



An Analysis of Flouting Maxim in the Talkshow of “Graham Norton Show”

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Abstract:

Language is a crucial tool for communication within society. Effective communication requires politeness, respectfulness, and adherence to linguistic rules. One of these essential rules is the cooperative principle, which supports smooth and effective communication. This study examines the use of conversational maxims that are flouted in an episode of *The Graham Norton Show*, featuring Jamie Oliver, Chris Pratt, Jennifer Lawrence, and Will.I.Am as guests. The research investigates the specific maxims flouted by the guests and identifies the purposes behind these flouting. The researchers used a qualitative method in this study, and the data were collected from a video. To identify and analyze the flouting maxim, the researcher used Grice's (1975) theory, the Cooperation Principle, which consists of four types of maxims. The four types include the maxim of quality, the maxim of quantity, the maxim of relevance, and the maxim of manner. The findings reveal that the guests flout all four maxims, with 19 instances recorded. The maxim of quantity is the most frequently flouted. Additionally, the study reveals the purposes behind these flouting, showing that by intentionally breaking conversational rules, the guests create an exciting and lively atmosphere, aiming to foster enjoyable communication and induce an element of humor.

Keywords: Pragmatic; Cooperative Principles; Flouting of Maxim; Graham Norton Show

Abstrak:

Bahasa merupakan alat penting dalam komunikasi di masyarakat. Komunikasi yang efektif memerlukan kesopanan, rasa hormat, dan kepatuhan terhadap aturan bahasa. Salah satu aturan penting tersebut adalah prinsip kerja sama, yang mendukung komunikasi yang lancar dan efektif. Penelitian ini mengkaji penggunaan maksim percakapan yang dilanggar dalam sebuah episode *The Graham Norton Show*, yang menampilkan Jamie Oliver, Chris Pratt, Jennifer Lawrence, dan Will.I.Am sebagai bintang tamu. Penelitian ini meneliti maksim-maksim spesifik yang dilanggar oleh para tamu dan mengidentifikasi tujuan di balik pelanggaran tersebut. Peneliti menggunakan metode kualitatif dalam penelitian ini, dan data dikumpulkan dari sebuah video. Untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis pelanggaran maksim, peneliti menerapkan teori Prinsip Kerja Sama oleh Grice (1975), yang terdiri dari empat jenis maksim, yaitu maksim kualitas, maksim kuantitas, maksim relevansi, dan maksim cara. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa para tamu melanggar keempat jenis maksim tersebut dengan total 19 data yang tercatat. Maksim kuantitas merupakan maksim yang paling sering dilanggar. Selain itu, penelitian ini mengungkapkan tujuan di balik pelanggaran tersebut, menunjukkan bahwa dengan sengaja melanggar aturan percakapan, para tamu menciptakan suasana yang menarik dan hidup, dengan tujuan menciptakan komunikasi yang menyenangkan dan menimbulkan unsur humor.

Kata kunci: Pragmatik; Prinsip Kerjasama; Pelanggaran Maksim; *Graham Norton Show*



INTRODUCTION

The most reliable and effective means of communication in society is language (Apriyanto, 2022). It helps convey to others needs, wants, ideas, and thoughts. People employ language in a variety of contexts and manners. According to Kurniati (2017), language allows people to learn new things and share knowledge. Language is essential to communication because it facilitates comprehension and interaction. Apriyanto (2022) also stated that communication has succeeded in conveying its message if the listener can understand the speaker's intent even with limited language.

For verbal and written forms of communication, language is a vital instrument (Ekah & Akpan, 2018). It can inform, persuade, entertain, and build relationships within the community. Without language, it would be hard to transmit messages clearly, which can lead to misconceptions. Every speech act requires a speaker and a listener since language and communication are related (Taylor-Rubin et al., 2017). The speaker must utilize language that makes sense and properly conveys their ideas. The listener needs to focus and make an effort to comprehend the speaker at the same time. Both the speaker and the listener play critical roles in ensuring communications are comprehended correctly.

Effective communication is also important in TV shows as well as in everyday interactions with friends and family (Firda et al., 2021). A talk show is a type of television program where the host interviews guests and discusses various topics. These topics include lifestyle issues, entertainment, personal stories, and current events. Viewers find it interesting when the host asks questions and the guests share their opinions and experiences. Talk shows usually include entertainment segments that liven up the program, such as games, entertainment, or audience participation.

The Graham Norton Show is one of the most-watched talk shows in the United Kingdom. This program, which Graham Norton hosts, showcases well-known figures from television, music, and film. Every episode features interviews with guests who talk about their most recent work and funny stories. This program is fun and relaxed, making it unique, which is one reason the researcher will examine it. The host has a beautiful sense of humor, makes guests feel comfortable, and inspires them to be themselves. There was an episode of The Graham Norton Show with guests Jamie Oliver, Chris Pratt, Jennifer Lawrence, and Will.I.Am in 2016. The four celebrities talked nicely throughout this episode since they told humorous stories. The researcher chose this specific episode



because it highlights moments where the guests flouted conversational maxims, such as being too honest or utilizing humor unexpectedly.

The cooperative principle is one of the many significant subjects pragmatics covers. The goal of this cooperative principle is to enhance conversational communication. A cooperative attitude is necessary for both speakers and listeners to communicate effectively. This implies that they must follow specific rules supporting meaningful and clear communication. These rules, also known as maxims, specify appropriate ways for people to communicate and engage with one another. By following these maxims, speakers and listeners can improve communication and have more successful conversations.

Good communication happens when speakers and listeners follow the maxims of the cooperation principle. However, a conversation is considered to flout a maxim when the speaker intentionally does not follow one of these maxims. Flouting occurs when participants misunderstand one another because they are unable to apply specific maxims in their communication (Sembiring & Ghozali, 2017). Lestari (2019) also said that flouting is when someone purposefully violates a maxim in order to express a hidden or inferred message rather than to confuse listeners. For instance, when someone uses hyperbole or sarcasm in their words, they expect the listeners to pick up on its meaning. According to Cutting (2002), flouting happens when the speaker does not follow a maxim but still expects the listener to grasp the implied message. Speakers should generally follow the four maxims to ensure successful and clear communication.

Several researchers have studied the concept of flouting maxims in different contexts. The study “An Analysis of Flouting Maxim in a Talk Show Program in Indonesia” was carried out by Firda et al., (2021). They conducted a qualitative analysis of conversations from the discussion show *Sapa Indonesia Malam*. According to their research, the maxim of relevance was flouted in 50% of the cases. Arofah and Mubarok (2021) study examined cases of maxim violations and flouting during teacher-student interactions in English classes. They found that while the maxim of relevance was frequently flouted, but the maxim of quantity was more frequently violated. Additional research conducted by Aziz, Mustafa, and A'la (2019), Hamidah, Arifin, and Ariani (2022), and Triani, Fitri, and Lastrri (2023) examined the flouting of maxims in films. These studies used dialog between



characters to identify instances of maxims being flouted. All of these studies add to our understanding of how and why speakers flout conversational maxims in various contexts.

The main difference between this study and the others is that this study's subject speaks in English while the host and guest star, Jenrix, uses Indonesia. This study aims to discover the flouting maxim in the talk show. This specific talk show was chosen as the sample because the guests frequently answered in-depth and humorously, used confusing language, and tried to amuse the audience. These situations often lead to flouting maxims, causing potential communication issues. Thus, the purpose of this study is to analyze the instances of flouting maxim in the talk show's conversation using Grice's maxim theory.

LITERATURE REVIEW

From the conversation in the talk show, several utterances need to be interpreted by considering the context of the situation. Therefore, the listener will be able to understand the speaker's intention, whether expressed or implied. In linguistics, the study of contextual meaning in language is known as pragmatics. According to Cutting (2002), pragmatics is the study of how meaning is derived from social context, physical context, and knowledge of the time and location of speech. Kroeger (2018) states that the parts of meaning that result from the context in which words and phrases are employed are the focus of pragmatics. Pragmatics looks beyond the literal meaning and allows us to understand and imply the meaning of words. Through pragmatics, the interlocutor will be able to respond appropriately to the utterances given by the speakers. In this analysis, the researcher will focus on the concepts of the maxim, specifically the flouting of the maxim since it is frequently found in talk shows.

The Cooperative Principle, as stated by Paul Grice (1975), is essential to effective communication. It helps cooperation amongst participants to ensure a smooth talk without any misunderstandings. Grice divided this concept into four maxims: the maxim of quantity, the maxim of quality, the maxim of relevance, and the maxim of manner. Grice said, "Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange)." This serves to explain the quantity maxim. This indicates that the information provided by the speaker should be just correct—neither too much nor too little. The listener might not understand all the information if there is too little provided, and they might become overwhelmed or confused if there is too much provided. Next,



maxim of quality is when the speaker gives precise information supported by actual facts. In order to clarify this, Grice (1975) offers the following advice: “Do not say what you believe to be false and do not say anything without adequate evidence.” This implies that a speaker should refrain from lying or providing unsubstantiated claims. A speaker risks misleading the listener with incorrect information, which could lead to misconceptions. Thus, the speaker must provide accurate information supported by proper evidence.

The third is the maxim of relevance. “If I am mixing ingredients for a cake, I do not expect to be handed a good book, or even an oven cloth,” states Grice (1975), as an example of this. It means that the information should be relevant. A speaker makes relevant contributions by sharing information that relates to previous utterances. This implies that the information presented must be relevant to the topic at hand. In order to keep the conversation on topic, the speaker should contribute by providing information directly related to what has already been discussed. The last is a maxim of manner. Grice's cooperative principle (1975) states that speakers must stay true to the maxim of manners, which calls for them to talk concisely, clearly, and with organization. This ensures that the message is understandable and unambiguous to others. A listener may take a speaker's use of ambiguous or confusing language differently and misunderstand what they are saying.

On the other hand, flouting a maxim is when a speaker seems to flout a conversational maxim but hopes the audience will pick up on the implied meaning (Cutting, 2002). Cutting went on to say that speakers purposefully use indirect communication by doing this. This indicates that they employ hidden clues or implications rather than just ignoring conversational rules to make their point. It is important to note that the speaker wants the listeners to understand the underlying message rather than trick them.

Giving too much or too little information causes participants can be defined as flouting maxim of quantity. This indicates that the speaker does not give the appropriate quantity of information for the topic at hand. Next, when a speaker makes or omits information that can be verified and encourages the listeners to discover the truth of what they say, it is called flouting the maxim of quality. Cutting (2002) states that speakers can flout the maxim of quality in a number of ways. They are irony, metaphor, hyperbole, and quips. Flouting the maxim of relevance occurs when someone changes the topic to avoid discussing a straight conversation about something. This shows the individuals' desire to



hide some information while implying their actual intentions. Last, speaking in a complex way for the listener to understand, for example, using unclear or disorganized language, is flouting the principle of manners.

RESEARCH METHODS

A qualitative descriptive method was chosen in this study, which works well for in-depth data analysis. This strategy works well since it enables detailed explanations of the flouted maxims in this talk show. Hancock (2009) claims that because qualitative research aims to explain social phenomena. So, it is appropriate for this flouting maxim. The purpose of qualitative research is to thoroughly explore and comprehend people's thoughts, emotions, and actions (Dawson, 2009). She also states that to gather in-depth data, focus groups, interviews, and observations are frequently used. This approach is helpful for studies when studying complex situations that are impossible to quantify using numbers.

Two types of instruments are used in this research, namely human and non-human. The main instrument in this study is the researchers themselves. Meanwhile, non-human instruments are needed because the selected video data requires a laptop to analyze the flouting maxims in the Graham Norton Show. The procedures were that the researchers examined the conversation, classified the flouted maxims and explained them based on what the host and guests had said.

FINDINGS

The researchers' findings revealed four categories of Grice's flouting maxims, each serving its purpose. For easier comprehension for readers, the researchers have organized the data into the following table:

Types of Flouting Maxim	Percentage	Frequency
Floating Maxim of Quantity	53%	10
Floating Maxim of Quality	5%	1
Floating Maxim of Relevance	32%	6
Floating Maxim of Manner	10%	2

The table above shows that nineteen maxim data were obtained from the utterances of the four guests and the host. This study found ten utterances representing the flouting maxim of quantity, one utterance representing the flouting maxim of quality, six



utterances representing the flouting maxim of relevance, and two utterances representing the flouting maxim of manner.

Floating Maxim of Quantity

Speaking in a conversation disobeying the Cooperative Principle's rule of quantity is known as flouting the maxim of quantity. This implies that the information they provide may be either excessive or insufficient. They are not being as transparent as they ought to be when they act in this way.

Data 1 [3:02 – 3:10]

Context: In this episode, it can be seen that the host asked a fairly obvious and simple question, whether the guests had met Jamie Oliver before.

Host: And just to check with our American friends, you must know Jamie Oliver. Have you met Jamie Oliver before?

Guest: It's the first time we've ever met, **but of course I know who he is.**

Data 6 [11:11 – 11:13]

Context: They discussed the movie "Passenger" trailer, which stars Jennifer Lawrence and Chris Prat as guest stars. In the trailer, another actor named Michael Sheen is also featured. The host commented that Michael Sheen was in the trailer, and Chris Prat replied with a short answer, "Yes." Then the host asked again and was answered with the same answer, "Yeah."

Host: Michael Sheen

Guest: **Yes.**

Host: Was he there?

Guest: **Yeah.**

The first data shows that Chris Prat answers with the relevant "It's the first time we've ever met," but then he means to add the utterance, "but of course i know who he is". The additional statement adds unnecessary information related to the host's statement. In this conversation, the guest flouted the maxim of quantity by providing more information than necessary when answering the host's simple question about meeting Jamie Oliver. Moreover, the second data shows that both answers were brief and provided no context or additional information. Meanwhile, the host's questions showed curiosity about Sheene's presence in the movie, such as his role, what he did, and whether anything significant happened. In this conversation, the guest violates the maxim of quantity by giving too short an answer to the host's question about Sheene. This back-and-forth between saying too much or too little information makes it funny because people usually expect well-balanced and polished answers in interviews. The unpredictability of her responses is what creates that comedic tension.



Floating Maxim of Quality

A speaker who ignores the maxim of quality speaks dishonestly. Based on this maxim, speakers must tell the truth and refrain from making statements they know to be untrue or for which there is insufficient supporting data. However, when someone breaks this rule on this show, it can lead to some of the funniest moments.

Data 12 [20:34 – 20:51]

Context: This situation is when the host shows a new book that Jamie Oliver will publish. As we know, Jamie Oliver is a celebrity chef and cookbook author. While talking about cooking, the host asked each guest, including Jennifer Lawrence.

Host: And Jennifer Lawrence, do you cook?

Guest: I do, I mean, yeah. **I roasted a chicken recently and no one got sick.** But I'm hardly the candidate for cooking for young children.

In the above conversation, she might playfully exaggerate or say something untrue. It can be seen when she says, "I roasted a chicken recently and no one got sick." this shows that she is trying to joke on herself by not feeling fully confident that she can cook. She also implies that there are risks involved in cooking chicken. This exaggeration and lack of clarity led to a misunderstanding of his actual cooking ability and the safety of her food, so this response resulted in a flouting of the maxim of quality.

Floating Maxim of Relevance

The Maxim of Relevance suggests that people should stick to the topic and ensure that what they say fits the conversation. However, guests often ignore this rule on The Graham Norton Show to keep things light or funny.

Data 18 [29:30 – 21:36]

Context: In the conversation below, Will.I.Am is a member of the music group Black Eyed Peas. When the host asked about whether they had reunited, the guest's answer did not directly answer the question.

Host: We played a bit of Black Eyed Peas. So what is the Black Eyed Peas, are they back together again?

Guest: **We've never broke up.**

The conversation above showed that the guest answered, "We've never broken up" which relates but does not directly answer the question. Instead of answering whether the band was back together, the guest clarified that the band never broke up. This answer may confuse the audience, which is what makes it so entertaining for them.



Floating Maxim of Manner

The Maxim of Manner encourages people to be clear and avoid confusion when speaking.

Data 5 [08:48 – 08:57]

Context: The context of the situation in this conversation is when the host asks Jennifer Lawrence to explain the premise of her movie with Chris Prat.
Host: So for people who don't know, explain the premise, how this happened?

Guest: Well, **Chris is better at that than me, but you're making eye contact with me**, so I'll say it.

Data 7 [12:28 – 13:00]

Context: The context of this situation is when the host asks the guest star, Jennifer Lawrence, about how she did an intimate scene with his co-star, Chris Prat, in a movie called Passenger.

Host: Jennifer, about when you prepare for kind of more intimate scenes, about your breath, particularly your breath. So how did Chris fare in the breath control?

Guest: Well, I said, whenever I had to kiss Josh and Liam for the Hunger Games, **who cares?** I'd eat, like, **mustard and tuna**. Like, **who cares** I need like **mustard and tuna** like cares and then I went off and I did the American Hustle and **I was like** Christian Bale and **I was like** oh and **I was like** really clean and you know glens and men's men's and with crap I ate mince.

In data 5 above, Jennifer says “Chris is better at that than me, but you're making eye contact with me,” shows a lack of continuity of speech or gives a confusing response to the host and the audience because she thinks Chris is superior in explaining. In this case, Jennifer flouted the Maxim of Manner because the guest's response was not as straightforward as it could have been to get a funny interpretation instead of a straightforward answer. This would leave Graham and the other guests trying to figure out what she is saying, which adds to the humor. In addition, data 7 shows that it is clear from the conversation above that the guest's answers are jumbled, ambiguous, and replete with the same responses: “I was like,” “Who cares,” and “mustard and tuna” phrases. The phrases need a coherent flow and are irregularly organized, jumping from one idea to another. As a result, the listener becomes confused since the guest needs to present the answer clearly and understandably. The answer flouts the rule of the maxim of manners since it is unclear and disorganized. Therefore, it is difficult to interpret her exact words or how they connect to the host's question regarding breathing control during intimate moments.



DISCUSSIONS

Through examples of maxim errors found, it shows that the comedic effect that the speaker wants to create often makes the speaker violate the maxims. This is because if the speaker follows the rules in the maxim of quantity, namely providing sufficient information (not too little and not too much), it will be difficult for the speaker to provide an unexpected or surprising effect to the interlocutor so that irrelevant or excessive information needs to be done so that the comedic effect can be created. Similar to the maxim of quality, if the speaker follows the rules in the maxim of quality, namely providing information correctly, it will be difficult to create a sarcastic or unreasonable comedic effect to make it funny. Then, if the speaker follows the rules in the maxim of relevance, namely, the information provided is relevant to the topic being discussed, the effect of the joke will be difficult to achieve. Therefore, often, to make a joke, the speaker ignores the rules in the maxim of relevance by drastically changing the topic of conversation or giving an unexpected answer. Finally, the comedic effect can also appear when the speaker ignores the rules in the maxim of manner, where the maxim of manner requires the speaker to convey the message briefly, orderly, and clearly. However, because they want to create a comedic effect, the speaker conveys the message convolutedly or does not get straight to the point to create a funny effect.

Based on the explanation, it shows that to create humor, speakers need to flout maxim because the inconsistency between the topic of conversation and the utterance will cause surprise, shock, and even confusion in the listener, which will later trigger laughter. In other words, humor is born because of violations committed by the speaker in the conversation, and this is considered normal by the listener and the conversation partner. Flouting maxims has become an effective way to create humor. Understanding how the maxim is violated in the middle of a conversation will help us better understand how to create humor.

From the several dialogues above, it can be seen that maxims on the Graham Norton Show contribute to the comedic attraction based on the system of interviews. The guests could make funny and unexpected moments by intentionally giving too little or too much information, being unclear, avoiding relevance, and exaggerating answers. These conversational violations subvert expectations or assumptions from people, providing several humorous scenes to what could otherwise become regular questions and answers.



It demonstrates or displays how playful communications could engage or entertain the audience even though it is not always relevant to their experiences and perspectives towards something from the context.

CONCLUSION

The Graham Norton Show is one of the most-watched talk shows in the United Kingdom. The popularity of this show reflects a uniqueness in the communication style among speakers that could be analyzed based on the four maxims in conversation, namely the Maxim of Quality, the Maxim of Quantity, the Maxim of Relevance, and the Maxim of Manner. Based on the analysis results, this study found 19 sentences that showed the presence of flouting maxims, which are divided into four maxims, namely the flouting maxim of quantity, which numbered 10. The flouting maxim of quality is numbered 1, the flouting maxim of relevance is numbered 6, and the flouting maxim of manner is numbered 2. The maxim of quantity is most often found in The Graham Norton Show, which means that the information they provide may be either excessive or insufficient. These floutings are known to create the effect of comedy and dynamics so as not to cause stagnancy or flatness in the conversation. For example, when asked about his meeting with Oliver, Chris did not respond with 'No.', but added more information to make it vivid and fun. This flout is then considered a flout in the Maxim of Manner. Another flouting maxim is found in Jennifer's utterance, "I roasted a chicken recently, and no one got sick," as a response to the question does she cook? Therefore, the flout based on Maxim Grice explains that the purpose of this violation is to create comedy and fun.

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