flouting of the maxims. It can happen because those characters flout the maxim of quality when they say something untrue or lack adequacy. Then, they applied to flout the maxim of quantity when they give less or more information. After that, flouting the maxim of manner occurred when the characters say ambiguous and sometimes obscure. In the end, the characters applied to flout the maxim of relation when they answered the interlocutor by using irrelevant in response to the previous topic. Additionally, Ibrahim et al. (2018) found that there were several motivations that affected the speakers for flouting the maxims in their utterances, such as competitive, collaborative, and conflictive. The speakers mostly stated and asserted what they wanted to say for giving a better understanding.

Relating to the previous researchers above, the researcher concluded that the flouting of the maxims occurred both in the written and spoken area. Based on the types of flouting of the maxims in the previous research, the researcher assumed that the speakers can apply all types of flouting the maxims in their utterances and in every occasion. After examining the previous research, the researcher comprehended that there is a gap to conduct the present research. It can be seen in the previous researchers that they focused on other written and spoken areas except for short comedy films. Although it consists of view minutes, it consists of various types of flouting the maxims. Additionally, the researcher applied the theory of flouting the maxims proposed by Paul Grice (1989). There were some kinds of research purposes divided into four kinds of research objectives, such as 1) to explain the flouting of the quality by the characters in the Short Comedy Film, 2) to explain the flouting of the quantity by the characters in the Short Comedy Film, 3) to explain the flouting of the relevance/relevant by the characters in the Short Comedy Film, and 4) to explain the flouting of the manner by the characters in the Short Comedy Film.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, there were some kinds of research purposes. It divided into four kinds of research objectives, such as 1) to explain the flouting of the quality by the characters in the Short Comedy Film, 2) to explain the flouting of the quantity by the characters in the Short Comedy Film, 3) to explain the flouting of the relevance/relevant by the characters in the Short Comedy Film, and 4) to explain the flouting of the manner by the characters in the Short Comedy Film.

This research indicated a spoken discourse study, especially in the pragmatics area. This research used qualitative methods in order to gain information about flouting the maxims by the characters. The study focused on finding out types of flouting of the maxims, such as flouting of the quality, flouting of the quantity, flouting of the relevance/relevant, and flouting of the manner, particularly in the short comedy film entitled *The Worst That Could Happen*. Hence, in this research, the data came from the video of a short comedy film performed by two characters namely Brennan and Amy. Last, the film was taken from the YouTube channels of BlueDog Film.

Furthermore, the researcher used some stages in order to examine the data appropriately. First, the researcher transcribed the video related to the short comedy film expressed by those characters. Second, the researcher started to classify by underlining the data based on the linguistic expression in the utterances. Third, the researcher categorized the data which focused on the theory of Paul Grice (1989). In this part, the researcher divided it into some categories such as flouting of quality, flouting of quantity, flouting of relevance, and flouting manner. Fourth, the researcher focused on counting the total of flouting the maxims in the characters' utterances in *The Worst That Could Happen* short film. Last, the researcher had to interpret the data based on the findings which used Grice's theory (1989).

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

This part is dedicated to presenting the several results of this research relating to the four research questions. Here, it revealed the investigation of flouting the maxims by adopting Grice's theory (1989) which is divided into four branches such as flouting of quality, flouting of quantity, flouting of relevance, and flouting manner.

1.1 Flouting of Quality Used by the Characters in *The Worst That Could Happen* short film

The flouting of quality can be seen when the speaker says something which is blatantly untrue or for which he or she lacks adequate evidence. Also, using hyperbole, metaphor, and irony are the hallmark of flouting the maxim. In this research, the findings showed that there was an utterance that contained the flouting of quality.

Brennan : Hi. Would you want grab lunch sometimes?
Amy : You're so hideous and I'm so pretty. Why would you even say such a thing?

The dialogue happens when Brennan asked Amy to get some lunch together sometimes. However, Amy gave him a surprising answer. Here, Amy's answer intentionally flouted the maxim of quality because she exaggerates her answer by using hyperbole. She used the word 'so hideous' to describe Brennan's face. The word purposely and obviously exaggerates Brennan extremely.

1.2 Flouting of Quantity Used by the Characters in *The Worst That Could Happen* short film

The flouting of quantity can be seen when the speaker blatantly gives more or less information than the situation requires. Here, the speaker answers the interlocutor by giving short answers and

it can make the interlocutor ask the same question or another question to make the interlocutor get information clearly. Then, in this part, the speaker can answer by giving more information although the interlocutor does not ask the speaker. In this research, the findings showed that there were two utterances that consisted of flouting the quality.

Amy : Theater major, right?
Brennan : Biology.
Amy : You're majoring in biology? Everyone that majors in biology is a total loser. So that must mean that you're a loser.

The dialogue happens when Amy asked Brennan relating to his major. Here, Amy's answer intentionally flouted the maxim of quantity because of her response. It can be seen in her dialogue that she delivered her idea freely by giving more information in her utterance. It classified that using more information than the situation requires was the hallmark of flouting the quantity.

1.3 Flouting of Relevance/Relation Used by the Characters in *The Worst That Could Happen* short film

The pattern flouting of relevance is changing the subject or by failing to address the topic directly. It can happen because it is exploited by making a response or observation which is very obviously irrelevant to the topic at hand. Also, this pattern is flouted when the speaker does not make the connection between his utterance and the context clearly in a verbal manner. Hence, the speaker expects the interlocutor to understand what the utterance did not say through 'implicature'. Furthermore, the findings showed that there was an utterance that consisted of flouting the relevance.

Brennan : Hi, Amy.
Amy : I'm sorry. I just... Oh your face..

The dialogue happens when Brennan greeted Amy for the first time. However, Amy responded to Brennan's greeting with an unexpected response. Here, Amy changed the topic because she focused on Brennan's face. Her utterance was the type of flouting of the maxim. It can happen because she gives a response that is irrelevant to the prior utterance. In that conversation, Amy flouts the maxim of relation to changing a topic and it causes an inconvenience. Also, she responded spontaneously.

1.4 Flouting of Manner Used by the Characters in *The Worst That Could Happen* short film

Flouting of manner can be seen when the speaker is obscure, ambiguous, brief (avoid unnecessary proximity), and unorderedly. Using abbreviations can show the existence of flouting the manner. It is because abbreviations can make the interlocutor confuse and make the speaker's utterance become ambiguous. The speaker who flout the maxim of manner, are often trying to exclude a third party appearing to be obscure. Furthermore, the findings showed that there was an utterance that consisted of flouting the manner.

Brennan : I was wandering if you might want to maybe get lunch sometimes or something else?
Amy : I have a boyfriend and he's a professional bass player and I'm gonna ask him to marker you.

Based on the dialogue above, it can be seen that Brennan asked Amy to have lunch together to know each other deeply. It happened because Brennan liked Amy a long time ago. However, Amy answer Brennan's question with an obscure sentence. There were some meanings behind Amy's

utterances. Amy's utterance consisted of an ambiguous way of explaining her boyfriend to make Brannon back off indirectly.

CONCLUSION

Depending on the research and analysis above, this research has several conclusions. First of all, the characters of *The Worst That Could Happen* short film namely Brennan and Amy used all types of flouting the maxims. It included flouting of quality, flouting of quantity, flouting of relevance, and flouting of manner. Second, the flouting of quantity was the first flouting of the maxim that was frequently attached to construct their utterances in the communication between Brennan and Amy. Then, the maxim of quality, the maxim of relevance, and the maxim of manner were the last flouting of maxims that was commonly used by the characters in the short film. Those flouting maxims occurred once in those characters' utterances. Hence, Although Brennan and Amy applied those flouting the maxims, both speakers understand each other and still, the interlocutor can reach the meaning because of the implicature.

Additionally, applying to flout the maxims, such as flouting the quantity, flouting the quality, flouting the relevance, and flouting the manner in our communication is fine as long as both speaker and interlocutor get the idea clearly. Also, learning and investigating the flouting of the maxims is interesting. Further researchers can investigate deeply in another area like different texts or they can collect data from naturally occurring conversations in different settings such as talk shows etc.

References

- Arofah, S., & Mubarak, H. (2021). An analysis of violation and flouting maxim on teacher-students interaction in English teaching and learning process. *Journal of Language and Literature*, 15(2), 249-255. <https://doi.org/10.15294/lc.v15i2.28148>
- Cahyanti, A. D., Hartono, R., & Bharati, D. A. L. (2021). Comparing the language style used by native and non-native English speakers in the Ellen show. *English Education Journal*, 11(4), 579-588. <https://doi.org/10.15294/EEJ.V11i11.50290>
- Fitri, E., & Qodriani, L. U. (2016). A study on flouting maxims in divergent novel. *Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra (TEKNOSASTIK)*, 14(1), 32-40. <https://doi.org/10.33365/ts.v14i1.84>
- Grice, H. P. (1989). *Studies in the way of words*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Ibrahim, Z., Arifin, M. B., & Setyowati, R. (2018). The flouting of maxim in the seven movie script. *Jurnal Ilmu Budaya*, 2(1), 81-94. <https://doi.org/10.30872/jbssb.v2i1.1016>
- Levinson, S.C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Rafika, R., Yuliasri, I., & Warsono. (2020). Flouting of Grice's maxims in the humorous utterances in American situation comedy 2 broke girls. *English Education Journal*, 10(4), 474-479. <https://doi.org/10.15294/eej.v10i4.39465>
- Wahyudi, A., Yusuf, S., & Lestari, Z. W. (2020). Maxim's flouting: An analysis of classroom action. *Journal of English Education and Teaching (JEET)*, 4(2), 219-231. <https://doi.org/10.33369/jeet.4.2.219-231>
- Yuliastini, D. (2016). Flouting of cooperative principle in diary of a wimpy kid: Dog days. *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 14(1), 23-29. <https://ojs.unud.ac.id/index.php/sastra/article/view/19359>