



Types of Conversational Maxim Flouted by the Main Characters in *Green Book* Movie

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Abstract

In order to analyze further regarding to the phenomenon of flouting maxim in conversation, this study is concerned to describe the types of conversational maxim flouted by the main characters in *Green Book* movie through the theory of Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1975). In conducting this study, the descriptive qualitative approach is used to analyze the data. The study has found that all types of conversational maxim are flouted by the main characters in the movie, with the flouting maxim of quantity as the most dominant type in which as many as 31 (38,75%) occurrences, followed by the flouting maxim of relation with 28 (35%) occurrences. As for the lower ranks in the number of occurrences consist of the flouting maxim of quality with 12 (15%) occurrences and finally, the flouting maxim of manner with 9 (11,25%) occurrences as the least dominant type of flouting maxim found in the movie.

Keywords: *cooperative principle, flouting of conversational maxim, movie*

Abstrak

Untuk menganalisis lebih dalam mengenai fenomena flouting maxim dalam percakapan, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan jenis-jenis maxim percakapan yang dilanggar oleh para tokoh utama dalam film *Green Book* melalui teori Prinsip Kooperatif (Grice, 1975). Dalam melakukan penelitian ini, pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa semua jenis maxim percakapan dilanggar oleh para tokoh utama dalam film, dengan flouting maxim of quantity sebagai jenis yang paling dominan di mana sebanyak 31 (38,75%) kejadian, disusul dengan flouting maxim of relation dengan 28 (35%) kejadian. Adapun peringkat yang lebih rendah dalam jumlah kejadian terdiri dari flouting maxim of quality dengan 12 (15%) kejadian dan terakhir, flouting maxim of manner dengan 9 (11,25%) kejadian sebagai jenis flouting maxim yang paling dominan ditemukan di dalam film.

Kata Kunci: prinsip kooperatif, flouting maxim dalam percakapan, film

Introduction

As a way to survive, humans as social beings need to interact with each other. One form of human interaction is through conversation. According to Brennan (2010), conversation is defined as a joint activity which involved two or more participants by using linguistic forms and nonverbal signals to form an interactive communication. In daily conversation, people can fulfill many of their purposes, one of which to exchange information or messages. Moreover, in order for the message being transferred

successfully, the participants of conversation are required to be cooperative with each other.

In pragmatics, there is a theory that specifically discussed the way people can be cooperative while conversing. It is the theory of Cooperative Principle that is proposed by Grice (1975). Following the cooperative principle, Grice (in Wardaugh, 2006: 293) stated that conversation is a cooperative activity which means that participants are expected to cooperate with each other by giving contribution as required so the utterance can be understood. In addition, Levinson (1983: 101) also stated that cooperative principle is a set of guidelines that is needed for the efficient and effective use of language in conversation. In other words, the theory is defined as set of rules that need to be observed by participants of conversation in order the conversation runs efficiently and successfully. Furthermore, it is divided into four types of conversational maxim, namely: (i) maxim of quantity, (ii) maxim of quality, (iii) maxim of relation, (iv) maxim of manner.

Nonetheless, in reality, people tend to disobey and break those rules by creating inferences in their utterances which act referred as 'flouting'. According to Levinson (1983: 104), flouting of maxim occurs when the speaker deliberately 'breaches' the maxims and inferences are generated. Thereafter, by creating inferences in their utterances, the speaker expects the hearer to understand of what is being said in which also can raise the possibility of misunderstanding during conversation. In this case, the hearers are somehow also responsible since there are possibilities that a hearer might fail to understand what is being said by the speaker (Chierchia & McConnel-Ginnet, 1990).

The phenomenon of flouting maxim not only can be seen in real life but also in movies, since movie is a form of visual art that represents human social life. Specifically, the dialogue of the characters is the reflection of human's social interaction that includes flouting of conversational maxim. Furthermore, *Green Book* movie is chosen as the object of this study because aside of winning several prestigious awards including Academy award and Golden Globe award in 2019, this movie has interesting story which is also inspired by a real life event in 1962. Since the movie is based on real story, there is high possibility of the phenomenon could occur among the dialogues of the main characters.

There are similar studies related with flouting maxim that had been conducted by several other researchers who are namely, Hidayati (2015), Kurniati and Hanidar (2018), Dewi (2018), Ibrahim (2018) and Aisyah (2019). The difference of the previous studies and the current study lies in the data source in which specifically, the data of the current study were taken from *Green Book* movie. Therefore, in order to achieve deeper understanding regarding to the situation where inferences are created by a speaker in conversation and also to avoid misunderstanding, further analysis regarding to flouting of conversational maxim is conducted with *Green Book* movie chosen as the data source.

Method

The data of this study were obtained from utterances of the main characters in *Green Book* movie, Dr. Donald Shirley and Frank 'Tony Lip' Vallelonga. *Green Book*

movie was chosen as the data source because, aside of winning several awards including Academy awards and Golden Globes awards, the movie also has an interesting story which also based on real event. Hence, since is depicting real situation on segregation era in 1962, the phenomenon of flouting maxim could occur in the dialogue of the main characters. Furthermore, the data were collected through observation method and proceeded to be analyzed through descriptive qualitative approach. Finally, the data regarding to flouting of conversational maxim that have been obtained from the movie are presented by using both, formal and informal method.

Result and Discussion

Result

The finding of this study shows that flouting of conversational maxims are indeed performed by the main characters in *Green Book* movie. The table of data finding is presented as follow.

Table 1. Types of Flouting Conversational Maxim Performed by Main Characters in Green Book Movie

Type of Flouting Conversational Maxim	Frequency	Percentage
Flouting Maxim of Quantity	31	38,75%
Flouting Maxim of Quality	12	15%
Flouting Maxim of Relation	28	35%
Flouting Maxim of Manner	9	11,25%
Total	80	100%

The finding of this study has shown that all types of conversational maxim are flouted by the main characters in the movie with the total number of data as many as 80 occurrences. According to the table of data finding, there are 31 (38,75%) occurrences of flouting maxim of quantity that also served as the most dominant type and in the second rank of the number of occurrences, followed by the flouting maxim of relation with slightly less number of occurrences in which as many as 28 (35%) occurrences. Based on those dominant types of flouting maxim that occurred mostly while both characters are conversing with each other, it can be concluded that they were still in a period of adjusting and accepting each other's differences. In the movie, it is mostly shown since both of the main characters tend to over-explaining something which could lead to flouting maxim of quantity and also being irrelevant which could lead to flouting maxim of relation. As in the lower ranks regarding to the number of occurrences, there are flouting maxim of quality with 12 (15%) occurrences and flouting maxim of manner as the least dominant type of flouting maxim with 9 (11,25%)

occurrences. In this case, the flouting maxim of quality occurs when both of the main characters fail to convey a contribution that correspond to the reality which mostly resulted from the use of figurative language in their utterances. Whereas, the flouting maxim of manner mostly occurs because the main characters provide contribution that is unclear and contains obscurity which causing the hearer to be misunderstood of what is said by the speaker.

Discussion

In this section, the data regarding to flouting maxim performed by main characters in the movie are analyzed further in order to achieve deeper understanding regarding to the phenomenon of flouting maxim. Specifically, several data that used as representative of each type of flouting maxim found in the movie are presented as follows.

Types of Flouting Conversational Maxim Performed by Main Characters in Green Book Movie

As the most dominant type of flouting maxim performed by main characters in *Green Book* movie, there is *flouting maxim of quantity* with 31 (38,75%) occurrences. In flouting this maxim, the main characters fail to observe the maxim of quantity that is providing only the required amount of information through their utterances. In the movie, the main characters tend to provide too much information while involved in conversation. The example of flouting maxim of quantity can be seen in the following dialogue.

Data 1

Dr. Shirley : Have you driven professionally before?

Tony : Yeah, *sanitation. Garbage trucks. Plus I drive my boss home at night... but I can drive anything, limos, tow trucks, snowploughs, whatever.*

(*Green Book* movie, 00:15:24)

The context of the dialogue above is when Tony Lip was being interviewed for the job as a driver by Dr. Shirley himself. During the interview, Tony Lip was asked several questions in order to assure his capability regarding to the job. One of the question asked by Dr. Shirley is that whether he has driven professionally prior to the interview. In response to the question, Tony Lip answered with “*Yeah..*” indicating that he has driven professionally before and then, proceeded to assert his capability by stating that he can drive many kinds of vehicle. In his utterance, Tony Lip is shown to flout the maxim of quantity because of providing more information than is required. In order to observe the maxim of quantity, the proper answer of Tony Lip should be only affirming the question asked by Dr. Shirley but instead, he provided information

regarding to his capability of being able to drive many kinds of vehicle. In the dialogue, Tony Lip assumed that by over-explaining his capability in driving, he would be chosen and hired for the driver job issued by Dr. Shirley. Therefore, because of providing too much information, Tony Lip's utterance is considered as flouting of the maxim of quantity.

Data 2

Tony : So, where did you learn how to play like that?
Dr. Shirley : *My mother.*
Tony : Your mother? Really?

(*Green Book* movie, 01:20:27)

The dialogue above occurred when Tony Lip and Dr. Shirley were having a conversation in a hotel in Tennessee. After a rough night they both experienced, they exchanged story about themselves to get to know more of each other. In the beginning, Tony wondered about where did Dr. Shirley learn to play piano in the first place. In replying the question, Dr. Shirley said "My mother". In cooperative principle, Dr. Shirley's utterance is considered as flouting maxim of quantity because the required information needed by Tony Lip is not fulfilled. That is shown by Tony asking about a specific place in which Dr. Shirley learn to play piano and then, answered by Dr. Shirley with a name of a specific person, "My Mother". Therefore, by providing a statement that lacks of adequate information, Dr. Shirley is shown to flout the maxim of quantity in the dialogue above.

In the second rank regarding to the number of occurrences, there is *flouting maxim of relation* with 28 (35%) occurrences. The flouting maxim of relation is mostly occurred when participants fail to observe the maxim of relation that requires participants to provide relevant contribution according to the subject of conversation. As for the main characters in *Green Book* movie, they also tend to being irrelevant with each other in many occasions in which mostly because they tend to avoid talking about particular topic. The situation where maxim of relation being flouted by main characters in the movie can be seen in the dialogue below.

Data 3

Dr. Shirley : If I was in the bar in your neighborhood, would the conversation be any different?
Tony : *From now on, you don't go nowhere without me. Nowhere!*

(*Green Book* movie, 00:59:31)

The dialogue above is performed when both Dr. Shirley and Tony Lip were having an argument right after Dr. Shirley was saved by Tony Lip from being beaten by thugs in a bar in the state of Kentucky. The racial discrimination experienced by Dr. Shirley was the cause both of them to be arguing in the first place. During the argument, Dr. Shirley asked Tony Lip, *“If I was in the bar in your neighborhood, would the conversation be any different?”* referring everywhere is the same for a ‘colored’ guy like him. After hearing that, for a moment, Tony Lip was silenced and then, proceeded to command Dr. Shirley to always be accompanied by Tony for the sake of his safety. In the dialogue, Tony Lip is considered flouting the maxim of relation by being irrelevant in answering the question previously asked by Dr. Shirley. In his response, Tony Lip is shown to not answering and avoid talking further about the incident in which by giving a certain command to Dr. Shirley. Therefore, because of providing a statement that is irrelevant to the subject of conversation, Tony Lip is considered to flout the maxim of relation through his utterance.

Data 4

Dr. Shirley : How is that?
Tony : Salty.
Dr. Shirley : Have you ever considered becoming a food critic?
Tony : No, not really. Why? Is there money in that?
Dr. Shirley : *I’m just saying, you have marvellous way with words when describing food. “Salty”, so vivid, one can almost taste it.*

(*Green Book* movie, 00:32:19)

The conversation occurred between Dr. Shirley and Tony Lip in a restaurant on their way to Pittsburgh. At the restaurant, right after Dr. Shirley finished eating his food, he stared at Tony who is still eating and then asked, *“How is that?”* referring to the food. Tony replied simply by saying, *“Salty”*. As for Dr. Shirley, such words just as elegant as a food critic would say and then, he wondered and asked would Tony consider to become one. Confusedly, Tony asked whether the job would be able to produce money. Without answering Tony’s question, Dr. Shirley provided the reason on why he asked that in the first place. In the dialogue above, Dr. Shirley’s utterance as the response to Tony’s question is considered to flout the maxim of relation because it is not related to the subject of conversation in which regarding to whether the job of ‘food critic’ would be able to produce money. In the dialogue, it is clearly seen that Dr. Shirley is trying to avoid talking further about the job and instead, providing the reason why Tony’s comment on his food amazed Dr. Shirley. Therefore, because of stating something that is not related to the subject of conversation, Dr. Shirley is flouting the maxim of relation in his utterance.

Flouting maxim of quality becomes the third rank in the number of the occurrences performed by the main characters in the movie with 12 (15%) occurrences. In performing the flouting maxim of relation, the main characters fail to provide a contribution that is reliable and corresponds to the reality. In the movie, it is because

both, Dr. Shirley and Tony Lip, provide a statement that contains figurative languages, which is not based on the reality and lies. The example of data regarding to flouting maxim of quality by the main characters in *Green Book* movie can be seen in the following dialogue.

Data 5

Dr. Shirley : That's like clanging a cowbell at the end a
Shostakovich's Seventh.
Tony : Right. And that's good?
Dr. Shirley : *It's perfect, Tony.*

(*Green Book* movie, 01:10:32)

The dialogue above is occurred when Tony Lip was writing a letter for his wife, Dolores, at a rest area during the concert journey. Dr. Shirley who has seen Tony writing a letter from earlier became curious and ended with him offering to help Tony in writing the letter. After finished the letter in which becoming very poetic and beautiful, Tony Lip wanted to add a P.S. for his wife at the end of the letter. Tony Lip then, asked for confirmation towards Dr. Shirley whether he can put a P.S. saying "*Kiss the kids.*". Responding to that, Dr. Shirley said, "*That's like clanging a cowbell at the end a shostakovich's Seventh.*" Indicating that it could ruin the beauty of the letter. Tony who was still confused, reassured him by saying "*...And that's good?*". Hearing how innocent and pure his love to his family, Dr. Shirley put aside his opinion and then said, "*It's perfect, Tony.*". Dr. Shirley, in his utterance, is considered flouting the maxim of quality by providing a statement that is believed to be false which does not correspond to the reality. The marked statement provide by Dr. Shirley is shown to be the contrary to what he said earlier which referring that putting a P.S. could ruin the letter. In order to honor and respect the love given by Tony to his family, Dr. Shirley lied in which ended with praising Tony's idea. Therefore, by stating something that is believed to be false or a lie, Dr. Shirley is shown to flout the maxim of quality in his utterance.

Data 6

Tony : Okay, look, we're out of here tomorrow morning.
You'll never see us again. There's gotta be something
to work this out. What if you let him go and I give
something to thank you.
Police : You bribing us?
Tony : *No, hell no! A gift. A thankyou.*

(*Green Book* movie, 01:14:13)

The dialogue occurred between Tony Lip and two police officers in Macon, Georgia. Prior to the conversation, Tony was notified that Dr. Shirley was caught

having sexual intercourse with a guy by the manager of the concert place. Tony then, came to the police station only to find that Dr. Shirley was being humiliated by the police and then, he tried to find a solution and save Dr. Shirley. Known to be good at talking to people, Tony began to talk his way out with both of the police by offering something as a 'gift' to them. One of the police officer wondered and asked, "*You bribing us?*". Tony then denied that he was trying to bribe them in the first place. In the dialogue, Tony Lip is clearly shown to flout the maxim of quality by telling something that is lack of adequate evidence or lies to the police officers. The act of Tony in the dialogue is clearly can be considered as a bribe since he offered something to make the police release Dr. Shirley but in his utterance, Tony denied all of that and insisted that it is in the form of a 'gift'. Because of providing a statement that is not true or lies, Tony Lip is flouting the maxim of quality.

Finally, there is *flouting maxim of manner* as the least dominant type of flouting maxim performed by main characters in *Green Book* movie with 9 (11,25%) occurrences. The maxim of manner requires participants of conversation to provide a contribution that is clear without any expression that can cause the hearer to be confused. As for the main characters in the movie, they fail to observe the maxim in several occasions because both Dr. Shirley and Tony Lip provide a statement that is unclear and obscure which resulted with the hearer to not understanding of what is said. Thereafter, an example of flouting maxim of manner in the movie is presented below.

Data 7

Tony : You're married?

Dr. Shirley : Was. June. Good person. Terrible grammar, but a kind soul. You'd quite like her.

Tony : *June. Like Lassie's mom.*

(*Green Book* movie, 00:50:27)

The context of the conversation above is when Tony Lip and Dr. Shirley were having conversation in a car during their concert journey to the South. Prior to the dialogue, Tony Lip wondered about Dr. Shirley's family in which ended with Dr. Shirley talking about his previous marriage including his ex-wife. Dr. Shirley told Tony about his ex-wife whose name is June as well as her traits when they both were still together. After Dr. Shirley finished talking about his wife, Tony added "*June. Like Lassie's mom*" referring to one of his acquaintance who has similar name to Dr. Shirley ex-wife. In the dialogue above, Tony Lip utterances in which he talked about his acquaintance to Dr. Shirley is considered as flouting of maxim of manner. The statement of Tony is not clear and obscure to Dr. Shirley and can caused Dr. Shirley to be confused. In the first place, Dr. Shirley does not know any of the person that is mentioned by Tony Lip. Since the statement of Tony Lip contains obscurity that can

cause the hearer to be confused, he is shown to flout the maxim of manner in his utterance in the dialogue above.

Data 8

Bar Girl : So, darling, what you do? All dressed up like that?
Dr. Shirley : *Nothing particularly important.*

(*Green Book* movie, 01:46:33)

The context of the dialogue occurred is when Dr. Shirley and Tony Lip were at a diner on their way home after finishing the tour concert journey. The harsh discrimination experienced by Dr. Shirley in the last place of the concert tour resulting him and Tony to cancel the concert there and proceed to go home. On the way back home, they decided to have dinner at a diner called 'Orange Bird', a 'colored-friendly' diner. After finished with his meal there, Dr. Shirley was approached and asked by a bar lady who wondered about his occupation. The lady asked, "...*What you do? All dressed up like that?*" considering that they were the only ones who were wearing a set of nice formal suits at the time. In response to the question, Dr. Shirley answered by saying, '*Nothing particularly important.*'. In his utterance, Dr. Shirley fails to observe the maxim of manner in which requires the participants to provide a statement that is clear. In the dialogue, the response provided by Dr. Shirley in replying to the bar lady's question is not clear and contains obscurity which resulted her to be confused. Dr. Shirley refused to answer directly to the question because he was trying to be humble among his own people, considering the majority of colored people during the time were living in poverty. Therefore, because of providing an utterance that is unclear and contains obscurity, Dr. Shirley is considered to flout the maxim of manner in the dialogue.

Those are several examples of the data that have been analyzed regarding to the types of flouting maxim that are found from the utterances of the main characters in *Green Book* movie. This study has found considerably high number of occurrences of the phenomenon regarding to flouting maxim as if being compared to other previous studies. For the example, the study conducted by Kurniati and Hanidar (2018) entitled *The Flouting of the Gricean Maxims in the Movies Insidious and Insidious 2* had found the total of 23 occurrences and the study conducted by Dewi (2018) entitled *An Analysis of Flouting Maxim Found in Frozen Movie* had only found 21 occurrences of flouting maxim meanwhile, this study found the total of 80 occurrences of the phenomenon. Despite based on real event, the high occurrences of flouting maxim in *Green Book* movie is supported by the fact that the movie is about two people who are trying to accept each other's differences, both of the main characters tend to solve their problems by creating inferences in their utterances, hence flouting the conversational maxim.

Conclusion

This study is focused on describing the types of flouting conversational maxim performed by the main characters in *Green Book* movie. The finding of the study shows that all types of conversational maxim are flouted with the total number of occurrences as many as 80 times. Among those 80 data, there are 31 (38,75%) occurrences of flouting maxim of quantity as the most dominant type of flouting maxim and followed by the flouting maxim of relation with 28 (35%) occurrences. As in the lower ranks of occurrences, there are flouting maxim of quality with 12 (15%) occurrences and finally, flouting maxim of manner with 9 (11,25%) occurrences as the least dominant type of flouting maxim. Based on the dominant types of conversational maxim flouted by the main characters in *Green Book* movie, it can be concluded that both of the main characters, Dr. Shirley and Tony Lip, are still in a period of getting to know more of each other and accepting each other's differences which also becomes the purpose of their journey in the movie.

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